

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES

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

SAVIOR OF THE WORLD

By J. Preston Eby

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Chapter 1

Eternity

GOD HAS A PLAN!

AMONG all the questions that men have asked, there is one that is of supreme interest and importance. Why are we here? What is our destiny? What lies beyond the grave for the Christian, for the unbeliever? For old, for young? For our fellow citizens, and for the teeming masses in far-away lands serving strange gods? These questions were raised by one of the great poets of all times. I am speaking now of that American genius of letters, Edgar Allen Poe - an incomparable genius, and yet a man whose life was destroyed by unbelief. Millions of people have read his masterpiece, "The Raven," but few, I am afraid, have ever grasped the real spiritual significance of the struggle that was going on in the soul of this man. He asked four very significant questions - questions which every living soul, at one, time or another, must raise to God. First, Is there a God who comforts? Is there a God who can assuage the pain of life? (In this case it is the poignant pain of the loss of a loved one, his beloved Lenore.) Is there "some water from the river of paradise, the water of Nephenthe," which can take away the heartache that is driving him insane? Secondly, he asks, Is there really a Christ? Does He live? Is there a balm in Gilead? Is there One who can smoothe the wrinkled brow and soften the hard heart? Thirdly, he asks, Is there some place, some heaven, some distant Eden or future world where we shall be joined again with our loved ones? And, finally, Is there any hope that the darkness and hopelessness and despair of this life will be lifted? But always he directs his questions to his own unbelief which is personified in that grim and ghastly raven, a picture of doubt and unbelief. A few years after writing those chilling words, Poe became insane. Regaining his sanity, he drank himself to death, and this genius was found dead in the gutter.

Untold billions of human beings have lived and died without hearing the gospel of salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ. What has become of them? Is there no hope? For more than six thousand years generations of men, like the grass, have appeared and in a few fleeting years withered and vanished. Whence came those countless billions of human beings, and where do they go? This is the problem which has preoccupied the world's thought since the dawn of history. This is the question about which philosophers have theorized and theologians have dogmatized. Unquestionably the problem of the eternal destiny of mankind is the question of questions! It concerns every individual and touches everything of enduring interest. Life is a vapor that appears for a while and vanishes away. But there is a beyond! What is that beyond to be?

God has a plan indeed, God has a wonderful plan for this world! It is a plan of which the architectural drawings were made in eternity. It encompasses the minutest detail of all of creation. I assure you that when time has run its course, and the veil is dropped upon the final scene, we shall discover that that plan has been worked out to its very tiniest detail, just as God had planned it in eternity - that His will has been done!

That is an amazing thought because it often seems as if the world is flying off unattended, like a chariot where the driver has fallen off, the horses are running wild, the

reins are flapping in the breeze, and it is threatening to go over the precipice at any moment. Yet the Scriptures would have us know that God, the sovereign Lord of history, has His hands firmly upon those reins and that His plan is coming to pass. Think about it! Our God is perfect in all His attributes. He is perfect in His power. He is perfect in His holiness and justice. He is perfect in His love and mercy. He is perfect in His wisdom and in His omniscience. Therefore, His plan must be perfect. Indeed it is a perfect plan!

This is not to deny that the world is filled with many evils; that all about us we see that sin and evil and disease and death cling to man. It is not to shut our eyes to those realities, but it is to open our eyes to the realization that God sovereignly overwhelms all these things to bring about His own will. God has created this world. Even though Satan let chaos loose into the midst of the creation, God created Satan and God knew precisely what this angel of destruction would contribute. He knew of the chaos and the sin that would be introduced into the peaceful calm of those Elysium fields. Yet God created him anyway. God knew that with sin would come the perfect judgment of God upon that sin, which means sickness, death, judgment, disillusionment and decay. Yet, God ordained all these things so that He might overcome them for good.

Central to the whole plan of God is Jesus Christ and His greater glory, but even more amazing is the realization that God has planned for us to share His glory and to work out for us our good as well. God has a perfect plan. My friends, I want you to understand one thing. This plan needs no human support! In Madrid, Spain, there exists the Escorial, one of the greatest cathedrals ever built by man. For centuries the kings of Spain have been buried there. When that magnificent structure was under construction, the architect designed a vast arch, perhaps bigger than anything that had been built before. However, that arch was so flat at the top that the reigning king was frightened by the prospect of the tremendous weight of the roof collapsing on his head. He commanded the architect to build a column from the floor all the way to the center of that arch to hold it up. The architect protested vehemently that it was not needed, but the king insisted and, over the laments of the architect, the column was built. The king worshipped contentedly in the vast structure, having seen to it himself that the ceiling would not fall. The years went by, the church stood, and the king finally died. Only then did the architect reveal that between the top of the column and the bottom of the arch there was a quarter of an inch of space. In all these hundreds of years that have passed the arch has not sunk so much as a quarter of an inch. Today a board is still passed over the column and under the arch for all to see. So it is with the plan of God - that over-arching plan that encompasses all of reality and all of life. It needs no human support to hold it up. God is the LORD OF ALL and He is working out His purposes in our lives, in all of the world, and through the whole universe.

Read the words of that magnificent hymn: "God moves in a mysterious way His wonders to perform; He plants the footsteps in the sea, And rides upon the storm." What a beautiful hymn! Many people may not know how William Cowper was brought to write that hymn. His life was in shambles. He was not a Christian. He was filled with despair and discouragement. In fact, so overcome with despair was he that he determined to take his life by taking poison. Instead of dying, he became deathly ill. He bought a gun and tried to shoot himself, but the gun would not go off. In great anger, he threw the gun away, got a rope and tried to hang himself. The rope broke. So then, in utter desperation, he hired a carriage in London and instructed the driver to take him to the Thames River. The driver could not find the Thames River! The fog had settled in so thickly on the town that even a London cabdriver got lost! After several hours he brought Cowper back to his

apartment. He went up to his room, totally dismayed, and his eyes fell upon a Bible. He opened that Bible and began to read. He read of the love of a heavenly Father who loved even William Cowper. Astonished by the events that had just taken place, he read of the sovereign providence of God working all things after the counsel of His own will. He embraced Him as his Saviour and wrote the wonderful words of that great hymn.

Perhaps I ought to state here for the benefit of some of my readers, that the idea that God HAS a plan may be to them a new one. According to the view of most Christians, God has no definite, prearranged plan, but is simply endeavoring to do the best He can through human instrumentality to repair the ruin that sin has made, and, though thus far the majority of the race have been overwhelmed in that ruin, yet in the end truth will triumph and sin will be confined in an eternal prison house.

As some ignorantly misjudge the skill and wisdom of a great architect and builder by his unfinished work, so also many in their ignorance now misjudge God by His unfinished work; but by and by, when the rough scaffolding of sin, death, and redemption has been removed, and the rubbish cleared away, God's FINISHED WORK will universally declare His infinite wisdom and power; and His plans will be seen to be in harmony with His glorious character.

Since God tells us that He has a definitely fixed purpose, and that all His purposes shall be accomplished, it behooves us, as His children, to inquire diligently what those plans are, that we may be found in harmony with them. Notice how emphatically the Lord affirms the fixedness of His purpose: "The Lord of hosts has sworn, saying, Surely as I have thought, so shall it come to pass; and as I have purposed, so shall it stand." "The Lord of hosts has purposed, and who shall disannul it?" "I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me... My counsel shall stand, and I will do all My pleasure ... Yea, I have spoken it, I will also bring it to pass; I have purposed it, I will also do it" (Isa. 14:24-27; 46:9-11). Therefore, however haphazard or mysterious God's dealings with men may appear, those who believe this testimony of His Word must acknowledge that His original and unalterable plan has been, and still is, progressing systematically to completion.

When we think of a plan, we think of something involving more than just a single element. An architect's plan for a building consists of drawings and specifications descriptive of its several floors, including styles of plumbing, decoration, arrangement of rooms, etc. Unless each floor of the building is to be identical to every other floor, necessarily the drawings and specifications for any given floor do not harmonize with the details of the other floors. No one, however, would construe this to mean that the architect is incompetent, nor that his plans and specifications are contradictory. God's plan, like the plan of a building, is also made up of many parts. Instead of different floors, however, it embraces EPOCHS AND AGES. Through each of these ages the divine plan has steadily progressed toward completion. Only when it is complete, and mankind sees the result, will they all be able to appreciate the wisdom, justice, love and power of the Divine Architect. -Ps. 72:1-20

THE PLAN OF THE AGES

Upon your table today there is or should be a book we call the Bible. This book alone reveals God's secret plan of the ages. It unfolds with unerring accuracy the mysteries of ages in the dim and misty past and points with unerring finger to the purpose of countless

eons yet to come. The Christian Church as we know it has been living in a fool's paradise, propounding pet doctrines, ranting and raving about an endless eternity with golden streets and harps and white nightgowns for some and crackling, searing, tormenting flames for others, but almost completely overlooking God's wonderful PLAN OF THE AGES.

Paul writes of this plan of the ages in Eph. 3:8-11. "Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; and make all to see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world has been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ: to the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the Church the manifold wisdom of God, according to the eternal purpose which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord." The word translated "eternal" in the phrase "eternal purpose" is the Greek word AIONON which means "ages." Young's Literal Translation reads, "And to cause all to see what is the fellowship of the secret that has been hid FROM THE AGES in God, who the all things did create by Jesus Christ, that there might be made known now to the principalities and authorities in the heavenly places, through the assembly, the manifold wisdom of God, according to A PURPOSE OF THE AGES, which He made in Christ Jesus our Lord." The Diaglott renders verse 11 thus, "According to A PLAN OF THE AGES, which He formed for the Anointed Jesus our Lord," and Rotherham says, "According to A PLAN OF THE AGES which He made in the anointed Jesus our Lord."

It will be a wonderful day for you, dear one, when first your soul becomes enthralled with the revelation that God, before ever the world began or ever the ages were formed, looked forth from His temple of wisdom and omnipotence to chart with resolute care the course and purpose of every age. Your heart will throb as you read the opening proclamation of Scripture, "In the beginning - GOD!" In the beginning of what? Not in the beginning of God, certainly, but in the beginning of His creation of all things, in the beginning of time, in the beginning of the orderly procession of the divinely destined ages. In the beginning stands God, omnipotent and omniscient, creating, sustaining and guiding all things and all people and all the ages of time according to the purpose of His own will. No purpose ordained by God from the beginning can possibly go astray or be hindered by the efforts of devil or man. Oh, for the hour when all creation will grasp the beautiful message, "From Him everything comes, by Him everything exists, and in Him everything ends!" (Rom. 11:36).

As men with the aid of God's Word have gazed into the vista of the future, it seems to have missed their understanding that God says very little in His Word about eternity, while devoting many hundreds of passages to His will and works wrought through THE AGES. "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spoke in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken unto us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, by whom also He made the worlds" (Heb. 1:1-2). What tremendous statements we have here! God has spoken to us through His Son - literally, "spoke to us in Son," or, God spoke to us in One who has the character that He is a SON, revealing the realm and relationship of sonship to God. This Son is heir of all things and, blessed be God! we are joint heirs with Him. "By whom also He made the worlds." Many people believe this refers to the creative act - "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." Actually, it does not refer to that at all. The word here for "worlds" is AIONAS. It means ages- "... by whom He made the ages." This goes beyond His being the Creator of matter and its arrangement into multiplied billions of stars, suns,

and planets with their atmospheres and inhabitants. This lends purpose to everything. He is the heir who GIVES THE PROGRAM FOR THE FUTURE! He framed the ages, He ordained the end from the beginning; not only did He create everything, He did it for a purpose, and "known unto God are all His works from the beginning of the world" (Acts 15:18). Notice - the Amplified Bible says, "But in the last of these days He has spoken to us in the person of a Son, Whom He appointed Heir and lawful Owner of all things, also by and through Whom He created the worlds and the reaches of space and the AGES OF TIME - that is, He made, produced, built, operated and arranged them in order!" "Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God." (Heb. 11:3), but it should read, "the ages were planned by the word of God."

God made, planned, and determined the destiny of all the ages by Jesus Christ. The Lord Jesus Christ is the Creator of this universe, and time and space, and there is purpose to it all. Abroad today is the idiotic notion that the universe is running at breakneck speed through time and space like a car that has lost the driver. The interesting thing is that when a car loses the driver there is a wreck, but this universe, even according to the scientists, has been running millions of years, and it has been doing pretty well, by the way. The sun comes up at a certain time every morning; it is very precise. The moon stays in a predictable orbit. As one of the men who works on the moon modules says, all they have to do is aim, and the moon will be there when the module gets there. This is not a mad universe in which you and I live. It has purpose, and the Lord Jesus Christ is the One who gives it purpose. HE is the architect and sovereign Lord of the ages. He FORMED THE AGES and appointed what should be done in each of them. I must, therefore, with utmost force impress upon all who read these lines that, if we are to comprehend God's great plan for the ages, we must raise our eyes far above the engulfing muck and sucking quicksand of Babylonish Church tradition handed down to us by the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth to keep God's people in bondage to eternal hopelessness. God has a plan of the ages! It was conceived by the omnipotent and omniscient Christ of God, the Creator and Redeemer of the world. Its successful conclusion is as sure and unfailing as God Himself is sure and unfailing. God never "flits" from one thing to another. He does not begin one work and then tiring of it, drop it and start another. He does not create what He cannot control. He is not the proverbial mad scientist who creates an UNCONTROLLABLE monster. The prophet Isaiah gives us the words of God wherein God declares, "I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like Me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure" (Isa. 46:9-10). God's purpose is so unalterable, so fixed, so certain that He could declare from the very beginning just what the end would be, and that end will come to pass in just exactly that way.

For many years now multitudes of preachers and people in the Churches would have us believe that God has been in this great work of the ages for the short period of about 6,000 years. They tell us that in this day God is about to become so disgusted with the whole mess that He is going to close it down, take a few saints away to some far off heaven somewhere, and give up on the rest of the creation, the work of His love. What a WEAK God some folk have and worship! They worship a God who CHANGES, one who in the beginning did start out to bring about a glorious end, but somewhere along the line lost control of the situation and has now thrown up His hands in despair and decided to destroy the whole thing and be satisfied with a little handful for Himself for all eternity. What great pity I feel for such people and for the god they serve! For this is going to put their god in the unenviable position of being filled with regret throughout all eternity

because He was not able to carry out His purpose, and He will have to always remember that over in the hell He created is the vast majority of His creation suffering the tortures of the damned for ever and ever. What a prospect for God and His creation! If God knew in the beginning that it would turn out like this and included eternal damnation in His creative plans, then why did He create the world in the first place? Better to have forgotten the whole creation in the beginning! And if God DID NOT know this from the beginning, THEN HE IS NOT GOD.

"AION" - AN AGE

This brings us to the thought I want to share in this chapter. Let us consider the wonderful Kingdom parable Jesus told of the sheep and the goats. "When the Son of man shall come in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then shall He sit upon the throne of His glory: and before Him shall be gathered all nations: and He shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: and He shall set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say unto them on His right hand, Come, blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was hungry, and you gave Me meat: I was thirsty, and you gave Me drink: I was a stranger, and you took Me in: naked, and you clothed Me: I was sick, and you visited Me: I was in prison, and you came unto Me. Then shall the righteous answer Him, saying, Lord, when did we see You hungry, and fed You? or thirsty, and gave You drink? When did we see You a stranger, and take You in? or naked, and clothe You? Or when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come unto You? And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as you have done it unto the least of one of these MY BROTHERS, you have done it unto Me. Then shall He say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from Me, you cursed, into EVERLASTING FIRE prepared for the devil and his angels: for I was hungry, and you gave Me no meat ... then shall they also answer Him, saying, Lord, when did we see You hungry, or thirsty, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto You? Then shall He answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as you did it not unto one of the least of these, you did it not unto Me. And these shall go away into EVERLASTING PUNISHMENT: but the righteous into LIFE ETERNAL" (Mat. 25:31-46).

There are many precious and important truths contained in this parable, but we must restrain ourselves from pursuing them at this time in order to deal briefly with two points. First, it is important to note that this separation of the sheep from the goats was brought about, not on the basis of whether one had accepted Jesus Christ as his personal saviour, but solely on the basis of WORKS. Everything depended entirely upon what the sheep or goats had DONE or had NOT DONE. There was nothing of faith or a spiritual experience connected with this separation. The sheep were set on God's right hand because of the fact that they had done something - given meat and drink to the LORD'S BRETHREN, clothed them, visited them, and comforted them. All these things the Lord said they had DONE TO HIM. But the sheep confessed that they had never seen Him, so how could they have done these things to the Lord? He answered, "Inasmuch as you have done it to the least of THESE MY BRETHREN, you have done it unto Me." All of this is a kind of ministry unto the Lord Himself and it brought all these people into a separation unto blessings of the right hand of God! This had nothing whatever to do with how the sheep treated the Jews, or the orphans in foreign lands, or the destitute masses or the poor drunk in the gutter. None of those are the Lord's brethren! Paul identifies the Lord's brethren in Rom. 8:29, "For whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren."

The Lord's brethren are the sons of God, the members of His body, of His flesh, of His bone, of His spirit and nature. The sheep had responded in a positive way to these brethren in their time of testing and preparation during their sojourn in the flesh, and now there is rich reward!

This meant an entrance into a kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the world. This kingdom was not to be some far-off land of ivory palaces, golden streets, beautiful mansions, white nightgowns, wings and harps, where there is nothing to do and all eternity to do it in. THIS IS A KINGDOM. And because it is a kingdom it denotes rulership and advancement of all kinds. It indicates the bringing of a great many people into a higher realm in the Spirit than they have ever known before. It means WORK and RESPONSIBILITY and a place of ministry and authority to bless.

But the people who had never done all these things mentioned by the Lord were separated unto the left hand of God! They received no kingdom. There were no rewards for work done or attainments reached. Rather, they were set on the dark side of God, they were put under a kingdom and under authority and they were placed in a process of fiery judgment to receive correction. There is much subtle truth in these words of Jesus: "These shall go away into everlasting punishment." The word punishment is from the Greek KOLASIS which means simply that - punishment. But it comes from the root KOLAZO which sheds precious light upon the nature of the punishment. KOLAZO, according to Strong's Concordance, bears only two shades of meaning, namely, "to curtail" or "to chastise." To "curtail" means to restrain as a person is restrained in jail or a child is restrained when he is "grounded" for a week because of some disobedience. "Chastise" has one simple meaning according to Webster's New World Dictionary: to punish in order to correct, usually by beating. It should be clear to any thoughtful mind that the subject here is not meaningless, sadistic, unending torture, but PURPOSEFUL CORRECTION.

While the King James version states that these goats go into everlasting fire and everlasting punishment and the sheep enter into life eternal, that is not quite the meaning of the Greek. The Greek word here translated everlasting and eternal is AIONIOS and AIONIOS is the adjective form of the Greek noun AION. Some have arrogantly contended that the punishment must be everlasting because the same word is used of the life of God - eternal life - and if the punishment is not eternal then the life cannot be eternal. But that is an argument put forth by the ignorant, the result of the shallow reasoning of men who reach hasty conclusions not founded on the facts. "If the punishment ends then God's life must end, if the life is eternal then the punishment must be eternal," we are told!

In late years there has been much controversy over the meaning of the little Greek word AION. Certain deceivers, to further their unscrupulous ends and uphold their blasphemous and Romanish doctrine of eternal damnation, have maintained, contrary to and in spite of all revealed facts, that it means eternal. And our King James version renders it, together with the adjective AIONIOS as "age, course, eternal, for ever, evermore, for ever and ever, everlasting, world, beginning of the world, world began, world without end." What a horrible mixture!

But we need not remain in darkness, for fortunately the Word of God tells us precisely what this Greek word means. Too few have taken the time or energy to consider the real meaning of AION. It is the word from which we get our English word eon. Eon, according

to Webster, means "a long period of TIME." Many attempts have been made to prove that eons are eternal. But this is more than a grave error, it is the height of stupidity, for the divine Author of the blessed Bible has not Himself used them in that way. AION nowhere means eternal! Its simple meaning is an age. In its plural form it means ages. This fact can be unquestionably and incontrovertibly demonstrated from numerous New Testament passages. A glance at any Greek concordance proves that the noun AION, or AGE, is not the synonym of eternity. A study of each case would make a library; so, leaving this task to the reader, we must content ourselves with adducing a few specimens to demonstrate the fact. It is usage that determines meanings - THEIR usage, not ours; the meanings that the holy prophets and apostles gave to their words rather than those that our English translators may try to give. Let me illustrate.

The term forever (and its equivalents, eternal and everlasting) often occurs when it cannot possibly mean unending. In the story of Jonah one is surprised to hear him say while in the belly of the fish, "I went down to the bottoms of the mountains; the earth with her bars was about me for ever" (Jon. 2:6). But he was in the fish only three days and three nights! When a Hebrew slave loved his master and did not wish to go free at the end of the seventh year, we read, "... His master shall bore his ear through with an awl; and he shall serve him for ever" (Ex. 21:6). Of course, that couldn't be longer than his life span. Again, when Solomon built the temple unto the Lord, he began his prayer of dedication with the statement, "I have surely built You a house to dwell in, a settled place for You to abide in for ever" (I Kings. 8:13). And the Lord answered Solomon, "I have heard your prayer and supplication that you have made before Me: I have hallowed this house, which you have built, to put My name there for ever" (I Kings. 9:3). But Solomon's temple lasted for only about 400 years! And it was never in God's mind to dwell there for ever!

Here is something that ought to be clear to any intelligent, honest man. A word that is used to mean in one case three days and nights, in another case to mean a man's lifetime, and in still another case to mean a period of about four centuries, surely does not mean unending or eternal, no matter what English word is used to translate it. USAGE DETERMINES MEANING. Another illustration is the Aaronic priesthood. According to the King James version, Aaron and his sons were anointed as priests for ever. It says, "Their anointing shall surely be an everlasting priesthood throughout their generations" (Ex. 40:15). Yet we read in Heb. 7:11-18 that the Aaronic priesthood is CHANGED to that of Melchizedek. "Now if perfection had been attainable by the Levitical priesthood, for under it the people were given the Law, why was it further necessary that there should arise another and different kind of Priest, one after the order of Melchizedek, rather than one appointed after the order of Aaron? For when there is a CHANGE IN THE PRIESTHOOD, there is of necessity an alteration of the law concerning the priesthood as well. For it is obvious that our Lord sprang from the tribe of Judah, and Moses mentioned nothing about priests in connection with that tribe. So, a previous physical regulation and command is CANCELLED because of its weakness and ineffectiveness and uselessness" (Amplified Bible). Amazing, isn't it, that the priesthood which was ordained for ever has been CANCELLED! There would be no contradiction if the statement in Exodus were translated as it should be, "to the age throughout their generations." That is, throughout their generations AS LONG AS THAT AGE LASTED. In the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures which Jesus and His disciples used, the Greek word AION was the word used for the Hebrew OLAM. According to Hebrew and Greek usage, therefore, these words mean a period of time, a period of unknown length,

the duration of which is determined by the fact or condition or person to which the term is applied.

Furthermore, Lev. 24:8 states that the covenant given to Israel was an "everlasting covenant." Yet, it was conditional and based on Israel's obedience (Ex. 19:5-6). And the inspired writer of the book of Hebrews declares, "For if that first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second. For finding fault with them, He says, Behold, the days come, says the Lord, when I will make a NEW COVENANT with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah... in that He says, A new covenant, He has made the first old. Now that which decays and waxes old is ready to VANISH AWAY" (Heb. 8:7 8, 13). Ah, did you notice? The everlasting covenant has been DONE AWAY! What a wonder, that! We are told that the "earth abides forever" (Eccl. 1:4), but Jesus said, "Heaven and earth shall pass away.." (Mat. 24:35).

The Lord announced through the prophet Isaiah, "Upon the land of My people shall come up thorns and briars; ye upon all the houses of joy in the joyous city: for the palace shall be forsaken; the populous city shall be deserted; the hill and the watch-tower shall be dens for ever; a joy of wild asses, a pasture for flocks; UNTIL the Spirit be poured upon us from on high, and the WILDERNESS BECOME a fruitful field, and the fruitful field be counted for a forest" (Isa. 32:13-15). Verse 15 limits the use of the word in verse 14, for the desolations of the land are "for ever" only UNTIL the Spirit is poured out from on high bringing glorious RESTORATION!

As regards animal sacrifices, dietary laws, ceremonial observances and sabbaths, each was to be "observed as a statute for ever" (Ex. 31:16-17; II Chron. 2:4; Lev. 16:31). But the New Testament clearly shows that these were, one and all, but "carnal ordinances imposed UNTIL the time of reformation" (Heb. 9:10). It is clear - if "for ever" really meant ETERNAL - we would still be offering sheep, bullocks, and goats as sacrifices to God! But - more startling still - the idea of endlessness does not adhere even to the reign of Christ. Heb. 1:8 says, "But unto the Son He says, Your throne, O God, is for ever and ever..." Now turning to another Scripture bearing on the same subject, we obtain additional light on this subject. "Then comes 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. For He must reign TILL He has put all enemies under His feet. And when all things shall be subdued unto Him, THEN SHALL THE SON ALSO HIMSELF BE SUBJECT UNTO HIM that put all things under Him, that God may be all in all" (I Cor. 15:24-25,28). The Kingdom of the Son will have a conclusion. In some remote time the Son delivers up the Kingdom to the Father, the Kingdom continues no longer in the rule of Sonship, but in the rule of Fatherhood, that God may be known no longer in and through the Son and the Sons, but transcendentally as ALL IN ALL!

Dear reader, it is high time to stop acting the fool. It is high time to cease from exalting ourselves and our ignorant imaginings above the knowledge of God. It is high time to bow in humble submission to His Word and cease our own blasphemous and ignorant prattlings. It is high time for a lot of people to curb their wagging tongues and do some listening for a change, if perchance they might at length learn something worth talking about. The Hebrew word OLAM and its Greek equivalent, AION, mean a limited time, an age, and their plural means ages. No one who is sane and reasonable can maintain otherwise. To do so is to contradict all known facts and to contradict God's own Word. That is precisely what all the "eternal damnation" people are guilty of. God be merciful to them!

Let us look at how the word AION is used in a number of passages. About 37 times in the New Testament it is rendered "world," twice as "worlds," twice as "ages," and once as "course." Every place where the word "eternal" appears, with but one exception, it is a translation of this word AION or its adjective form AIONIOS. Twice it is rendered "evermore." Every place where the word "everlasting" appears, but one, it is this same word or its adjective form. With but thirteen exceptions, every place where the word "ever" appears it is the same word or its adjective form. And aside from all this confusion, the word also appears in the plural, and in a number of confusing combinations, such as "the aion of the aion," "the aion of the aions," and "the aions of the aions," etc.

Some of the passages where AION is found will give us added information concerning it. In Eph. 2:7 we find, "in the ages (aions) to come." In Col. 1:26 we find, "the mystery which has been hid from ages (aions)." In Eph. 2:2 we find "you walked, according to the course (aion) of this world." In Heb. 1:2 we find, "by whom also He made the worlds (aions)." In Heb. 11:3 we find, "the worlds (aions) were formed by the Word of God." In about fifteen instances, such as Mat. 12:32, 1 Cor. 1:20, etc., we find it rendered "this world (aion)." Twice we find "this present world (aion)." In Gal. 1:4 we find, "deliver us from this present evil world (aion)." In Eph. 6:12 we find, "the rulers of the darkness of this world (aion)." In 11 Cor. 4:4 we find, "the god of this world (aion)." In I Cor. 2:6 we find, "the wisdom of this world (aion)." In Lk. 16:8 we find, "the children of this world (aion)." In Mk. 4:19 we find, "the cares of this world (aion)." How much more understandable it would be if the translators had used the word age instead of world!

In Mk. 10:30 we find that there is not only this present aion, which is evil, but also "the world (aion) to come." In Lk. 20:35 we find, "but they that shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world (aion), and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry nor are given in marriage." In Heb. 6:5 we find, "and have tasted the powers of the world (aion) to come." And in Lk. 1:70, Jn. 9:32, etc., we find that the aion had a beginning: "since the world (aion) began."

And now in reviewing the Scriptures we have just quoted we note that this aion is something which has a king; it has princes; it is in darkness; it had a beginning; it has an ending; it is evil; it has wisdom; it has children who marry; it has cares. The aions we find were made by Christ, simply through His spoken Word, and we also find in Col. 1:26 that the mystery of Christ in us, the hope of glory, has been hidden from these aions.

Now, if AION means ETERNAL, consider how ridiculous the Word of God would be! The Holy Spirit would be found saying, "the mystery which has been hid from eternities;" "the mystery of Christ which in other eternities was not made known;" "in the eternities to come;" "You walked according to the eternity of this world;" "by whom also He made the eternities;" "the rulers of the darkness of this eternity;" "now once in the end of the eternities has He appeared;" "the harvest is the end of the eternity;" "since eternity began;" "in the eternities to come," etc. etc. Let the scholars whose business it is delve into the many intricacies of expression, and worry over the many grammatical combinations. Suffice it to say here that there have been "aions" in the past, there is this present "aion," and there are "aions" to come. And these all combined make up TIME, encompassing the whole of the progressive plan and program of God for the development of His creation.

Any thinking person should clearly see that if you translate the word AION which means an age by the word eternal, which has nothing to do with time, you immediately get the

wrong idea. The same thing applies when the word AION is translated by the word world. It is incorrect and brings nothing but confusion. That is why so many Christians have been worrying about "the end of the world" when they should have been understanding God's special dealing here at "the end of the age." There is a great deal of difference between the expression, "He shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever," and the expression, "He shall be tormented day and night unto the ages of the ages." For ever and ever has no end. The ages of the ages do have an end, and their end will see every knee bowing and every tongue confessing that Jesus Christ is the Lord to the glory of God the Father. (Phil. 2:10; Rom. 14:10-11). The first expression forebodes complete hopelessness for billions and makes the faith of God of none effect. The second expression, which is completely correct, not only offers hope but expresses the ultimate fulfillment of the purpose which was purposed in Christ Jesus before the world began or before the ages were framed.

THE AGES OF THE AGES

The best way to arrive at the true meaning of a word is to study carefully the way it has been used. If we are to study a Greek word, we must go to the Greek text and not to a translation, nor to a definition which has been derived from an interpretative translation. If, in the original text, the word appears in different forms, surely these forms must have some special significance. A singular form cannot have the same meaning as the plural. Since both forms are used they should be distinguished when they are translated. Yet in certain places the singular form is translated by exactly the same words as the plural form and thereby the true import of the words is hidden. For example, compare the following passages: Heb. 1:8 Your throne, O God, is forever and ever (Gr: for the aion of the aion); Rev. 1:6 To Him be glory ... for ever and ever (Gr: for the aions of the aions); Eph. 3:21 Unto all generations for ever and ever (Gr: for the aion of the aions). In I Cor. 10:11 we have the expression, "The ends of the aions." In Heb. 9:26 we have "The end of the aions." How can a period that is definitely said to come to an end be endless? How can a group of such periods, each said to come to an end, be forever?

I am aware that some people will oppose us on the grounds that the Greeks of today use the phrase "the aions of the aions" meaning eternal, everlasting. A Greek gentleman told me several years ago that "the ages of the ages" is how they express eternity in Greek, and that when the book of Revelation says "and the smoke of their torment ascends up to the ages of the ages" (Rev. 14:11) it means FOREVER. Ah, that sounds convincing, conclusive, final and unanswerable, does it not? But precious friend of mine, in studying Bible language we are studying ANCIENT GREEK, not MODERN. The Greek language in two thousand years has changed to such an extent that the ancient tongue is altogether unintelligible to a modern Greek. The fact is, for over a thousand years, up till the year A.D. 1453, Greek was almost unknown or forgotten in most of Europe. Even in Italy, which formerly had been dominated by Greek, it became almost unknown. Ancient Greek has been a dead language for 1500 years! Anyone who knows anything at all will at once see the utter ridiculousness of this form of argument. Ancient and modern Greek are as different as day and night. As well might we teach our children the English of 2,000 years ago, and then expect them to be proficient in modern English, as to try to apply modern meanings to ancient Greek. The older the English, the more unintelligible it becomes. The spelling changes, word meanings change, sentence structure changes, until finally one is hopelessly lost in a morass of indecipherable hieroglyphics. Even in the four centuries since the translation of the King James Bible, what changes have taken place! "Thee" and "thou" have been replaced by the more familiar "you" and are no

longer used except in classical literature and religion. "Let" meant to "restrain or prevent" in King James' day; now the word means exactly the opposite, to "permit or allow"! So with Greek. Ancient Greek is a dead language, while modern Greek is a living language, with about as much similarity as there is between German and English.

It was the false doctrines of the apostate Greek Orthodox Church that caused the meaning eternal to be placed upon the modern Greek phrase "the ages of the ages." And don't think for one moment, dear friend, that religion doesn't influence language! The English word "hell" once meant "a dark hidden place" but Church dogma has through the years caused the word to take on an altogether different connotation. Word meanings do change! And religious dogma has effected many such changes!

So usage is the fundamental key to unlocking the meanings of ancient Greek words. That the expression "the ages of the ages" cannot mean an endless succession of ages, or eternity, is clearly revealed by comparing Rev. 11:15 with I Cor. 15:24-28. In Rev. 11:15 our Lord is said, in the Greek text, to reign "for the ages of the ages" but in I Cor. 15 His reign is said to end. He does not reign "for ever and ever" though He does reign "for the ages of the ages." As the Son, God reigns unto the ages of the ages through a process of subjecting, subduing all things unto Himself. When that work is completed and there is nothing more in all God's vast universe to subdue and reconcile unto Himself, God reigns no longer as the Son, but as Father He shall finally and eternally be ALL IN ALL.

Endlessness is expressed in the Scriptures by the simple phrase "no end" (Lk. 1:33; Dan. 7:14; Isa. 9:7). The thought of permanence is also expressed in Heb. 7:16, "the power of an endless (or indissoluble) life," and in I Pet. 1:4, "an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fades not away." Now had the Holy Spirit wished to indicate true unendingness or true eternity as the time issue in the punishment and suffering of the lost, He could have used the word that He used in Rom. 1:20 to describe God's "eternal power and Godhead, " literally God's "perpetual" or "imperceptible" power and Godhead, one being unable to see to the end of it! You see, had the Holy Spirit wanted to convey unendingness in reference to the punishment of the enemies of God, He could have used words that plainly denoted that, rather than the words "to the age..... to the ages," "to the age of the ages "to the ages of the ages, " etc., all which plainly denote SPANS OF TIME.

"The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of His indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb: and the smoke of their torment ascends up for ever and ever (to the ages of the ages): and they have no rest DAY NOR NIGHT, who worship the beast..." (Rev. 14:10-11). Notice, dear reader, that these are tormented DAY AND NIGHT unto the ages of the ages and have no rest DAY NOR NIGHT. The very terms day and night and for ever and ever prove beyond question that we are still dealing with the realm of time. The expression for ever and ever is misleading and throws us into confusion, for, while on one hand eternity is indicated, on the other hand time is indicated by the use of the words day and night. There is neither day nor night in eternity! Both are creatures of time. There is no way of knowing how long a time this will be, but since it unquestionably deals with day and night and ages, it does therefore belong to time and no endeavor must be made to equate it with eternity. These words are solemn and awful, and we have no desire but to acknowledge both the wicked deeds and the dreadful and fearful doom of those who are so justly condemned. I have no desire to spend even one day under the terrible hand of God's

severity! But to refer to these words as bespeaking eternal, endless, hopeless, and merciless torture is to invite the fearful curse of those who "add to the words of this book" (Rev. 22:18).

Once we understand that AION and all the compounds of that word denote TIME, how clear everything becomes! And how ridiculous the ignorant prattlings of men! In an effort to harmonize the Scriptures with the false doctrines of the apostate Church, the translators rendered "the ages of the ages" as "for ever and ever." This one little mistake once and for all exposes their folly. Even in English we can see that "for ever" cannot be endless if "and ever" may be added to it. Eternity cannot be added to! Only time may be compounded. Eternity is absolute timelessness. Eternity is without either beginning or end. There cannot be more than one eternity. You cannot add a second eternity on to a first eternity. Forever in English means "for eternity; always; perpetually; endlessly." Now if "for ever" is "eternity" how can you add "and ever," attaching ANOTHER ETERNITY to an already existing eternity? That isn't even correct English grammar! Ah - but ages are time and time, beloved, can be added to! When the Greek speaks of "the ages of the ages" it is speaking of AGGREGATED PERIODS OF TIME - not eternity! And you cannot get eternity by compounding all the time periods of the past and the future, for time began and time ends. The ages and all the time and times combined do not equal eternity. There simply is no such thing as "the endless ages of eternity" as the preachers love to say, for the phrase is a complete contradiction of itself. No one who is sane and reasonable can maintain otherwise. To do so is to contradict all known facts and to contradict God's own Word.

No other book that was ever written can be compared to the Bible, which is the Word of God. I am a believer in the verbal inspiration of the Scriptures, and I am not a believer in the folly of uninformed and unenlightened men who by ignorance of the facts and misinformation try with puny human reasoning to tear it apart. There are a great many people who forget their scholarship, however, if ever they had any, and contend for the King James version even when it is manifestly wrong. One thing I should like to say in passing is, that while the Bible is inspired in its origin, you have to be exceedingly careful of two things: FIRST, THAT YOU HAVE THE ORIGINAL MANUSCRIPT; AND THE SECOND, THAT YOU HAVE A GOOD TRANSLATION. Original manuscripts are inspired, but translations are not. To hear some people talk you would think that the good old King James Bible was the one Paul preached from!

It is interesting to note that the word "Easter" appears one time in the King James version in Acts 12:4. "And when he had apprehended him, he put him in prison, and delivered him to four quaternions of soldiers to keep him; intending after Easter to bring him forth to the people." Here Easter is translated from the Greek PASCHA which appears twenty-eight other places in the New Testament, and in all of those instances is translated "Passover." The Greek PASCHA comes from the Hebrew PASACH which means to pass, to leap, or skip over. We see from this that the English word "Passover" is the correct meaning of the original. How then did the translators of the King James version come up with Easter? Easter, according to Webster's New World Dictionary, is from "Eastre," the ancient Anglo Saxon GODDESS OF THE DAWN - her festival being in the spring of the year. And "Eastre" is the Anglo Saxon form of the Babylonian goddess "Ishtar" the pagan Queen of Heaven! Hundreds of years after Christ the Romish Church, as a compromise with the pagan converts, adopted the pagan rites and customs associated with the worship of Ishtar into the Church as a celebration of the resurrection of Christ - and called that celebration EASTER! Naturally, Easter is celebrated at

approximately the same time as ancient Israel celebrated their Passover. But the point is - because of deeply entrenched apostate religious practice, the translators of the King James Bible mis-translated the Scripture according to CHURCH TRADITION instead of TRUTH! We must never forget that the King James version was translated under the auspices of a STATE CHURCH, which Church was even at that time persecuting, torturing and martyring humble followers of Jesus who dared to resist and denounce its apostasy and shame.

It lets in light on the attitude of the translators of King James' Bible to know, as stated in the Bible helps of Bagster's edition, that King James instructed the men who gave us our Authorized Version, "To sanction no innovation that would disturb the orthodoxy or peace of the Church." It is said that, "The translators were careful in the main to respect the rules laid down by the king." What a vast difference it would have made in our thinking today had these translators followed consistently and accurately the Hebrew and Greek texts, instead of conforming to the heresies of the mother of harlots! Especially where "eternity" and the "ages" are concerned!

Thus, the translators were at the disadvantage of never being able to say or write anything that conflicted with the accepted belief of the nominal Church, its leaders or the ruling element of the nation. In support of this I would give you a quotation from page seven of the Emphatic Diaglott as follows, concerning the King James version: according to Dr. Gell, it was wrested and partial, and only adapted to one sect; but he imputes this, not to the translators, but to those who employed them, for even some of the translators complained that they could not follow their own judgment in the matter, but were restrained by reasons of State." Little wonder, then, that we have eternal damnation taught in the King James Bible!

THE AGE OF THE AGES

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

Few men have been caught away by the spirit of inspiration as was the wise king Solomon when he penned the beautiful Song of Solomon. God dropped one thousand and five songs down into the heart of Solomon, but of these, only five comprising the Song of Solomon, have been preserved and have found a place in Holy Scripture. Inspiration named it "The Song of Songs," that is, the one song which was above and beyond all the songs that have ever come from human heart and human lips. Just as the "Song of Songs" was chief above them all, just as the "Holy of holies" was the Holiest place of all, just as the "heaven of the heavens" is the highest heaven of all, just as the "King of kings" is the greatest King of all, so all through the Scriptures, though obscured by many translators, we have this remarkable phrase TO THE AGE OF THE AGES. It points to that age which shall be the most glorious of all, and which finds its type in the year of Jubilee. This is the Holy Spirit's way of expressing the superlative, and so far as God's plan of the ages is concerned this AGE OF THE AGES is THE AGE PAR EXCELLENCE of them all. A simple illustration of this is our expression, "a day of days," meaning a day that comes out of previous days, which crowns them, and embodies not

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

"AIONIOS" - THE LIFE OF THE AGES

I have pointed out previously that the word for "everlasting" as used of punishment and "everlasting" as used with life is often the same word in the Greek - AIONIOS. Some sincere and well meaning people assert that if AIONIOS does not mean eternal, that is, if the punishment is not eternal, then the life is not eternal. If the "aionios punishment" ends, then the "aionios life" of God must end, say they! That sounds like a reasonable argument, but when one searches beneath the surface he discovers that it merely reveals the ignorance of those who labor the point. Let us see!

The noun AION nowhere means eternal. Its simple meaning is an age. In its plural form it means ages. We have unquestionably and incontrovertibly demonstrated this fact from numerous New Testament passages. Now once we understand that AIONIOS is the adjective form of the noun AION, a simple little sixth-grade grammar lesson should once and for all establish the exact meaning of AIONIOS.

A noun is a word that tells what you are talking about. A noun is a word that names something, a person, place, thing, quality, etc. Boy, water, tree, age and truth are all nouns. An adjective is a word that is used with a noun to describe it. It is a word that tells you what kind, what color, which one, etc. If you wanted to tell me about the hat a woman was wearing you would describe the hat in some way. You might say that it was a large hat, an atrocious hat, or a red hat. These are adjectives, words that describe what kind, what color of hat. When you add one or more of these "describing words" or "adjectives" to hat, you give a clearer picture of what the hat is like. Some words are both nouns and adjectives, that is, the same word can be used both ways. Sometimes the adjective form of the word is identical to the noun form, while at other times the spelling is slightly different. Look at these sentences: "I would like to visit France." "I am learning the French language." France is a proper noun, but the adjective form of the same word is spelled differently - French. But in both cases they indicate the same setting. Anyone with even an elementary knowledge of grammar (English or Greek) knows that the meaning of a noun and the meaning of the same word in its adjective form MUST CORRESPOND! It cannot have one meaning as a noun and exactly opposite meaning as an adjective!

Let me illustrate. If we say "John is in college," the word college is a noun. But if we say, "John has sixteen college credits," college is an adjective, modifying the word credits - telling what kind of credits. Now we all know what a college is - an institution of higher education that grants degrees - so we understand what kind of institution John is attending in the first sentence. Since we know the meaning of college, when we come to the second sentence we have no difficulty understanding what kind of credits John has -

college credits - credits gained through study in an institution of higher education granting degrees! No one in his right mind is going to read the second statement and conclude that John has just finished kindergarten, or that he has a diploma showing that he finished sixteen lessons in leather craft at the YMCA, or that he has \$16.00 worth of credit at a department store! College as a noun and college as an adjective cannot have altogether different meanings. They mean the same in both cases!

Ah, brethren, let's be fair with the basic rules of English grammar and interpretation, and Greek, too, for they both follow the same basic rules. No one can say that AIONIOS means eternal without breaking the basic rules of English or Greek. The adjective AIONIOS which is directly derived from the noun AION occurs seventy times in the New Testament. It is an axiom of grammar that derivatives cannot have a greater force than the parent word. When we have an adjective derived from a noun, the meaning of the adjective is dependent upon the meaning of the noun. A daily paper is one that comes every day. A monthly bill is due for payment every month, not once a year. A yearly automobile license is good for one year, not for ever.

Thus the adjective AIONIOS, a derivative of AION, carries within itself its own solution; for AIONIOS is simply what belongs or relates to the AIONS - the ages - hence it cannot carry a force or express a duration greater than that of the ages of which it speaks. If therefore these ages are limited periods, some of which are already past, while others are yet to come, the word AIONIOS cannot mean infinity!

And yet men who should know better tell us that the Greek noun AION means an age, or ages, which is TIME, and then proceed to ridiculously explain that the adjective form of the same word means exactly the opposite - unending, everlasting, ETERNAL! A child of ten should be able to understand that that is not so. The adjective AIONIOS modifies two nouns in Matt. 25:46 and numerous other passages: punishment and life. "And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal." It tells what kind of punishment and what kind of life Jesus is talking about. It is ages-lasting punishment and ages-lasting life, or better stated THE LIFE OF THE AGES. Now I can hear someone protesting, "But isn't the life we have received from God ETERNAL LIFE?" Certainly God's life is eternal life. But we have received that life injected into TIME, so that the inworking of that life through the processings of God is experienced in relation to TIME rather than ETERNITY. Let me explain. Anything that is absolutely eternal is not only unending, but is also UNCHANGEABLE. Anything that changes in any way is not eternal, for in the change some characteristic is left behind and a new one acquired. In every change something ends and something else begins, at least in form. That which dwells in an eternal state knows NO CHANGE. Change is possible only in that which is limited, imperfect, or not fully developed. The Lord declares of Himself, "I am the Lord, I CHANGE NOT" (Mal. 3:6), and the inspired apostle says of Him, "with Whom there is no VARIABleness, neither shadow of turning" (James 1:17). God is never surprised. God has not learned anything this week, nor last year, nor in the last several trillion years. If God learned one thing today, it would destroy Him. He would no longer be the omniscient One who knows the end from the beginning, for known unto Him are all His works from the creation of the world. God does not experiment. God does not become stronger, mightier, or increase Himself in any way. God is the omnipotent and omniscient one. He CHANGES NOT. He eternally is all that He is without a decrease or increase or fluctuation whatsoever. Therefore He is the ETERNAL GOD! It means more than unending, it means unchangeable, and therefore unending! But we, in our spiritual life, are STILL BEING CHANGED! "And all of us... are constantly BEING TRANSFIGURED

(changed) into His very own image in ever increasing splendor and from one degree of glory to another" (II Cor. 3:18, Amplified). Therefore the life we have received is not truly eternal yet, it is the LIFE OF THE AGES, God's life injected into time to be processed and matured into that unchangeableness which He Himself is!

TIME VS. ETERNITY

It is a great and blessed fact that God is the eternal God. Transition, adjustments, change - these words seem to be constantly with us, until we faint would grasp for something that seems to be stable, solid, enduring. Much of the inner drive for change is simple evidence that man is not satisfied, has not found his completeness in Christ, for "beloved NOW are we the children of God, and it does not yet appear WHAT WE SHALL BE: but we know that when HE shall appear, we SHALL (then) BE LIKE HIM for we shall see HIM AS HE IS" (I Jn. 3:2). Here is stability - immutability - the quality of His nature remains the same, HE IS THE ETERNAL! And this is the nature of which we would be a partaker, the fullness of which we find in Christ, and through union with Him with which we shall be changed until we become changeless in the absoluteness of that which He is. He who is eternal cannot be influenced, affected, moved, changed, altered, damaged or destroyed in any way. He cannot grow tired or old. The character of God is eternal, changeless, unaffected. The love, joy, peace, righteousness and power of God do not rise and fall, rise and fall, rise and fall. Matters not what happens or what men or devils say or do, the love of God, the purpose of God, and the power of God are steadfast, unmoved, unquenched, unaffected, without fluctuation. The eternal existence of God is certain for He is the source of all life. Death cannot touch Him for He is not dependent upon the sustaining power of another, He is Yahweh, the SELF-EXISTENT ONE.

A concept we must immediately grasp in order to understand God's plan of the ages is that time is a created phenomena consisting of past, present, and future just as man is created phenomena having youth, middle age, and old age. No, you cannot smell, touch, or feel time, but it is there, ever-present, always marching into the future. Time was created; it had a beginning, it shall have an end. It is only one thing among countless other things that are part of the entire created universe. It is as much a "species" of creation as, for example, rocks, elephants, trees, and water are species of creation. Before the creation of the universe, there was no time; at the end of the ages when the present material universe is dissolved and replaced by a new, spiritual universe, time shall cease to be. It will be swallowed up into eternity just as all death will be swallowed up into victory, and there shall be no more death. Time - composed of milliseconds, seconds, minutes, hours, days, weeks, months, years, decades, centuries, millenniums, ages was created in the beginning, and will be dissolved at the end of the ages.

A proper understanding of time as a created phenomena having beginning and ending is an absolute prerequisite to a proper understanding of eternity. Time is relative only to the physical universe and the purposes of God therein. Let me ask - If there were no such thing as the planet earth, would there be days? No! If earth didn't have a satellite called the moon, would there be months? No! If both earth and moon didn't have a thing called the sun around which to orbit, would there be years? No! If there were no stars, no suns, no planets, would there be time? No! Time is "duration set forth by measures;" the ticking of a clock, the beating of a pulse, the burning of a candle, the falling of sand through a certain aperture, - these, and a thousand similar regular movements, may serve as measures, more or less exact, of time. Time, then, because it is a created phenomenon, can be studied to some extent just as any other part of the creation of God can be

studied. We know how it functions by its effects in passing: decay, corrosion, erosion, deterioration, or progression, growth, development, maturity.

The late Dr. Einstein discovered, at least theoretically, that time and space are interdependent, inseparably related, and form a four-dimensional continuum (length, height, depth, and duration). That is to say, there is no space without time, and no time without space. Space cannot be traversed without the passage of time; without the passage of time, there is no traversing of space. That is why in His post-resurrection, spiritual body, Jesus was able immediately to transcend and traverse the space-time continuum with the speed of thought. By Christ's power, space and time cohere and consist. Without His binding power, space and time would become nonexistent. Also, since we know from the Scriptures that space is created, we can then know that time is created, too. We can also understand that both time and space (as we presently know them) will end together at the conclusion of the ages.

I am compelled to state that the Bible says very little by way of a definition of eternity because the Bible is essentially a book of time and for time. It was written for man who lives in a temporal state and who is not yet a totally eternal being. Only as we enter that state of being called eternity... only as HE who IS ETERNITY becomes "All in All" in us... only as we are spiritually metamorphosized into our eternal condition... only as eternity becomes an absolute reality to us... only then will formerly temporal beings such as we now are truly comprehend and understand eternity and things of an eternal nature. This marvelous work has now begun within our spirit as our spirit has been quickened by His Spirit. I stated that the Bible is relatively silent about what eternity is; that is not to say that human teachings and theology haven't taught us a great deal about eternity, but, alas! much of it over the past centuries has come from the carnal minds of Babylonish theologians and not from the mind of the Eternal One via the Holy Spirit.

ETERNITY IS A STATE OF ABSOLUTE TIMELESSNESS, not of unending time. Eternity is a STATE OF BEING, resident in the very nature and person of God in which such concepts as past, present, future, before, after, change, transition, growth, decay, etc. do not exist. It is wrong to assert that, when time ends, eternity will begin, because eternity has no beginning. Neither did it end when time began, as so many charts indicate. Therefore it is very important that we make a clear distinction between ages, which belong to time, and eternity, which is timeless. It is more important still that we, in our study of the Bible, search out diligently those passages which refer to time and those which refer to eternity. Do you have it yet? Do you see? Time is not part of eternity; eternity is not composed of segments of time. Eternity is not time standing still; it is simply not time at all. Eternity doesn't go on and on and on, ad infinitum. Eternity doesn't go anywhere, nor does it do anything. Eternity simply IS. Eternity is part of the very nature and person of God. Eternity transcends beyond our knowing anything having to do with time. It is not time at all. It is just a glorious experience of BEING! Eternity simply IS, just as God simply IS. Jesus said, "Before Abraham was, I AM" (Jn. 8:58) - not "Before Abraham was, I WAS." There are not past or future tenses in eternity. There is only one eternal NOW.

THE GOD OF THE AGES

Now the eternal God has injected Himself into time. The Bible rarely speaks of God as eternal; both the Hebrew and Greek Scriptures reveal Him as the GOD OF THE AGES - time. "In the beginning God created..." Since that wonderful dawn God has been the God

of His creation, the God of heaven and earth, the God of the ages, the God of history, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God of Israel, and the God of our salvation. God is said to be living "for the ages of the ages" not because God must die when the ages end, but in contrast to multitudes of His creatures whose days upon earth are limited to "threescore and ten years." Generation after generation, through the rise and fall of empires, and the shifting sands of history, God remains.

The great revelation of the Scriptures is that this universe is governed by a throne and that throne is not in Moscow, it's not in London, it's not in Rome, and it's not in Washington - it's in heaven, the eternal dimension. Time is being governed by eternity, creatures are being governed by the Creator. There is a whole order of cosmic government that those of us who have had our eyes opened, our spirits quickened by His Spirit, raised up and made to sit together with Him in heavenly places, have beheld. And the first thing we saw was that ultimate reality sits upon a throne and governs mountains, governs hills, governs streams, governs insects, governs animals, governs things, governs man, governs time, governs history, governs creation, and governs the whole vast, unbounded universe!

God in Christ became man as well as God. God as man has tenses to His being: the yesterday of the past, the today of the present, the tomorrow of the future. This is not the eternal God, but the God who has dispensed of His eternity into time. "Jesus Christ the same - yesterday, today, and to the ages" (Heb. 13:8, literal). "And the four beasts had each of them six wings about him; and they were full of eyes within: and they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come" (Rev. 4:8). Day and night do not exist in eternity - they fill up the whole of time. HE is praised and extolled both DAY AND NIGHT, this God who WAS, and IS, and IS TO COME, the God of the ages, the Architect of history, the Lord of time, the King of the universe, the Most High who "...lives for the ages, whose dominion is an age during dominion, and His kingdom is from generation to generation: and all the inhabitants - of the earth are reputed as nothing: and He does according to His will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay His hand, or say unto Him, What doest Thou?" (Dan. 4:34-35, literal & KJV).

Oh, take me not back through the long ages to a Christ that walked the shores of Galilee, to a Christ that was! He is! He lives! He is here! In my today! I can never again be alone, never grope in the dark for a hand, never be forsaken, never lack in the hour of need, never fail in His ongoing purposes, never need a Saviour, a Redeemer, a Sanctifier, a Guide, a Master, a Friend, a Husband, a Father. I have Him, He who was everything in the yesterday of the past, and who will be everything in the tomorrow of the future, is mine today; and at each conscious moment of my existence - here, and in all ages, praise His wonderful name! Not a far-off, untouchable God, "inhabiting eternity," as the King James version erroneously states, but a God made nigh, INHABITING THE AGES, involved in His creation, working tirelessly and unceasingly and unfailingly until His wonderful plan is brought to a successful conclusion and HE becomes gloriously ALL IN ALL!

"Crown Him the Lord of Years - The Potentate of Time,
Creator of the rolling spheres, Ineffably sublime.
All hail, Redeemer, hail! For You have died for me;
Your praise shall never, never fail As long as Time shall be!

FROM TIME TO ETERNITY

This phenomenon called time was created by God for man. Why? Time is the womb from which God is birthing a people like unto Himself. We get the germ, the beginning and foretaste of eternity in time, but this is only the seed of eternal life. This womb of time is provided to aid man in his development, to assist him in preparation for a new, totally spiritual existence beyond time, beyond the last age, when the umbilical cord is cut, in a state of existence called eternity. Man, as he is dealt with by God, is passing from a gross, largely material consciousness, into a glorious spiritual existence. Time serves only as an instrument to help man, to give him time and experience to develop into that new state of being. In time there is change - in eternity there is no change. All change and development must take place in time.

Thank God! we are being changed! But that means that the life of God within is still in a limited, imperfect, underdeveloped state. That life as to our condition and state of being is limited, imperfect, and in some measure immature. God has dispensed that life into us in time, that through a process of time with its experiences the spiritual life may be perfected and matured, brought to the fullness of that which HE HIMSELF IS. When the process is completed and we are like Him fully and see Him as He is, there will BE NO MORE CHANGE. We will then truly know what ETERNAL LIFE is! But as long as the life within is passing through the process of change, growth, and development, it is not viewed as eternal, unchangeable life, but as the LIFE OF THE AGES, life undergoing the dealings of God in time.

The eternal security of the believer is known only by the overcomers who have fully and forever conquered every vestige of the world, the flesh, and the devil, being conformed into the image of the Son. Of these triumphant ones it is written, "To him that OVERCOMES will I give to eat of the TREE OF LIFE," and again, "He that OVERCOMES... I will NOT BLOT HIS NAME OUT of the Book of Life" (Rev. 2:7; 3:5). The inference is clear ... until this "overcomer" state is attained, it is possible to have one's name blotted out of the Book of Life! That does not mean that the name cannot be written there again, any more than it could be said that it was impossible for it to be written there in the first instance. But it does indicate that the life possessed by a Christian who is not fully an overcomer is not by God's definition ETERNAL LIFE, for if it were absolutely eternal it could not be lost! Little wonder, then, that our Lord says to the Church at Smyrna, "Be faithful unto death, and I will give you a CROWN OF LIFE" (Rev. 2:10). It is my deep conviction that He speaks not of the death that takes this old body to the cemetery, but the death that comes by the INWORKING OF HIS CROSS until all that pertains to the realm of carnality has been completely and forever dealt with. Then, and only then, are we CROWNED WITH LIFE, His life reigning within without interference or possibility of defeat.

The life we now have is a progressing, growing, conquering life - the LIFE OF THE AGES. It is life that has come by the quickening of our spirit by His Spirit, giving a new beginning, and the potential to become, in due time, all He is. But I am sure my readers, with myself, must confess that there is a great deal of progress still to be made, considerable growth to be experienced, much transformation to be wrought before we stand in Him in the fullness of that life that needs no change, no further development, no additional experience, no more growth, no fuller stature, no added triumph, no increase of wisdom and knowledge - that state of being as unchangeable as He is unchangeable, as ETERNAL AS HE IS ETERNAL! Only faintly now do our eyes behold the splendor of that

eternal realm which lies before us, but if we approach softly with reverence and godly fear, not disrespectfully and thoughtlessly as nose children prying into some sacred thing, then the Lord of glory will meet us and will be a Father unto us and we shall be the Sons of God in whom the Father shall unfold the fullness of His life, mind, will and glory. Thus shall we come into that same image and be sharers with the Christ in the glory He had with the Father BEFORE TIME WAS - ETERNAL GLORY! I think I know why some become so enraged when we tell them that we do not now possess the absolutely eternal life. Is it not because they would rather ignore this life of the ages, somehow projecting themselves into that life which is eternal, claiming "by faith" the finished product, while bypassing the tedious processing? Ah, dear ones, it doesn't work that way! God has graciously given unto us life aionios - the life of the ages - and how I thank God that my present state of being is NOT ETERNAL! There is MORE! I would follow on to know Him in all fullness. And it will take "the ages," my friend, to unfold it all. As long as there is need for growth, change, and advancement, there is need for time. But redemption as a completed plan has a unique relationship to time. Until redemption is complete its work will proceed in time, but the finished work of redemption stands at time's end. Thank God! There is an END - then eternity, God all in all!

As God's plan of the ages has progressed there has been a level of life, a spiritual vitality, for each age. Each age has been different. Men in antediluvian times knew God in a certain way and received life of a particular order. Israel, under the law, and the ministry of the prophets, entered into another degree of spiritual life. Perhaps I can give you a simple illustration in this way. There is a difference between "fetus" life and "baby" life and "child" life. There is a difference between "youthful" life and "middle-age" life and "old-age" life. Can we not see by this that there is a continuing development of God's life in us, until HIS FULLNESS is attained, and there shall be a continuing development of His life in the whole human family in the ages to come until God becomes all in all.

God is cultivating within His Sons an eternal nature. The thoughts of God's people are becoming boundless and eternal, no longer controlled and motivated purely by carnal memories of the past, by present events, or by dim hopes for an endless future in "mansions over the hill-top". The fledgling spirits of God's Sons are fast growing up into the limitless expanses of God's own eternal, spiritual nature. Yes, the whole man is becoming a new, eternal creation, no longer limited by the space-time continuum. God's maturing Sons see the reality of a state of being called eternity, and their hearts strain and leap upward toward that "place" in God!

AGES-LASTING CORRECTION

We miss so much vital truth by our careless scanning of the Bible, and by clinging tenaciously to the time-worn traditions of the religious systems, mistaking them for the holy truths of God. It should be clear that if the "eternal life" of Mat. 25:41 is really the "life of the ages", then the "eternal punishment" is likewise an age-lasting correction. The Diaglott says, "Depart from Me, you cursed ones, into that aionian fire... and these shall go away into a cutting-off age lasting." The Bible in Modern English by Farrar Fenton reads, "And these He will dismiss into a LONG CORRECTION." Rotherham's New Testament says, "These shall go away into age-abiding correction." Young's Literal translation renders, "And these shall go away to punishment age-during."

The word punishment is from the Greek KOLASIS which means simply that - punishment. But it comes from the root KOLAZO which reveals the true nature of the

punishment. KOLAZO according to Strong's Concordance, means "to curtail" or "to chastise". The word means "a pruning" according to Liddell and Scott's Greek English Lexicon. It is so used all through the Greek language. That punishment of which the Christ spoke was the very thing that helped me to see the glorious HOPE for all who are unbelievers or rebellious against God - because the word punishment there means chastisement or pruning. I saw in a moment that it was not the destruction of the man; it was the correcting of the man. It was not the destruction of the tree; it was the cutting back, and the pruning, that it might bring forth fruit. Some rightly reason that KOLASIS cannot mean corrective punishment or pruning if it is everlasting. But everlasting is itself wrong - who ever heard of EVERLASTING CORRECTION! It is age-lasting punishment, age-abiding correction, age-during pruning.

There are those who did not enter into His life in ages past, there are those who do not enter into His life in this present age, and there shall be those who will not enter into His life in the age to come. But in the world where God is the King you can count on it - every man will finally have to face up to his waywardness, and being thoroughly disciplined, broken, and purged of self-will, until he is prepared to respond to the love of Christ, to advance from the realm of punishment into the blessing of HIS LIFE and victory. If you do not punish a criminal for his improvement, for what do you punish him? There are just two right reasons - to protect society and to restore the criminal to society improved by the punishment. The "aionian" punishment which will come to every sinner who goes to hell will be a punishment that will break his stubborn, rebellious spirit and bring him back to God!

It is most regrettable that many Bible translators have been careless in their translation of words that concern the ages. The common thought seems to have been that any age following this present age must be identical with eternity, which, of course, is gross error, and we get ourselves into all manner of confusion by thinking that such is the case. For instance, according to the King James version Jesus, speaking of the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, is clearly quoted as saying, "He that blasphemeth the Holy Ghost has never forgiveness" (Mk. 3:29). Because of this faulty rendering we have concocted the fallacious notion of an unpardonable sin. But the Emphatic Diaglott translates the passage correctly thus: "Whoever may blaspheme the Holy Spirit has no forgiveness to the age, but is exposed to aionian (age-lasting) judgment." Likewise also the passage in Mat. 12:32..... "Whosoever speaks against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come." The word world here, as the margin of your Bible will probably indicate, is translated from the Greek word AION, which means age or a period of time. See also Young's Concordance. Hence the translation should be, "It shall not be forgiven him, neither in this age nor in the coming age" (Diaglott). Jesus was born in the age of law. Therefore, when He spoke of this age, He was speaking of the age of law, the age to come being the Church age in which we now live.

God's precious people, saturated and literally "oozing" with the false doctrines of the harlot Church systems have long viewed God's judgments as a vindictive action prompted by a motive for revenge and supported by a tumultuous wrath that must be pacified. NOT SO! Such is a gross caricature of our God! His mercy and grace are super-abundant, His mercy endures to all ages, and though He finds it necessary to chasten, His wisdom and righteousness produce a just and pure chastisement conditioned to correct the situation, and bring forth a creature prepared to respond to the delivering and redeeming power of God. ALL OF GOD'S JUDGMENTS ARE CORRECTIVE IN

NATURE, conceived in His wisdom, motivated by His love, administered by His power, and used to work out the divine purpose, into our good, and unto His praise!

This does not deny that "the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men" (Rom. 1:18). There is no doubt whatever as to the fact that the Bible clearly teaches wrath - not only in this age but in that which is to come and in dim and distant ages beyond that. But it is a just wrath; the judgment is everywhere said to be ACCORDING TO OUR WORKS (Ps. 62:12; Rom. 2:6; Rev. 20:12-13). The punishment will fit the offense, and it is for a purpose. If we teach that it is endless we will have to tear the Bible all to pieces.

Those who are hard and impenitent of heart treasure up for themselves wrath in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God who will render to every man according to his works. If you don't believe it, ask the antediluvians, ask Korah and his followers, ask the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah, ask the Jews who passed through the holocaust, and ask all the rest of men who have lived and died trampling under foot the righteousness and mercy of the Lord. To them that are rebellious and obey not the truth but obey unrighteousness shall be wrath, indignation, tribulation and anguish upon every soul. All that the Scriptures actually teach about the wrath of God will surely come to pass. The wrath of God is an awful thing and it is not my purpose to minimize it in the least. I do rejoice, however, in the knowledge that it will accomplish its work until all men are broken before God and call upon Him for mercy full and abundant.

Thank God - He has a plan! And it will work. You can count on it. Grace has intervened. Love will conquer. The wisdom of God will be vindicated. God will actually WIN! Hallelujah! Isn't THAT good news! The devil will have none left to possess. The grave will claim not one victim. Death will hold no more power over any creature anywhere in all God's vast universe, for death shall be DESTROYED. Sin and rebellion shall raise their ugly heads no more, for God will be all in all. YOU CAN COUNT ON IT! THAT IS GOD'S PLAN!

Chapter 2

The Law Of Circularity

WILL JESUS TORTURE BILLIONS FOREVER?

Our Lord Jesus Christ is the Creator and Sustainer of ALL things and ALL people. He either does or allows everything that is done in heaven or on earth. If one hundred billion helpless human beings are being tortured, then Jesus is doing it. Satan has brought suffering and death to the whole human race. However, if eternal torment IS TRUE, then Jesus Christ will torture forever the whole human race, except the small handful who will be saved. In one hour, in a hot searing hell, our Lord will inflict more pain and agony on each person than Satan inflicted on that person during his entire life.

If this torture lasts throughout eternity, then each unsaved person will suffer more than all the suffering of all the people that ever lived on earth. Think of it! Billions have suffered horrible pain for hours, days, weeks, months, and years, during the time they were alive. And yet, after they die, EVERY unsaved person will suffer more agony than all the suffering of the whole race PUT TOGETHER from Adam until now. This is so horrible, so frightful, that it is difficult for our minds to grasp. Except Satan himself, Pharaoh, Nero, and Hitler were among the most horrible killers of men this world has ever known. Yet, the doctrine of eternal torture makes Jesus a million times more vicious and vindictive than these three put together. You see, these brutal murderers killed their victims. Death brought sweet relief in a moment of time. However, that Man of Galilee, that Man whom we love, praise, and worship, that Man who taught that we should forgive four hundred and ninety times a day, that Man who told us that we should love our enemies and bless them that curse us, that Man who died for all men, will never, never forgive ANYONE who has rejected Him in this frail life, or, worse yet, who merely failed to believe on Him during this brief time. Instead of torturing them for a season and then ending their suffering with death, He will torture them through all eternity.

Even the hardest, cruelest, most brutal men cannot torture their fellow men for more than two or three hours without growing weak, faint, and sick (see Fox Book of Martyrs). However, Christian leaders teach that our Lord will torture His victims through endless ages. The Scripture reveals that Christ Jesus is the kindest, the most tender-hearted and merciful Person this world has ever known. His mercy endures forever, or to all generations of time. The doctrine of eternal torment pictures Him to be the most horrible monster, the most beastly, brutal, cruel, vicious Person this world has ever known. The governments of this world, ruled by unregenerated men, put their rebels in prisons, and the very worst offenders they put to death. But our Lord Jesus Christ, the Creator and Redeemer of the world, will mercilessly torture those who offend Him to the most hideous and incomprehensible degree. Surely, this pagan and Romish doctrine of eternal torture does NOT glorify HIM!

One of the theologians of the Church of England (Jeremy Taylor) speaks of the fate of the wicked in the following terms: "In hell every sense and organ shall be assailed forever with its own appropriate and most exquisite sufferings. We are amazed at the inhumanity of Phalaris who roasted men in his brazen bull, but THAT WAS A JOY IN COMPARISON

WITH HELL." And here is what the renowned evangelist, C. H. Spurgeon, said on the same subject: "There is real fire in hell. The body shall be suffused with agony; your head tormented with racking pains; your eyes starting from their sockets; your ears tortured with horrid sounds; your pulse rattling with anguish; your limbs crackling in the flame; every vein a pathway for the fire to tread; every nerve a string on which the devil shall forever play the diabolical tune of hell's unutterable lament."

If it were true, it is so awful that it should never be spoken without tears and a broken heart. How does the mother of a murderer speak of the coming execution of her boy? Yet the prospect to her is only one of time, and in the limits of the physical. If the people believe it, then their attitude about the whole thing reveals that they could care less if the creation burns forever. The fact is, NO ONE really believes in an eternal burning hell if we are to judge by their actions. If they saw a person in a burning building, they would put forth every effort to save them; they would cry and scream for help; they would be late for work; they would not rest until the victims were rescued. Yet, those who teach eternal torment can spend their hours relaxing in front of the television screen, visiting and feasting upon rich dainties with their friends, and whole days in camping, vacationing, fishing, and playing, and then lay their heads upon a pillow every night and sleep soundly, while, according to their own teaching, countless millions are going to a place a million times worse than a burning building!

If they believed what they teach, they would never cease, day and night until they dropped, and others came to take their places, in their efforts to save men from such a place! They excuse themselves by saying, "All we can do is warn." But if they were standing before a burning building would they preach a thirty-minute sermon, then turn and walk away, saying, "All we can do is warn!" And how many do they meet day after day, and never mention their danger? Ah, precious friend of mine, if my concept of hell were what modern Christendom's is, then it is my conviction that I would not be able to wait for God to send me to preach the Gospel! I would have to spend my every wakened hour pleading, working, struggling, fighting to save men from such a fate. I would be compelled to spend hours upon hours in the chronic wards of hospitals, in rest homes, with the elderly and those working on dangerous jobs, begging men to repent and turn to Jesus before they die. And I am convinced that anyone with the love of God in his heart would do the same IF HE REALLY BELIEVED the fables that are being taught today about hell. I will say this, either those who teach eternal torture are EXTREMELY CALLOUSED or they do not believe what they teach!

George Hawtin has so aptly written: "Is it any wonder that in the face of such sadistic humbug there has been a wholesale manufacture of infidels? All these statements (by eternal hell-fire preachers) may be a show of oratorical eloquence, but they are nothing more. They hold no part of truth. They deny every attribute of God. They make wisdom foolishness, turn eternal love into exasperated hate, make omnipotence helplessness, and make the justice of God the grossest injustice in the universe. To say that I believe in such repugnance would be a lie of the first order. I do not believe it because it is contrary to the nature of God. It is contrary to the love of God. It is contrary to the justice of God. It is contrary to the power of God. It is contrary to the Word of God and it puts God in the ridiculous position of being the almighty King of kings and Lord of lords yet having in His dominion a vast pocket of hate and resistance that even He cannot overcome. Further than this it makes the mighty sacrifice of Christ that was made for all the world to be almost impotent in its power and scope. Worst of all, it frustrates the purpose of God laid down in the beginning when He said, 'Let us make man in our image and after our

likeness.' Some will immediately ask me whether I do not believe in hell. My answer is very definite on this point. I most certainly DO BELIEVE in hell, but the hell of the Bible and the hell of human tradition are not the same thing at all. The hell of tradition is hopeless and eternal, while the hell of the Scripture like every judgment of God is corrective, remedial, and restorative." -end quote.

I do not like to differ, even in minor things, from those whom I esteem for their devotion to Christ and their valuable service in the cause of His Kingdom. But in the immortal words of the great Martin Luther, "Here I stand - I can do no other. So help me God!" Long centuries ago the faithful apostle Peter penned these inspired words, "Who by the power of God are kept through faith unto a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time" (I Pet. 1:5). My conviction before God is that the extent of the salvation of Jesus, the Christ, our Lord, is to be known only in the last time. Jesus Himself said to His disciples, "I have yet many things to say unto you, but you cannot bear them now." But He said when the Holy Spirit should come, He would lead his people step by step - patiently lead them into the way of All Truth; so that when the last time (end of the age) came, the full revelation of that salvation would be made. I believe that I am writing in the last time. Writings of this kind do not endear the hearts of many people. I fear that enemies are made instead. Every time a truth is spoken, many become offended and many are filled with wrath. People always astonish me. It is never possible to know what attitude they will take under any given circumstance. They will believe and trust you and feed from your table, and for many years, only to become suddenly offended because of some point upon which they disagree, and often become hostile and sometimes even vicious, calling you a heretic and a false prophet, cutting you off from any fellowship and spiritual communication, and warning other saints near and far not to have anything to do with you.

I am also perfectly aware that these profound truths will be misapplied by another class, and some will twist and wrest them to their own destruction in their carnal and wicked endeavor to set aside all repentance of sin and annul all holiness of life, as some men in their zeal to display the grace of God have done, ridiculously living in sin and turning the grace of God into lasciviousness (Jude 4). These beautiful truths are not now written to men of corrupt minds who have no desire to walk in the Spirit, but to all who walk in the whole counsel of God, serving God because they love and know Him and not in fear of some dreadful judgment that hangs like a horrible terror before their eyes. I do not address those who would pervert the right ways of the Lord, using God's gracious plan and His great mercy as an excuse for careless living or unconcern for lost men, but to those children of the Most High God who, seeing their infinite identity in Christ, are consumed with the holy passion of becoming the very instrument of God to fight the good fight of faith, destroying sin and death and hell, and bringing all men back into the loving embrace of their God and Redeemer. So be it!

I recognize that there will be some still unanswered questions in some minds, but there is neither time to write nor finances to print a treatise dealing with every small point. How can we put the ocean of eternal truth into the limited pages of one small book? If God will have all men to be saved, and the Scripture is very clear on this point, then there must be a way by which this truth falls into perfect harmony with every other Scripture which seems to teach otherwise. We do ourselves much injury when we seize upon every Scripture which proclaims the salvation of all men, but carefully avoid all Scripture which speaks of the fearful judgment of the wicked. Yet even greater harm is done when people insist upon taking the other point of view, as almost the entire Church system has done for centuries, emphasizing only those Scriptures which seem to teach the unending doom

of those unfortunate creatures who never once heard that God had a Son and skillfully avoiding every direct statement of Scripture which indicates that God has reconciled all things to Himself, and that every knee shall bow and every tongue shall confess to God of things in heaven and things in earth and under the earth. There is always a place of harmony if we look for it, and it is not usually difficult to find. Otherwise we will be forced onto that untenable ground of having to say that the Bible contradicts itself - which, of course, it never does. Whenever you find two Scriptures that seem to set forth conflicting views, there is always a simple explanation, and, if we will diligently inquire of the Lord, He will give us a definite answer. Human understanding is almost always prone to seize upon one side of a statement and will cling to that with the grip of death, refusing to even investigate or seek the wisdom of God to harmonize the truth. Worldly wise men are forever saying that the Bible contradicts itself.

I have never believed that by teaching the ultimate salvation of all men we were pitting one group of Scriptures against another, for it is my conviction that the solution can only be found in the correct HARMONIZATION of all the Scriptures, not ignoring one group while advancing the other. I believe I speak by the Spirit of God when I assert that the only sensible harmonization of all the Scriptures lies in the fact that Jesus is indeed THE SAVIOUR OF ALL MEN, that He is in very fact THE SAVIOUR OF THE WORLD, and that HE WILL HAVE ALL MEN TO BE SAVED and come to the knowledge of the truth, DRAWING ALL MEN UNTO HIMSELF. To me this is a most glorious and wonderful fact! I find all the judgments of God to be correctional and disciplinary rather than vindictive and final. Therein lays the harmonization of which I speak. This leaves us free to believe ALL of God's Word. It magnifies the cross. It glorifies God. It honors the atonement. It gives meaning to the ministry of the Sons of God. It gives purpose to the ages yet to come, all planned and arranged beforehand by our wonderful Creator. Sin, judgment, and death are temporary, all to be dealt with by the mighty power of God invested in His saints. The entire universe will be reconciled to God through the blood of Christ's cross. God will become All-in-All. Here is a God worthy of your worship and adoration!

Several brethren have written or discussed this subject with me through the years, adamant against the truth I see. But their arguments are shallow and twisted and their spirits generally harsh against men whom God loves and for whom the Christ died, as though they wanted to make CERTAIN that everybody gets every thing they "deserve." Their theology is lopsided, distorted, out of balance, and it will be smashed in the end! Those who walk in that attitude know but little of the love of Him who is at the same time the JUDGE OF ALL and the SAVIOUR OF ALL. He is not the Judge of some and the Saviour of some, but both Judge and Saviour of ALL! If "Judge of ALL" means that He judges all, then "Saviour of ALL" must mean that He saves all, for the Scriptures plainly make both statements. Within that one fact again can be seen the HARMONIZATION of the justice and the love of God - His judgment leading to repentance and a knowledge of His mercy. Praise His wonderful name!

HOW MEN ARE SAVED

It is estimated that about one hundred and sixty billions of human beings have lived on the earth in the six thousand years since Adam departed from Eden. Of these, the very broadest estimate that could be made with reason would be that less than five billion were saints of God. This broad estimate would leave the immense aggregate of one hundred and fifty-five billions (155,000,000,000) who went down into death without faith and hope in the only name given under heaven or among men whereby we must be

saved. Indeed, the vast majority of these never knew or heard of Jesus, and could not believe in Him of whom they had not heard. What, I ask, has become of this vast multitude, of which figures give a wholly inadequate idea? What is, and is to be, their condition? Did God make no provision for these, whose condition and circumstances He must have foreseen? Or did He, from the foundation of the world, make a wretched and merciless provision for their hopeless, eternal torment, as many of His children claim? To these questions, which every thinking Christian asks himself, and yearns to see answered truthfully, and in harmony with the character of God, comes a variety of answers:-

CALVINISM ANSWERS: God is all-wise; He knew the end from the beginning; and as all His purposes shall be accomplished, He never could have intended to save any but a few, the Church. These He elected and fore-ordained to be eternally saved; all others were equally fore-ordained and elected to be lost - to go to eternal torment; and they are there now, writhing in indescribable agony, where they will ever remain, without hope.

ARMINIANISM ANSWERS: Yes, God is love; and in bringing humanity into the world He meant them no harm - only good. But Satan succeeded in tempting the first pair, and thus sin entered into the world, and death by sin. And ever since, God has been doing all He can to deliver man from his enemy, even to the giving of His Son. And though now, six thousand years after, the Gospel has reached only a very small proportion of mankind, yet we do hope and trust that within six thousand years more, through the energy and liberality of the Church, God will so far have remedied the evil introduced by Satan that all then living may at least know of His love, and have an opportunity to believe and be saved. We believe that God excuses many of them on account of ignorance. Those who did the best they knew how will be sure of being a part of the saved, even though they never heard of Jesus.

FUNDAMENTALISM ANSWERS: Only those who here and now, during the fleeting years of this life, truly repent and receive the Lord Jesus as Saviour are saved. All others have been and are and shall be eternally lost without retrieve and go to a merciless, hopeless, hell-fire and damnation.

There is one beautiful and undeniable truth in the Word of God. The Scriptures clearly show that there is only one ground of salvation and that is FAITH IN JESUS CHRIST as our Redeemer and Lord. "By grace are you saved, through faith" (Eph. 2:8). Justification by faith is the underlying principle of the whole system of New Testament revelation. When asked, "What must I do to be saved?" the apostles answered, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved" (Acts 16:31). "There is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4:12). "Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved" (Rom. 10:13).

The apostle Paul warned of those who would depart from the utter simplicity of this truth to preach ANOTHER WAY, and ANOTHER GOSPEL. "I fear lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. For if he that cometh preacheth ANOTHER Jesus, whom we have not preached, or if ye receive ANOTHER Spirit, which ye have not received, or ANOTHER Gospel, which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with him" (II Cor. 11:3-4). ANOTHER JESUS, ANOTHER SPIRIT, ANOTHER GOSPEL - ANOTHER W-A-Y!

Many today who claim to be "Bible believing," "Evangelical" or "Fundamental" preach ANOTHER GOSPEL and ANOTHER W-A-Y OF SALVATION. There are some who feel the burden of the awful doctrine of eternal torture which they embrace, and unconsciously their souls revolt at the ghastly conclusions to which it leads. Such ones have resorted to various makeshifts to escape the inevitable conclusions. I will mention two or three of these. It is said that although it is true that the great mass of the race have thus far died in their sins, yet it does not follow that they have been lost; for if those who are unavoidably ignorant live up to the light they have, they will be saved. These claim that Paul teaches that IGNORANCE will save men, when he says that "The Gentiles, which have not the law, are a law unto themselves" (Rom. 2:14). They gather from this that the law which their conscience furnishes is sufficient to justify them. But such persons misunderstand Paul. His argument is that the whole world is guilty before God (Rom. 3:19); that the Gentiles, who had not the written law, were condemned, not justified, by the light of conscience, which, whether it excused them or accused them proved that they were unworthy sinners and thus estranged from the life of God, even as Israel who had the written law were condemned by it; "For by the law is the knowledge of sin" (Rom. 3:20). The law given to the Israelite revealed his weakness, and was intended to show him that he was unable to justify himself before God; for "By the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in His sight." The written law condemned the Israelite, and the Gentiles had light enough in their conscience to condemn them; and thus every mouth is stopped from claiming any inherent life, and all the world stands guilty before God.

Remembering the statement of James (2:10), that whosoever shall keep the whole law, except to offend in one point, is guilty of all, and cannot claim any blessing promised by the Law Covenant, we realize that indeed "there is none righteous; no, not one" (Rom. 3:10). And thus the Scriptures close every door of hope save one, showing that not one of the condemned is able to secure eternal life by meritorious works, and that it is equally useless to plead ignorance as a ground of salvation. Ignorance cannot entitle anyone to the REWARD of faith and obedience! Salvation by IGNORANCE! Indeed! ANOTHER GOSPEL! ANOTHER WAY! "For there is none other name under heaven, given among men, whereby we M-U-S-T be saved!" (Acts 4:12).

Many Christians, unwilling to believe that so many billions of ignorant heathen will be eternally lost (which they have been taught means to be sent to a place of eternal and hopeless torment), insist, notwithstanding these Bible statements, that God will not condemn the ignorant. I admire their liberality of heart and their appreciation of God's goodness, but urge them not to be too hasty about discarding or ignoring the words of Scripture. God has a blessing for all, IN A BETTER WAY THAN THROUGH IGNORANCE!

But do these erring ones act in accordance with their stated belief? NO! Though they profess to believe that the ignorant will be saved on account of their ignorance, they continue to send missionaries to the heathen at the cost of thousands of valuable lives and untold millions of dollars. If they all, or even half of them, would be saved through ignorance, it is doing them a positive injury to send missionaries to teach them of Christ; for only about one in a thousand believes when the missionaries go to them. If this idea be correct, it would be much better to let them remain in ignorance; for then a much larger proportion would be saved. Continuing the same line of argument, might we not reason that if God had left ALL MEN in ignorance, ALL would have been saved? If so, the coming and death of Jesus were useless, the preaching and suffering of apostles and saints were vain, and the so-called Gospel, instead of being good news, is very bad

news. Leave the heathen alone in their darkness and ignorance and the majority will be saved by living up to the light they have. Send them the Gospel and we know from past experience that the majority of them will reject it and be lost. These conclusions are inevitable. You cannot escape them while you entertain the notion of the majority of the heathen being saved by living up to the light they have. Such reasoning is a hideous affront to the atoning sacrifice of Jesus, and a wicked blasphemy against God and His plan of redemption. ANOTHER GOSPEL! ANOTHER W-A-Y!

Others, craftily seeking to evade these conclusions, invent the silly myth that in some unexplained way ALL MEN HAVE BEEN DEALT WITH BY GOD. These conniving souls presume that in some mysterious way God reveals Himself to each and every son of Adam sometime during his life. Perhaps through the conscience - or one dark night while the heathen is standing under the canopy of the heavens observing the majesty of the star-studded sky - there suddenly comes that burst of inner revelation there is a GOD! And if, in that instant, we are told, that man will seek after God he will find Him. To which I answer: -Tommyrot! Rubbish! ANOTHER GOSPEL! ANOTHER W-A-Y! And those who teach the lie are deceivers. Why, bless your heart, if God habitually and consistently reveals Himself sovereignly and independently to every man who lives upon this earth, then what need is there to print Bibles, or send missionaries, or intercede in prayer, or preach the Gospel? You will have to tear the Bible all to pieces if you teach such nonsense. It is blasphemy. The Word of God asks the burning question: "HOW THEN SHALL they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And HOW SHALL they believe on Him of whom they HAVE NOT HEARD? And HOW SHALL they hear WITHOUT A PREACHER? And HOW SHALL they preach, EXCEPT THEY BE SENT?" (Rom. 10: 14-15). And these poor deluded souls pretend to answer all these "HOW SHALLS" of Scripture by creating a method by which it CAN BE DONE! They have invented a system by which men can believe without hearing and hear without a preacher, and under this system no preacher need be sent.

But, I ask, how are the heathen, or any lost men, to be justified by faith by this method since "faith comes BY HEARING and hearing by the Word of God," and "it pleased God BY THE FOOLISHNESS OF PREACHING to save them that believe" (Rom. 10: 17; 1 Cor. 1:21). Nowhere in all the pages of God's blessed Book does it state that God sometime, somewhere, somehow, reveals himself to every man during his brief life in the flesh. Show me! Here is God's estimation of the condition of the heathen: "Wherefore remember, that you being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; that at that time you were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having NO HOPE, and without God in the world..." (Eph. 2:11-12).

If God independently and sovereignly reveals Himself to every man then the "Great Commission" is a monstrous farce and should be torn out of the Bible and deposited on the garbage heap. No need to "go into ALL THE WORLD and preach the Gospel to EVERY CREATURE" if the Spirit deals with EVERY MAN sometime, somewhere, somehow during his life APART FROM THE MINISTRY OF THE BODY OF CHRIST. Ah! The argument is really the great "cop out," a silly invention of conniving deceivers who are unwilling to face the fact that God would permit billions of men to pass through this life without any chance of salvation, and equally unwilling to concede that God has any plan for the salvation of those billions in the future. So - in order to consign them an to eternal damnation they concoct this outrageous lie that God really DID give these billions

a chance, apart from the preaching of the Gospel of God's grace in Jesus Christ, that these rejected His dealing, and have of their own free wills been damned. Such a teaching contradicts the Word of God, making a travesty of the fact that "God has committed unto US the word of reconciliation" and has "given to US the ministry of reconciliation" (II Cor. 5:18-19). The fundamental flaw in the theory is that even if a heathen looked up at the stars one beautiful night and became deeply impressed that there must be a great God out there somewhere, such understanding in no way reveals to his darkened heart the wonderful truth that this God HAS A SON, that His Son's name is JESUS, that JESUS DIED FOR HIS SINS, and that ONLY BY FAITH IN JESUS CHRIST CAN A MAN BE SAVED. I challenge anyone to prove that the vast multitudes of heathen die having REJECTED JESUS CHRIST WHO DIED FOR THEM who was revealed to their hearts by the Holy Spirit apart from the preaching of the Gospel. How foolish can men be! Let someone answer - if they can! Ah, it is but ANOTHER GOSPEL! ANOTHER W-A-Y!

Another makeshift theory is the theory of salvation by INNOCENCE. Most Christians today, including the so-called "Fundamentalists" who claim to believe the whole unadulterated Word of God, believe this lie. They tell us that a baby that dies in infancy, or a small child that dies before reaching the "age of accountability," whatever that is, is alright, automatically covered by the blood of Jesus-SAVED! This evidently becomes a SECOND WAY to salvation, since it is apart from FAITH in Jesus Christ. "Oh," they glibly recite, "the little child is INNOCENT, and therefore free from the guilt of any sin." Is that so! The Scripture says otherwise. "Behold, I was shaped in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me" (Ps. 51:5). In this verse David was not attempting to prove that his mother was having an adulterous affair at the time of his conception, but states the true inner condition of his own nature from his mother's womb. Again, "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon ALL MEN, for that ALL HAVE SINNED" (Rom. 5:12). "For ALL have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23). "For God has concluded them ALL in unbelief, that He might have mercy upon all" (Rom. 11:32).

If even one infant is saved without personally believing on the Lord Jesus Christ, then there IS INDEED A-N-O-T-H-E-R W-A-Y! "He that believes shall be saved" is the unceasing and unalterable testimony of God's Word. Some of the basic ingredients in salvation are repentance, faith, and confession. No infant can do any of these things! "Ah," you say, then you believe that all the little babies that have died are burning in hell!" What I am saying is what the Bible says, that all men are BORN SINNERS, and that faith in Jesus Christ is the ONLY WAY OF SALVATION. "As many as RECEIVED HIM, to THEM gave He authority to become the children of God, even to them that BELIEVE on His name" (Jn. 1: 12). The child who dies goes into the loving hands of God who watches over the souls of all men, who is the Saviour of all, and who deals with all out of His heart of infinite love, drawing each in the perfect timing ordained by His wisdom and omniscience. WE CAN TRUST HIM WITH THE FATE AND DESTINY OF OUR LITTLE ONES, for the Judge of all the earth shall DO RIGHT, but He does not cancel His redemptive process for any offspring of Adam, all must come the same route, the infant included.

The truth is, we who believe in the faithful dealings of God AFTER DEATH are the only ones who have the answer to the problem of the child that dies in innocence and ignorance of God and salvation. We are the only ones who correctly harmonize the whole plan of God and the processes of redemption. The rest contradict their own teaching that

all men are born sinners, arguing rather that all men are born saved and afterwards BECOME SINNERS, when, reaching the so-called "age of accountability," they become guilty before God. These offer us a SALVATION BY INNOCENCE. It would be much better to die as infants, if such were the case! What an act of mercy the wicked old king Herod performed when in Bethlehem he sent thousands of babies into eternal heaven by the swish of the sword! Why should he be judged for his crime when in fact he saved more people from a life of sin, and sent more souls to heaven in a few days than many preachers are able to show for a lifetime of ministry! Think of how many hundreds of millions of souls we could secure for heaven and eternal life simply by KILLING ALL THE LITTLE CHILDREN! Chances are, if we let them live they will live in sin and end in hell. But, again, how foolish our reasoning! It would be very profitable to meditate deeply upon these things. THERE IS BUT ONE WAY FOR ALL, rich and poor, male and female, bond and free, Israelite and Gentile, old and young, and a personal encounter with Jesus Christ most surely IS THAT WAY ... now and forevermore!

THE LAW OF CIRCULARITY

The Bible, which is full of the missionary spirit, does not teach that there are several ways of salvation, one way by faith, another by works, another by ignorance, and another by innocence. Neither does it teach the God-dishonoring doctrine of fatalism. While it shows every other door of hope closed against the race, it throws wide open the one, only door, and proclaims that whosoever will may enter into life; and it shows that all who do not now see or appreciate the blessed privilege of entering shall in due time be brought to a full knowledge and appreciation. The ONLY WAY, by which any and all of the condemned race may come to God, is not by meritorious works, neither by ignorance, nor by innocence, but by a living faith in the precious blood of Christ, which takes away the sin of the world (I Pet. 1:19; Jn. 1:29). This is the Gospel, the good tidings of great joy, "which shall be unto all people."

Suppose we now look at these things just as God tells us of them, and leave the clearing of His character to Himself. Let us inquire, what has become of this one hundred and sixty billions of people who have lived upon this planet? Whatever may be their present condition, it cannot be their full reward; for Peter says, "The Lord knows how to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished" (II Pet. 2:9); and He will do so. But the thought that so many of our fellow creatures should at any time be lost from lack of having had the knowledge which is necessary to salvation would be sad indeed to all who have a spark of love or compassion. Then, too, there are numerous Scriptures which it seems impossible to harmonize with all this. Let us see: In the light of the past and the present as the only opportunities, laying aside all hope through a restoration in the coming age and ages, how shall we understand the statements, "God is love," and "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him should not perish" (I Din. 4:8; Din. 3:16)? Would it not seem that if God truly loved the world so much He might have made provision, not only that believers might be saved, but that ALL MIGHT HEAR IN ORDER TO BELIEVE?

Again, when we read, "That was the true light that lights every man that comes into the world" (Jn. 1:9), our observation says, Not so; every man has not been enlightened; we cannot see that our Lord has lighted more than a few of earth's billions. Even in this comparatively enlightened day, millions of heathen give no evidence of such enlightenment; neither do many now living on our street; neither did the Sodomites, nor multitudes of others in past generations and ages.

We read that Jesus Christ, by the grace of God, tasted death "for every man" (Heb. 2:9). But if He tasted death for the one hundred and sixty billions, and from any cause that sacrifice becomes efficacious to only five billion, was not the redemption comparatively a failure? And in that case, is not the apostle's statement too broad? When again we read, "Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people" (Lk. 2:10), and looking about us, see that it is only to a "little flock" that it has been good tidings, and not to all people, we would be compelled to wonder whether the angels had not over-stated the goodness and breadth of their message, and overrated the importance of the work to be accomplished by the Christ whom they announced.

Another statement is, "There is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself a ransom for all" (I Tim. 2:5-6). A ransom for ALL? Then why should not all involved have some benefit, from Christ's death? Why should not ALL come to a knowledge of the truth that they may believe? Without the KEY, how dark, how inconsistent these statements appear; but when we find the KEY to God's plan, these texts all declare with one voice, "God is love." This key is found in the latter part of the text last quoted - "Who gave Himself a ransom for all, TO BE TESTIFIED IN DUE TIME." Ah, God has a "due time" for everything! He could have testified it to these in their past lifetime; but since He did not, it proves that their "due time" must be the future. For those who will be of the Church, the body of Christ, the firstfruits of His redemption, the present is the "due time" to hear and receive; and whosoever now has an ear to hear, let him hear and heed, and he will be blessed accordingly. Though Jesus paid our ransom before we were born, it was not our "due time" to hear of it for long years afterward, and only the appreciation of it, quickened by the Holy Spirit, brought responsibility; and this, only to the extent of our ability and appreciation. The same principle applies to all: in God's due time it will be testified to all, and all will then have the glorious opportunity to believe and be blessed by it. The prevailing opinion is that death ends all opportunity; but there is no Scripture which so teaches; and all the above, and many more Scriptures, would be meaningless, or worse, if death ends all hope for the ignorant masses of the world.

Nothing is more evident in the Word of God than the fact that man had his beginning IN GOD. Every son of Adam, born as he is in trespasses and sins, enters into this world shrouded by the darkness of the carnal mind and imprisoned by the power of the carnal nature. But it was not always so! Everything everywhere OUTSIDE OF CHRIST belongs to the realm of death, and because it belongs to the realm of death, it likewise belongs to the realm of darkness. Before ever man touched this dreadful realm the record states: "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). W-A-S! It is a wonderful fact that in Him IS life, and His life IS the light of every man who believes, but, wonder of wonders, in that long ago beginning Christ WAS THEN THE LIFE and His life WAS THEN THE LIGHT OF MEN. It was into this realm OUTSIDE OF CHRIST, the realm of OUTER DARKNESS, that Adam was banished when he partook of that strange tree of the knowledge of good and evil. There he died, as God had warned, and we all died in him. Thus death passed upon all men, for all have sinned. Has mankind not fully proved throughout the centuries that he is in truth the son of Adam? Which of all God's commandments have we not broken, justifying ourselves in having done so even as Adam seemed to do.

Oh, sweet mystery of the ages, that a second Adam should stand upon the earth and declare, "The thief comes not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come

THAT THEY MIGHT HAVE LIFE, and that they might have it more abundantly. For the bread of God is He which comes down from heaven, and gives life unto the world. I am that bread of life. If any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: the bread that I will give is My flesh, which I will give for the life of the world" (Jn. 10:10; 6:33, 48,51). No greater revelation can break upon any man's consciousness than this simple truth that there is ONLY ONE LIFE in the universe, and that one life is JESUS CHRIST. May God make this truth real to your heart! When a man comes to Christ the life, he comes not only to the life that IS the light of men, but to the same life that in the beginning WAS the light of men. What we have received in Christ's opening again of Paradise is a re-turn, a re-storation, a re-newing, a re-demption, a re- conciliation, a re-surrection. The prefix "re" means BACK AGAIN, ANEW- and all the words with this prefix speak of something that LEFT ITS PLACE AND HAS NOW MADE ITS CIRCUIT AND COME BACK TO THE POINT OF ITS BEGINNING.

Let me give you now a Scripture that shows the hand of God in this and the extensive scope of both the departure from, and the returning unto, God. I quote from Ps. 90:1-3. "Lord, You have been our dwelling place in all generations. Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever You have formed the earth or the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, You are God. YOU TURN MAN TO DESTRUCTION; and say RETURN YOU CHILDREN OF MEN." You could never read this word "return" here, if you had not first read that man had been "turned" away to destruction. In this passage the word "destruction" has this meaning in the original: A COMPLETE COLLAPSE, crumbling man to a contrite condition.

Here is the picture: For the magnificent purpose God had in mind He made all the provision necessary before the foundation of the world. He made provision for a Lamb to be slain (Rev. 13:8). He made provision for a company of people to be chosen in Christ, to be holy and without blame before Him in love, as a firstfruit of His redemption in the earth (Eph. 1:45,10). Then He brought into Eden a poisonous serpent, a murderer, a MANSLAYER (Gen. 3: 1). Having prepared all this HE THEN BROUGHT MAN INTO THE GARDEN. Having brought man into the Garden, GOD PUT HIM INTO THE PATHWAY OF A COMPLETE COLLAPSE. It was GOD who turned man to destruction, set him on this downward course, sent him into outer darkness, and made him subject to vanity. God our Father has never once blamed man for the fall, but takes the responsibility for it Himself when He says, "For the creation was subjected to frailty - to futility, condemned to frustration - not because of some intentional fault on its part, BUT BY THE WILL OF HIM WHO SO SUBJECTED IT. YET WITH THE HOPE that creation itself WILL BE SET FREE from its bondage to decay and corruption and gain an entrance into the glorious freedom of God's children" (Rom. 8:20-21, Amplified). Man did not volunteer for this time of travail, but the plan of God included this process, so God turned man into this route, this experience, and it will also be the sovereign work of a sovereign God who shall BRING BACK INTO HIMSELF the whole of His creation.

After turning man to destruction God then says, "RETURN TO ME, children of men." In verse four of Psalm ninety, the writer makes the statement that in God's sight a thousand years is as a day when it is passed. But in verse thirteen the Psalmist exclaims, "Return, O LORD, HOW LONG?" In the beginning of the Psalm the writer is joyful in the knowledge that though the Lord has turned man to destruction, yet God has also given the command to return, and what if it does take a thousand years or more, it is but a day in God's sight. But by the time the writer reaches the position of the thirteenth verse, he begins to cry out, saying, "O Lord, HOW LONG is all this going to take? HOW LONG

before our full return to You?" A thousand years had become an unbearably long time. Surely this is the cry from the hearts of men today! This is the crying, groaning, and travailing we find the creation passing through in the eighth chapter of Romans, waiting for the manifestation of the Sons of God.

There was a day when Paul, standing in the center of the Areopagus (Mars Hill Auditorium) declared to the philosophers of Athens, "The God who produced and formed the world and all things in it, made from one common origin, one source all nations of men to settle on the face of the earth, having definitely determined their allotted periods of time and the fixed boundaries of their habitation - their settlements, lands, abodes; SO THAT THEY SHOULD SEEK GOD, IN THE HOPE THAT THEY MIGHT FEEL AFTER HIM AND FIND HIM, although He is not far from each one of us. For in Him we live and move and have our being; as even some of your own poets have said, FOR WE ARE ALSO HIS OFFSPRING" (Acts 17:24-28, Amplified).

Oh, yes, He turned us to destruction, but planted deep in the sub consciousness of every man the SECRET COMMAND to RETURN, which is revealed in that inner desire, yearning, craving, seeking, feeling, compulsion which is never satisfied until man does find himself home in God once more. All the religiousness of men, from the witch doctor in the jungle to the modernist in the pulpit in America, is the manifestation of this FEELING AFTER GOD, IF HAPLY THEY MIGHT FIND HIM. While mankind in general is still lost in the hellish darkness of sin and death, yet there is a firstfruit company whose hearts have been charged by the inward call to return, and with the Shulamite maiden in the Song of Solomon share this blessed experience: "By night on my bed I sought Him whom my soul loves; I sought Him, but I found Him not. I will arise now, and go about the city in the streets, and in the broadways I will seek Him whom my soul loves: I sought Him but I found Him not. The watchmen that go about the city found me: to whom I said, Saw ye Him whom my soul loves? It was but a little that I passed from them, but I FOUND HIM WHOM MY SOUL LOVES AND WOULD NOT LET HIM GO" (S. of S. 3:1-4). As the Spirit has witnessed through the prophet, "And ye shall seek Me, and find Me, when ye shall search for Me with all your heart" (Jeer. 29:13).

Mankind is yet groping about in the dense darkness of the carnal mind, knowing not that HE is standing right there in the shadows, were their eyes opened to see. Yet He has appointed a day - Oh glorious day! - when His light shall shine forth and the plan shall be completed as the apostle says, "For God has allowed us to know the secret of His plan, and it is this: He purposed long ago in His sovereign will that all human history should be consummated in Christ, that everything that exists in Heaven or earth should find its perfection and fulfillment in Him. In Christ we have been given an inheritance, since we were destined for this, by the One who works out all His purposes according to the design of His own will" (Eph. 1:9-11, Phillips).

The very laws of physics and mathematics establish with indisputable certainty the absolute inevitability of the creation's return back to God. Psalm nineteen was long a source of amusement to Bible critics. In speaking of the sun, the Psalmist says: "His going forth is from the end of the heaven, and his circuit unto the ends of it: and there is nothing hid from the heat thereof" (Ps. 19:6). It was claimed that the writer of this verse, obviously believed in the ancient notion of the sun's revolving about the earth. This charge is most unjust, since we still use words and phrases of the same sort, simply because from our natural viewpoint the sun does rise in the morning, move across the sky, and set in the evening. The whole science of nautical and engineering astronomy is

based on the assumption, made purely for convenience, that the earth is the center of a great celestial sphere, moving along the surface of which in ordered paths are the sun, moon, planets and stars. And as far as any practical usage is concerned, this is so. On this assumption, courses can be plotted, positions determined, and scores of other applications made.

But the words of the Psalmist have a deeper, more scientific meaning than that. It is now concluded by the leading astronomers that the sun, with the entire solar system, actually does move through space at the tremendous speed of 600,000 miles per hour in such a gigantic orbit that it requires over two million centuries to complete it, but complete it it shall, returning again and again, as the ages roll onward, to the point of its beginning. Furthermore, it is believed that our galaxy is also moving with respect to other galaxies. The sun's circuit IS from one end of the heavens to the other! Who can accuse the Holy Spirit of ignorance of modern astronomy?

The entire universe is an infinite sphere and each galaxie, solar system, star and planet within it moves continuously and harmoniously in circular motion; thus, all worlds and suns have circles for their pathway. This principle has been referred to by scientists as the "law of circularity." Science is beginning to tell us that in the highest development of physics and mathematics the old theory of straight lines of infinite length has to be changed and modified to satisfy all the data of electro-dynamics, light, and some of the new electrical phenomena. There is no such thing in the universe as an absolutely straight line of infinite length. All straight lines will be found to be portions of immense circles. This law of circularity runs through all nature. If you were to leave planet earth traveling steadily in one direction, the day would surely come, be it in some distant age millions or billions of years hence, when you would arrive back at the precise point of departure, having completed the circuit - home again! Someone has said (a scientist) that if we were to build a telescope that could see into infinity, we would one day be looking at the back of our heads!

This great law of circularity by which all things in God's creation are seen to RETURN to the place of their BEGINNING, in its spiritual significance, is expressed in Rom. 11:36: "For FROM HIM and THROUGH HIM and TO HIM are all things - for all things originate with Him and come from Him; all things live through Him, and all things center in and tend to CONSUMMATE AND TO END IN HIM. To Him be glory forever! Amen" (Amplified). All manifestations of nature discernible to the senses confirm this law of circularity. "The sun also arises, and the sun goes down, and hastens to its place where he arose. The wind goes toward the south, and turns about unto the north; it whirls about continually, and the wind returns again according to his circuits. All the rivers run into the sea; yet the sea is not full; unto the place from whence the rivers come, thither they return again" (Eccl. 1:5-7).

Today, scientists tell us that there is just so much water in the earth. There has always been that amount and there always will be. We should understand that neither water, nor anything else, can be destroyed. Its form can be changed, but it eventually will return to its original form. The writer of Ecclesiastes tells us that water is taken from the oceans in the form of moisture by the sun. Then the winds in their circuits carry that moisture as clouds over the land. There through certain actions of cold and heat, according to the laws of God, that moisture falls to the earth in the form of rain or snow or hail. Creeks and rivers are formed that carry this water back into the oceans, thus completing the circuit or cycle. Water may be frozen, but under the right condition it will return to water. It may be

heated and converted into steam, but the steam will eventually condense, becoming water again. Water sinking into the ground is either evaporated, or taken up by plants and evaporated, or perhaps finds its way to underground streams. In any event it eventually finds its way back to the sea, and the circuit continues on, unseen, unheard, almost unknown, but it is by the law of God.

Ray Prinzing has written, "We have known what it is to take the downward journey, picking up the debris of the flesh and self, until we come to the bottom, a filthy pool. But there is another river, much more invisible, spiritualized, we might say, and that is the one which forms by the DRAWING OF THE SON, lifting us up out of the 'dead sea' and raising us again into the heavenlies, to bring us back to the height of the mount of God. Of this glorious river we read, 'There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God' (Ps. 46:4). Some are still on the low road, taking the downward path in self, sin, wayward rebellion. And some, praise God, are already being irresistibly drawn upward, to take that HIGH WAY back to Father's house.

"What is true in the cycles of our own life, is also true concerning God's dealings with His whole creation. That which was turned away from Him, to run an erratic and wild course of self-will, shall eventually come meekly and submissively back to its Source, our Creator. Thus we need this perspective, to view from the vantage point of God's great purpose to BECOME ALL IN ALL, for without this purpose there would be no rhyme nor reason to any unfolding event. We often say that the 'way UP is DOWN,' but to always have to go down, without a way up, would bring forth a hopeless frustration that would surely end in defeat. But, in God's law of circularity, there is a place in our going down process, God knows when and where, we come to a curve and begin that upward way"--end quote.

We read in Isa. 40:22, "God sits upon the circle of the earth." While the word for "circle" in the Hebrew denotes the sphericity of the earth, it may also indicate the cycles of nature. These cycles are the continual goings and comings of the seasons, days, months, years, etc., which were ordained of God in the beginning. Everything in nature moves in cycles: winter and summer, seedtime and harvest; generation after generation, all show the might and wisdom of God. Even electricity must have a circuit. A battery has a positive and a negative to complete the circuit. SO IT IS WITH GOD'S WORK. In the spiritual realm God is the positive, and Satan is the negative. It is therefore reasonable to conclude that man, the highest of God's creation, came out of God, was then lowered into the world of vanity, darkness, and death, but will return to God, thus completing the cycle, not in part, but in full. Even Jesus came out of God, and descended into the depths of man's fall, then arose and returned to God.

The King James version of Rom. 11:36 begins, "For of Him..." This word "of" comes from the Greek word "ek" literally meaning OUT OF. This clearly places God as the one Source of all things, and hence the Amplified's beautiful rendering, "For all things originate with Him and come from Him." Col. 1: 16 says, "For it was IN HIM that all things were created, in heaven and on earth, things seen and things unseen, whether thrones, dominions, rulers or authorities" (Amplified).

The law of circularity requires that EVEN AS ALL THINGS BEGAN IN CHRIST, ALL SHALL END IN CHRIST. "I am ALPHA and OMEGA, the beginning and the end, the first and the last," says the Lord (Rev. 22:13). Only the glorious mind of Christ can reveal to our hearts what that means! Through a glass darkly I can see that He was the FIRST -

"before all things." Can I also believe that HE IS THE LAST? If He is the BEGINNING, can my feeble mind dare to comprehend what it signifies when He says that He is also the END? All that existed IN CHRIST before the ages began, shall RETURN INTO HIM AGAIN that He may be the FIRST and the LAST, the BEGINNING and the END. All that came out of Him, lowered into the realm of the negative, completes its circuit and returns once more to its former estate - IN GOD! The first Adam had power to take ALL with him into death, without their knowledge, or consent: therefore, the second Adam, the Lord from heaven, gathers up the same number in His redemptive work and man who came out of God shall return, that the circle may be unbroken.

To quote Ray Prinzing once more: "When we understand the glorious truth that our God is both the Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the Ending, then we realize that no matter how vast the cycle and circuit, the end is secure, for all things return unto Him again. To read only a portion of God's Word, the facts are too few to rightly calculate the CURVE of God's plan. And while HE does, gloriously, illumine a specific verse or sentence to speak to our hearts for that day, we also need the full sweep of the Book to gain an overall view of His purpose, and then understand the tremendous victory which is ours in Christ"-- end quote.

Long millenniums ago Adam was banished from the Paradise of God and its life-giving tree. But God has provided a way by which His banished may return! Some glad morning, when the unfolding plan of God is complete, all who once stood "in Adam" in the Garden will again be gathered together and their eyes will behold with endless joy that heaven blest Eden in which walked Adam, the son of God. But even now there is a remnant, the election of grace, the firstfruits of His redemption WHO IN SPIRIT HAVE ENTERED THOSE ONCE-CLOSED PORTALS AND HAVE PARTAKEN OF THE FRUIT OF THE TREE OF LIFE! In the power of the Christ, the last Adam, though the firstfruits of Christ's redemption still move about in a world which is under the curse, where the traces of sin are visible on all hands, these have found their way, by faith, to the bosom of the Father, and are NOW AT HOME AGAIN IN GOD! The mighty transformation that has come and is coming to our lives shall be experienced ultimately by ALL MEN, God's own law of circularity secures it, and none can resist it, praise His glorious name!

Chapter 3

God Will Have All Men Be Saved

On this earth there are more than seven billion people! The most populous lands are China, India, and other parts of Asia, and in spite of missionaries from the West, actually more than half of all people on the earth have never so much as heard the ONLY NAME BY WHICH MEN MAY BE SAVED - the name of JESUS CHRIST! For your Bible says..... "there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4:12). This means that billions of people here on this earth have lived, and died, without having known anything about God's provision of salvation - without saving knowledge - neither having heard the only name by which men may be saved! Now think what that means. If all unsaved are eternally lost, then more than HALF the people who have ever lived on this earth have been consigned to eternal hell without ever having been given so much as a chance to escape it!

What about the millions of people living now in the modern nations of Red China where the Gospel is suppressed? Those people did not choose to be born into these godless nations. Are they lost forever because they never heard the true message of God's love in Christ? Is this their only day of salvation? Are they eternally doomed when they die? Will a just God and Saviour condemn to eternal damnation those people who died before the true Gospel was ever brought to them? Is God about to "shut the door" of mercy in their face?

We hear much today about evangelizing and saving the world in one generation. The preachers tell us this mission must be accomplished before Christ can return, and it must be done in this generation. We hear of glorious revival at home and abroad, of fresh missionary efforts in various directions, of great Crusades attended by tens and sometimes hundreds of thousands, of radio and television beamed by satellite to all the nations of earth, and of large sums being devoted to these endeavors: and we get the idea that adequate efforts are being made for the evangelization of the nations of the earth. It is estimated today that the world's population is over seven billion, and it is a fact that considerably more than one-half - nearly two-thirds - are still TOTALLY HEATHEN, and the remainder are mostly either followers of Mohammed or members of those great apostate Churches whose religion is practically a Christianized idolatry, and who can scarcely be said to hold or teach the Gospel of Christ.

And what about the multiplied billions who have gone before and never had any contact with the living Christ? Even if all the people of this one generation could be saved, it would be only a infinitesimal fraction of the people who have ever lived, and there would be no victory for God, for the devil would still possess the vast majority of mankind. It is estimated that about one hundred and sixty billions of human beings have lived on the earth in the six thousand years since Adam's creation. Of these, the very broadest estimate that could be made with reason would be that less than three billion were truly saints of God. This broad estimate would leave the immense aggregate of one hundred and fifty seven billions (157,000,000,000) who went to their graves without faith and hope in the only name given under heaven or among men whereby we must be saved. Indeed, the vast majority of these never knew or heard the name of Jesus, and could not believe

in Him of whom they had not heard. What, I ask, has become of this vast multitude, of which figures give a wholly inadequate idea? What is, and is to be, their condition? Did God make no provision for these, whose condition and circumstances He must have foreseen? Or did He, from the foundation of the world, make a wretched and merciless provision for their hopeless, eternal torment, as many of His children claim? Can you really believe that is the plan by which the all-wise, all-merciful, loving God is working out His purpose here on earth? WHAT IS THE TRUTH?

Paul, in I Tim. 2:1-6, gives the answer! "I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for ALL MEN ... for this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; who WILL HAVE A-L-L M-E-N TO BE SAVED, and to come to the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; who gave Himself a RANSOM FOR ALL, to be testified in due time." This text is one of rare beauty. It is indeed like a precious diamond, the effulgence of whose radiance dazzles the mind. It is a drop of pure distilled essence, whose fragrance fills the rooms of the heart. It is a joy forevermore and a challenge to everyone who reads it with an understanding heart. It should be engraved upon the heart of every saint of God. There is so much depth to that text that I am afraid that we often do not even perceive it. It is like a beautiful sky of deep rich blue and one cannot even begin to grasp the vast depth above us. So it is with this passage!

The few laws that Scripture contains are rays of light revealing only small portions of God's will, much as the words I write are parts of the thought I wish to express. He who would know the complete will of God must look for the larger concept, discover the real objective. One main objective is given us in our text for this study: "I exhort therefore, that ... supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for ALL MEN ... for ... God our Saviour ... WILL HAVE A-L-L M-E-N TO BE SAVED, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth." The will of God is so far beyond our usual thoughts that we simply cannot understand it unless the Spirit enlightens us. The eternal God WILL have all men to be saved! We need to ask God to fill our minds with this great truth, by the Holy Spirit.

The light of God and His power always go hand in hand. If I try to understand the will of God with my limited and darkened mind, I have only my limited and feeble strength with which to participate in it. But when I wait upon God so that through the Holy Spirit His will shines within me like a heavenly light and I am "filled with all knowledge and spiritual understanding," the Spirit will with the light also give power. Note well, the most complete knowledge of God's will, if it is acquired only by the natural mind, fails to give me the strength to see it fulfilled. On the other hand, every revelation concerning God's will that comes to me through the Holy Spirit strengthens me with heavenly power. So I must fervently pray, "Lord, help me to understand how earnestly God WILLS THE SALVATION OF ALL MEN!" May everyone who sincerely prays, "Your will be done!" receive into his own heart this wonderful and loving will of God. Let us not deceive ourselves into thinking that the will of God in salvation is just for a "little flock" that is to be saved and evacuated off to heaven. His will is far more glorious than that! It is the very nature of God, the revelation of His divine perfection, the expression of His limitless and unfailing love. How foolish even to think of doing His will unless I have something of this great love in my heart! Therefore, we must open our hearts and allow the love of God for all men to be poured in by the Holy Spirit.

When we think of and seek the will of God we should not limit ourselves to concern about our individual lives and needs, but rather learn His will for all men and use this as a guideline for our behavior and feelings toward them. Reread I Tim. 2:1-4 and note what we are taught - He wills "all men to be saved." He wills "that all men should come to the knowledge of the truth." What effect should this will of God have on us? And how must we become participators with Him in the fulfilling of His will? First, accept what His Word teaches; believe in His love; and leave it to God to someday fulfill all that He means. Your task is to prayerfully accept God's will and to receive it into your heart. Believe what is written: GOD WILLs that all men be saved. Let faith in those beautiful words take possession of your heart; allow God's will to BECOME YOUR WILL and inspire your life. If we accept this will of God, taking it into our hearts and making it truly ours, how will our lives be affected? The first result will be just what Paul commands: prayers and intercessions FOR ALL MEN. We will learn to see each man in the proper light, not the light of who he is, what he does, or what he deserves, but in the light of God's love and God's will for him. If God so loved miserable and unworthy creatures and so desired to help them that He sent His Son to die for them, and if our will is one with His, we will be inspired to love them and pray earnestly for them.

I have met a few people who argued that when Paul states that "God will have all men to be saved" he means that God "wishes" or "would like" for all men to be saved, and then, of course, these folk are always quite certain that what God "wishes" or "would like" to be really stands very little chance of ever being fulfilled. How foolish! Oh, that God's will for the salvation of all men might be found in each one of us! The glory of God is nothing less than this: His unfathomable love for all who are lost and miserable, His will that they should be saved. When will Christians learn that this is their glory, their likeness to God, to allow themselves to be filled with the loving will of God, to let it possess them, devour them? Obedience to all the individual commandments of God, which are expressions of His will, is merely a first step on the path to this higher oneness with the will of God that purposes to bless and save and lift the whole creation!

In December, 1981, I sent out an article in which I set forth the wonderful truth of the ultimate salvation of all men. Soon thereafter I received a letter from some precious folk who were deeply distressed by this teaching. They raised several objections, the first of which was stated thus: If we believe the way you are teaching, it will mean we no longer need to pray for the salvation of our loved ones as they will be saved in the end regardless of their standing. On top of that, all our past prayers have been in vain as the Lord will save them in the end anyhow. On the surface that may seem to be a plausible argument; but what makes such faulty reasoning so pathetic and tragic is that it openly contradicts the Word of God! Let me quote again what the Lord says about this in I Tim. 2:1-6: "I exhort therefore, that, first of all, SUPPLICATIONS, PRAYERS, INTERCESSIONS, AND GIVING OF THANKS be made for A-L-L M-E-N ... for this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; Who WILL HAVE ALL MEN TO BE SAVED, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus; Who gave Himself a RANSOM FOR A-L-L, to be testified (proven, demonstrated, fulfilled) IN DUE TIME."

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

is THE INTERCESSORY PRAYERS OF THE SAINTS. The men who are to be saved are held under the power of the devil. The saints are called as God's INSTRUMENT OF SALVATION, on behalf of lost men they engage in spiritual warfare, claiming these men for God, binding the enemy who enslaves them, bringing deliverance to the captives. That all men be saved is God's purpose. Intercessory prayer is part of the process. To say that since God will save all men we need not pray for them, is to say that God has a purpose to save them, but NO MEANS BY WHICH TO ACCOMPLISH IT. That would be like saying that a contractor is going to build a skyscraper and, since he is going to build it, there is no need for nails, hammers, saws, heavy equipment, plumbers, electricians, carpenters, etc. How ridiculous! All those things are the necessary instruments and means of ACCOMPLISHING HIS WILL AND PLANS!

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

Through many years the spirit of intercessory prayer has stirred within my spirit and I have been compelled to pray for some of the most wicked, unbelieving, and treacherous men and women upon the face of God's earth. I speak not of an occasional weak, insipid little table prayer, but of deep travail and intense spiritual warfare on behalf of the souls of these individuals. Among those for whom I have been moved to intercede have been world leaders such as Golda Meir, Nikita Khrushchev, Leonid Brezhnev, and Fidel Castro. Must I now believe that my prayers shall never be answered, and that the Omniscient and omnipotent Holy Spirit who wrought so mightily in these supplications, failed?

My heart is emboldened by the testimony of that great man of God, George Muller. George Muller was literally the "man God made," and whom God used to house, feed, clothe, educate and save thousands of orphans in England. The key to George Muller's triumphs of faith is to be found in the fact that George in his youth opened all avenues of his being to the divine infilling. Henceforth he was a man who lived with eternity in view. He looked, after the shadow of God's glory rested upon him, beyond time and limitation and saw God. From that time forward he was never again to ask man for body or soul needs. He realized that God alone was able, and in that realization the puny supplies of man dwarfed beside the reservoirs of God's grace which he tapped by faith. He learned the secret of getting things from God, the simple expedient of boldly coming to the throne to receive. He practiced this daily for seventy-three years, and in coming he never found

the throne vacant nor the supplies exhausted. He learned not to bind God by the limits of his own faith. He asked, knowing that God, Who heard, was able.

Muller has been called "the apostle of faith." When there was a vision to be fulfilled never once did he announce his plans in advance, nor even once did he appeal to men for help. He shut himself up in solitude and prayed to his Father Who saw and heard in secret. George Muller's faith was grandly rewarded, for God furnished in response to his prayers approximately seven and a half million dollars. From a most insignificant beginning the work grew until it became the leading supporter of missions, distributor of Bibles and religious literature, as well as the outstanding "father of the orphans."

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

And I would add would God that he might have prayed for the salvation of ALL MEN! He prayed for five - and they were all saved. Praise God for that! But we are commanded to pray, supplicate, intercede, and give thanks for all men..."for God will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth." "Whatsoever you ask in My name, I will do it." What awesome power! Ah, we know it works for needs, money, jobs, healing, problems, -carnal things. But does it work for the SOULS OF MEN? Dare we ask for the salvation of men with the same confidence that God will grant our request as when we ask for a new pair of shoes? The Holy Spirit answers, "I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for ALL MEN ... for this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; Who WILL HAVE ALL MEN TO BE SAVED..."

Those foolish people who in their willful and petulant ignorance dare to say, "If God is going to save everyone, why need I bother?" really do not deserve either recognition or an answer. Since my eyes have caught a vision of the supernal glory of the will of God to save all men, and my ears have heard the Word of the Spirit saying, "I exhort THEREFORE, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be

made FOR ALL MEN," my heart responds with the greatest eagerness, for the greatness of His infinite love and purpose for every man who has ever lived, sets aflame the love of God in my heart until every breath I breathe is a fervent prayer, "YOUR WILL BE DONE! YOUR WILL BE DONE!" This is the hope that consumes my life and all my waking hours, and beside it all else is the grossest and lowest vanity. Stir yourself in repentance and in prayer and in consecration, you carnal minded, blessing-seeking souls who think you shall enjoy the glories of heaven while billions for whom the Christ died writhe in the tormenting flames of hell, possessed by the devil forever. How narrow our prayers sometimes can be. We pray so often for ourselves: me and my wife, my son John, we three, no more. How broad our intercession should be! When we come before the throne of the God whose Kingdom we represent, there must be a catholicity, a universality, about our prayers. And to any who still think our prayers are wasted if God will save all men in the end anyway, I now say - In my mind there could be nothing so frustrating, vain, meaningless, vexing, and futile as to be given a ministry of intercessory prayer on behalf of God's creation knowing that for the most part my time, effort, energy, and ministry would end in failure as most of those I pray for will never be saved anyhow! To be commanded to pray for all men, intercede for all men, when only a few, a mere handful would ever be affected by that prayer could represent either utter foolishness or absolute impotence on God's part, for the devil would win out in the end anyway, possessing for ever the souls of those on behalf of whom we had done battle! Ah, dear ones, the salvation of all men in no measure diminishes our responsibility to the lost; it INCREASES IT A HUNDRED AND SIXTY BILLION FOLD! Previously I felt responsible to pray for the few I hoped could be rescued through my effort in God; now I am responsible to pray and pray and pray, and battle and battle and battle for the souls of all men until the battle is won and the enemy has not even one left! It is those who believe MOST MEN WILL BE ETERNALLY LOST who should give up their praying - not we, who have the assurance that our prayers actually CAN and WILL be answered!

I WILL DRAW ALL MEN UNTO ME

With what new and wonderful significance does the proclamation of Jesus Christ now echo through the corridors of our spirits as we hear the impelling words sound from His lips, "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, WILL DRAW A-L-L M-E-N UNTO ME" (Jn. 12:32). This speaks not of Christ being lifted up in our daily living, or in praise, or by preaching, but upon the cross of Calvary, dying for the sins of the world. The verse following the one quoted above makes this very clear: "And this He said, signifying what death He should die." Again, "... as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up" (Jn. 3:14).

Whenever there is introduced into any revelation this "I WILL" of God, then you immediately erase the will of man, the self-efforts of man to fulfill His will, and are brought face to face with the sovereignty of the GRACE of God. In the face of the sovereignty of God's purpose all of man's hostility toward or unbelief regarding what God says He will do is as nothing, for whenever God decrees "I WILL do it," all of man's unbelief cannot deter the sovereign operation of HIS GRACE. Man has the tremendous powers of will. Man can say "I will," and he can say "I will not"; and when a man says "I will not," to God, he will go down as swift as an arrow to its mark, swift as a stone into the depths of the sea; he will sink to the deepest depths; he will be cast down to endure the judgment of fire and brimstone until his breaking comes. Learn this, O man, and you will know a great truth: man's will is subject to God's will! The will of God is always the higher will. In the will of God lies the origin of all creation - its very existence, its joys, its power, its glory. In

the will of God lies the origin of redemption - the fact of it, its power, its glory. In the will of God alone lies the origin of the grace of God in the life of each of His children - its being, its power, its blessedness, its glory.

The Lord Jesus Christ became man in order to do the will of God, and also to teach us what is God's will, and how to do it. On one occasion we read, "And, behold, there came a leper and worshipped Him, saying, Lord, if You will, You can make me clean. And Jesus put forth His hand, and touched him, saying, I will; be clean. And immediately his leprosy was cleansed" (Mat. 8:2-3). I desire to impress upon your mind and heart, dear reader, these words, the words of Jesus: "I will." The most important of all things is first to know God's will, and secondly to do, the will of God. I would call your attention to the prayer of the leper. That is a prayer which neither you nor any Christian should ever offer. It is a wicked prayer for you to offer. It is a prayer that will be fruitless. The leper said, "Lord, if You will, You can make me clean." That leper was ignorant. In his case there was this excuse for him: that the Lord Jesus Christ was only unfolding His mission, and that He had not fully revealed God's will. Ignorance of the Lord's will was the one thing which stood in his way of getting the healing. He saw that Christ was able. He said, "You can make me clean." But he was in doubt as to whether Christ was willing. Therefore he said, "Lord, if You will." The Lord said, "I WILL," and the moment He said that, there was no more "If You will" in that man's heart.

Let me illustrate. Supposing now that you and I are talking together on the telephone, and after some remarks you say to me, "Bro. Eby, may I see you this morning?" You know many precious folk want to come by and see us, about the same time sometimes, and sometimes would like to stay and visit for a few hours, or days, and sometimes they cannot do it, because I am a very busy man, and have an immense number of things to do. The work load is such that I must spend a full fifty to sixty hours in my office each week with correspondence, study, writing, and attending to many matters; then often travel out on weekends in ministry among various groups of the Lord's people. Generally, when we have visitors, or when I go away for a few days of meetings, I must then work OVERTIME the same number of hours in order to keep up with those things the Lord has entrusted into my hands here. Many people do not understand this. But you have said to me: "May I see you this morning?" and I say: "Yes, if you will come to my house I will see you at eleven o'clock today." Well, now, suppose you come to my house at eleven o'clock. Suppose you ring the bell at the front door, and you say to my wife, "Bro. Eby told me that if I came he would see me at eleven o'clock." "All right," she says, pointing, "there is the office door; knock there." Suppose you come back down the walk near to my door, and you lie down on the walk-way, and begin to howl like this: "Oh! Bro. Eby, if you will, if you will, you can see me in your room. Oh! Bro. Eby! if you will." Well, I wonder who is making all that noise, and open another door into the house, and my wife comes, and I say, "Honey, who is out there making that noise?" "Oh, it is a person you told to come and see you this morning, and I told him to knock at your door." "And what did he say?" "The person said to me, 'Oh, it is so good of Bro. Eby to invite me to come. Oh, I wish he was willing. Oh, if I only knew he was willing.' I said, Did Bro. Eby not tell you he was willing? 'Yes, and I wish I could believe it..... Oh, Bro. Eby, if you will, if you will,' and you keep on howling like that, and I say, "Honey, go tell the person I am willing to see him. Bring him right in." You come up closer and begin howling again, "Oh, Bro. Eby, if you will." "Honey, tell that person to come in at once." "He won't come in, Dear." "Why?" "He says it is too good to be true; he won't come in unless you go out." So I go out and say, "My dear friend, I told you to come to my house at eleven o'clock, and I am willing to see you." "Oh, Bro. Eby, I wish I could believe it were true. Oh, if you will, if you will."

Now, would that not be great nonsense? But that is the way people talk to God and about God. Jesus said to the leper, "I will - be clean." And straightway his leprosy was cleansed. In this case the leper said, "Lord, if You will." And Jesus answered, "I will." But in Jn. 12:32 no man is inquiring concerning the will of God. The omnipotent and sovereign Lord and Redeemer of heaven and earth issues the wonderful and certain fiat: "I W-I-L-L DRAW A-L-L M-E-N UNTO ME!" When the Lord Jesus Christ says "I will," no man on earth has any right to even question whether or not He will. It is a wicked blasphemy to say that He will not do what He has said He will do. The WILL OF GOD is that all men be saved. And yet I hear many Christians, and some who profess to be walking in sonship, impiously saying, "I do not believe that God will save all men." To which I say, It doesn't make any difference what YOU believe, your unbelief does not make the power of God of none effect.

Jesus says, "I, if I be lifted up from the earth, WILL DRAW ALL MEN UNTO ME!" "It does not mean that," they argue, "it means He will draw all of the elect, or He will draw all men who believe, or He will draw all kinds of men." "But how many does it say He will draw?" "All men." To which I answer, "If that proclamation is not true, if He is not strong enough, and purposeful enough, and loving enough to draw every spirit on earth and in hell, and throughout the universe, to Himself, then He has told a lie. If He can, but won't, then He is a mean, hard, vindictive, sadistic tyrant. And if He can't, then He's not God" "Oh, Bro. Eby!" they cry, "that is heresy!" "But," I say, "that is Jesus. Was He a heretic?" "Oh, no; you do not understand, we can explain all that away, and you must not talk like that." But they explain and I still don't understand!

Has the first Adam more power than the second? ALL were made partakers of the sinful nature through the fall of one man (Rom. 5:12; I Cor. 15:21-22). Adam had power to take the whole human family down with him; even without their consent. If he being of the earth, earthy, could do this, how much more power will the second Adam show in lifting all again, through His death and resurrection! Jesus said, "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me. " He did not say He would draw them if they decided to come, or He would draw them, and they could come if they chose; but if He was lifted up (which He was), "I WILL DRAW ALL UNTO ME." It is not a partial drawing, an action to be yielded to or resisted according to the whims of the subject. It is a complete action, the subjects are drawn irresistibly and totally. If the drawn ones merely "sensed" His drawing but could resist, Jesus would have said, "I will cause all men to sense my drawing power." But the wonderful words "unto Me" denote the object and the end of the drawing. He says not, "I will draw all toward Me," but "unto Me." A total, completed action. "I will draw all men UNTO ME" all the way! Hallelujah! It should be clear to every thinking mind that the last Adam has more power than the first; that the Almighty cannot fail; that He has a plan by which He will cause ALL to come at the appointed time, praise His wonderful name!

Are you agitated over the wayward condition of sons and daughters, or of other loved ones? THEN REST IN GOD'S PROVISION, FOR HE HAS APPOINTED A TIME WHEN THEY, TOO, SHALL COME TO CHRIST. And if they are not responding to the many attempts to convert them, then it is because GOD IS NOT CALLING THEM YET. But never fear, in due time He will merely point His finger at them and all of heaven's hosts will converge upon them to bring them to their promised and purchased salvation. Paul Mueller relates the following story which so beautifully documents Christ's power and ability to draw all men unto Himself: "Some years ago, during our missionary tour in Nigeria, West Africa, we were told a fascinating story of a people who lived on an island

off the coast of Africa. These island people were in a remote area and somewhat isolated from the mainland, but God sought to bring a significant number of people on this island to salvation. There were no missionaries or other Christians on the island, so the Lord gave a dream to the chief of the tribe. In the dream, the chief was told to erect a cross and call the entire tribe to present themselves before that cross. As the people came bowing before the cross the chief had erected in obedience to the dream, they came without understanding of the significance of the cross. But they came nevertheless, for it was the command of the chief. However, as they came and bowed before that cross, they wept in repentance and their lives were changed by the power of God. Later, a missionary came to the island. He found the people serving God as best they knew, and he explained more fully to them the ways of the Lord" -end quote.

Beloved, when God wants to bring a people unto Himself, He is well able to do so, even to reach out to them without the use of human vessels, if need be. The Christ has been lifted up from the earth and now HAS ALL POWER IN HEAVEN AND IN EARTH. In due time He will bring His redemptive process into glorious fulfillment and consummation. If God wants to save some Russians, He is well able to reach inside the iron curtain and take those lives unto Himself that are appointed of the Father. If He wants any number of Chinese, He is able to apprehend them unto salvation in spite of the iron rule of an atheistic government. There is no continent too dark, no people too enslaved by satanic powers, no man too incorrigible but what His power can reach them. Christ has been lifted up from the earth, and HE WILL DRAW ALL MEN UNTO HIMSELF. You can count on it!

GOD'S OATH - TO SAVE ALL!

The purpose of God to save all men is as unalterable as His nature of love and His character of holiness. Not only has God stated that He will save all men, not only has God promised that He will save all men, but God has SWORN BY AN OATH that He will save all men! This truth stands forth in clarity in the glorious words declared openly by God Himself. In fact, when God could find no greater, He swore an oath by Himself, vowing that every promise He had made unto the children of men would be accomplished. What He had spoken He was well able to perform. God is faithful, who also will do it!

What does God's Oath entail? We are warned never to swear, or make a vow; either by heaven or by earth. For it is better never to make a vow, than to make one, and then not be able to keep it. Great penalty can be incurred upon our carelessly made vows and pledges. We see this in the reckless vow made by Jephthah. In Judges 11:30-40 we read that he "vowed a vow unto the Lord" which caused him and his daughter great pain, sorrow, and loss.

God's Oath, sworn by Himself, is an expression of God's utter devotion to His Word, spoken in a solemn vow to His whole creation. Let us consider only one of these unconditional promises revealed and confirmed by God's own Oath. "Look unto Me, and BE ye SAVED, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else. I HAVE SWORN BY MYSELF, the word is gone out of My mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, that UNTO ME EVERY KNEE SHALL BOW, EVERY TONGUE SHALL SWEAR" (Isa. 45:22-23). "Wherefore God also has highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus EVERY KNEE SHOULD BOW, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that EVERY

TONGUE SHOULD CONFESS that Jesus Christ is Lord, To THE GLORY of God the Father" (Phil. 2:9-11). "I have sworn by Myself." The word "sworn" is from the Hebrew SHABA meaning "to SEVEN oneself, i. e. swear, by repeating a declaration seven times." The number seven is used in the Bible to indicate completeness and perfection and is used as the basis for swearing to point to the sureness and sacredness of that which was sworn. And just what has God sworn that He shall accomplish? "Unto Me EVERY KNEE SHALL BOW, EVERY TONGUE SHALL SWEAR."

Many people who do not believe the truth of the salvation of all men do believe the words quoted above. But they take them entirely out of context and wretchedly distort what God has said. They feel that this bowing of the knee and confessing unto God by every man is a sort of COMPULSORY ADULATION rendered by beings who can't help themselves, a sort of "Heil Hitler!" extracted under pressure from conquered subjects. Such persons believe that God will grind His enemies into subjection, FORCING a confession of His Lordship through their clenched teeth, just before sending the sinners and unbelievers away to eternal doom. Just what good this would do, I do not know.

I would draw your attention to this Oath of God as reiterated and expanded by Paul in Phil. 2:10-11. "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." These are not conquered subjects compelled and coerced into bowing and confessing allegiance to a hated but almighty God. The character of the speech, the structural form of the language used here reveals something far greater than a forced confession! Arthur S. Way so beautifully renders these verses - "Because He stooped so low, God uplifted Him very high, and has freely given Him The Name - The Name that is above every name, decreeing, In the Name of Jesus shall every knee bend IN PRAYER, alike of dwellers in heaven, on earth, in the underworld, and every tongue shall utter this confession, Jesus the Messiah is Lord! So rendering glory to God the Father." The Amplified Bible reads, "That at the name of Jesus every knee must bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue FRANKLY AND OPENLY CONFESS AND ACKNOWLEDGE that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

The word translated "bow" is KAMPTO, found in the Bible only in Paul's writings, and means TO BOW IN WORSHIP. The meaning is clarified when we understand the Spirit that moved Paul when he said, "For this cause I BOW my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Eph. 3:14). No compulsory adulation there! What love and worship and adoration moved Paul to BOW low before the One whose love had completely won his heart in unmovable allegiance. He was captivated by this altogether lovely One. Humbled by the knowledge that he was the "chiefest of sinners," and awed by the love and mercy of the Lord, he bowed his knees - worship and adoration freely and spontaneously flowing from every part of his being. For the present time, such bowing, such worship, is found only in the "firstfruits" - those whom God has apprehended and drawn to Himself in this age. But we read of a coming day, witnessed in spirit by the beloved apostle John - "And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth ... heard I saying, Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sits upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever" (Rev. 5:14).

As one has written, "All, we are told, will bow the knee. This is always a sign of fealty and worship. Surrender to a conqueror is not indicated by bowing the knees, but by raising the hands high above the head. In one of the darkest days of Israel's defection God

reserved seven thousand men who had not bowed the knee to Baal (Rom. 11:4). It is clear from this that this is no mere perfunctory performance, but that it involves a hearty homage. If He spared those who did not bow the knee to Baal, how much more will He save those who bow the knee to the Saviour of His selection?"

This gives the key to God's Oath in Isa. 45:23; "Unto Me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear." When this great Oath is fulfilled it will be found that it was only by virtue of a SAVIOUR that every knee has bowed and every tongue confessed to God. They all bow at the name of Jesus! "Jesus" signifies "Yahweh is salvation." Ah - it is in the name of God THE SAVIOUR that they bow! - not in the name of God as judge, general, or dictator. To bow in this Name can indicate but one thing, the acceptance of Him as their Saviour. And notice now, precious friend of mine, upon the basis of God's Oath to cause every knee to bow and every tongue to swear allegiance He commands, "Look unto Me, and BE ye SAVED, all the ends of the earth ... I have sworn ... every knee shall bow ... every tongue shall swear" (Isa. 45:22-23). This is not a declarative sentence. It is an IMPERATIVE SENTENCE and carries all the weight of a command by the sovereign Lord of the universe! God COMMANDS all to BE SAVED and then proceeds to SWEAR that He will do it, and every knee shall bow in worship before Him, offering up the fruit of their lips, even praise to His name. Those who suppose that it is through clenched teeth that the conquered masses will acclaim Him as Lord completely miss the message of the above passage. But how wonderful that God's Oath is an Oath UNTO SALVATION FOR ALL MEN!

"Unto Me every tongue shall swear (allegiance)" (Isa. 45:23). "And every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Phil. 2:11). Consider now the wonderful statement made by Paul in I Cor. 12:3, "Wherefore, I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calls Jesus accursed: and that no man CAN SAY JESUS IS LORD, but by the Holy Ghost." This surely makes it plain that this is not a forced confession, but one coming through the lips of men under the influence of the Holy Spirit. It becomes a willing acknowledgment and acclamation. This word "confess," from the Greek EXOMOLEGEO, means "to speak out the same thing." To give the same confession from our heart, as truth known by the Holy Spirit. "The Spirit of Truth ... shall not speak of Himself ... He shall glorify Me..." (Jn. 16:13-14). And filled with His Spirit, all creation shall utter only that which glorifies God. Their confession is to the Holy Spirit's confession! The word translated "confess" is also used to mean "praise" or "acclaim." The same Greek word is used to express Jesus' gladness as recorded in Mat. 11:25 and Lk. 10:21. He said, "I thank You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth..." Now according to Paul, every being IN HEAVEN, and IN EARTH, and IN THE UNDERWORLD is to bow the knee in the same worshipful humility that characterized Paul himself, and every tongue is to thank or praise or acclaim Christ as Lord in the glad spirit that characterized our Lord Himself. The loving attitude of the whole universe is to be complete and perfect. Thus all the ends of the earth shall offer their THANKSGIVING TO HIM for His great love and salvation and inflow of life. What a THANKSGIVING DAY that will be! Every knee on this globe, and in the heavens, and in the underworld shall confess the Lordship of Jesus Christ. What a TESTIMONY MEETING! There has never been one like it! Hitler will bow and say, "Jesus, You are my Lord! " Caesar and Alexander will bow and joyfully proclaim, "Jesus, You are Lord!" Idi Amin will lovingly testify, "I thank God for saving me - Jesus Christ is now my Lord!"

THE JUSTIFICATION OF ALL MANKIND

Paul says in Rom. 5:19, "For just as by one man's disobedience (failing to hear, heedlessness and carelessness) the many were constituted sinners, so by one Man's obedience the many will be constituted righteous - made acceptable to God, brought into right standing with Him" (Amplified Bible). The word disobedience in this verse is from the Greek word PARAKOE which comes from a root meaning "to mishear; neglect to hear; inattention." It speaks of A HEARING AMISS, or a wrong hearing. The verse also speaks of Christ's obedience, the word for obedience in Greek is HUPAKO meaning A SUBMISSIVE HEARKENING. If obedience is a right hearing and obedient action thereto, then disobedience is simply a wrong hearing, a hearing amiss, and then acting in kind. It means a hearing of a voice OTHER THAN GOD'S, a LISTENING TO THE WRONG VOICE and then acting upon what is suggested. Adam and Eve listened to the voice of a stranger, the voice of the bestial spirit of this world, as represented by the serpent, and found that sin was at the door, and death by sin.

It would not have been so tragic if Adam's sin had affected himself alone, if all after him could have observed the horrible fruit of his sin and then kept themselves from the same ravaging despair; but the Scriptures faithfully point out the awful POWER OF DISOBEDIENCE, revealing that it was by ONE MAN'S DISOBEDIENCE that "the many" (that's how the Greek says it) - ALL - WERE MADE SINNERS! As Adam fell, we fall each one, for Adam lives yet in his progeny. Because Adam had the principle of sin and death imposed as an actual feature of his biological life, his descendants also have inherited a life principle which involves a built-in death principle. The moment a child is conceived the nature of disobedience is in him and the power of death - so that in the same moment he is conceived he is a sinner by nature and also begins to die; he is dying ere he is born, and eventually the death principle wins out over the life principle and he does die. And, fallen in Adam, men prove he is in them, by walking just as he walked. Adam yet relives old Adam's life in every unregenerated man, as Christ in us yet lives Christ's life. With all emphasis I must declare that at the very most, the worst offender on earth, has committed a crime WHICH IS INHERENT IN HIS OWN NATURE, and the eye of the all-seeing God sees what even we, in most cases, cannot see, that the most wicked sinner on earth IS SIMPLY DOING THAT OVER WHICH HE REALLY HAS NO CONTROL. People tell me that "man has a choice," but I declare to you that when I came into this world nearly 80 years ago ADAM HAD ALREADY MADE MY CHOICE FOR ME! God didn't ask me if I would prefer to be born a sinner or a saint, Adam answered that question for me in the dim and distant past! Never in my life did I have a "choice" until the blessed day when the Spirit of God came and illumined my mind, convicting me of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment, taking the things of Christ and unveiling them to my astonished soul; then, and not until then, did I have a choice! It did not take me long, beloved friends, to make that choice!

Until the day God intervened and apprehended me sovereignly by His grace, I was in no way responsible for my actions, for, try as I might, I could never have been different than I was, and neither could you. If this is not the case then the apostle lied when he said, "And you He made alive, when you were dead, slain by your trespasses and sins in which at one time you walked HABITUALLY. You were following the course and fashion of this world - and were under the sway of the tendency of this present age - following the prince of the power of the air. You were obedient to him and UNDER HIS CONTROL, the demon spirit that still constantly works in the SONS OF DISOBEDIENCE... who go against the purposes of God. Among these we as well as you once lived and conducted ourselves in passions of our flesh - our behavior governed by our corrupt and sensual nature; obeying the impulses of the flesh and the thoughts of the mind - our cravings

dictated by our senses and our dark imaginings. WE WERE THEN BY NATURE THE CHILDREN OF WRATH ... like the rest of mankind" (Eph. 2:1-3, Amplified).

Men have, in their blood, been saturated with sin, with lawlessness, with nervous temperaments and diseases WHICH HAVE BEEN THE DIRECT CAUSE OF THEIR TRANSGRESSION. God in His great mercy knows this, and thus it is written, "And the Lord said in His heart, I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake; for the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth; neither will I again smite any more every living thing, as I have done" (Gen. 8:21). I do not hesitate to say that all the multiplied sins upon earth today ARE THE RESULT OF HEREDITARY WEAKNESSES - inherited from Adam! Ah, beloved, such is the unspeakable POWER OF DISOBEDIENCE, a power beyond the scope of human imagination. I now invite you to meditate deeply upon these inspired words penned nineteen centuries ago by the consecrated hand of the apostle Paul. "Well then, as one man's trespass - one man's false step and failing away - led to CONDEMNATION FOR A-L-L M-E-N, so one Man's act of righteousness leads to ACQUITTAL AND RIGHT STANDING WITH GOD, AND LIFE FOR A-L-L M-E-N" (Rom. 5:18, Amplified). Can we not see by these words what a mighty power there is in both obedience and disobedience?

Two persons, two acts, and two sentences affecting ALL MEN are brought before us in this passage. Adam's act of disobedience and its race-wide, life-destroying result, bespeaks the universal tragedy that has befallen all men because of Adam. Christ's act of obedience and its race-wide, life giving result, bespeaks the glorious hope and consolation we have for ALL MEN. Is it not strange that the negative side of this passage is usually believed without hesitation, while the positive side is strongly denied by nearly all Christians? In order to understand the effectiveness, the success, and the scope of the saving work of Jesus Christ set forth in this passage, it is only necessary to believe implicitly what it states. In the following arrangement the two parts of the passage are placed in parallel columns as an aid in comparing them:

AS

Through one trespass. The judgment came. Upon ALL MEN. To condemnation.

EVEN SO

Through one righteous act. The free gift came. Upon ALL MEN. To justification of life.

How shall I describe the blessing that came to my own soul when Jesus Christ revealed to me that as potent as was the power of Adam's disobedience, mightier yet is the power contained in the OBEDIENCE OF THE SON OF GOD. All the languages and dialects of earth do not contain words meaningful enough to describe the immensity of the all embracing work of Jesus Christ, the Son of the Living God. I fully expect that I will be misunderstood in these things, but I am assured by the Lord Jesus that one day the truth of it will be common knowledge, and all Christians and all people will be forced to acknowledge it. I suppose that all the arguments and persuasions in the world will not convince some saints today of the incontrovertible truth of the words under consideration: "Therefore as by the offense of one judgment came upon ALL MEN to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon ALL MEN unto justification of life. For as by one man's disobedience many (Greek: "the many" - all) were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many (Greek: "the many" - all) be made righteous. Moreover the law entered, that the offense might abound. But where sin abounded, GRACE DID MUCH MORE ABOUND" (Rom. 5:18-20). The Amplified Bible

renders verse 20: "But then Law came in, only to expand and increase the trespass. But where sin increased and abounded, GRACE HAS SURPASSED IT AND INCREASED THE MORE AND SUPERABOUNDED."

Grace did "much more" abound. More. MUCH MORE! My deepest prayer is that God may grant understanding to all who read these lines that you may see the wonderful significance of the word "more." You can never comprehend the greatness of God's love, the majesty of the glories of His Kingdom in the bright ages yet to come purpose, nor unless your spirit can grasp this word "more." "More" is that which goes beyond the limits. A five pound bag of apples is a set limit. I pay \$5.00 for a five pound bag of red delicious apples. But if I find that the bag actually contains six pounds of the apples, that is "more." It surpasses the limits of the \$5.00. I am amazed, happy, delighted and I feel deeply gratified – someone has done MORE than required or paid for. It has a language all its own. That language of MORE THAN is what the Bible is teaching from the first verse in Genesis to the last verse in Revelation. That is what GOD IS AND DOES. That is what LOVE IS AND DOES. That is what GRACE IS AND DOES. That is what SALVATION IS AND DOES!

You see, it is as if a common deckhand in the line of duty, during a raging storm, is swept off a great ocean liner into the foaming sea. The rescue party goes to work fast and before long the deckhand stands on his feet, the crowd gathered around him. He has been unconscious. He feels his clothes, and they have been changed. He feels his head, but a new brass cord trimmed cap is upon it. The deckhands who were his fellows stand to salute him, and in astonishment he asks why. The captain comes to him and calls him mate and the vessel rolls on while he assumes his newly gained place of authority next to the captain of the ship. He fell off a deckhand, he is rescued a mate! This is the way grace works. This is the "much more" abounding grace in Jesus Christ!

MUCH MORE! "Where sin did abound, grace did MUCH MORE abound!" You cannot understand God nor His language apart from it. Nor can you really fellowship deeply with the Father in prayer unless you understand HIM as being "much more" than. Nor can you understand what His Kingdom is, nor how it shall develop, nor His plan and purpose for the ages to come, unless you understand what "much more" means. If your hope is merely something for you, and the rest of the "little flock" of saints, and not "much more," then it is not from the heart of God but is a product of self. Listen! "The love of God is broader than the measures of man's mind; and the heart of the Eternal is most wonderfully kind." "Much more" is something for HIM - yes, ALL for Him! Much more means abundance - MORE THAN ENOUGH.

No one will dispute that SIN abounded, or that it overflowed, spilling out of Eden's fair garden and saturating the whole earth and all men. Abound means overflow - constantly filling and running over like a spring of water or an ocean wave. Ah, yes, sin overflowed, flowed all over, flooded the world, permeated the minds and temperaments and nature of all men everywhere, until the seed of Adam's disobedience has grown and increased through six long millenniums in the field of the world and has now come to horrible fullness. Wicked men and seducers are waxing worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived. The grapes of wrath are not only ripe, but they are over-ripe, as the original implies in Rev. 14:15. The fullness of sin and death is such that no flesh could survive the desolation that lies ahead unless the Lord Himself were to cut the days short. We recognize this fact. Men in all walks of life recognize it. Men in high places recognize it. The hearts of men who know what the score is in this treacherous hour are failing them

for fear, as they contemplate the things that are about to come upon the world in this generation.

But what about the other seed that was cast into the earth, the second man, the last Adam, the OBEDIENT SON? Are we going to credit the disobedience of Adam with having more power and authority than the Christ? Are we going to infer that the law of sin and death has an even greater potential than the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus? Are we going to believe that the law of sin and death has the power and ability to stretch forth its poisonous tentacles into every area of mankind, to the complete perversion of body, soul, and spirit, and then at the same time draw back in unbelief at the revelation of the Word concerning the law of the Spirit of life (more abundant) in Christ Jesus? Five times in Romans 5 does the apostle Paul use the expression "Much more" relative to the POWER OF THE GRACE OF GOD, IN CONTRAST TO THE SIN OF ADAM. Shall we not believe that there is a greater and MUCH MORE potential in the redeeming grace of Christ, than there is in the law of sin and death? Is there not a MUCH MORE effectual working of the grace of God through the last Adam, than there was of the power of disobedience through the first Adam? In other words, are we going to honor the power of Adam and Satan ABOVE THE REDEEMING POWER OF CHRIST? Shall not the Christ redeem and restore every man that Adam's sin cursed, and make every one of them better men than Adam was? Is that not what MUCH MORE means?

"But God's free gift is not at all to be compared to the trespass. His grace is out of proportion to the fall of man. For if many died through one man's falling away - his lapse, his offense - MUCH MORE profusely did GOD'S GRACE and the free gift that comes through the undeserved favor of the one Man Jesus Christ, ABOUND and OVERFLOW to and for the benefit of many" (Rom. 5:15, Amplified). It is interesting to observe that while all Churches will acknowledge that by one man, and his offense, death passed upon all men, yet they cannot accept the glorious fact that MUCH MORE the grace of God shall abound unto all men. That one man's offense could cause such devastation of the human race does not provoke an argument, for the evidence is all around us. But when one Man, Christ Jesus, releases that GRACE, through His obedience to the will of God, then people find it hard to believe that this shall have the same coverage, abounding unto all men, and even MUCH MORE! Yes, there is also a MUCH MORE to be brought into account here. For the FREE GIFT is not the same as the offense, Paul says. For one act of disobedience brought judgment and condemnation. But by the time the FREE GIFT came on the scene, there wasn't just one offense to take care of, but now it must cover MANY OFFENSES and a multitude of sins. Therefore, how much greater is this free gift, able to go beyond ALL SIN and gain the victory, until all shall receive of His life.

Our problem seems to be simply this. We believe, oh, HOW we believe in the horrible manifestation of sin and death in Adam, because it is a matter of history in the past, and of fact in the present. But we reject the glorious outcome of the overwhelming grace of God in Christ because it is not too manifest in history, nor scarcely visible in this present day. Only a few have been affected thus far. Men will not believe until they see. But those apprehended to be the SONS OF GOD, though unknown by the world as yet, even now are believing what they cannot see, and indeed the whole creation groans for their manifestation, for the creation itself also SHALL BE DELIVERED FROM THE BONDAGE OF CORRUPTION into the glorious liberty of the children of God (Rom. 8:19-21). If the life of God is not to overflow super-abundantly to the entire creation, then the manifestation of the Sons of God is TOTALLY WITHOUT PURPOSE, and all the

teaching and preaching about it is a great farce and a wicked hoax. I do not hesitate to declare it.

Who has not been distressed by the overflowing of evil and sorrow and death? But - where sin increased and abounded, grace has surpassed it and increased the more and super abounded. In the same place where sin and evil overflowed, grace did - do we dare to say what the Scripture says here? Will not someone think that we are getting off into some heresy? Oh well, we will just happily sing it out - "where sin overflowed, grace did EXCEEDINGLY-MORE-THAN-OVERFLOW!" Where evil flooded, grace more than flooded. Grace equaled the overflow of sin, and THEN MORE. Grace overflowed where sin did, and then became permanent floods of mercy and redemption! If the Word of God does not teach this, then I know nothing of the Word. Oft times we have sung the little chorus:

"His love has no limit, His grace has no measure,
His power has no boundaries known unto man,
For out of His infinite riches in Jesus,
He giveth, and giveth, and giveth again!"

The limitation of God's mercy, if it were possible, would be the condemnation of God Himself. If there are limits to His mercy, then the word of God, which says that "His mercy endures forever," is a lie. The limitation of God's mercy is a trick of the devil, to discredit God and defeat His Gospel. The limitation of God's mercy makes the disobedience of Adam more powerful and enduring than the OBEDIENCE OF CHRIST. I am glad for a Gospel that is coextensive with, and GREATER THAN, the devil's work in spirit, soul and body. I am glad for a Gospel that is not limited to a man's heartbeat, for our great High Priest is able to save them TO THE UTTERMOST that come unto God by Him, seeing He EVER LIVES to make intercession for them. I am glad for a Gospel that is not limited to one age, or to the three-score-and-ten years of man's frail existence, but reaches out into the ages to come until GOD IS ALL IN ALL. I am so glad for a Gospel which tells me that God has made a way by which even His banished may return. The Lord Jesus, the Christ, said, "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw" - how many? "ALL men." "ALL MEN unto Myself!" (Jn. 12:32). If that proclamation is not true, if He is not strong enough and gracious enough to draw every man on earth, and under the earth, and throughout the universe, unto Himself, then He told a lie.

If you say that sin abounds to an extent not equaled by grace, you again contradict the Word of God. If God could eventually be defeated in the purpose for which He created man, to be an "Habitation" for Himself, "in the Spirit," and if He were to abandon all effort, and permit man throughout the endlessness of eternity to be possessed by the devil, then He had better stop saying that He is God Almighty, All-wise and All-merciful. That would be failure and proof that the devil is stronger than the Christ, that sin exceeds grace, which we know is not true. You will have to tear your Bible all to pieces if you teach such doctrine.

"Well then, as one man's trespass led to condemnation for ALL MEN, so one Man's act of righteousness leads to acquittal and right standing with God, and life FOR ALL MEN" (Rom. 5:18, Amplified). How final, how supreme, how absolute is this word! There is no appeal from it. There is no escaping it. There is no disregarding it. There is no discrediting it. God stands as His own witness to this act, and all mankind will eventually be forced to accept the truth of it and God will be glorified through it all!

MERCY UPON ALL

"This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance. For therefore we both labor and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Saviour of ALL MEN, specially of those that believe. THESE THINGS COMMAND AND TEACH" (I Tim. 4:9-11). I have suffered reproach because I have trusted in the Living God as "the Saviour of ALL MEN, specially (in a special way, measure) those that believe." I have been exhorted by unthinking brethren to stop teaching it, or to at least minimize it. To do so would be a violation of the Word of God, and rebellion against the clear command of God. "These things COMMAND AND TEACH." This Gospel I am commanded to teach.

Some time ago a letter came in the mail wherein the statement was made, "It hurts me to the uttermost to have people - unsaved especially - read this or know it - as by your standing they will be all saved someday, somehow, somewhere. So, in other words, there is no need for them to give their life to the Lord now. They can continue their fun in this sinful world, as they will all be saved" -end quote. It is beyond my comprehension how it could hurt anyone to hear the lost being told that THEY WILL BE SAVED. That is exactly what we are sent to tell them, the Gospel, the GOOD NEWS, to pray them in Christ's stead to be reconciled to God. I therefore teach you today, as the apostle Paul has taught, and has exhorted us to teach, that "God is the Saviour of all men." Of course we don't tell the sinner to go out and live it up because in the end he is going to be alright!

"And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now COMMANDS ALL MEN EVERYWHERE TO REPENT" (Acts 17:30). God commands all men everywhere to repent and as God's messenger I command all men everywhere to repent. And thank God, they shall! The One who commands men to repent is the almighty Christ of God. Have you prayed for your loved ones and friends, and then despaired lest God should fail to reach them? Why, my dear friend, are you so sad? All power is given unto our Lord and Saviour in heaven and in earth. At His Word rainwater and dew become the grape-juice; tiny handfuls of grain fill autumn barns; storms die away into calm; fish are led through the path of the sea; rills are sent among the mountains; and stars are maintained in their courses, so that "not one fails." What God commands shall be carried out. Do you believe it?

Think of all the wrong and evil that was done to the Son of God during His trial and crucifixion. Things that many Churches would have us believe would separate men from God for all eternity. There was railing, ridicule, false accusations, mocking and blasphemies. There was defiant and utter rejection of Jesus as the Christ of God, as King and Redeemer. ALL MANKIND was gathered there to reject and refuse the Saviour of the world. ALL MANKIND killed the Prince of Life. "The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord, and against His Christ. For of a truth against Your holy child Jesus, whom You have anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles (nations), and the people of Israel, were gathered together" (Acts 4:26-27). But what happened? In the midst of all the railing and ranting and cruelty, nine wonderful words are heard coming from the Christ. He said, "Father, forgive them. They know not what they do." Here was forgiveness to the uttermost! Here was forgiveness covering EVERYONE AND EVERYTHING! Here was the healing of the nations. Here was the uniting of the Father and all His creation. Here was the end of the struggle and peace was completely established between God and mankind.

Why should He die? He had loved men. His life had been stainless and beautiful. Why should He die? Why should He suffer for the lies of false priests, and the malignity of petty politicians, and a drunken, voluptuous king and a beastly, brutal procurator, a heathen, who had a good wife that warned him not to do what he did. Why should He die? Twelve legions of angels would have come in a moment at His command. Why should He die? He must die. It was necessary. The High Priest was right when he said, "You know nothing at all, nor do you take account that it is expedient for you that One Man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not." It was necessary that the Lamb of God, slain from the foundation of the world, should appear and by the sacrifice of Himself tear down every wall of partition and unite humanity; establish His Kingdom; call out His Church from that Kingdom; put down all rule and all authority and all power; bring unity out of diversity, light out of darkness, life out of death, health out of disease, a new world wherein dwells righteousness out of an old world wherein dwelt Satan and sin and disease and death and hell. It was necessary. AND IT IS NECESSARY STILL FOR THIS WORK TO GO ON UNTIL ALL MEN AND ALL CREATION HAS BEEN BROUGHT BACK TO GOD.

There is one verse in Paul's letter to the Romans that seems to express all this in about as few words as can be found anywhere in God's Word. I want to quote it and give two or three translations of it. "For God has CONCLUDED them ALL in UNBELIEF, that He might have MERCY upon ALL" (Rom. 11:32). The Diaglott reads, "For God SHUT UP together ALL for DISOBEDIENCE, that He might have MERCY on ALL." Young's Literal says, "For God did SHUT UP together the WHOLE to UNBELIEF, that to the WHOLE He might do KINDNESS." Then one more, the Amplified Bible renders, "For God has CONSIGNED (penned up) ALL MEN to disobedience, only that He may have MERCY on them ALL alike."

WHY TEACH SALVATION FOR ALL?

There are always those people who object to this truth on the grounds that the preaching of universal salvation will make Christians and unsaved careless. I can hear the unbelieving say, "If I believed that all men were to be saved eventually, I would just go out in the world and enjoy myself. What is the use of going through all these things we have to endure, if we're going to be saved in the end anyway?" Such ridiculous talk only reveals the true inner condition of the one who makes such an assertion. It shows that he has no true love for God, but is serving Him only out of fear of going to hell, as a slave in fear of a tyrant. If such a person had the fear of hell removed from him it is obvious that he would promptly tell God to go to hell and then proceed to drown himself in devilish pleasures and fleshly pursuits. I have no hesitation in saying that any man who says that if all are going to be saved in the end we might as well eat, drink, and be merry, is a devil at heart, and convicts himself by his own words. If the wages of sin were removed, he would immediately go out and begin to live it up in the world, serving both the flesh and the devil. He has no love for God at all, and is the most contemptible of hypocrites.

If your heart is that much inclined to the world and your love for God is no greater, then you better go back into the world. People who want to live careless will always find an excuse to be careless and they will have to suffer the result of their carelessness both now and in the day of judgment. The knowledge of God's gracious purpose does not make true men of God careless. It makes them long to become a part of His will and an instrument in His plan of the ages. We can embrace every travail in understanding,

grace, and love, when we clearly see it is working for eternal good according to His purpose which He purposed in Christ before the ages began.

Some press the issue further and raise the question, "If sinners hear that all will be saved eventually, won't that cause them to relax and live more carelessly?" To which I reply, Has the doctrine of eternal torture kept men from backsliding? Has it turned the world to God? Has it made the streets in your city safe to walk at night? Has it kept the Christians from growing spiritually cold, or from committing disgraceful sins? Has it prevented Churches from becoming worldly, or sinking into apostasy? It has not! If anyone thinks to use their service to God as a fire escape, He will not accept it. Our service must be because we love Him. Everything He did for us was because He loved us, and He will accept nothing less from us. "The love of Christ constrains us" (11 Cor. 5:14). He does not want what we have; He wants us; our heart and affection. And sinners need to discover the love of God in Christ, and be brought to truly love Him. Let us consider these things, and cry mightily unto God to deliver our minds from all prejudice and preconceived ideas and distorted notions, for it is possible He still has truth He has not revealed to us!

Some time ago the following questions were presented to me. "Why preach and teach the Gospel if all are to be saved ultimately? There is no need to witness for they will be saved someday, someday, somewhere - right?" W-R-O-N-G! First, the Christian life is so rich and beautiful and worthwhile that it would be the only life to live, even if there were no hereafter. Ask those who have truly known and experienced Christ over a period of years. Was it not Dr. A. J. Gordon who met an old crippled man on the street, and asked him why, with all his handicap, his face was nevertheless so bright and shining? And the old man answered, "The devil has no happy old men!"

Furthermore, God will never save your loved ones, your neighbors, or any other person who has ever lived or who ever shall live apart from a MEANS, an INSTRUMENT THROUGH WHICH TO REACH THEM. And WE are that instrument! God declares to His elect in Isa. 49:6, "I will also GIVE YOU for a light to the nations, that YOU may BE MY SALVATION unto the end of the earth." The method by which God causes men to believe is revealed in Rom. 10:14-15. "How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not BELIEVED? and how shall they BELIEVE in Him of whom they have not HEARD? and how shall they HEAR without a PREACHER? and how shall they PREACH except they be SENT?" Does the salvation of all men negate this procedure? NO WAY! It only intensifies it! The simple truth is that God purposes to save all men. The means by which He shall accomplish this is A PEOPLE, a ROYAL PRIESTHOOD, the SONS OF GOD, who are made ONE with the PRIESTLY MINISTRY OF JESUS the great HIGH PRIEST, to intercede, witness, speak, exhort, warn, entreat, preach, and proclaim the redemptive power of the Christ until this ministry conquers all men for God.

Ah - does the fact that God will have all men to be saved mean that it is meaningless to WITNESS, to PREACH? A thousand times no! "It pleased God by the foolishness of PREACHING to save them that believe" (1 Cor. 1:21). So we cannot preach less, we must not witness less, armed now with the hope that the preaching will ultimately BEAR FRUIT we shall preach MORE THAN EVER BEFORE, for this is one of God's MEANS of salvation! Those who should really give up witnessing to their loved ones, and preaching to the lost are those who believe most of them will burn for ever in hell anyway! What on earth could be more worthless, unprofitable, vain, disturbing and disappointing than witnessing and preaching to men when we actually believe that only a small fraction of

them will ever be saved? Why bother? To what end all the labor? The devil gets most of them in the end anyhow!

We who know that God will have all men to be saved are really the only people on earth who have REAL PURPOSE in ministering to the lost. Praise God! He has committed unto us the MINISTRY OF RECONCILIATION. Now comes the word: "And all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself by Jesus Christ, and has given UNTO US THE MINISTRY OF RECONCILIATION; to wit, that God was in Christ reconciling T-H-E W-O-R-L-D unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and has COMMITTED UNTO US THE WORD OF RECONCILIATION. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: WE PRAY YOU IN CHRIST'S STEAD, BE YE RECONCILED UNTO GOD" (11 Cor. 5:18-20). The apostle shows how it is that God was in Christ reconciling NOT THE CHURCH, NOT THE SAINTS, NOT JUST BELIEVERS, but T-H-E W-O-R-L-D unto Himself, and now has given the MINISTRY BY WHICH THIS RECONCILIATION IS TO BE EFFECTED ... unto us! "We pray you in Christ's stead." Not witness to our loved ones because they will be saved anyway? Not preach to the unconverted because they will be saved in the end? The very idea is absurd, a complete contradiction of terms! Because God has made blessed provision for their salvation IS W-H-Y WE WITNESS! On the contrary, to witness and witness and witness to vast numbers of people who will NEVER BE SAVED would be an effort in futility. If I believed that nonsense, then I really might STOP PREACHING!

Will believing that God is the Saviour of all men do away with evangelistic fervor and zeal? Only in men who hold a carnal knowledge of the doctrine in their intellect, but have no deep revelation of the truth of it in their hearts. It did not affect the apostle Paul in this manner. On the contrary it increased his fervor and zeal. Paul states it clearly and emphatically, "For to this end we labor and strive, because we have our hope set on the living God, who is the Saviour of all men" (I Tim. 4:10). After many years of ministry, being, by the grace of God, an instrument of God to help a great many people in the deep spiritual, psychical, and physical needs of their lives, I testify that I know of no greater joy on earth than the joy of seeing people receive Christ as their own Saviour and Lord. Just ask anyone who has led some person to the Lord, what is the greatest joy he knows. He will not be slow in telling you. Or try it yourself!

The fact that we see and appreciate God's great and wonderful plan for all men leaves no room in us for a dilatory, DON'T CARE spirit. The elect of God are always conscious of their unique calling. We are given the high honor of being "laborers together with God." Some day when the last devil has been subjected, and the last sinner broken in humility and contrition at the lovely feet of Jesus, we shall realize, as we may not now, just how great that honor really is, and how much we have missed if we fail to share in this task to which the Almighty has set His hand.

I must confess that I am deeply grieved in my spirit when I meet these would-be Sons of God who look with contempt upon those who still have a passion for souls and desire to see men delivered from the power of the devil. I am aware of the fact that the hour has not yet arrived when God shall deal with all nations, and multitudes of past generations, to bring forth His salvation in them, but it is my deepest conviction that one of the sure marks of sonship is THE SPIRIT OF RECONCILIATION. Why speak of our great hope of what God shall do in the ages to come if THE SPIRIT OF THAT HOPE is not now alive in our hearts? It is not the doctrine of reconciliation that shall change the world, but the

MINISTRY OF RECONCILIATION. The ministry of reconciliation springs from the spirit of reconciliation.

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 chosen of God to help in the delivering of the whole creation from the bondage of sin and death. The Spirit of Reconciliation must reign within our hearts. The Ministry of Reconciliation must issue forth from our lives. Rivers of Living Water must, even now, pour forth out of our innermost being, bringing hope and victory and life to all who will come and drink! Amen!

Chapter 4

Man Is A Free Moral Agent

Just What Do You Mean ... MAN IS A FREE MORAL AGENT!

ONCE I read a story about the so-called "free will of man," and it goes something like this. A certain infidel was reported to have raised his hand and dared God, if there be a God, to bring it down. Now the case was such, the story goes, that the infidel was bald, and there was a fly buzzing around which at that very moment landed on this bald pate and tickled it, and without hesitation down came the hand and swatted the fly. Thus God had answered the fool according to his folly, not by a mighty act of omnipotence, but by the seemingly insignificant weakness of a little fly. Now, this infidel's public verbal defiance of God was prompted by a desire for fame and notoriety; this he inherited from his human nature. Alone on an island in the middle of the ocean he would never have done such a thing. Next, his baldness was not an act of his own will, for man does not will to be bald, with the top of his head exposed to the elements. Then we see how God used this man's will against itself. He willed to hold up his hand, but the tickle of the fly was far more momentous in his life than the existence of God, and so while he willed to hold up his hand, he also willed to swat the fly, and God, setting man's own will against itself, defeated itself. How true is the word, "O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walks to direct his steps" (Jer. 10:23). You have probably heard it said throughout all of your life, that MAN IS A FREE MORAL AGENT. Let me call attention to the fact that the phrase "free moral agent" is not a Scriptural one, any more than the term "rapture" is Scriptural. Free moral agency is simply a theological expression, man-manufactured for his own convenience, and like most human inventions, and extra-biblical terminology, is not the truth at all. But briefly let us examine these three words: free moral agent.

1. An AGENT is an actor, one who is able to act or perform.
2. A FREE agent is one who can act as he pleases without any restraint of any kind placed upon him.
3. A free MORAL agent is one who is free to act as he pleases and without any restraint on all moral issues, i.e. questions involving the qualities of right and wrong.

I do not believe that the Bible anywhere teaches that man is a free moral agent. That teaching is a figment of the imagination of the harlot church system. In fact, the Bible teaches the exact opposite. It tells us, "It is NOT of him that WILLS or of him that runs, but of GOD that shows mercy" (Rom. 9:16). The biggest lie that ever was told in human language is that all men are born free moral agents. They are not born free. Be honest! Ask, Is that child free who is born in the slums; the child of a harlot and a whoremonger; a child without a name, who grows up with the brand of shame upon his brow from the beginning; who grows up amidst vice, and never knows virtue until it is steeped in vice? Is such a child a FREE MORAL AGENT, free to act intelligently, as he chooses, upon all moral questions? Is that child free who grows up amidst falsehood, and never knows what truth is until it is steeped in lies; that never knows what honesty is until it is steeped

in crime? Is that child born free? Is that child free who is born in a communist land and in a godless home; who is told by its government and taught by its teachers that there is no God in heaven, and never knows even a verse of Scripture until it is steeped in unbelief and infidelity? Is that child born free? Is he a free moral agent? It is a sham, a delusion, and a snare to say it. It is not true. All are not born into this world as free moral agents. The truth is much stronger than that, for the fact is, that NONE are free moral agents!

The preachers claim that when God made man in the first place, He endowed him with freedom of will, the ability to accept God's love or reject it, to keep God's laws or break them, and that the decision here and now is a final choice. But our Lord says, "No man can come unto Me, except the Father which has sent Me draw him" (Jn. 6:44). Let us think a moment of just how free man is, how far his freedom reaches. A little observation and study will show that man's freedom has very narrow limits. One is able to wish or desire or purpose as he pleases, but when he comes to carry out his wish or desire or purpose, he finds that he faces a problem. One is not free in the physical realm. Just let him try to jump off the Earth and land on Mars, for example. One is not free in the social realm. Not every man can marry the woman he wishes. One is not free in the economic realm. Not every person who dreams of being a millionaire can become one, no matter how hard he tries. One is not free in the moral and spiritual realm. He may desire with all his being to rid the world of drunkenness and vice, of greed and hate and war, but who has yet accomplished that? Many are not able to free even themselves from a little weed called tobacco!

Life neither begins or ends by choice and free will. Consider the matter of your own physical birth. What did you have to do with it, my friend? May I remind you that you were not consulted in the matter; you were absolutely passive in it; you had nothing whatsoever to do with it. You did not have a choice as to where or when you would be born. You had no choice as to what kind of a home or family you would be born into. Did someone say to you, "Tell me, sir - or would you rather be madam? Would you like to have black hair, or blond hair, or perhaps no hair at all? Would you like to have brown eyes or blue? Would you like to have white skin, or black, or would green, or red, or yellow suit you better? And where would you like to live? In Miami, or Hong Kong, or Siberia, or maybe in the Congo?" Nothing of the sort! You were not even consulted. The sovereign Lord God of heaven and earth brought you into existence and ordained your path without so much as a how-do-you-feel-about-it. And you had no choice as to how you would be born, in what condition or state of being. The Psalmist declared, "Behold, I was brought forth in a state of iniquity; my mother was sinful who conceived me and I, too, am sinful" (Ps. 51:5, Amplified). Well did the apostle Paul write..... "by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned ... for by one man's disobedience many were made sinners" (Rom. 5:12,19). If any man had brought himself into being, then we can conceive of the possibility of his having something to say about his condition and destiny. But mankind had absolutely nothing whatever to do with his coming into this world. It was the choice of God. God chose to bring this creature into existence because He had a definite plan for him in His creative purposes in the whole universe. It was God who formed man of the dust of the ground. It was God who breathed into his nostrils the breath of life. It was God who placed man in the Garden of Eden. It was God who planted the tree of the knowledge of good and evil in the midst of the Garden. It was God who gave the law that man should neither touch this tree nor eat of it. And it was God who made the serpent and put him in the Garden and sent him along one beautiful day to tempt the man. It was GOD!

Even if Adam was a free moral agent, God is responsible for what happened in the Garden, for whatever a free moral agent may do, He is responsible for it who made him a free moral agent. If God made man a free moral agent, then God created within man the propensities for either good or evil which determined his choices. If God made man a free moral agent, He knew beforehand what the result would be, and hence is just as responsible for the consequences of the acts of that free moral agent as He would be for the act of an irresponsible machine that He had made. Man's free moral agency, even if it were true, would by no means clear God from the responsibility of his acts since God is his Creator and has made him in the first place just what he is, well knowing what the result would be. If God's will is ever thwarted, then He is not almighty. If His will is thwarted, then His plans must be changed, and hence He is not all-wise and immutable. If His will is never thwarted, then all things are in accordance with His will and He is the architect of all things as they exist. If He is all-wise and all-good, then all things, existing according to His will, must be working toward some wise and wonderful end!

"What shall we conclude then? Is there injustice on God's part? Certainly not! For He says to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. So then God's gift is not a question of human will and human effort, but of God's mercy. It depends not on ones own willingness ... but on God's having mercy on him. For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, I have raised you up for this very purpose of displaying My power in dealing with you, so that My name may be proclaimed the whole world over. So then He has mercy on whomever He wills (chooses) and He hardens - makes stubborn and unyielding of heart - whomever He wills. You will say to me, Why then does He still find fault and blame us for sinning? For who can resist and withstand His will? But who are you, a mere man, to criticize and contradict and answer back to God? Will what is formed say to him that formed it, Why have you made me thus? Has the potter no right over the clay, to make out of the same mass one vessel for beauty and distinction and honorable use, and another for menial or ignoble and dishonorable use?" (Rom. 9:14-21, Amplified).

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

The message is clear - we were not sinners by choice. We were sinners by NATURE! We were BORN INTO this condition, simply because the first man, Adam, put us all into slavery to sin. We had nothing to say about it. We did not in any way will it, consent to it, or choose it, for we were born into it. And we were not born free moral agents. We were born slaves!

There is no fact more self-evident than the fact of the total depravity of man, or his TOTAL INABILITY to deliver himself from bondage to sin, and this is rooted in the fact that his human spirit is dead from birth. Total depravity means that man in his natural state is incapable of doing anything or desiring anything pleasing to God. Until our spirit is quickened by HIS SPIRIT we are slaves of the flesh and the devil and are enemies to God. When man insists that he still has a "spark" of divine good resident in his heart the Bible says, "The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked. Who can know it?" (Jer. 17:9). When man contends that he is a free moral agent and can accept or reject the Lord by his own volition, the Word of God contradicts him, declaring, "There is none righteous, no not one! There is none that understands, there is N-O-N-E THAT SEEKS after God" (Rom. 3:10-11).

Man is totally depraved in the sense that everything about his nature is in rebellion against God. Man is loyal to the god of darkness and loves darkness rather than The Light. His will is, therefore, not at all "free". It is a slave to the flesh. Total depravity means that man, of his own "free will," will NEVER MAKE A DECISION FOR CHRIST. Our blessed Lord bluntly says, "You will not come to Me, that you might have life" (Jn. 5:40). Why does our Lord say this? Because the will of the unregenerate man is bound by the bands of sin and death to the god of the spiritually dead.

Total depravity means that the natural man is completely incapable of discerning Truth. In fact, unregenerate man thinks of the things of God as being ridiculous! "The natural man receives not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness to him. Neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned" (I Cor. 2:14). Man cannot see or know the things which relate to the Kingdom of God, without being regenerated first by the Holy Spirit. A dead spirit perceives only the things of man and Satan. Hence the words of Jesus to Nicodemus: "Unless a man is born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God" (Jn. 3:3). Unborn children do not see the light. Dead men do not see the light.

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

Observe! Saving faith is the GIFT OF GOD, NOT AN EXERCISE OF MAN'S "FREE WILL"! Man must believe, certainly, but it is not the old deceitful and desperately wicked heart, nor the old carnal mind which believes, but the faith graciously imparted by God as a gift is the agency of man's believing. God has decreed that the works of the flesh shall

have no part in the "so great salvation" which He Himself provides. It is His work through the Gift of Life. He regenerated us when we were dead in sins. Life is His Gift. Faith is His Gift. We are saved by a faith which "is not of ourselves." We believed by the faith which GOD GIVES, not by our own FREE WILL! Until a man has been quickened by the Holy Spirit the word is: "Why do you not understand My speech? Even because you cannot hear My word! You are of your father the devil" (Jn. 8:43-44). But once God quickens us by the Gift of Life and the Gift of Faith the word is: "It is GOD who works in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure" (Phil. 2:13).

Wise men standing by the grave of Lazarus might pronounce it an evidence of insanity when the Lord addressed a dead man with the words, "Lazarus, Come forth." Ah! but He who thus spoke was and is Himself the Resurrection, and the Life, and at HIS word even the dead live! Just as Lazarus would never have heard the voice of Jesus, nor would he have ever "come to Jesus," without first being given Life by our Lord, so all men "dead in trespasses and sins," must-first be given Life by God before they can "come to Christ." Since dead men cannot will to receive Life, but can be raised from the dead only by the power of God, so the natural man cannot of his own mythical "free will," will to have eternal life (Jn. 10:26-28). He must be given God's gift of saving faith. If Jesus had had no more than an "invitation" for Lazarus to receive Life, He could have knocked at that tombstone door for a long time. But Christ spoke the Life-giving Word and that Word brought Lazarus to life and caused his heart to begin to beat and his lungs to work, and Lazarus heard the voice of his Master and received the faith to arise and walk out of the darkness of that tomb of death.

The natural man is a third rate power. He is not able to resist Satan because his will is inferior to the will of the devil. Paul says that those who oppose the ministers of God's truth are in the snare of the devil and "are taken captive by him at his will" (II Tim. 2:26). How can the devil ensnare the lost "at his will"? For the simple reason that man, without the Holy Spirit, is an inferior power who cannot resist the devil but walks "according to the course of this world, according to the Prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now works in the children of disobedience" (Eph. 2:2). And consequently, Jesus says, "NO MAN CAN COME TO ME, except the Father which has sent Me draw him" (Jn. 6:44). A plain example of this is the business woman named Lydia who heard the apostles teaching the Word of God, and "whose heart the Lord opened.." (Acts 16:14). Who opened her heart to Jesus? Does the Bible teach that the sinner opened her heart to the Lord, or does the Scripture teach that it is THE LORD WHO OPENS HEARTS?

As someone has said, "Here is a man that is dead, lying in a casket in the ground. What will you do to raise him? Will you bring your flute and play a sweet melody to woo him out of the grave? Perhaps a great thunderstorm could come and the lightning could strike around him and the thunder could shake the earth and boom and crash with its mighty voice. But neither the sweet music of the flute nor the mighty thundering above would have any effect whatsoever on the dead in their graves. They hear not; neither do they know. Nor, can the thundering of the Law or the sweet music of the Gospel have any effect on the mind and soul that is dead in sin. It needs one thing. It needs to be made alive! By a POWER BEYOND ITSELF! 'You has He made alive that were dead.' " Therefore, until God first of all comes with His grace and MAKES MEN ALIVE, there is nothing that man can do. Only GOD can raise the dead! True, God requires repentance and faith that we might be saved. But, praise His name, that which He requires, He also freely gives, that the whole thing may be of grace. Yet Christendom insists on a doctrine of man being a "free moral agent," even though the Word of God exposes this as being

utterly false in every degree. Most emphatically do I declare: We are NOT free moral agents! "The creature was made subject to vanity, NOT WILLINGLY, but by reason of HIM WHO HAS SUBJECTED the same in hope" (Rom. 8:20).

THE SINNER MUST DECIDE!

Strange as it may seem there are many today who insist that they believe in salvation by grace, yet they insist that man has the power to "make a decision for Christ." They argue that "God loves everyone, equally and alike," yet they are sure that He is going to send some people to hell for ever. They affirm that the Bible teaches that the Creator of all things is surely omnipotent, but they are also quite confident that finite man is fully capable of obstructing the will of God. In nearly every case the problem lies in the fact that these dear people do not know Bible truth. They have heard nothing from their pulpits but "plan of salvation" sermons minus the wonderful truths which make up the plan! If they were asked to explain the meaning of such doctrines as redemption, propitiation, reconciliation, remission, and atonement, they would either mutter trivia or be absolutely speechless. Why? Because they have never been taught, nor have they had the spiritual vigor necessary to discover for themselves, what Scripture actually teaches about the work of Christ. There is one thing they hold in common: the confidence that man can use his own "positive volition" or "free will" to accept Christ and get himself "saved."

More than a century ago a great man of God, A. P. Adams, penned the following: "I wish to add a word further in regard to the salvation of all men, suggested by the following extract which I clip from one of my exchanges. The extract is as follows: The Rev. B. W. Ward, the popular Boston evangelist, and efficient superintendent of the Bleeker Street Mission, thus beautifully illustrates the gift of salvation: A friend of mine invited me into a jewelry store, and asked the clerk for samples of their pocket knives. Placing the price of the best one alongside of it, on the counter, he said, 'Ward, I want to make you a little present. There's a knife and there is the price of it. Make your choice. Take which one you will as a memento from me.' Now, said the evangelist, whose knife was that while it lay there on the counter? It wasn't mine. It would become mine by my deciding to accept it; but without such an act on my part it was not for me. So of salvation. Jesus has paid the price, but the sinner must decide whether or not he will reach forth and take it before it becomes his.

"In this extract it will be seen that the salvation of the individual is made to depend upon his own decision. THE SINNER MUST DECIDE, and as he decides so will his future destiny be to all eternity. Thus one's salvation is practically made to depend on one's self. God and Christ have done, or are doing their part, and now they simply wait for the sinner's decision. By the way, how long did God wait for the 'decision' of Saul of Tarsus when 'it pleased God to call him?' Most people, however, would accept the above extract as a correct presentation of the case, and would assent thereto without any hesitation. But there is a fatal defect in the illustration. The case of the one choosing the knife is NOT PARALLEL TO THAT OF THE SINNER CHOOSING SALVATION, because the former has his EYES WIDE OPEN and knows full well the value of what is presented to him for his choice, while the LATTER IS BLINDED, and knows not what he does. 'But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: in whom the god of this world has blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ ... should shine unto them' (11 II Cor. 4:3-4).

"The Bible plainly teaches that fallen man is blinded to the truth; the soulish man receives not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him, neither can he know them because they are spiritually discerned, and the soulish man has not the Spirit. Thus the sinner does not realize and appreciate the value of the salvation that is offered to him. In the first place, he does not know that he is lost, and hence feels no need of salvation. Secondly, this sinner does not know that the salvation offered him in Christ is worth anything. All he has to go by in determining its worth is the lives of those who profess to possess it, and they for the most part, are very deficient illustrations of its merit. Furthermore the sinner is surrounded by circumstances entirely adverse to his acceptance of Christ. And finally, worse than all, 'the mind of the flesh,' a corrupt nature, an 'evil heart of unbelief,' a 'body of death,' that leans toward the bad and opposes the good continually; and mark you, all these things are circumstances over which the individual has no control and for which he is not to blame.

"Again, mark you, that if he overcomes these unfavorable circumstances and in spite of them does accept Christ, it must be by some power OUTSIDE OF HIMSELF, for in himself he would never have any power for his own deliverance. This is the teaching of the seventh chapter of Romans. God must deliver him if he is delivered at all! He must bring him to a knowledge of his lost condition, so that he will feel his need of a Saviour, and He must give him repentance and faith. God must open his eyes so that he shall not only see the need, but also the priceless value of salvation, that like the apostle Paul, he will be willing to count all thing but dross for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus his Lord.

"And he must be endowed with power to overcome the evil around and within him. All this help must come from God, and must be imparted to the sinner before he can make the slightest movement toward salvation. Are there any such elements as these in the case of the man choosing the knife? Is it not plain that that illustration and the case of the sinner are NOT PARALLEL at all? And yet just such illustrations are constantly presented as setting forth exactly the case of the sinner in 'his' choice or rejection of salvation in Christ! The fact is there are many factors to be taken into account in the regeneration and new creation of a human being. It is no such small matter as picking up a little present that a friend passes over to you. Hence these illustrations are very faulty and misleading"
-end quote.

When addressing the unsaved, an evangelist often drew an analogy between God's sending of the Gospel to the sinner, and a sick man in bed, with some healing medicine on a table by his side: all he needs to do is reach forth his hand and take it. But in order for this illustration to be in any wise true to the picture which Scripture gives us of the fallen and depraved sinner, the sick man in bed must be described as one who is blind (Eph. 4:18) so that he cannot see the medicine, his hand paralyzed (Rom. 5:6) so that he is unable to reach forth for it, and his heart not only devoid of all confidence in the medicine but filled with hatred against the physician himself (Jn. 15:18). Oh, what superficial views of man's desperate plight are not entertained! Christ came here not to help those who were willing to help themselves, or even those willing to be helped, but to do for people what they were incapable of doing for themselves: "To open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison house" (Isa. 42:7).

Someone will ask, "Will God save men eventually against their will?" The answer is no! He will have no need to do that, for all men will be one hundred percent willing when God

reveals Himself to them. Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped, and the doors of the prison house shall be opened. We have only to consider the case of Saul of Tarsus to understand the miraculous power of the Lord to change the leopard's spots and melt the heart of stone. There are those who suppose that God could not convert a soul unless that depraved and lost soul gives to almighty God that permission. I only wish they would ask the apostle Paul, that great despiser of Christ and hater of His Church, that persecutor of Christians, who while on his way to Damascus was suddenly cast to the ground and converted. No man was ever more hateful toward Christ than was Saul of Tarsus, yet, when his turn came to see the light, he changed in an instant, crying out in fear and trembling and with bitter repentance, "Who art You, Lord?" and "What will You have me to do?" Did God ask Saul of Tarsus whether or not he wanted to be saved? Or did He say to Ananias, "He is a chosen vessel unto Me to bear My name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel" (Acts 9:15)? It is only God who can change the human heart, and when God wills to change every single human heart in earth and in hell, each will be changed in an instant. Some suppose that God is desperately trying to convert every human being in the world ... ah, but He cannot do it, because mighty man, sovereign man, will not allow it! Yahweh does all of His pleasure. "As I have purposed so shall it come to pass," says the Lord. Where do these man-made preachers get the notion that man is a FREE MORAL AGENT? Indeed, he may be free in some minor things that concern his personal conduct, but concerning God's eternal purpose for him HE IS NOT FREE to do his own will, for "it is NOT OF HIM THAT WILLIS or HIM THAT RUNS, BUT GOD THAT SHOWS MERCY" (Rom. 9:16). God in His great mercy has condescended to extend mercy to all men, He sent His Son to die for all men, to redeem all men, to reconcile all back to God, and in due time He sent also His Holy Spirit to invincibly draw them unto Himself. In the day of the power of God, men are made willing and, having been quickened by that Spirit, renewed in mind, having been given a heart of flesh, they do come most willingly, having been made willing BY HIS POWER. What an exalted view is this of our OMNIPOTENT GOD AND SAVIOR!

There is an overwhelming desire in my heart that God's precious people might know that GOD IS GOD, glorious in power, fearful in praises, DOING WONDERS. I long with a great longing that His people will repent of ever having believed the insipid and useless traditions that make the almighty God seem to be a victim of the will of His own creation. It is my opinion that most of the theology of the church system is stupid prattle that seeks to render the almighty God impotent by robbing Him of His omnipotence. It teaches that God gave His Son that all the world through Him might be saved and then renders His sacrifice hopeless by leaving ninety-nine percent of all His creatures in the hands of the devil for all eternity. Such a doctrine as that belittles the power and wisdom of God and does despite to the Spirit of grace, the atoning work of Christ, and the precious blood that He shed so that the world through Him might be saved. Such a doctrine as that is, undoubtedly, one of the "doctrines of devils" of which Paul warned. I say that because I cannot think of anyone outside of the devil himself who would be happy with the prospect that Calvary was such a colossal failure! But the preachers, including some who profess to be in the "Kingdom Message," would lay down their lives for such an abominable heresy!

My dear friend and brother Elwin Roach has given a striking illustration of the ludicrousness of the popular teachings concerning man's "free will" and God's judgments. He writes, "I recall having written quite a number of years ago a scenario of a very wealthy family man who was the mayor of his village as well as the judge whose brother

was the chief constable. He was honorable, the pillar in the city who was loved by all. He was generous to a fault, giving freely to anyone who was in need. He was one who would sacrifice and do without so others would be blessed. His generosity went to the extreme at times, so much so, that he deprived his own children in order for complete strangers to eat and have a roof over their heads. He was a man that everyone admired, even worshiped by some. A few did, however, fear him because they knew he was a very strict man of matchless authority. It was a side of him that no one should cross; for rumors had it that not only was this philanthropist a man of love and ultimate sacrifice for others, but that he had a vindictive side as well, so do not, and I repeat, do not cross him! If you should, it would be hell to pay... f-o-r-e-v-e-r! He would never forgive and certainly would never forget.

“The story goes that he was having guests over for a special dinner to celebrate the awards he had received for his humanitarian services to the poor of his community as well as his humanitarian work throughout the world. There was no end to his love and giving. Wherever there were people hurting, he tried to be there to help relieve their suffering.

“After dining on the finest of cuisines and during the celebration, a young man noticed a door at the end of a long, dimly lit hallway. The door was of old, tattered wood with huge iron hinges and a latch that seemed would take a little effort to life it. The décor of the door was out of place in such a beautiful mansion; but there it stood for all to see, almost as if this wonderful man wanted people’s eye to be drawn to it. He asked a few around him to where did that door lead. Some had no clue, while a few who had known about this man of honor for a long time, said, ‘Stay out of there. Don’t get close to that door. It leads to a place you don’t want to go. Be warned!’

“After his curiosity could no longer be contained, he cautiously slipped down the hallway toward the door without anyone noticing. The latch was not nearly as hard to lift as it looked, and the door swung open with ease. It led down a dimly lit, foreboding staircase, and to his horror, utter shock, he saw the most heinous torture chambers he could have imagined. There were torture racks, beds of needle sharp spikes, red-hot iron rods resting in beds of live coals of fire, and horrific implements that staggers the mind. To this young man’s amazement were three of the honorable man’s children who seemed to be from around 17 years old to perhaps 29 or 30. But the worst part was their remorseful groans. It was so horrible that he thought that he must be asleep and was having a terrible nightmare; but if it was, he was not able to wake up.

“These poor kids were being tortured day in and day out by hired thugs who delighted in what they were doing. They were so demented that it was all a big game to them. It would have been merciful if they could die; but these bottom of the barrel hirelings made sure they did not torture unto death, and gave the bare minimum of food and water to keep them alive, but never enough to satisfy their hunger and thirst.

“The man in his horror, screamed out, ‘What in your loving father’s name are you doing here? Does he know about this?’ The answers were all the same: ‘Yes, he knows we are here. He put us here. Not thinking he could be serious we all ignored his warnings after we became of age and could make our own decisions. He told us that after becoming of age, if we chose to live the way we wanted to rather than what was required of us, that he would throw us into this cellar to be punished for the rest of our lives. He loved us so much that we could not believe he would carry through with it, even to the point of not

letting us soon die so the torment would end. If only we had taken heed to our loving father's demands and chose his ways rather than those of our youthful temptations, we would be upstairs being enraptured by the festivities that everyone else is enjoying. But it is too late, so late, eternally too late. Oh, father, I wish we had a second chance; but like you warned, that will never be.'

"His heart was being torn out by what he was seeing and was told by the man's children, as his attention was drawn to the awful screams of one of the servants. He asked what was her offense that caused her to be imprisoned here and tortured? 'I was caught lying about my coworkers, and I didn't repent and confess my sin before the end of the week, the deadline I was given. It came and was gone before I had a change of heart. Now it is too late, too late, forever too late.' Another servant sorrowfully told him that he was sentenced to this fate for stealing and drinking several bottles of his masters best wine. He said, 'I was told that this would be the punishment for stealing and drinking unto drunkenness. I should have known better, but temptation got the best of me, and now I will always be paying for the debt that can never be paid.'

"In this scenario, after witnessing such a surreal nightmare, we can see him slowly climbing the stairs back to the party where everyone is rejoicing and praising their wonderful host for his unprecedented love and generosity for all who were meritoriously invited to his banquet. But the stunned man cannot reconcile what he had just seen in that horrid torture chamber with what the host of honor was ravishing upon his guests in paradise made especially for them.

"After a few moments, that seem like an eternity had past, the man could not refrain from questioning his benevolent host. 'How could it be, Sir, that you lavished such love upon everyone here; but you are having your own children and servants tortured in the basement below?' Without hesitation, and showing no emotion, he said, 'First, it is beyond me that you would question a man of my stature, the mayor, the judge, the one who has made this town and provided jobs for everyone who lives here. Nonetheless, I will put your concerns to rest. You see, I taught my children, as well as my servants, throughout their earlier childhood about rewards and punishments. Of course, to be fair, I gave them a sacred free-will that I would never trespass. They could choose to obey the rules I established for my household, or they could choose to disobey, and they knew the consequences. If they had obeyed, I would have rewarded them beyond measure. They would be here with the rest of us if they had been obedient; but if they freely chose to disobey and live frivolously. They knew their punishment would be without measure, and for the rest of their lives. They knew what was facing them, and still, they went astray. So, I had no choice, especially since I had given my irrevocable word of what would happen. I didn't want to do this, but they made me! They forced my hand! Now, do you understand?'

"We know that no one in their right mind could understand or accept such an atrocity. Only on rare instances do evil people hold others in captivity and torture them, and those who do are labeled as demented, diabolical fiends. Yet, so many in the world of most religions say that our God, the Father of all, is that way.

"Some of you might feel that the above scenario is a bit harsh and unrealistic; but this is a very accurate example of what has been formed in the minds people over the centuries."
– end quote

THE SHEPHERD SEEKS THE SHEEP

In Luke 15:4 we read, "What man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, does not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness and go after that which is lost UNTIL HE FIND IT?" In this passage we find that at the end of the day, the shepherd finds that he is just one little sheep short of completeness. There is only one outside - so why bother to go after that one, for perhaps that one is one of the rebellious ones anyway and will not choose to come back!

But the Shepherd we are dealing with in this story is not an ordinary shepherd. This is the Great and Good Shepherd of the sheep and nothing will stop Him or prevent Him from finding that last sheep. This Shepherd will not be content with even an extraordinary effort to find the sheep and then give up, feeling that He has done His duty. Neither does He "call" the sheep, and then wait to see if the sheep decides to come, and if not, just leave him there in his lost condition to die. This Shepherd searches UNTIL HE FINDS. And the FINDING of this Shepherd is not only the locating of the sheep, but it also includes the bringing back into the fold of that sheep.

If you know anything at all about sheep, you know that a sheep is helpless to find its way back to the rest of the flock. Not only that, but it becomes subject to every danger that is near to it, yet it never recognizes that danger. This is exactly the condition of mankind today. Mankind, being dead in trespasses and sins and in rebellion against God, does not know how to get to God. In fact much of humanity does not even think of getting to God. They have come to the point where they are quite satisfied with their condition just as the sheep is satisfied with its condition as it feeds, knowing not that it is lost. Mankind does not know the way back to God. Mankind must wait until IT IS FOUND. He does not even know he is lost. How will the lost ever come to God of himself, of his own "free will"? If he were able to come HE WOULD NOT BE LOST. Men do not even know they are lost, or where they are going. Ah, the Shepherd must find the sheep, and not the sheep find the Shepherd! And Jesus said the Shepherd would seek until. Jesus said He came to seek and to save those lost ones. Not the lost ones seek God but GOD SEEK THE LOST!

Most of the religious teaching today would have us believe that Christ has done all He can for the sinner, so He has now gone back to His heaven and is seated upon His golden throne waiting for all who will to be saved. According to this thinking, God through Jesus has done all He can possibly do and has now left the work of saving souls to the Church, hoping that some, at least, will be persuaded to accept the Saviour. The Church must go out and contact all the sinners they can and see if they cannot get them to "accept Christ." But, of course, if the sinner does not want to be saved, then even God in all His power cannot intervene and nothing is left but eternal hell fire and damnation for that sinner. But just what does this line of reasoning reveal? The tragedy of it is that it shows us nothing but a POWERFUL MANKIND and a WEAK GOD!

Another thing this line of teaching suggests is that God, having finished the work of redemption, then turns it all over to a rather carnal Church that does not truly know God, does not even understand God's great plan of the ages, and cares far more about making proselytes to a denomination than in bringing people into a living relationship with Jesus Christ. The average Church today cares more about its programs, its missionary efforts, its buildings, its committee meetings and its budget than it does about making known to the world the glad news that God has reconciled the whole world to Himself and He shall not rest until every heart has surrendered and the very last sheep has been

carried back to the fold. Nothing stops or hinders this Shepherd, for if He did fail in this effort, He could never rest knowing that one of His sheep was lost and eternally destroyed. He does not send anyone else or leave it to the sheep to find its way back. HE HIMSELF GOES UNTIL HE FINDS.

Let us have these things right and straight in our minds. Let us see these things correctly. Nothing is left in any way to chance. The Shepherd sends no one out to look for the sheep, but goes Himself. Granted, HE GOES THROUGH HIS BODY, but He is not sitting idly by to see what will happen. His mission goes on until it is one hundred percent successful and the LAST ONE is found. Nothing will stop the work of the Shepherd until that last sheep is made to correctly know the Shepherd, who He is, and His great love for him. The Shepherd DOES SEEK until He finds the last one, no matter how long it takes or to what depths He must search!

Someone will ask, "But doesn't God command sinners to CHOOSE this day whom they will serve and to SEEK the Lord while He may be found?" ABSOLUTELY NOT! Oh, yes, the Scripture does say, "And if it seem evil unto you to serve the Lord, CHOOSE YOU THIS DAY WHOM YOU WILL SERVE; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the god of the Amorites, in whose land you dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord" (Jos. 24:15). But those words were never spoken to the unsaved man, without God and without hope in the world; these were the words of God's prophet to Israel, GOD'S PEOPLE, as they possessed the promised land! God has nowhere, in all the pages of His blessed Book, commanded unconverted sinners to "choose" between Him and anything else. DEAD MEN DON'T MAKE CHOICES.

And yes, the Scripture does say, "SEEK ye THE LORD WHILE HE MAY BE FOUND, call upon Him while He is near: let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and He will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon" (Isa. 55:6-7). But again, these words were never addressed to the sinner who never had a relationship with the Lord. They were thundered by the prophet Isaiah to GOD'S BACKSLIDING PEOPLE in a time of spiritual declension and apostasy. It is God's own people who must "seek" the Lord, not the man who is lost and cannot find his way. Thus it is that Jesus said, "For the Son of man is come to SEEK AND TO SAVE THAT WHICH WAS LOST" (Lk. 19:10). It is the Lord's people who are called upon to "choose" between Him and the ways of the flesh, the world, and the devil, not the man who is dead, for "the dead know not anything" (Eccl. 9:5), and are totally incapable of choosing anything but sin.

The popular Churches ridiculously assert that spiritually dead men must somehow "choose" the Lord, but God's testimony about it is just the opposite. The bluntest affirmation that man does not do the choosing of God is that our Lord Jesus Christ Himself testified, "You have not chosen Me, but I HAVE CHOSEN YOU" (Jn. 15:16). In fact, according to Paul, that choice was made by God before He ever made so much as one single thing! "According as HE HAS CHOSEN US in Christ before the foundation of the world" (Eph. 1:4). It is tantamount to blasphemy for anyone to argue that man is capable, of his own "free will," to make a decision for Christ. Note the testimony of Luke: "And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the Word of the Lord; and as many as were ordained to eternal life, believed" (Acts 13:48). The Lord Jesus insists that Life and Faith are the work of God, not the work of man. He said..... "the Son gives life to whom He will" and "this is the work of God, that you believe on Him whom

God has sent" (Jn. 6:29; 5:21). In all fairness, the evangelist who says to the crowd, "Whosoever comes to Jesus will in no wise be cast out," should add the preceding words of Christ: "All that the Father gives Me shall come to Me" (Jn. 6:37). Who is it that will not be cast out? All who come to Him! Who, then, will come to the Saviour? He says, "All whom the Father gives Me." The choice as to who will come to Christ at any given moment is God's, not man's. God does not call all men at the same time. Some are ordained to eternal life, right now, while others will be called later. "For as in Adam ALL DIE, even so in Christ shall ALL BE MADE ALIVE. BUT EVERY MAN IN HIS OWN ORDER..." (I Cor. 15:22-23).

If it were left up to man he would NEVER BELIEVE, for man is totally depraved, totally incapable of that which is good. Left on his own to make a decision for Christ, without first being given life and faith by an act of God, man would never of his own "free will" come to Jesus. "You will not come to Me, that you might have life" (Jn. 5:40).

'Tis not I that did choose You. For, Lord, that could not be:
This heart would still refuse You, Had You not chosen me!

In the true and eloquent words of another, "Let me interject a foundational truth here. It is a truth seldom, if ever, heard among the people of God. The preachers and evangelists studiously avoid it, but it is fundamental to all our understanding of the work of God in this present age. It is a truth given by no less an authority than God's only begotten Son. The following three Scriptures vividly point out God's method of choosing those who are elected to be saved in this age and in the ages to come: First, 'No man can come to Me except the Father which has sent Me draw him' (Jn. 6:44). The second is this: 'All that the Father gives Me shall come to Me; and him that comes unto Me I will in no wise cast out' (Jn. 6:37). And the third is: 'Father, the hour is come; glorify Your Son, that Your Son also may glorify You: as You have given Him power (authority) over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many (all flesh) as You have given Him' (Jn. 17:1-2). Christians blindly strive under the mistaken idea that, if they will only meet certain conditions, God will reply by bringing every man into the fold of Christ in this present age. My friend, this is a very great error. It is about as far from the truth as anything could possibly be. God does not intend to bring all men into the fold now. If that were His intention, He could do it with but one word of His omnipotence. When God's eternal voice speaks, saying, 'Let there be light,' then light immediately floods the universe as it did in the beginning. There is no need for a candle nor the light of the sun, for the Lord God gives them light. That light could not be matched by ten thousand suns, for the light that shone out of darkness in the beginning is the same light that lightens every man that comes into the world. It is the light that shines into the benighted souls, bringing the life of the ages to men who are sleeping in death. 'Lazarus, come forth!' called the Lord, and a dead man sprang from his tomb to reply. 'Saul! Saul!' Jesus called to a disconsolate and determined persecutor, and he quickly replied, 'Lord, what wilt You have me to do?' And so will it be when He calls you, your child, your husband, or your wife with His still small voice, speaking to the inner ear. Whether it be John, George, Henry, Joan, Phyllis, or Louise, all will fall at His feet in penitence and brokenness the moment He speaks, crying, 'Here am I, Lord! What wilt You have me to do?'

"It is useless to try to gather all the world into the Kingdom in this dispensation, for that is not God's purpose in this age. No man comes except the Father draw him. Those who insist on bringing all the world in now are trying to do in this age the work that God Himself has said should be done in the dispensation of the fullness of times. In the

dispensation of the fullness of times, His immutable Word has declared, He will gather all things into Christ, both which are in heaven and in earth, even in Him (Eph. 1:10). 'ALL that the Father has given Me SHALL COME to Me,' said Jesus, and you may be sure that this is the truth. At the end of this age there will not be one soul missing of all that number of the 'firstfruits' who were predestined to come to Him, and, when the age to come has run its course, there will not be one missing of all who are appointed to come to Him in that blessed age. So also may we declare for that wonderful AGE OF THE AGES, the dispensation of the fullness of the times, for God's Word has faithfully declared that in that glorious age of all ages every missing sheep will be accounted for as God gathers together in one the all things into Christ " -end quote.

Some have tried to say that in Eph. 1:10 the things gathered into one in the Christ are limited to those things already in Christ, that is, that it is all things that are "in Christ" that are gathered "into one." That is a mistake that those who oppose the ultimate salvation of all men are only too eager to make, and the error comes from a faulty understanding of what is actually said due to the wording in the King James version. ALL OTHER VERSIONS OF THE SCRIPTURES CLEARLY SHOW THAT SUCH IS NOT THE CASE. It is not "all things in Christ" that are gathered "into one." It is ALL THINGS IN HEAVEN AND IN EARTH GATHERED INTO ONENESS IN AND UNDER THE CHRIST. The Amplified Bible says, "He planned for the maturity of the times and the climax of the ages to UNIFY ALL THINGS and head them up and CONSUMMATE THEM IN CHRIST, both things in heaven and things on earth." The Moffatt translation reads, "It was the purpose of His design to so order it in the fullness of the ages that ALL THINGS IN HEAVEN AND EARTH alike should be gathered up in Christ." J. B. Phillips renders, "He purposed long ago in His sovereign will that all human history should be consummated in Christ, that everything that exists in heaven or earth should find its perfection and fulfillment in Him." We could go on from version to version and they all with one voice show that in the dispensation of the fullness of times God shall gather together into one, into the Christ, ALL THINGS AND ALL BEINGS IN HEAVEN AND IN EARTH. From age to age, those that the Father has given the Christ in each age, will come to Him, praise His name. When the last and crowning age is ended ALL shall have been gathered together into the Christ. What anticipation this stirs in our hearts!

THE WILL OF MAN

At this point I wish to share some searching and enlightening words penned by a servant of the Lord more than eighty-five years ago. "Concerning the nature and the power of man's will, the greatest confusion prevails today, and the most erroneous views are held, even by many of God's children. The popular idea now prevailing, which is taught from the great majority of pulpits, is that man has a 'free will,' and that salvation comes to the sinner through his will co-operating with the Holy Spirit. To deny the 'free will' of man, i.e. his power to choose that which is good, his native ability to accept Christ, is to bring one into disfavor at once, even before most of those who profess to be orthodox. And yet Scripture emphatically says, 'It is not of him that wills, nor of him that runs, but of God that shows mercy' (Rom. 9:16). Which shall we believe: God, or the preachers?

"But does not Scripture say, 'Whosoever will may come'? It does, but does this mean that everybody has the will to come? What of those who won't come? 'Whosoever will may come' no more implies that fallen man has the power in himself to come, than 'Stretch forth Your hand' implies that the man with the withered arm had the inherent ability in himself to comply. It should be obvious that the ability came from the One who spoke the

word: 'Stretch forth your hand.' In and Of himself the natural man has power to reject Christ; but in and of himself he has not the power to receive Christ. And why? Because he has a mind that is 'enmity against' Him (Rom. 8:7); because he has a heart that hates Him (Jn. 15:18). Man chooses that which is according to his nature, and therefore before he will ever choose or prefer that which is divine and spiritual, a new nature must be imparted to him; in other words, he must be born again.

"Let me appeal to the actual experience of the reader of these lines. Was there not a time when you were unwilling to come to Christ? There was. Since then you have come to Him. Are you now prepared to give Him all the glory for that (Ps. 115:1)? Do you not acknowledge that you came to Christ because the Holy Spirit brought you from unwillingness to willingness? You do. Then is it not also a patent fact that the Holy Spirit has not done in many others what He has done in you! Granting that many others have heard the Gospel, been shown their need of Christ, yet, they are still unwilling to come to Him. Thus He has wrought more in you, than in them. Do you answer, Yet I remember well the time when the word of salvation was presented to me, and my conscience testifies that my will acted and that I yielded to the claims of Christ upon me. Quite true. But before you 'Yielded,' the Holy Spirit overcame the native enmity of your mind against God, and this enmity He does not overcome in all at this time. Should it be said, That is because they are unwilling for their enmity to be overcome? Ah, none are thus 'willing' till He has put forth His all-mighty power and wrought a miracle of grace in the heart.

"But let us now inquire, What is the human Will? Is it a self-determining agent, or is it, in turn, determined by something else? Is it sovereign or servant? Is the will superior to every other faculty of our being so that it governs them, or is it moved by their impulses and subject to their pleasure? Does the will rule the mind, or does the mind control the will? Is the will free to do as it pleases, or is it under the necessity of rendering obedience to something outside of itself?

"What is the Will? We answer, the will is the faculty of choice, the immediate cause of all action. Choice necessarily implies the refusal of one thing and the acceptance of another. The positive and the negative must both be present to the mind before there can be any choice. In every act of the will there is a preference - the desiring of one thing rather than another. Where there is no preference, but complete indifference, there is no volition. To will is to choose, and to choose is to decide between two or more alternatives. But there is something which influences the choice; something which determines the decision. Hence the will cannot be sovereign because it is the servant of that something. The will cannot be both sovereign and servant. It cannot be both cause and effect. The will is not causative, because, as we have said, something causes it TO CHOOSE, therefore that something must be the causative agent. Choice itself is affected by certain considerations, is determined by various influences brought to bear upon the individual himself, hence, volition is the effect of these considerations and influences, and if the effect, it must be their servant; and if the will is their servant then it is not sovereign, and if the will is not sovereign, we certainly cannot predicate absolute 'freedom' of it.

"That which determines the will is that which causes it to choose. If the will is determined, then there must be a determiner. What is it that determines the will? We reply, THE STRONGEST MOTIVE POWER WHICH IS BROUGHT TO BEAR UPON IT. What this motive power is, varies in different cases. With one it may be the logic of reason, with another the voice of conscience. with another the impulse of the emotions, with another the whisper of the Tempter, with another the power of the Holy Spirit; whichever of these

presents the strongest motive power and exerts the greatest influence upon the individual himself, is that which impels the will to act. In other words, the action of the will is determined by that condition of mind which has the greatest degree of tendency to excite volition.

"Human philosophy insists that it is the will which governs the man, but the Word of God teaches that it is the heart which is the dominating center of our being. Many Scriptures might be quoted in substantiation of this. 'Keep your heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life' (Prov. 4:23). 'For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders,' etc. (Mk. 7:21). Here our Lord traces these sinful acts back to their source, and declares that their fountain is the 'heart,' and not the will! Again, 'This people draws nigh unto Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me' (Mat. 15:8). If further proof were required we might call attention to the fact that the word 'heart' is found in the Bible more than three times oftener than is the word 'will,' and nearly half of the references to the latter refer to God's will!

"When we affirm that it is the heart and not the will which governs man, we are not merely striving about words, but insisting on a distinction that is of vital importance. Here is an individual before whom two alternatives are placed; which will he choose? We answer, The one which is most agreeable to himself, i.e., his 'heart' - the innermost core of his being. Before the sinner is set a life of virtue and piety, and a life of sinful indulgence; which will he follow? The latter. Why? Because this is his choice. But does that prove the will is sovereign? Not at all. Go back from effect to cause. WHY does the sinner choose a life of sinful indulgence? Because he prefers it - and he does prefer it, all arguments to the contrary notwithstanding. And why does he prefer it? Because his heart is sinful. The same alternatives, in like manner, confront the Christian, and he chooses and strives after a life of piety and virtue. Why? Because God has given him a new heart or nature. Hence we say that it is not the will which makes the sinner impervious to all appeals to 'forsake his way,' but his corrupt and evil heart. He will not come to Christ, because he does not want to, and he does not want to because his heart hates Him and loves sin (Jer. 17:9).

"In what does the sinner's 'free will' consist? The sinner is 'free' in the sense of being unforced from without. God never forces the sinner to sin. But the sinner is not free to choose or do either good or evil, because an evil heart within is ever inclining him toward sin. Let us illustrate what we have in mind. I hold in my hand a book. I release it; what happens? It falls. In what direction? Downwards; always downwards. Why? Because, answering the law of gravity, its own weight sinks it. Suppose I desire that book to occupy a position three feet higher; then what? I must lift it; a power outside of that book must raise it. Such is the relationship which fallen man sustains toward God. Whilst Divine power upholds him, he is preserved from plunging still deeper into sin; let that power be withdrawn, and he falls - his own weight (of sin) drags him down. God does not push him down, anymore than I did that book. Let all Divine restraint be removed, and every man is capable of becoming, would become, a Cain, a Pharaoh, a Judas. How then is the sinner to move heavenwards? By an act of his own will? Not so! A power outside of himself must grasp hold of him and lift him every inch of the way. The sinner is free, but free in one direction only - free to fall, free to sin. As the Word expresses it: 'For when you were the servants of sin, you were free from righteousness' (Rom. 6:20). The sinner is free to do as he pleases, always as he pleases (except as he is restrained by God), but his pleasure is to sin.

"We repeat our question: Does it lie within the power of the sinner's will to yield himself up to God? Let us attempt an answer by asking several others: Can water (of itself) rise above its own level? Can a clean thing come out of an unclean? Can the will reverse the whole tendency and strain of human nature? Can that which is under the dominion of sin originate that which is pure and holy? Manifestly not. If ever the will of a fallen and depraved creature is to move God wards, a Divine power must be brought to bear upon it which will overcome the influences of sin that pull in a counter direction. This is only another way of saying, 'No man can come to Me, except the Father which has sent Me, draw him' (Jn. 6:44). And how effective is that drawing? 'ALL that the Father gives Me SHALL COME TO ME' (Jn. 6:37). In other words, people must be MADE WILLING! " - end quote.

Ah, God did not MAKE Jonah go to Nineveh - but He did MAKE HIM WILLING to go! The notion that God cannot, or will not, influence the wills of all men to bring them unto Himself is a wicked insult to both His redeeming love and His omnipotence!

I WILL DRAW ALL MEN UNTO ME

It is a strange theory that obsesses men that the human will is greater in power than God, and that, no matter what the will of God is for His creatures, man is able finally to wreck it. It is a curious hypothesis that states that although the Holy Spirit seeks to woo all men to Christ, since God loves all mankind and wills to save all men, still, the omniscient God has boxed Himself into a corner, since the will of God is bound by the will of man, and the Omnipotent Spirit can be resisted by finite man if man so chooses. Such faulty reasoning actually brings into prominence ANOTHER OMNIPOTENCE which, because it baffles the omnipotence and love of God, is by far the greater. Man will not so God cannot! What makes this notion so tragic is that it DEIFIES MAN, elevating him to god-hood, and aligns all who embrace it with the very sin that caused the fall in the beginning! The first sin committed by man had its roots in the desire to be a FREE MORAL AGENT! Free moral agency is not the doctrine of the Bible. It is the doctrine of Romanism; and it is the doctrine of humanism. It was Erasmus, the humanist, who wrote on the freedom of man's will. It has always been the humanists that have sought to deify man and have boasted of the freedom of their sovereign will.

The serpent entered upon the stage with the bold question as to the authority of God: "Yea, has God said, You shall not eat of every tree of the Garden?" (Gen. 3:1). This was Satan's crafty inquiry; and had the Word of God been dwelling richly in Eve's heart, her answer might have been direct, simple, and conclusive. To raise a question, when God has spoken, is blasphemy. Thus, the question, "Has God said?" was followed by the lie: "You shall not surely die." But the enticement to induce Eve to disobey the command of God was couched in this argument: "God does know that in the day you eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and you shall be AS GODS, knowing good and evil" (Gen. 3:5). YOU SHALL BE AS GODS! Can we not see by this that man was grasping after GODHOOD, which godhood gave him the right to CHOOSE FOR HIMSELF whether to obey God or not obey Him! This godhood, furthermore, was to bring to man the knowledge of good and evil, the innate ability to discern and choose between the good and the evil. Thus, the doctrine of "free moral agency" was spawned by the devil in Eden's fair Garden, and the fruit thereof was the fall! And the lie is still preached from the pulpit of the apostate churches all over the world - the lie that man has the power and the right to CHOOSE FOR HIMSELF between God and the devil, between sin and

righteousness, between redemption and man's own way, and that this "choice" of man is final and irrevocable.

Man's effort at free moral agency was his attempt at godhood. Man became a "god" alright, in the eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil - but he became a god in the wrong realm - the demigod of a lower realm - for at the same time that God acknowledged man's "deity" (Gen. 3:22) He also CAST HIM FROM THE GARDEN - cast him from the heavenly realm - and set him in the earth "to till the ground from which he was taken." And from that day to this man has discovered to his sorrow that he definitely is not a free moral agent, for man's boasted freedom is in truth "the bondage of corruption"; he "serves divers lusts and pleasures"; he is "sold under (slavery to) sin"; his will is biased toward evil, and therefore he is free in one direction only, namely, in the direction of evil. He is unable to fulfill the role of godhood he assumed. He cannot weigh good over evil and come out on top, because his desires are filled with the mystery of iniquity. "There is none righteous, NO NOT ONE!"

In supporting the omnipotence of man's godhood, the radio preacher declared, "Man makes his choice, and once it is made God cannot do one thing about it." What brash stupidity! It is true that man has a will, but so also has God. It is true that man is endowed with power, but God is all-powerful. It is true that, speaking generally, the material world is regulated by law, but behind that law is the law-Giver and law Administrator. Man is but the creature. God is the Creator, and untold ages before man first saw light "the mighty God" (Isa. 9:6) existed, and ere the world was founded, made His plans; and being infinite in power and man only finite, His purpose and plan cannot be withstood or thwarted by the creatures of His own hands.

To say that Christ is unable to win to Himself those who are unwilling is to deny that all power in heaven and earth is His. To say that Christ cannot put forth His power without destroying man's responsibility is a begging of the question here raised, for HE HAS put forth His power and MADE WILLING those who HAVE come to Him, and if He did this without destroying their responsibility, just why "CANNOT" He do so with others? If He is able to win the heart of just one sinner to Himself, why not that of another? To say, as is usually said, the others will not let Him is to impeach His sufficiency and the depths of His love. It is a question of HIS will, not man's! If the Lord Jesus has decreed, desired, purposed the salvation of all mankind, then the entire human race will be saved, or, otherwise, He lacks the power to make good His intentions; and in such a case it could never be said, "He shall see the travail of His soul and be satisfied." The issue raised involves THE DEITY of the Saviour, for a DEFEATED Saviour cannot be God.

His promise is sure, His purpose unailing: "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw A-L-L M-E-N unto Me" (Jn. 12:32). This speaks not of Jesus being lifted up in praise, or lifted up by preaching, or lifted up in our spiritual lives, for the record states: "This He said, signifying what death He should die" (Jn. 12:33). It was the cross of Calvary upon which He was to be "lifted up," and our Lord says emphatically, "And I, if I be lifted up (dying upon the cross) from the earth, WILL DRAW ALL MEN UNTO ME." And yet people have the brazen audacity to accuse us of being "heretics" because we believe and teach this plain statement of our Lord! May God have mercy upon them!

The truth of the supernatural and all-powerful DRAWING of God is one of the most neglected of all the great truths of God's Word, and yet it is one of the most important. Undoubtedly the reason for its neglect is that it is repugnant to the world of unregenerate

man, and professing Christians whose theology denies the sovereign and infinite grace of God. One of the chief characteristics of apostate Christendom is that it vigorously opposes any teaching of Scripture that refuses to give man the glory. Therefore any doctrine of the Bible that declares man's helplessness apart from the activating power of God is bound to arouse the ire of the adversary and his followers.

The words translated "draw" and "drew" in the Greek New Testament are HELKUO and HELKO. Each of these words has the basic meaning of "compel..... draw..... pull," and "tug." In most instances the force which does the drawing or compelling is sufficient to cause the object of the drawing to respond fully. For example, in Jn. 18:10, it is said that "Peter having a sword DREW it..." The impetuous disciple most assuredly did not draw the weapon out of its sheath in a gingerly or wooing fashion. Nor did the sword seek to draw itself out by its own will and good pleasure! Peter didn't merely "invite" the sword to come out, in spite of any resistance the blade may have had as it dragged the leather scabbard, the muscular arm of Peter yanked it forcefully out in obedience to his will.

One of the forms of HELKO is used in the Song of Solomon (in the Septuagint, Greek Old Testament) to speak of the love of the Bridegroom which causes the Bride to cry out to her maidens: "DRAW me after thee!" (S. of S. 1:4). The irresistible power of the heavenly Bridegroom's love for His betrothed creates a corresponding love in her heart. It is the heavenly One who initiates the love, creating faith and devotion in His beloved as He reveals Himself to be desirable and trustworthy. Already she has been drawn unto Him in deeper hunger; already she has longed for the kisses of His mouth, those tender moments of communion and prayer, wherein is revealed His love. Already she has smelled the sweet odors of His oils; already she has beheld Him upon the cross for her, she has beheld HIS LIFE poured out for her. This but increases her desire to be drawn with greater power, with stronger cords of love, with greater call to separation, and even with greater suffering, that she may arise and run AFTER HIM. She is more and more realizing the truth of her helplessness to run unless He draws.

We little realize that mighty unseen power that is drawing, drawing, drawing us like an irresistible, supernatural magnet. We speak of our hunger for the Lord, we tell of the longing we feel for Him, we pour out our hunger and longing at His feet as though He did not know they were in our hearts. We comprehend but little that all this is the drawing of God; that if He did not graciously put the hunger in our hearts, we should be cold and barren; we should be satisfied with but little of that into which He is constraining us to enter. Let this sink down into our hearts and ever abide there, that every heavenward impulse in our souls, every upward desire, IS THE DRAWING OF GOD. No sinner could be saved if God did not convict, quicken, deal with, and draw him. So many times we lose sight of this. We could not desire His will nor His best, we could not love and hunger for our dear Lord if God did not graciously put within us a hunger for Him and His will. Dear child of God, if you feel the drawing of God in your soul, cherish it as you would cherish a great treasure. If you feel a deeper hunger, if you are entering into a closer walk with Him, do not look upon it carelessly, nor treat it lightly.

The words HELKO and HELKUO may be found eight times in the Greek New Testament. I have already mentioned the passage in which Peter forcibly drew his sword from its sheath to cut off the ear of Malchus. Other passages contain the idea of force connected with this word, such as in Jn. 21:6, where we find that the load of fish was so huge that the disciples could not haul it aboard the boat. Their seasoned muscles were not able to pull such a great weight out of the water, for John says, "Now they were not able to

DRAW it for the multitude of fish." Yet, a moment later, Simon Peter hauls the net through the water and up to the shore. This again is referred to as "drawing" the net load of fish with a force that is not resisted.

When the apostle James wishes to describe the manner in which rich men forcibly drag those who are indebted to them to prison, he uses the word HELKO. In James 2:6 he writes, "Do not rich men oppress you and DRAW you before the judgment seats?" This "drawing," of course, was not with wooing or pleading! It was an act of force that absolutely took no care of the willingness of the person drawn! The poor man might resist ever so much, and he might cry and plead, but he was drawn irresistibly to the place of judgment! It is with precisely this kind of forceful drawing that the Lord Jesus is talking when He says, "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will DRAW all men unto me!" And, thank God, they are not just drawn "toward" Him, but UNTO HIM all the way! Because the Christ was "lifted up" on the cross of Calvary, dying on behalf of every man of Adam's race, the promise is sure, He will inexorably DRAW all men unto Himself! The divine plan calls for the Church, the body of Christ, to be drawn to Him in this age, all the living nations of the world to be drawn to Him in the next age, and the remainder of men, all who have ever lived and died upon this planet in the ages to come.

Another example of the use of the Greek work HELKO which shows that the drawing is by force and in spite of the resistance of the one drawn, is in Acts 16:19. When Paul and Silas were vexed by the demonic slave girl, Paul cast the evil spirit out of her. Her masters saw that all hope of profit was gone, so they grabbed the two servants of Jesus and forcibly dragged them to the judges in the market place. We read: "And when her masters saw that the hope of their gain was gone, they caught Paul and Silas, and DREW them into the market place unto the rulers." This was not an act in which the persons drawn delighted to cooperate. No, it was an act of force which "compelled" them to go where they would not have preferred to go! So it is with man who is spiritually dead and happy to follow the devil to hell because he prefers darkness to light. He does not "come to Jesus" of his own "free will." If he has eyes to see and ears to hear the Lord it is because God has quickened his spirit and opened his spiritual sight and unplugged his spiritual ears, as it is written, "The hearing ear, and the seeing eye, the LORD has made even both of them! " (Prov. 20:12).

Still another instance in which the Greek word HELKO is translated "draw," when it refers to taking by force and overcoming all resistance, is Acts 21:30. Paul is seen in the temple at Jerusalem, and the Jews are so aroused by the presence of this apostle of Jesus that they incite the mob to lynch him if at all possible. They did not gently invite him to "please leave," nor did they "lovingly" draw him out of the place. No, they grabbed him forcibly, determined to haul him out of their holy house. The Scripture declares that "All the city was moved, and the people ran together; and they took Paul, and DREW him out of the temple, and at once the doors were shut." Of course he was rescued at this point by the Roman soldiers before the Jews could kill him for desecrating the temple by his presence. The point is that "draw" speaks of violence and force, not gentle persuasion.

No one ever comes to Jesus without God having planned the time and the manner. No one ever "decides" to accept Jesus of his own "free will." It is the volition of the Lord that moves powerfully and irresistibly upon the sinner to trust the Saviour, and not the will of the spiritually dead creature who loves darkness rather than light! "No man can come to Me, except the Father which has sent Me DRAW him... " (Jn. 6:44). Do you think that you came to the Christ of your own free will, as a free moral agent? Do you dare assume that

your old corrupt mind and heart somehow became persuaded to violate its very nature and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ? Then read Jn. 6:44 and Jn. 12:32 again and accept it for what it plainly says! Treat these verses with honesty. Jesus says that NO ONE can come unto Him apart from the irresistible force of God's drawing, and He also says that because He died HE WILL FORCIBLY AND IRRESISTIBLY DRAW A-L-L M-E-N unto Himself.

I sought the Lord, and afterwards I knew
He moved my soul to seek Him, seeking me!
It was not I that found, O Saviour true;
No, I was found of Thee!

Are you a born again believer? Then kneel humbly before your God and Saviour and confess that it was because HE DREW you, and not because you exercised some inherent prerogative of "free moral agency." Acknowledge His Word to be truth, and that just as surely as HE SUCCESSFULLY DREW YOU, He shall likewise draw and DRAW and D-R-A-W until He has drawn ALL MEN unto Himself! We ourselves are the living proof that He both can and will do it! "GOD has saved us ... not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began" (11 Tim. 1: 9). "The Son gives life to whom He will..." (Jn. 5:2 1). "I will draw all men unto Me." (Jn. 12:32).

BY ONE MAN

"For the love of Christ constrains us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead" (II Cor. 5:14). How can one who is dead find God? Impossible! Why should Paul connect the love of Christ with the fact that ALL WERE DEAD? Simply because it is the love of God in the Christ which is accomplishing this work, in His sovereign way, of bringing the whole world back to life and to God. Again we read in Eph. 2:12 "That at that time you were without Christ, being aliens from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world." Ah, this is really a desperate situation! And all mankind was in a place like that. All of us were absolutely dead to God and without God in the world.

One of the most enlightening passages along this line is found in Jn. 1:10. "He was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and THE WORLD KNEW HIM NOT." How can anyone seek after the Lord if they don't know Him? How clear that mankind was in a dilemma. We could not direct our own steps or order our way before the Lord. We were without God and we were dead. And now John declares that Jesus came and walked in the midst of the people He had created, AND THEY DID NOT KNOW HIM! What chance did men have to return to God EXCEPT GOD HELP THEM?

The prophet Jeremiah declared, "O Lord, I know that the WAY OF MAN IS NOT IN HIMSELF; IT IS NOT IN MAN THAT WALKS TO DIRECT HIS STEPS" (Jer. 10:23). God had been saying through the prophet that His people were scattered, His pastors had become brutish and His tabernacle was destroyed, so it was obvious that the way of man is not in himself. This being true, man cannot direct his steps or set his pathway. This is the condition in which God began His redemptive work with man. If it was not in us to direct our steps, then we could not direct our steps back to God. This ability was not a part of the makeup of man. In the beginning the first man deliberately, and according to the plan of God, directed his steps away from God and, hopelessly lost, man has walked

that way ever since. Mankind was made blind and couldn't see his way back to God, even though, as Paul said to the Athenians, surely God is not far from any one of us.

How we thank God that He sent one Man into this world who did know the way back to the Father! This Man knew how to order His own steps, and also how to order our steps, when we could not direct them ourselves. We can see it so plainly in a little child. Even after the child learns to walk, it does not know where or how to walk to keep out of danger and harm. Its way must be directed by an adult. Without any fear it would run onto a highway filled with speeding cars. It does not know how to order its way. Just so, mankind does not know how to direct its way!

"For God has concluded them all in unbelief, that He might have mercy upon all" (Rom. 11:32). "Therefore as by the offense of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. For as by one man's disobedience (the) many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall (the) many be made righteous" (Rom. 5:18-19). "For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order" (I Cor. 15:21-23). 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 simple and obvious truth that if the first Adam could do something which the last Adam could not undo, then the first Adam had more power than the last Adam. In other words, if Adam could put ten people into sin and death, and the Christ could take only nine out, then Adam would have greater influence and power than the Christ. But whether we believe it or not, ALL POWER HAS BEEN GIVEN UNTO THE CHRIST.

With the foregoing truth in mind let us read a most remarkable and significant statement in Jn. 12:31. "NOW is the judgment of this world." What a volume of truth is contained in those few short words! The word "judgment" literally means A DECISION. We know that any judgment is a decision. Jesus was saying that now is THE DECISION of this world, or now is the time the world is going to decide what it is going to do. At the time He uttered these words Jesus was preparing to be sacrificed on behalf of the people of the world. He came to taste death for every man. He was speaking just prior to His crucifixion and the world was soon to make a momentous decision. The world would decide just what it would do with the Christ. It should be clear to every honest heart that the world at that or any other time, WAS NOT CAPABLE OF TURNING TO GOD, or of MAKING A DECISION FOR ITSELF THAT WOULD CAUSE IT TO RETURN TO GOD. There was absolutely no desire, no will, nor any purpose on the part of mankind to return to God. The people of Israel, with the Gentiles, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord and His Anointed. They wouldn't have "this man" to rule over them. They were finished with Jesus, the Son of the living God. So Jesus declared that the world must decide what it would do, yet it was in no condition to decide!

This condition is again mirrored in the lives of our children. In the life of a child, there are times when decisions must be made, and the child is not capable of deciding, SO SOMEONE ELSE MUST DO IT FOR HIM. The parent, or other responsible person, must make the decision. Here in chapter twelve of John we see a whole world that is estranged from God and dead in trespasses and sins, without God and without hope. Here was a world whose ears were stopped, whose eyes were blinded, and understanding had been taken from their hearts. Yet this world was going to be required to make a decision!

Another profound statement, freighted with meaning, accompanies the statement by Jesus that we have previously quoted. He said, "NOW shall the prince of this world be cast out" (Jn. 12:31). Christ proclaims two great truths which cannot be separated. "NOW is the judgment (decision) of this world: NOW shall the prince of this world be cast out." The world had come to the crossroads and must make a decision, but was not capable of doing it. So Jesus said that the prince of this world would be cast out and that He, Jesus, the last Adam, the representative of the whole human race, would decide for the whole human race, just as the first Adam, the first representative man, decided for us all. If the first Adam, as a representative man was able to decide for all the world and put us all into sin and death, then the last Adam, the Christ of God, as the representative man could decide to take all of us out of sin!

How meaningful, then, the inspired words of the apostle Paul, "For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son..." (Rom. 5:10). According to all human reasoning this is an impossibility - that my enemy could be reconciled to me by the death of my own son. But Paul argues that the death of Jesus reconciled us, the enemies of God, unto God. By the death of the Son of God was this wrought. Naturally, an enemy would refuse to be reconciled. He would have nothing to do with it. Nevertheless, God sent His Son, and by the dying of that Son, reconciled T-H-E W-O-R-L-D unto Himself (II Cor. 5:19). God did not consult with the world, did not ask the world whether it wanted to be reconciled. He just went ahead and did it! God knew from the beginning that we would not be capable of deciding for ourselves. We would be so bound by the fetters of sin, so bound by our pride and ignorance, our minds so twisted by the illusions of this world, our reasoning so warped by the god of this world, that we could not decide. So God decreed that He would seal up all humanity in unbelief, conclude all under sin, stop up their ears that they could not hear, blind their eyes that they could not see, and take understanding from their hearts that they could not understand. He would send His own Son as a representative man to make the decision for us, to lead us all back to Himself, since we were not able to direct our path or order our way. He concluded us all in unbelief and then let JESUS DECIDE FOR US. This, God did!

BY ONE MAN! Dare we believe it? Dare we embrace the simple but glorious truth that "...as by the offense of one judgment came upon ALL MEN to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon ALL MEN unto justification of life" (Rom. 5:18)? Are the blessed words of the apostle Paul too good to be true, wherein he states, "God was in Christ RECONCILING T-H-E W-O-R-L-D unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and has committed unto us the word of reconciliation" (II Cor. 5:19)? Ah - the destiny of the whole race was settled in one man, even Jesus. He was both the sacrifice and the new federal head of the race who would gather us all up into His loving arms and bring us back to God. He would lead all into salvation. Oh! how I rejoice that God did not permit the world to decide the eternal question, but that He sent His Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, to do it for us. What matchless love! And in God's own good time, as the orderly procession of the ages run their course, all will be worked out for His glory.

In view of the marvelous, glorious, majestic and all-inclusive work of the last Adam - what good would it do for man to be a FREE MORAL AGENT? God has overruled the will of man, anyway. Oh, no, beloved, man is not a free moral agent. JESUS CHRIST IS THE ONLY MAN WHO IS A FREE MORAL AGENT. And He made the right choice, the one and only right decision. And HE MADE IT FOR US ALL! Praise His name! And we, the

FIRSTFRUITS of His redemption, are the proof, the guarantee, that God is both willing and able to save ALL. Thank God! Man is NOT a free moral agent!

Chapter 5

The Wages Of Sin Is Death

In considering the issue of the eternal punishment of the lost, many people can only visualize this punishment as vindictive. In other words, sinners are afflicted by God because of God's intolerable disposition towards them in their sin. And this is the impression one certainly receives from Calvinistic descriptions such as the following: "The damned shall be packed like brick into a kiln, and be so bound that they cannot move a limb, nor even an eyelid; and while thus fixed, the Almighty shall blow the fires of hell through them for ever." G. H. Lang, commenting on Rev. 14:10-11 in *The Last Assize*, states basically the same thought, though perhaps in less barbaric language: "Mingled unmixed; every ingredient compounded that shall make the punishment fit the crime; but no element of mercy or alleviation shall be mixed with this dread draught of the wine of the wrath of God. If the Lamb can look on their torments, shall His saints be unable to do so." And on this same passage yet another further shockingly comments: "Should this eternal punishment and this fire be extinguished, it would in a great measure obscure the light of heaven, and put an end to a great part of the happiness and glory of the blessed!

Of all the blasphemous absurdities of the harlot Church systems, this is probably the worst, a lie intended to scare poor souls into her clutches in order to rob them of their dollars, a lie which makes our God of love to be a hideous monster, an insane and sadistic monstrosity who takes delight in tormenting and torturing His creatures made in His own image, a lie which makes our Saviour to be nothing but a lunatic, a deceiver, and a rascal of the first magnitude. It makes Calvary to be the most awful burlesque ever enacted on earth.

Here is a fact. The Word says, "The wages of sin is death" (Rom. 6:23). Wherever one goes he finds someone quoting that plain declaration of fact. But the remarkable thing is, that no one believes it, not even the ones who continually preach it. The hell-fire-and-brimstone enthusiast loudly proclaims that verse of Scripture to be true, and then abruptly and shamefully contradicts himself by maintaining that the wages of sin is ETERNAL TORMENT! But IF ETERNAL TORMENT WERE THE PENALTY FOR SIN, THEN JESUS NEVER ATONED FOR SIN. HE DID NOT SUFFER ETERNAL TORMENT. AND IF THAT IS THE PRICE THAT GOD DEMANDS AS PUNISHMENT FOR SIN, THEN JESUS PAID NOTHING AT ALL. If my punishment were eternal torment, and Jesus took my place, receiving the full judgment for my sin, then it should be clear to any thinking person that He would have had to suffer eternally in hell. That is the only way the debt could be paid!

But He merely became a man, lived as a man, was tempted as a man, suffered as a man, died on a cross, was buried, descended into Hades, and the third day arose, and is now seated on the right hand of the Majesty on high. And if eternal torment is the punishment for sin, then every son of Adam, whether saved or lost, still has to pay the full penalty himself. Then God's righteous wrath can never be appeased until every sinner, who ever committed even one sin, has paid that debt in full. If eternal torment is the punishment for sin, then Calvary was nothing but a farce, a burlesque, a travesty, and a

sham. Then Jesus died a failure and in vain, and never redeemed anyone from anything. If eternal torment were the penalty for sin, then Jesus is not the Saviour of men, for He failed to take our place, and pay our debt, by being eternally tormented. And if He is not the Saviour of men, then He is not even a good man, but a liar, and therefore a rogue and a deceiving rascal. And therefore, if eternal torment is the penalty for sin, then salvation is a mere myth, and the Bible the world's most abominable maze of evil imaginings; for it then merely leads men to trust for deliverance to a concept which will lead to everlasting sorrow.

If the wages of sin is eternal torment, then we must re-write the Bible from Genesis to Revelation. We must make the Bible say that, if that is what God meant. We must make the Bible say, "And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat: but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, you shall not eat of it: for in the day that you eat thereof you shall surely SUFFER ETERNAL TORMENT IN HELL" (Gen. 2:16-17). We must correct the Word of God so that it says, "The soul that sins, it shall be eternally tormented in hell" (Eze. 18:4). Jn. 3:16 must be made to correctly read, "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him should not be eternally tormented, but spend eternity in heaven." If the wages of sin is eternal torment then Rom. 5:12 must be made to say, "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and eternal torment by sin; and so eternal torment passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." You will have to tear the Bible all to pieces and re-write literally hundreds and thousands of passages if you say that the wages of sin is eternal torment!

Oh, that men might begin to read, and to heed what is written! "The wages of sin is death," says the Lord. And it is true, even though the majority of men still think that the wages of sin is eternal torment, one of the most abominable and notorious lies ever told, a product of popish fraud and deception and greed. The wages of sin is actually death. And Jesus died! He met the full demands of law. He paid the debt of sin in full, blessed be His wonderful name!

The "annihilationist" has another scheme. He is going to have a few men of his own persuasion to be saved, and then after such-and-such has happened, all the rest of mankind are to be simply blotted out of existence. They will simply cease to exist! That is his idea of the penalty for sin. To the annihilationist the wages of sin is ETERNAL DEATH. But that is not what the Word says! The Bible nowhere speaks of "eternal death." God did not say to Adam, "In the day that you eat thereof you shall surely eternally die." The record does not state that "the wages of sin is eternal death." It does not say that "the soul that sins, it shall die forever." To the contrary, it points to the END of death for "The last enemy that shall be destroyed is DEATH" (I Cor. 15:26), and the beloved apostle John, banished to the barren Isle of Patmos for the Word of God heard a great voice out of heaven saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He shall 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 ... for the former things are passed away" (Rev. 21:3-4). But again, if the wages of sin were utter annihilation, or eternal death, then there is no hope for anyone. For Jesus was not annihilated! He did not stay dead for ever! If annihilation is the penalty for sin, then every son of Adam, saved or lost, must yet suffer his own penalty and be blotted out of existence for evermore. Then Jesus never saved anyone from anything. And then we all might as well enjoy this world to the full; for it is the only life and existence that any of us will ever know!

"For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. 6:23). It is not written that the wages shall be death, but the passage we have before us, penned by divine inspiration, by God's finger, is, "The wages of sin IS death." "She that lives in pleasure," the Scripture again says, "is dead while she lives." Dead in trespasses and in sins. It is a sad and most horrible fact that there are millions and thousands of millions of people going about this earth dead in their spirits! Dead to God! Dead to virtue! Dead to truth! Dead to purity! Dead to righteousness! DEAD!

I speak not, therefore, concerning a death that is to come. I speak of the wages, OPSONIA, which in the original 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. The free gift of God is the reverse of this. God's soldiers do not receive the LIFE OF THE AGES as Wages, but as a free gift. I would point out that these Wages are given to those who have enlisted under a banner and are fighting for someone. There are but two armies in this world.

One marches to the drum beat roll,
The deep mouthed clarion's bray,
And bears upon a crimson scroll,
"Our mission is to SLAY!"

That is the devil's army. There is another army - it is God's.

Along our ranks no sabers shine,
No blood red pennons wave;
Our banners bear one single line:
"Our mission is to SAVE!"

You are on one side or the other, and you will get your Wages. The devil's Saturday night comes. God's Saturday night comes. Every man gets his Wages. And Adam and all in Adam HAVE ALREADY RECEIVED THEIR WAGES! When God passed sentence upon Adam He passed sentence not only upon ONE MAN, Adam, but upon all men in Adam, the entire race. In that day of death, it became more than the death of a single man, but it became the death of all humanity. Humanity left the realm of life, and entered into another realm 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. The truth is not that man is under the sentence of and in danger of being lost, 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, 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. 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 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 pick 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 you eat of it you shall surely die." The words "you shall surely die" are often translated "dying you shall die," or "you are 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.

The word "death" means vastly more than this old dilapidated body going to the grave; it means the whole condition and state of being of the man outside of Christ. May God make this truth real to your hearts! 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), "And this is the record, that God has given unto us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He that has the Son has life: and he that has not the Son of God has not life" (I Jn. 5:11-12). "I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat this bread, he shall live forever: and the bread that I will give is My flesh, which I will give for the life of the world" (Jn. 6:51).

"The dead know not anything" (Eccl. 9:5). Furthermore, the dead see not anything, nor do they hear or feel anything. How can a natural man who is dead in trespasses and sins hope to see or understand the things that belong to the wonderful realm of life, 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 those 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!

Death takes in this whole dreadful realm of sin, weakness, fear, sorrow, pain, heartache, rebellion, strife, war, sickness, torment, sadness and trouble in which men walk without the peace and joy and transforming power of God in their lives. Men need to know that they are dead and that the wrath of God abides upon them. "But," you may ask, "what is the wrath of God?" I must reply that the wrath of God is death! "The soul that sins, it shall die," is the edict of the Lord. God's wrath against sin is manifested in the death of the sinner, a Christless death in which he is 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. He abides in this death throughout all the decades, centuries, or millenniums of his existence until Christ comes into his heart. It was this very truth that Jesus was making clear to us when He said, "He that has the Son has life, but he that has not the Son of God has not life; but the wrath of God abides on him." The wrath of God is death. Though such an 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 spiritual things, and an enemy of God. I know many people who are quite intelligent, capable in their field, civil, polite, personable, courteous, and caring in an earthly kind of way; and yet, when the subject of SPIRITUAL THINGS and CHRIST is introduced into the conversation, suddenly the true nature emerges and the true antipathy the person has toward the living God will come forth. They are dead to God, and 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 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 why he is here or where he is going.

In the conflict with the enemies who have to be overcome by 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, 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, destroys all vitality, corrupts the mind, disturbs the emotions, torments the soul, and reduces the eye to dust and leaves only an empty socket. Do not talk of death as if 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.

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 spirit 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 Jairus' 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 you, 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 stinks." Jesus said to her, "Said I not unto you, that if you would believe, you should 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, said, "Lazarus, come forth!" and life pulsed 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 have not had time for sin to run its course and to effect its devastating changes. Like Jairus' daughter, they still look alive - why she looks as though she sleeps! 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 Jairus' 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 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 stinks 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 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, 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 some like Jairus' 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." 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 you 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.

When Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God, came into this world to reveal the LIFE OF GOD, 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 with broad phylacteries, wearing their mitres, 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 mighty 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 withers, 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, but it is not the path to sonship and the fullness of HIS LIFE AND GLORY. Oh! there is no death anywhere more horrible than that to be found in dead religion. It is the land of the living dead, a land filled with 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 transforming power, 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, 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.

THE SAVIOUR OF THE WORLD

All men are born sinners; and the wages of sin is death. But Jesus became a sin offering for all men, He carried those sins to the cross, and that ends the matter. And there, because He actually atoned for ALL those sins, He actually "ABOLISHED DEATH." To abolish is to do away with entirely. Death is no more. That is God's estimation of the fruit of Christ's redemption! "Our Saviour Jesus Christ, who HAS ABOLISHED DEATH, and has brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel" (II Tim. 1:10).

We have been told a lot of funny stories. How we need to get back to the Word, and to it alone! How we need to forsake the imaginings of mere men, and get our feet planted firmly on solid rock! How we need to cease limiting the Holy One of Israel and renouncing the all-inclusive victory of Calvary! For there, whether we believe it or not, our Lord tasted death "for EVERY MAN" (Heb. 2:9). Yes, He only tasted it. He was a man for thirty-three and a half years; He died; He descended into Hades, the realm of the dead; He remained

in death but three days. He merely sampled death. He sampled it in the place of every son of Adam. He actually tasted death for E-V-E-R-Y M-A-N! Then He arose, victor over every foe. And as a result of that victory, ALL MEN SHALL HAVE LIFE. And through that death He actually bought back THE WORLD, A-L-L O-F I-T, unto Himself. No, He did not reconcile only a few believers unto Himself! Let us forever forsake the kind of ignorance that can contradict the words of inspiration: "To wit, that God was in Christ RECONCILING T-H-E W-O-R-L-D (A-L-L OF IT) UNTO HIMSELF, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and has committed unto us the Word of reconciliation" (11 Cor. 5:19).

One wonders what most Christians read their Bibles for. They certainly get very little out of them worth mentioning. If they did, then they would have discovered long ago that "by the righteousness of One the free gift came upon A-L-L MEN unto justification of life" (Rom. 5:18). Oh, that all might somehow come to realize the enormity and compass of the work of Calvary! Satan would ever limit that work, set it aside, for it is his work to discount and belittle it, and eventually set it aside for it is his undoing. He would keep men blinded as to the great debt of gratitude they owe for such a mighty deliverance. He would blind all men to the enormity of the sweeping declaration of Jn. 4:42: "This is indeed the Christ, THE SAVIOUR OF T-H-E W-O-R-L-D." He is still the god of this world, and has no desire to believe that he will lose all. And how many Christians agree with him! When the devil says that he will possess the vast majority of the souls of men for ever, the Christians shout, "Amen!" And if you say that Christ is Victor they call you a heretic, and ask to be removed from your mailing list. How strange!

How we need to forsake all the stupidity and blasphemy that can represent our Lord as a failure! He accomplished what He came to earth to do. He did not die in vain. He did not do a half-job. He "finished the work," accomplished fully His Father's plan. And "we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to BE THE SAVIOUR OF T-H-E W-O-R-L-D" (I Jn. 4:14). Ah, the victory of Calvary means so much more than any of us ever realized in the past. It was such a pathetically ineffectual work, according to the way it was once taught us. It was weak and so limited in scope, so incomplete! Christ came to save the world (Jn. 12:47); God sent His Son "that THE WORLD through Him might be saved" (Jn 3:17). But it was all in vain. He wasn't able to do what He came for. He couldn't finish the work, even though in Jn. 17:4 He stated that He had finished it. He said. "I have finished the work which You gave Me to do." But He lied. He left it unfinished according to the way we have always been taught, which made God a poor puny victim of circumstances beyond His control and Christ a mere pawn of Satan and unbelieving men, a victim of their whim and fancy.

Thank God, that long night of darkness is passing! Thank God, a fuller, deeper message now goes forth, which does not limit the God of our salvation, which does not belittle and besmear the atonement, the complete redemption of our Lord Jesus Christ! He did not die in vain! He was not a failure! Hallelujah! Calvary was not a defeat, but an exultant victory. And there He, the spotless sinless Lamb of God actually gave His life to "take away the sins of THE WORLD." Let us never forget that fact. Jesus truly paid it all. And because of this we, like the woman at the well, "KNOW that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour OF THE W-O-R-L-D."

"...but now once in the end of the world (age) has He appeared to PUT AWAY SIN by the sacrifice of Himself" (Heb. 9:26). "Once in the end of the world." Not for each dispensation, but for all dispensations. Not for one age, but for all ages. Not for a few, but

for "the many" (vs. 28), comprehending the vastness of the number which no man can compute of the great family of man. As the year's sin of a nation was borne away into the desert by the scapegoat, and put away, so were the sins of the WHOLE WORLD centered on the head of Jesus Christ. He was "the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the W-H-O-L-E W-O-R-L-D" (I Jn. 2:2). And when He died, He dropped sin as a stone into the depths of oblivion. And He PUT AWAY sin. The Greek word is very strong: annihilated, made nothing of, made as though it had never been. Sin, in the mind and purpose of God, is as entirely done away as a debt when it is paid. Hallelujah!

Yes, He is actually "the Saviour of ALL MEN" (I Tim. 4:10). And He cannot be Saviour of all, and at the same time the destroyer of some. Let us, dear ones, cease listening to Satan who would have Him to fail in His mission, to come off second best in His attempted overthrow of sin. He came to earth to destroy SIN, and to save SINNERS . "The Son of man was manifested that He might DESTROY THE WORKS OF THE DEVIL" (I Jn. 3:8). And when all is finished, if but one trace of sin remains, He will have died a failure and in vain. The adversary would have us to believe that HE is the victor, that sin is not destroyed, and hence, since Christ can not destroy sin, He must destroy those sinners whom He could not reconcile. But let us remember that Satan is the father of all lies. Let us cease being deceived by those lies! Let us believe God. "God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that THE WORLD through Him might be saved" (Jn. 3:17). "I came not to judge the world, but to SAVE THE WORLD" (Jn. 12:47). "For the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, BUT TO SAVE THEM" (Lk. 9:56). He came to put away sin, to destroy death, to curse the curse, to lift the burdens, to heal the heartaches, to deliver those in bondage.

Why will men continue to preach eternal wrath, and damnation, and torment, and torture, and anguish, and despair, and fear, when God is love? Surely they cannot have experienced that love, else they could never refrain from proclaiming it! Surely they must not have found Jn. 3:16: "For God SO LOVED T-H-E W-O-R-L-D. that He gave..." And surely they must never have found Jn. 12:32: "And 1, if I be lifted up from the earth will draw ALL MEN unto Me." Let us never again forget that "He gave Himself a ransom for ALL, to be testified in due time" (I Tim. 2:6). Let us ever remember Col. 1:20: "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." And now, "the saving grace of God is manifested FOR ALL MEN" (Tit. 2:11, Gk.).

Think of it, the living God IS THE SAVIOUR OF ALL MEN! (I Tim. 4:9-11). The Greek word used here is SOTEER. It occurs twenty-four times in the New Testament and is correctly translated "saviour" every time. Nor does the Scripture say that God is the "provider" of salvation for all. This would not make Him the Saviour of all. If He does not actually save all, then He is merely a "would-be" Saviour, a "potential" Saviour of all. He is not a Saviour "for" all men, merely provided, to be accepted or rejected according to the whims of human nature or the power of the devil; He is the Saviour "of" all men, and there is a world of difference between those two views. I find that all the Churches believe that Jesus is a Saviour "for" all men, but none of them truly believe that He is the Saviour "of" all men. Let me illustrate. If five men were drowning and a life guard was on duty with instructions to save any who voluntarily called on him, he would be a saviour "for" the five men. But if he actually jumped into the water, grabbed them by the hair of the head, snatched them out of the water. and saved their lives, he would then be the saviour "of" the men. Can we not see by this that Jesus can only be the SAVIOUR O-F ALL MEN if all

men are actually saved by Him? Such a truth should fill the hardest heart with joy, and cause continual thanksgiving to God for His power, wisdom, love, grace, and righteousness.

Knowing how difficult it would be for men to believe that Jesus is the Saviour of all men, in I Tim. 4:9-11 God offers man encouragement by assuring him that it is a FAITHFUL SAYING and WORTHY OF ALL ACCEPTATION. It is faithful to God, faithful to His Son, faithful to Calvary, faithful to the Word, and faithful to the desire of all who have the love of God poured into their hearts by the Holy Spirit. It is hard to understand why so many should condemn as unfaithful and worthy of all rejection, that which God has so plainly declared to be a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance!

Oh blessed deliverance, oh wonderful emancipation! What a shame that so little of it is told! What a tragedy, that those who profess to preach the Gospel preach instead little but a morbid and horrid tale of eternal fear and torment and torture! Thank God it is true, wonderfully and gloriously true, "The wages of sin is death, but the GIFT OF GOD IS ETERNAL LIFE THROUGH JESUS CHRIST OUR LORD!"

Chapter 6

Hell

INFINITE GRACE

FROM the earliest years of my memory there stirred deep within my bosom an insatiable longing after Christ. Though only a child, I wanted to know Him who once was spat upon for me, who was crowned with thorns for me, who died and rose again and ascended into the highest heaven for me. I wanted to intimately know the Christ, the great and good Friend who was compassionate to all men, who forgave the thieves and harlots and drunkards, and healed the sick and gladdened the sorrowful, who brought the dead to life again, and loved and blessed the children. Oh! how I wanted to KNOW HIM! Sometime after my twelfth birthday, the Lord came to me in a remarkable visitation, flooding my life with billows of His presence, power and glory. From that moment Christ became a living Reality. He filled the skies. He filled the earth. He filled my life and flooded my heart with unspeakable love for His creation. He whispered in my ear and flooded within the depths of my spirit the precious knowledge that He is the Good Shepherd who will seek until the last lost sheep is in His fold. He proclaimed the omnipotence of His love in the sweetest of tones. The Good Shepherd who came from heaven, and gave His life, will seek, and seek, and seek, and save, and save, and save, until He has brought all men back to God. This is the work of the Redeemer and the redeemed. I remember sitting, some time after this experience, in the auditorium of the public school in the rural community where we lived in southern Alabama, looking at the several hundred students assembled there, as the Spirit mused in my heart, "Someday, someday, somewhere, CHRIST WILL SAVE THEM ALL!" The revelation was real to me, Christ was there bursting forth in my spirit, and I rose and departed with gladness that Christ is indeed Victor!

I do not hesitate to preach it. I do not hesitate to tell it. At the same time I have warned the sinner that if he sins, the face of God is against him; that if he will not submit to Christ, hell is in front of him; the way of the transgressor is hard, for the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men; let no man deceive you with vain words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the children of disobedience. But let us not falsely say that such men will never be saved; let us not limit the Holy One of Israel!

Most Christians believe that once a person dies, his or her fate is sealed for ever. If anyone has been fortunate enough to have repeated the "sinner's prayer" one moment before death stole the spirit away, he is guaranteed, according to the "orthodox" teaching, that he will go straight to heaven. Matters not whether he was truly drawn to the Son by the Holy Spirit; as long as he muttered the correct words before the final beat of his heart yielded to the stillness and silence of death, his salvation is eternally secured.

The question is, does physical death end the availability of God's grace? The death that came to Adam was first and foremost a spiritual death, and all men enter this world "dead in trespasses and sins" (Eph. 2:1). Does physical death render our moral character changeless? Does it irrevocably fix our eternal destiny? Are the grace and mercy of God TIED TO OUR HEARTBEAT? Here is a young man driving along the road on his way to

an evangelistic meeting where he will hear an anointed message of salvation. Conditions are such that he may be saved this very night. His heart is tender. His mother is praying. The Holy Spirit will be mightily dealing. But - en route to the meeting there is a terrible accident. The brakes are slammed on, the car skids wildly, spins uncontrollably off the highway, rolls down the embankment, crashing violently into a tree. Death is instant. Abruptly the young man is gone "out into eternity." The question comes ... was the mercy and redemption of God tied to his heartbeat? Was there mercy for him IF HE WOULD HAVE MADE IT TO THE MEETING, but eternal damnation instead BECAUSE A DRUNKEN FOOL PULLED OUT IN FRONT OF HIM IN THE DARKNESS?

I do not hesitate to say that there is not one passage of Scripture in the whole Bible that indicates that the grace of God is limited to physical life, or that the mercy of God is tied to ones heartbeat. I am sure that my readers recognize that it is the spirit of man that is of the greatest importance to God. Why should there be salvation provided as long as the mortal body remains animate, but no salvation for the much more valuable spirit of the same man or woman as soon as the last mortal breath is drawn? Oh, I know the writer to the Hebrews states, "It is appointed unto men once to die, and after this the judgment" (Heb. 9:27), but that proves nothing relative to the question under consideration. It merely establishes the fact of judgment - not the process following judgment. The passage is conspicuous for what it does not say. It does not say, "It is appointed unto men once to die, and after this ETERNAL DAMNATION." The whole theory of eternal torment rests upon a faulty translation of a couple of Greek words, and actual distortions and perversions of what the Scriptures say.

So the Church system concludes that God has both the will and the power to save a breathing man, but no will and no power to save a non breathing man. It teaches that God has both the will and the power to regenerate a spirit which has a body of dust, but no will or power to save the same spirit without a body. God's mercy and power limited to the temporary function of certain animal organs! Good heartbeat, good mercy! No heartbeat, no mercy!

If, instead of bringing every sin into judgment - punishing that sin - and correcting the sinner - we imagine the poor sinner suffering the eternal torments of hell with its unbearable anguish, the pangs of conscience, the taunts of fiendish demons, one hour of which is more than all his earthly sorrows rolled into one - lengthen this out to endlessness and season it with hopeless despair - and its horrors will be absolutely inconceivable. Though our lips may be afraid to frame the words, our hearts will whisper, "Can such be the final fruit of God's glorious plan?" Is this the response for which He hungered when He purposed that sin should estrange His creatures from Himself? But this is far from all! Multiply this single case by scores of billions of human beings, who age after age, have been hurled into this hopeless hell - all tortured and tormented while the ages roll, and roll, and roll... without mercy and without remedy.

If the above scenario be true then something horrid must have happened to both God and His 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, and would have performed a great number of kindnesses for one another. Many of these had Christian friends and loved ones who were very concerned about them and prayed earnestly for them. But now that both saint and sinner are out in "eternity," God and all the saints in heaven have either lost their love and compassion for their lost loved ones, or else God has brainwashed all the saints so that they have erased from their memory the fact that

their beloved mothers and fathers, their lovely sisters and brothers, their precious daughters and sons, and their good friends and neighbors are suffering the most terrible pain and hideous torture for all eternity. So we see this: there is MORE LOVE AND COMPASSION in the natural world in God and the saved ones, than there is in the spirit world. Furthermore, there is MORE LOVE for sinners while they have bodies than there is for sinners without bodies. What has happened to cause God and the saints to turn from love and pity for the lost, to a feeling that the lost are now getting what they deserve and should suffer the torments of the damned for all eternity? What, I ask, has happened to God and the saints to cause them to love and seek the lost as long as their frail, mortal bodies endure, but to turn from that love for the precious unclothed spirit of the very same man or woman? Can we believe that God, having created all things for His pleasure, having so loved His creation that He freely gave heaven's most precious gift, after a few paltry years, the brief span of a man's mortal existence, throws up His hands in futility and disgust, saying that He has done all He can and men would not respond, so He must cease all effort, seat Himself upon His golden throne, and consign His creation to everlasting hell? Yet this is exactly what we are told today. But how foolish! God is not that fickle, and God does not give up that easily. In fact, God does not give up! He started the whole program of creation and redemption and, blessed be His wonderful name! He will not cease His work until He is Victor - "All in All" throughout all the vastnesses of infinity for evermore!

How often we have heard preachers warn people that "the day of grace will soon be over for ever." Now nothing could be further from the truth, for as long as God exists the GRACE OF GOD will be with us. The end of the grace of God, were it possible, would mean the destruction of God Himself, for grace is one of His eternal, immutable attributes. Please notice that Paul shows that the grace of God is going to be displayed and made known in the AGES TO COME through those who have received it here and now in this dispensation. "And has raised us up together and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ, THAT IN THE AGES TO COME HE MIGHT SHOW (Greek: exhibit, put on display for all to see) THE EXCEEDING RICHES OF HIS GRACE in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus" (Eph. 2:7-8). Not only does this passage tell us of the great revelation of God's grace in the AGES TO COME, but it also shows us that it is for this very reason that God is saving a FIRSTFRUIT COMPANY now. The unveiling of the grace of God to the whole creation is the true reason for the MANIFESTATION OF THE SONS OF GOD. God has no intention of bringing all the world into the fold now. If that were His purpose He would surely bring it to pass, for He is the omnipotent God who works all things after the counsel of His own will. The whole purpose of this age is to GATHER OUT A PEOPLE TO DISPLAY HIS GRACE IN THE COMING AGES. James also declared this truth when at Jerusalem he said, "Simeon has declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles to TAKE OUT A PEOPLE FOR HIS NAME ... that the residue (rest, remainder) of men might seek after the Lord and ALL THE GENTILES upon whom My name is called...known unto God are all His works from the beginning of the world" (Acts 15:14, 17, 18). This so-called "age of grace" is coming to an end, but grace will be more manifest in the future than in previous times. This age which is presently coming to a close should more properly be called THE CHURCH AGE, for grace will not end, but the present form and administration of the Church will end. In the age to come God will move from calling out a body from among the nations, to the saving of the nations themselves. In ages beyond that God shall deal with the residue of men and all the reaches of His vast creation.

Ray Prinzing writes, "GOD'S PURPOSE ANTEDATES TIME, for He purposed it in Himself before time began, and then arranged for the times in which He will fulfill it. Therefore His purpose is not in bondage to any man's time, be it a day, or a thousand years, but all time has to serve that purpose. Furthermore, God's grace, whereby this purpose shall be accomplished, also antedates time, for we read, 'Who has saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to HIS OWN PURPOSE AND GRACE, which was given us in Christ Jesus BEFORE THE WORLD (ages) BEGAN' (II Tim. 1:9). The sufficiency of grace was freely given before time began, hence God's grace is not bound to time either. Grace can take all the time it desires for its manifestation, for it is not subject to the confines and limitations of time. The religious traditions of some speak of an age of grace, as if all other ages would be devoid of grace. This is utter nonsense. You cannot possibly limit the grace of God to any one age, for it is manifest in all ages, and is not bound to any certain age alone.

"Since man is saved by grace, not of self-works, and grace is a gift of a sovereign God, then obviously He can administer that grace to man whenever He chooses. The length of time has no claims upon that grace, it is but a servant to His grace, to reveal by degrees the wonder and glory of God's bountiful grace and mercy. Should God so arrange that this be the hour when He gives grace in your life, then bow low before Him in worship and praise. Yet if you have loved ones who have not yet been given this inflow of grace, do not despair, 'In Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order' (I Cor. 15:22-23), and God has fitted the ages so that there is an appointed time for grace to work in every life. We do not know HIS times and seasons, therefore we warn every man to turn to God now, knowing that we reap what we sow, and to continue sowing to the flesh means more harvests of suffering and sorrow. And we thank God for each heart that is opened to receive of God's grace now" -end quote.

The limitation of God's mercy, if it were possible, would be the condemnation of God Himself. If there are limits to His mercy, the Word of God, which says that "His mercy endures for ever (all ages)," is a lie. The limitation of God's mercy is a trick of the devil, to discredit God and to defeat His Gospel. The limitation of God's mercy makes the disobedience of Adam more powerful and more enduring than the OBEDIENCE OF CHRIST. I am glad for a Gospel that is coextensive with, and GREATER THAN, the devil's work in spirit, soul and body. I am glad for a Gospel that is not limited to one age, or to the threescore-and-ten years of man's frail existence, but reaches out into the ages to come until GOD IS ALL IN ALL. I am so glad for a Gospel which tells me that God has made a way by which even His banished may return. How gloriously true, then, the words of the chorus:

"His love has no limit, His grace has no measure,
His power has no boundaries known unto man,
For out of His infinite riches in Jesus,
He giveth, and giveth, and giveth again!

A "SECOND CHANCE"?

The following words by George Hawtin are most challenging: "The established visible Church has preached its multiplied sermons seeking to prove its tradition that the vast majority of God's human creation will be LOST, finally, irrevocably, and eternally, and not only will they be lost to God forever and ever, but they will be given up to the most sadistic, inhuman, ungodly torments that could be devised by the vilest fiends. According

to the tradition of the Church this hellish torment is to fall upon all who do not believe. It matters not a whit whether they had opportunity to believe or not. It matters not at all if they were born in the darkest jungles of Africa, the swamps of Borneo, or the deserts of India or China. The fact that they never heard there was a God will be no excuse whatever. The fact that they never heard that God had a Son will not impede their dreadful destruction. Heathen who never heard that God had a Son are, according to this teaching, faced with the same dreadful doom as men who heard the Gospel from their birth and yet rejected it. To add to the stupidity of their teaching they make pitiful attempts to prove that this is the justice of God and that God is manifesting His love in the punishment of sin. The doctrine of eternal punishment is based on a literal interpretation of some of the metaphors of Scripture, to the complete neglect of many other Scriptures. No doctrine has ever been propounded with more confidence and greater bitterness nor with a grossness and coarseness more hideous and repugnant, and, in the face of the love and kindness of God, more inconceivable and incredible" -end quote.

Some people say that the ultimate salvation of all men makes a "second chance" Gospel. NOT SO! We do not have a "first chance" Gospel, nor a "second chance" Gospel, nor yet a "third chance" or "fourth chance" Gospel. Salvation is not by "chance" at all - it is by grace! Had it been left to "chance" no one would have been saved, now or later. Salvation is of God! "As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: there is none that understands, there is none that seeks after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that does good, no, not one. For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; BEING JUSTIFIED FREELY BY HIS GRACE through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ" (Rom. 3:10-12, 23-24).

But if, for the sake of illustration, we choose to use the term "chance," before we speak of a "second chance," we must make sure that those whom we have consigned to eternal damnation have had a "first chance". "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, that bring glad tidings of good things!" (Rom. 10:13-15). Billions upon billions have lived and died; and billions live today in ignorance of even the existence of the true and living God; much more in ignorance of His blessed Son. Some say there is no excuse for them. They could know if they wanted to. What an abominable lie! With Christendom divided into six hundred and sixty-six different sects and beliefs, with strife and hypocrisy and apostasy on every hand, it is no wonder men are confused! We cannot expect men to believe until they hear the Word of God in power and see the living God in manifestation. Nothing short of that is "the Gospel".

There have been some people who accepted Christ as their Saviour at the "first chance" they ever had. Three thousand people did that on the day of Pentecost. But I have asked many men if they accepted Christ the "first chance" they had, and few have answered in the affirmative. Most of us should be filled with thanksgiving to the Lord that not only did He give us a "second chance," but a third and fourth and sometimes a multitude of chances! I doubt if there is any reader of these lines who can truthfully say that he has obeyed God every "first time" that God has spoken to him. If God had taken our first answer or refusal to submit to Him, and had not given us a second opportunity, it would have been too bad for us! We simply would not be walking in God today if He had not given us many "chances". Christians are very free to grant this privilege to themselves,

but seldom to the sinner, and NEVER TO THE SINNER WHOSE HEART HAS STOPPED BEATING. But does not the grace of God teach us that since in this life there is on the whole, so little of the Gospel of Christ touching the masses of humanity, the vast majority of men dying as they lived, like natural brute beasts, there must be an opportunity for the goodness and kindness and salvation of our ever-faithful God to reach them in the world to come? Indeed, since man has so poor an opportunity here, and the majority no opportunity at all, they must by the justice of God have an opportunity in the age or the ages to come. JUSTICE demands it! And GRACE demands it! This is both reasonable and Scriptural.

As one has written, "Jesus gave a wonderful teaching in Matthew 11, one aspect of which is often overlooked. He said that if Tyre and Sidon had only witnessed the mighty works which were done in Chorazin and Bethsaida they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. That is, more knowledge and information, more light and revelation, would have brought them to repentance. Do you think, therefore, that God will torment the inhabitants of Tyre and Sidon for ever because of their lack of knowledge? Again, He said that if Sodom could have witnessed the mighty works that were done in Capernaum 'it would have remained until this day.' Do you think that the inhabitants of Sodom will be tormented for ever just because they lacked the opportunities of Capernaum? Nay, indeed! God will not inflict ultimate punishment on men who have not had ultimate knowledge. 'For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth' (I Tim. 2:3-4). It is not just a matter of one 'chance' "-end quote.

HELL - THE HADEAN STATE

There is one Hebrew word and three Greek words which have been translated "hell" in our commonly used King James or Authorized Version of the Bible. In the Old Testament we find the word SHEOL which according to our Hebrew dictionaries means "the place of the dead." The word always appears in the singular, never in its plural form. It is not the "places" of the dead, not the individual graves where reside their respective bodies, but the realm of the dead, the abode of the dead, or the state of the dead. The word is derived from the root SHAEL, which means, by implication, "to request, to demand." And this reminds us forcibly of the common and inevitable end of all flesh. There is a realm and a state beyond this life which inexorably beckons men onward through the fleeting years of earthly ambition and toil till at last it lays its demand upon them, drawing them into its inescapable embrace.

In the New Testament there appears the word GEHENNA referring to the Valley of Hinnom, or Gehenna, which was the city dump outside the walls of Jerusalem, a place of constant burning of refuse. It is interesting to note that those who are pictured as going into Gehenna are, without exception, not the sinners of the world, but the SINNERS AMONG GOD'S PEOPLE. How precise the type! Gehenna was the city dump of Jerusalem, the Holy City, where every unclean and unnecessary thing was burned and consumed. The antitypical Gehenna to which our Lord alluded in His teaching is the process of PURIFICATION by which every unclean and unnecessary thing in the lives of His Holy People is purged and consumed by the fires of His judgment. "The Lord whom you seek, shall suddenly come to HIS TEMPLE ... but who may abide the day of His coming? and who shall stand when He appears? 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 (the Priesthood), and PURGE them as gold and silver, that they may

offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness" (Mal. 3:1-3). Gehenna stands as a type of the place or process of the PURIFICATION OF GOD'S PEOPLE. It is referred to in the Old Testament by the name of "Tophet," located in the Valley of Hinnom, a place where many sacrifices were made and dead bodies consumed.

Next we consider the Greek word TARTAROO - the English form is "Tartarus." The passage where this word is found is II Pet. 2:4. "God spared not the angels (messengers) that sinned, but cast them down to hell (Tartarus), and delivered them into chains of darkness to be reserved unto judgment." Jude also presents the same truth without mentioning the name as he writes, "And those angels (messengers) who kept not their first position of power and authority, but left their habitation, He has kept in chains under thick darkness, for the judgment of the great day" (Jude 6). The whole thought is of a restraint, a confinement, a prison, a condition in which apostates are held for a specific period of time, in the same manner as prisoners are often held in jail awaiting the day of trial. Tartarus is not the judgment itself, but a state or condition in which persons are inescapably held over unto a day of judgment. I see men today who are apostates, they have turned from the truth, they have usurped the gifts and anointing of God for their own advantage and to their own ends, making merchandise of God's people, they have perverted the ways of the Lord and turned the truth of God into a lie, and have sunk into the blinding darkness of delusion, captivated by the fleshly ways and methods of this world, chained in the snare of the devil, they continue going through the motions of their "ministry," unable to escape from the devilish trap into which they have fallen, and are held there in their personal "Tartarus" reserved unto a day of judgment.

This brings us to our fourth and final word, the one we wish to consider in this study - HADES. HADES is the Greek word most often translated "hell." Where do the dead go? They go into what has commonly been called "the unknown." 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. 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 dead haven't passed out of existence altogether, for man is not only a body and soul, but also 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 where he would be able to join that infant child. And likewise the phrase often used in the Old Testament of their being "gathered unto their fathers" meant far more than having their bodies buried in the same grave. 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 alive at that time, even though they were in the Hadean state. Indeed, they were all in Hades - the invisible world of departed spirits.

Some have contended that hell (Sheol and Hades) is never associated with the idea of suffering, pain or torment. That is far from the truth! A careful examination of the Hebrew and Greek words in context reveals that there is both the positive and negative aspects of hell, and there are those passages which connect hell, either literally or metaphorically, to darkness, restraint, distress, sorrow, suffering, pain, and torment.

Hell is certainly a place, a realm, a dimension of consciousness and existence, yet more than a place - it is a state or condition - in its negative application the inner state of depravity, perverted desire, burning lust and ambition, devilish emotions, mental anguish and despair - and because it is so twisted and warped it cannot obtain lasting fulfillment, being tormented by the fires of its own unsatisfied passions. Heaven and hell both are states of the soul rather than the body, whether it be the natural or the spiritual body. The spirit possesses the qualities of soul apart from the body, for the soul is so closely united to the spirit that only the sharp two-edged sword of the Word of God can separate between them (Heb. 4:12). These are realities transcending place and time. As the poet puts it:

"I sent my Soul through the Invisible,
Some letter of that after-life to spell,
And by-and-bye my Soul returned to me,
And whispered, 'I myself am Heaven and Hell;'
Heaven but the vision of fulfilled desire,
And Hell the shadow of a Soul on fire."

Heaven and hell may dwell in the same home, sit at the same table, sleep in the same bed, but between them there is a great gulf fixed. Here, for example, is a home in which one boy goes wrong, bears about with him a guilty secret he may not be able to tell the rest, and yet he must keep the dreaded company of his guilty, tortured self. Every time that boy hears the happy laughter of brothers and sisters rejoicing in the joy of the Lord, the fires of hell are burning in his heart. Every time he receives his father's blessing or listens to his mother speaking of him in the language of maternal pride, he knows that between them and him there is a gulf fixed, and over it neither he nor they can pass. To the sinner abiding in his sin even the language of love is part of the torture of hell!

Here is another home in which an angry and unhappy man has power to inflict suffering on those who are weaker than himself. He has lived for wrong and vicious, devilish ideals all his life, and they have grown stronger as he has grown older. He has power to oppress and abuse and crush one faithful, beautiful woman, whose very presence and purity of character are a rebuke to him. The more nobly she lives, the better for him she cares, the fiercer seems to burn his anger and hostility, because he knows that he is not worthy of such devotion. He does not repent, but he suffers remorse, and inward self-hate, and between the two there is a great gulf fixed. The fires of hell are burning in that man's experience now, for guilt is often made more devilish by the presence of holiness.

And in our acquaintance with life have we never suspected that the fires are burning where the world sees not? There are people facing life today with a smile who are not to be counted heroes, merely because behind the smile is anguish. Some people can smile in the shadow of the cross, and they do well. They are God's great ones! But there are others who wear the smile of dreadful joy, the smile of sin's make believe. Down beneath are the fires of hell, kindled by the pollution and the corruption and the wickedness on which the soul has fed. We can meet with hell in the palace, in the halls of Congress, in

the business establishment, in the world of entertainment, in the home, on the street, and salute it and pass it by, and never know, but hell knows, for it has seen heaven. Naked and open are we to Him with Whom we have to do, and, believe me, nothing but the tender mercies and the cleansing power of the blood of the Lamb can avail to save us from what we are in the great day of revelation, whether it come on this side of the grave or on the other, when delusions are gone, and we find ourselves in our heaven or our hell. We may eat, drink, and be merry; we may stifle the Voice within us, but some day it awakens and will be heard, and the wakening shall lead to brokenness and repentance, praise the name of the Lord! The truth is, nature is a mirror of the unseen world. Every form of death, all disease, decay, failure, pain, every fruitless seed, each ruined life, is the shadow of hell, and of the working of that spirit which destroys and mars God's handiwork, as all beauty, purity, harmony, and enduring love is the reflection of heaven.

THE KEYS OF DEATH AND HELL

"Fear not; I am the first and the last, and the living One: I was even dead, but behold, I am living for the ages of the ages: and I have the KEYS OF DEATH AND HADES" (Rev. 1:17-18, Diaglott).

To John on the isle of Patmos there came One who announced Himself as "the Alpha and Omega, the First and the Last." At His girdle hung "the keys of Hades and of death." At the enemy usurped control over mankind, ruling with fear, and bringing creation into bondage to the whole dreadful realm of death. Death was the adversary's "trump card," his final victory. He beguiled man into sin, and "sin when it is finished, brings forth death" (James 1: 15). After all the beguilement, which the enemy has exercised with ruthless working and deception, causing man to become perverted and corrupt, sinking into the quagmire of fear, sorrow, and hopelessness, the final result was death with its habitation in Hades.

When Jesus came into the world in the humiliation of the Incarnation, He started on a route of conquest that took Him through the lonely years prior to His introduction at the muddy waters of Jordan, when the bony prophetic finger of John the Baptist was pointed at Him and those significant words were uttered: "Behold, the Lamb of God, which takes away the sin of the world" (Jn. 1:29). For some thirty-three and a half years He overcame and lived an impeccable life so that it was said of Him that "He was tempted in all points like as we, yet without sin" (Heb. 4:15).

Jesus' flawless life was followed by a decisive death. He went to Calvary to endure inexplicable and incomparable suffering: suffering of which we can only have a hint; suffering we can only look at curiously with a sob in our throats; suffering veiled in the mystery of the bearing of sin; suffering surrounded by torn rocks and a sun that refused to shine and an earth that writhed in agony. As He hung there alone, God reached down His giant fist and gathered the accumulated sins of men and placed them upon Him. In the awful agony of Calvary, Christ made His soul an offering for sin. The sin of the world was imputed unto Him, and the waves of God's judgment were released upon Him. When He had become an offering for sin, He gave up the Ghost and came down from the mystery of His sufferings, having finished that work. What men saw was a man hanging limp - every bone out of joint, a swollen tongue protruding from burning lips that cried out, "It is finished!"

For centuries now Christians have supposed that when Jesus cried, "It is finished," that meant that His work of redemption was completed. Many refer to this as "the finished work of Calvary." But there is too much stopping at the cross. If we stop at the cross we end with a dead Christ, and a dead Christ can save no one! Paul wrote, "If Christ be not RAISED, your faith is vain; YOU ARE YET IN YOUR SINS" (I Cor. 15:17). We must get our thoughts broadened about the redemptive work of Christ. He died for our sins, but He was also raised again for our justification! There is no "finished work" at the cross. There is not even a "finished work" at the resurrection! The redemptive work of Christ was not finished until He had ASCENDED UP ON HIGH bearing the precious blood of His atonement into the Holiest Place of the heavenlies, as it is written, "Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by His own blood HE ENTERED IN ONCE INTO THE HOLY PLACE, HAVING OBTAINED ETERNAL REDEMPTION FOR US. For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into HEAVEN ITSELF, NOW TO APPEAR IN THE PRESENCE OF GOD FOR US" (Heb. 9:12, 24). When the Christ cried, "It is finished," it was the cup of suffering - the excruciating agony of the cross - that was finished, not the plan of redemption. When He died He then entered the darkest night of death, and was ushered through the somber gates and behind the fearful bars of Hades. "You will not leave My soul in Hades" (Acts 2:31). The Christ not only died He went to hell!

One day, in Satan's realm - the dark domain,
Where souls of dead in chains of death remain,
The Prince of darkness, boastful, spoke aloud
To his abject, imprisoned, awestruck crowd:
"Hearken, you spirits. Lo, I bring this day
Another victim bound beneath my sway:
Jesus, the Nazarene, the Master Fraud –
Who proudly claims Himself the Son of God!
I laid the snare, which the Imposter caught,
And to the tree of shame the Boaster brought,
And now, between two thieves He helpless hangs,
In Death's dissolving and resistless pangs.
You shall behold Him pass through Hades' door,
To walk among the living - nevermore!
My power shall hush the Arch pretender's breath,
And bind Him hopeless in the realm of death."
Then Hell itself in fear began to quake,
And, in alarm, thus to the Devil spoke,
"Jesus! Do you not fear that mighty Name?
And is this Jesus - Nazarene - the same
Who once cried, 'Lazarus! Come forth!' and swift
the bands of death were loosed, his fetters rift,
And through your gates impassable he broke,
So soon as that almighty word was spoke?
Let but that Jesus once invade these halls,
And in that hour your boasted empire falls!
What if the victim you do proudly claim
Shall as the Victor bring your pride to shame?"

And then He arose the conquering Christ! What a marvelous turn of events! He took control of the situation as with one exultant shout He grasped the keys of death and hell

from him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, stripped away the power of death, burst asunder the bars of hell, stalked boldly out in eternal triumph over all the dread powers of that unseen realm, entered back into His body in the garden tomb, passed through the walls of rock as water passes through a filter, ascended up far above all heavens, stepped up to the Father's throne, and presented the tokens of His redemption. The Father said, "Sit down, Son, at My right hand until your enemies are made your footstool!"

More than two hundred years ago, the world was in chaos because "The Scourge of the Earth" (we know him as Napoleon Bonaparte) almost conquered the world. Everything fell before him. The British feared that soon their homeland would be invaded by the troops of France. In one last effort to stop the tremendous on-rush of Napoleon's army, they sent their greatest general. General Wellington invaded the heartland of Europe. The people waited as the forces were joined at Waterloo. Eagerly they followed the watchman on the tower of Winchester Cathedral as he looked out over the English Channel in the fog waiting for some sign of a ship to bring them news of the outcome. The hope of England rested on that report. Finally, as the fog lifted just a little bit, the watchman saw a ship blinking the signal of what had happened. The letters were taken down. W-E-L-L-I-N-G-T-O-N D-E-F-E-A-T-E-D. The fog sank and with it all the hope of England. The people quivered at the thought that soon they would hear the tramp of French troops upon their land. However, an hour or so later, the fog lifted and again the message was sent forth: W-E-L-L-I-N-G-T-O-N D-E-F-E-A-T-E-D E-N-E-M-Y! A wild shout of glee went out all over England; that feared invasion never came.

There is a great hero whose name is Jesus. On a hill outside the city wall of Jerusalem, He went forth to take on the combined forces of death, hell, and Satan. He did this with His hands and feet secured to across, and a lion out of the pit leaped forth in rage and threw itself upon Jesus. The world waited to see what the outcome of that life and death struggle would be. Hour after hour His life oozed forth drop by drop. The people waited, hoping that soon He would respond to their taunts, "Come down if You be the Son of God and we will believe on You." Jesus never moved. Finally the great cry - He bowed His head and gave up the Ghost. Word went out in the midst of that midday blackness, JESUS DEFEATED. A pallor hung over the world. Life went out of the hearts of His disciples, joy was gone from the earth, all was black, hopeless and meaningless. But then, on the third day, as the sun began to break over that lonely sepulcher, a new light came with a dazzling radiance. The huge stone that blocked the door began to move back as if by some unseen hand. Those Roman troops were startled by the appearance of the messengers resplendent in white. Then, out of the darkness of that tomb, out of the very pit of hell itself, there stepped forth One who was dead and could now say, "I am He that was dead and, behold, I am alive forevermore and have the keys of death and of hell!" Word went out through all of Jerusalem. At first, just a whisper - then a voice - then a cry - then a shout - a chime - and a chant sublime:

JESUS DEFEATED DEATH!
JESUS DEFEATED HELL!
JESUS DEFEATED SATAN!

Jesus has the keys; He proved that He has the keys of both death and hell; for He unlocked both and arose Victor. Death could not hold its prey! Hell could not hold its prey! Oh Christ! You Son of the living God! You are the resurrection and the life. You were

alive; You were dead; and, behold, You are alive forevermore and Your nail-pierced hand does hold in triumph the keys of hell and death. Oh death, where is your sting? Oh grave, where is your victory? Oh gates of hell, you shall not prevail, for the Redeemer of Israel and the Saviour of the world holds in His triumphant hand the key.

Who NOW has the key of death? OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST. Who NOW has the key to hell? OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST. Praise God, no one passes through the gates of either of those two, hell or death, except the Lord open or close those gates. And now He proclaims, "FEAR NOT; I have the keys of death and of hell." And what reason do we have to not fear? Those reasons are found in the statement of the Christ. He is THE FIRST. He is THE LAST. He is the LIVING ONE. At one time He was dead, but behold, LOOK! He is living for the ages of the ages. And this ever living One HAS THE KEYS. We commonly think of keys being used to lock or unlock doors, but there is another sense in which the word key is used. Many times when we say we have the key to a thing, we mean that we have the solution to a problem. Jesus was saying to John and to us all that HE HAS THE SOLUTION TO THE UNSEEN WORLD. He has all the problems connected with it unraveled and solved. He had worked out the problem for Himself, overcame in it, and now stands to proclaim to all men everywhere the GREAT EMANCIPATION. Through His death and resurrection Christ took away from the enemy his power of death, and from hell its power of containment; no longer can negation claim the final victory over any man - CHRIST HAS THE KEY, and shall ultimately bring every man into the fullness of HIS LIFE. Christ has the power to redeem, and He has the keys of death and hell.

Praise God! Not only does the firstborn among many brethren possess the keys of death and hell, but He shares them with His OVERCOMING ONES in whom is inwrought the triumph of HIS LIFE. Jesus said to Peter, "You are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My Church; and the GATES OF HELL SHALL NOT PREVAIL AGAINST IT" (Mat. 16:18). The gates of hell HAVE NOT prevailed against our Lord Jesus Christ, and they SHALL NOT prevail against His Church. What are the "gates" of hell? Gates are used either to bar entrance or prevent exit. What does it mean that the gates of hell shall not prevail against Christ's Church? I used to erroneously imagine the conflict between the Church and Satan as a game of "Cat and Mouse." Satan was the cat and the Church was the mouse. Satan was big and powerful - the Church was small and weak, always on the defensive. But that's not what the verse about the gates of hell means. Far from it! The picture instead is of a VICTORIOUS CHURCH laying siege to hell and breaking down its gates to release its prisoners! The Lord Jesus Christ Himself is the example and prototype.

WHEN CHRIST PREACHED IN HELL!

A lady wrote to me more than a year ago, expostulating about this thought of the wicked ever having any opportunity in the next world. She said she did not see it in the Bible, and craftily raised this question: "There is no need for us to witness to the lost for they will all be saved someday, someday, somewhere - right?" I thought her eyes must have been closed, as well as her ears, because the Scriptures are so meticulously clear on this point. God will never save our loved ones, our friends, our neighbors, or any other person who has lived or ever shall live without a MEANS, an INSTRUMENT THROUGH WHICH TO REACH THEM. And WE are that instrument! God declares to His elect in Isa. 49:6: "I will also GIVE YOU for a light to the Gentiles, that YOU may BE MY SALVATION unto the ends of the earth." The method by which God causes men to believe is revealed in

Rom. 10:14-15. "How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not BELIEVED? and how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not HEARD? and how shall they HEAR without a PREACHER? and how shall they PREACH except they be SENT?" Does the salvation of all men negate this procedure? By no means! It only intensifies it! The idea that if God is going to save all men then we need not preach or witness is an incomprehensible absurdity. It leaves God with a wonderful objective, but with no MEANS of accomplishing His objective. The simple truth is that God purposes to save all men. The means by which He shall accomplish this is A PEOPLE, a ROYAL PRIESTHOOD, the SONS OF GOD, who become one with the PRIESTLY MINISTRY OF JESUS the great HIGH PRIEST, to intercede, witness, speak, exhort, warn, entreat, proclaim and preach the will of God and the good news of His glorious salvation until this ministry conquers all men for God. Most Christians are content to witness and preach the Gospel to a few lost souls here on earth, but how many would desire to so become ONE with the ministry of Jesus the Saviour until they would go even to HELL to PREACH? Jesus did!

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

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

It is written in the plainest of plain language. But there are some people who will not understand plain speech. They do not believe that the Christ went down into hell to preach the Gospel to dis-embodied spirits of wicked men; they think He went down somewhere in the heart of the earth to rescue Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and all the 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 preached to the disobedient and it was the Gospel that was preached to them, informing them of the death of God's Son, who was given as a propitiation for them, and that God had faith in the blood of His Son to deliver them from the bondage of sin and death and hell into the glorious liberty of the children of God. Shall our unbelief make the faith of God of none effect? Certainly not! If we believe not, yet He abides faithful. God's plan goes on just the same, and "God WILL have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth" (1 Tim. 2:4). God will do what HE WILLs to have done whether we believe it or not.

Ah, does the fact that God purposes to save all men mean that it is meaningless to witness and preach? A thousand times no! CHRIST WENT TO HELL AND PREACHED. God has chosen through the foolishness of preaching to save men, so we shall not preach less, we shall not witness less, for armed with the hope that the preaching will ultimately bear fruit we must preach more than ever before to those who are lost, for this is God's MEANS for their salvation! Those who should give up preaching to the lost and witnessing to their loved ones are those who believe that most of them will burn for ever in hell anyway! What on earth could be more frustrating, worthless, unprofitable, vain and disappointing than witnessing and preaching to men when we actually believe that only a small fraction of them will ever be saved? Why bother? To what end all the effort? The devil gets most of them in the end anyhow! But, blessed be God! He has committed unto us the MINISTRY OF RECONCILIATION, for God was in Christ RECONCILING THE W-O-R-L-D unto Himself (11 Cor. 5:19-20), therefore that is exactly what must be reconciled - the world!

I would point out to you, dear reader of these lines, that, contrary to popular teaching, it was not during the three days and three nights while the Christ's body lay in a Palestinian tomb that He went and preached to the spirits in Hades. Christ was not in Hades on a preaching mission during the time of His death, there was nothing to announce at that time, for redemption was not complete until after His resurrection and ascension. He was not there at that time to proclaim an as yet unrealized victory; He was there, rather, taking your place and mine as part of the penalty of our sin. He was there as a willing victim, not a deliverer. How and when then did He preach to the spirits in prison? Peter explains this. He says that Jesus was "put to death in the flesh, but QUICKENED (made alive again) BY THE SPIRIT," and then adds "BY WHICH (i. e. by this quickening in the spirit - the resurrection) ALSO HE WENT AND PREACHED TO THE SPIRITS IN PRISON." There is nothing in this text to indicate that Jesus went on a preaching journey during the time He was dead. The use of the expression "by which He preached" refers to Jesus' resurrection - "quickenened by the Spirit." It was after He was raised from the dead, after He was both "delivered up for our offenses, AND raised again for our justification" (Rom. 4:25) that He went on this mission.

With the release of the mystery of iniquity into the Adamic race, the wickedness of man became great in the earth, "every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually" (Gen. 6:5), and God used a restraining work to hold the upsurge of evil in check, restraining it according to HIS purpose. YET He did allow it to go a certain course for a certain length of time, knowing full well just how far HE could allow man to express these evil inclinations, and just where to draw the line. At the appropriate moment the spirits of these wicked men were put in prison, as society today puts a criminal in prison; the flood swept them away into hell and hell restrained the Antediluvians from committing more wrath upon earth.

The Christ, after His painful life on earth, His agony upon the cross, and His victorious resurrection from the dead, did not at once ascend into heaven to be seated at the right hand of the Father. He went down to hell. He went down to the deepest hell, approaching its portals with the cry, "Lift up your heads, O gates, and be lifted up, O ancient doors, that the King of glory may come in!" Entrance was not to be gained without some resistance, however, for the keepers of the gates hurled back their challenge over the ramparts of Hades: "Who is the King of glory?" To which the hosts of heaven replied, "He is the Lord strong and mighty - the Lord mighty in battle. He is the One who has just come freshly from the battlefield of Golgotha, where single-handedly He dealt a deathblow to all of Satan's plans and purposes, bore the sins of men, cut off the old Adamic order and died a decisive death, meeting the requirements for man. He is the One who has just grasped the keys of death and hell and strode out of Satan's domain triumphant. He is the Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle. NOW - will you lift up your heads, O you gates? Lift them up, O ancient doors, that the King of glory may come in!"

Again, unsatisfied, the challenge rang out, "Who is this King of glory?" Again the triumphant response came, "He is the Lord of hosts. He is the King of glory. He is the One who is in charge of all the Celestial Hosts. But not only that, He is King now of a multitude which no man can number. He is God's delegated authority. He is the One who is to bring to God the fruit of His purposes. He is the King of Glory. Now swing back those gates and let the King of Glory come in!" Finally the gates could prevail against Him no longer. The gates swung back. He entered in, stepped up before the assembled throng, and began His mission. The Christ was there on business! Wherever He went He did business for God. He went there to begin His new age deliverance ministry among a group of spirits that had been imprisoned there for two thousand three hundred and fifty years. They had been "disobedient in the days of Noah," and they were so bad that the Scripture says, "their thoughts" and all the "intents of their hearts" were "only evil continually." They were so bad that God could not wait for them to die, and another generation to arise, but in order to re-establish some order on earth He had to sweep all of them off the earth into hell. The fact that they remained there so long indicates that they were very bad, for I cannot doubt that the God of mercy was all the time in some way pleading with them to repent. They were ignorant and rebellious and would not learn of God. The race of Cain was a filthy, sensual, polygamistic race; they were hateful and violent and they were murderers. They were boastful and vile in the extreme, and would have nothing to do with the God who made them. They were the offspring of a murderer who slew his brother. I am sure that Christ felt a great, divine pity for the offspring of that murderer; and in a loving spirit, the One who reconciled the world unto God, not imputing their trespasses unto them, went down to hell.

And what was the result of such a wonderful mission? "Wherefore He says, When He ascended up on high, He LED CAPTIVITY CAPTIVE ... now He that ascended, what is it but that He also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that HE MIGHT FILL ALL THINGS" (Eph. 4:8-10). Some suppose this leading "captivity captive" refers to the Lord at His ascension leading the Old Testament saints out of Paradise into the more immediate presence of God. The phrase is a quotation from the Old Testament, and in the two places where it occurs, on both occasions it plainly refers to the leading captive of FOES. In Judges 5:12, in the song of Deborah as she was leading the strains of a victory song after subduing the armies of Sisera, we read of her prophesying to Barak, singing, "Arise, Barak, and lead your captivity captive, you son of Abinoam." What was she

speaking of? Barak went out against the armies of Sisera - he captured of the enemy, taking dominion over them with the sword - and any that were captured alive were led back captive to his own land, thus he "led that captivity captive," parading back victoriously. Who were the captives? The armies whom he had conquered!

So also in the passage from which the phrase is quoted in Eph. 4:8-10. The quotation is from Ps. 68:18 where we read, "You have ascended on high, You have led captivity captive: You have received gifts for men; yea, FOR THE REBELLIOUS ALSO, THAT THE LORD GOD MIGHT DWELL AMONG THEM!" There is every suggestion here that the captives thus led were not the righteous but the unrighteous, for they are described as "rebellious." And Christ will dwell among the rebellious! What a word! What a work!

And when did Christ lead captive a host of rebellious ones? "When He ascended on high." He had preached to those spirits who were damned through their terrible wickedness in the time of Noah. Thank God, He gave them an opportunity of salvation, and He opened the Kingdom of Heaven to every son of Adam when He arose from the dead and ascended on high. He captured those wicked men from the snare of the devil and made them His subjects in the same way He conquered the proud, rebellious, murderous spirit of Saul of Tarsus on the road to Damascus. It is quite evident that Saul of Tarsus was not on his way to a revival meeting when the Lord struck him down on the road. Saul made no premeditated "decision for Christ" before his conversion. SAUL'S WILL was set on the destruction of the Church. But the will of God was that he become an apostle of Jesus Christ! When Saul, smitten, and blind, was led away into the city for his encounter with Annanias, he was led away as a CAPTIVE, a CONQUERED FOE of the Lord Jesus Christ! Paul the apostle had total faith in Jesus and was motivated by the love of Christ, yet he never considered himself a "volunteer" for the Kingdom of God. He described himself as a "conscript," saying, "Not that I ... am already perfect, but I press on to lay hold of and make my own, that for which Christ Jesus has LAID HOLD UPON ME AND MADE ME HIS OWN" (Phil. 3:12, Amplified). He always spoke of himself as the "servant" or "slave" of Jesus Christ. This is precisely what our Lord did when He went down into hell and led captivity captive and gave gifts to the rebellious. The Moffatt translation reads, "When He ascended on high He LED A HOST CAPTIVE." Weymouth says, "He ascended on high, He LED CAPTIVE A HOST OF CAPTIVES." Another version renders, "When He ascended on high He CARRIED AWAY CAPTIVES." Out of the dark abyss of hell He took those prisoners. Now they are in heaven, forgiven and cleansed, whiter than the lily which sprang out of the dark earth. He took them from hell.

Then in the realm of Death's unbroken shade
Appeared the Conqueror in light arrayed.

It was as tho' in crimson and in gold
The splendor of a thousand suns had rolled

Their mingled glory in one matchless beam,
And lit up Death Shade with the lustrous gleam.

Ineffable that glory; as it shone
Like to the radiance of the Great White Throne,
Whilst through the open gates and broken bars.

Toward realms of light more fadeless than the stars,
The Prince of Life a host of captives led
From out the night and bondage of the dead.

Christ has led captivity captive! The official name for such an event in the Roman world was called a "Triumph." It was a spectacle well known to every citizen of Rome. Tens of thousands of spectators would gather. On those occasions, when a great general would return, the army would gather outside the city and move through the triumphal arch on their way to the temple. First would come the trumpeters, sounding in thrilling tones the notes of victory. Behind the trumpeters would come great floats upon which had been erected the pictures of the cities which had been conquered - towers, wall, and all. Then would come rumbling by, the wagons filled with the spoils of victory. Then came seventy white oxen walking philosophically to their death, to be offered in sacrifice to the gods. Behind the oxen came, in chains, the chieftains and captains of the armies of the enemy who, like the oxen, would soon meet their end. Then there were the lectors, harpists, flutists, and those bearing incense. Great roars of victory went up! Then came the general in a purple toga, with a golden crown upon his head, with the ivory scepter in his hand, and with the laurel branch, the insignia of victory. Behind his magnificent white chariot came the rest of the conquered army, chained with their heads down. At last came the victorious army of Rome, each soldier wearing a crown. In the midst of the cries of the people, the sounds of the trumpets and the harpists, the fragrance of incense, they made their way to the Temple of Jupiter.

This was a Roman "Triumph" and Paul is telling us that Jesus Christ, the Captain of the well-fought fight, the greatest General of all times, has come and has had a greater victory than any of these. He has come, not only into the opposition and hostility of this world, but He has gone into the very portals of Hell. There He has taken on the most violent and the vilest of the underworld, and now He leads into the metropolis Of the Kingdom of God a great triumphal victory. Behind Him come all the hosts of heaven, all the saints of Old Testament times, and all those to whom He preached in Hell and that have trusted in Him. This is the Triumph!

Paul tells us, secondly, that this triumphal march, this triumphal entry into the Kingdom of God is still going on. The same apostle in II Cor. 2:14 says that God causes us ALWAYS TO BE LED IN TRIUMPH BY JESUS CHRIST. This is a triumphal march that is going on right now. But it is somewhat different from the triumphal marches of Rome. You see, in the army of Christ all of the vanquished have enlisted, and all of those that were once our enemies, such as Paul himself who once opposed Christ and who now is one of the leaders of that army. So, as we look at the Triumph of Christ we see that the vanquished and the conquerors merge as one. The apostle Paul, himself, once went forth to war against Jesus, but he was struck to the ground outside Damascus, the sword was smitten from his hand, and he was conquered by the Son of man. But in that conquest Paul was to realize his greatest victory and he, too, was to become a part of the ongoing triumph of Christ - a triumph which is even now proceeding into the heavenly city of Zion.

THE PUNISHMENT MUST FIT THE CRIME

If Christ went to hell once, and preached, and led out a host of captives, I wonder why, on the same errand, He should not go or send to hell twice or even a thousand times? He considered the dreadfully and unspeakably wicked in the days of Noah fitting subject for

His mercy, and shall He not so consider the poor, wretched creatures who have gone to hell by the billions from heathen lands and by the millions from our so-called Christian cities? They never heard the name of Jesus, except as profanely used or in some empty religious platitude. They know nothing of His word or His power. The Churches too often cared nothing for them, and care next to nothing for them today. I speak plainly, because it is necessary. I am not seeking to extenuate the crime of anyone, and I am urging no plea for the undue mitigation of just punishment. But unlimited mercy is an attribute of God, as love is His nature, and when endless punishment is taught I claim the right to enter protest against that horrible dogma. I admit, and declare, and warn men, that those who sin against light and knowledge will have the heavier penalty. They invite the just judgment of God. No man who rejects the Christ will go from earth into the joys and purity of heaven; he will certainly go to hell.

As Charles Pridgeon has stated, "One of the elements that makes punishment effective is its certainty. If a man thinks that there is a chance for him to escape the punishment for a wrong doing, he may take that chance. Every one needs to learn that this law of certainty has no exceptions. There is no chance about it; WHAT YOU SOW, YOU REAP (Gal. 6:7). Every sin has its certain consequences. This is true even of the wrongdoer who thinks that he has escaped the working of this law. He is mistaken. The evil has already wrought damage to his character, and one day its direful consequence will be manifest, unless divinely dealt with. Every offer of salvation; every presentation of more or new light; and every opportunity proffered, brings added responsibility. Every rejection increases guilt and multiplies the consequences. From this law there is no escape. The normal harvest exceeds by many fold the sowing. This is a wise provision in reference to punishment. The enjoyment or gain that comes through sin is very small in proportion to the evil consequences that naturally come to the one who so yields. This is one of the natural laws of the harvest. God means this law to cause men to halt and to cease from sin. Sin costs the sinner too dear; it cost God His only begotten Son!" -end quote.

But, on the other hand, the doctrine that a temporal fault is to be punished with an eternal punishment is, in the very nature of things, unreasonable, illogical, and wicked. Such a doctrine could not be divine. As Adam fell, we fall each one, for Adam lives yet in his progeny. Because Adam had the principle of sin and death imposed as an actual feature of his biological life, his descendants also have inherited a life principle which involves a built-in death principle. The moment a child is conceived the nature of disobedience is in him and the power of death - so that in the same moment he is conceived he is a sinner by nature and also begins to die; he is dying ere he is born, and eventually the death principle wins out over the life principle and he does die. And, fallen in Adam, men prove he is in them, by walking just as he walked. Adam yet relives old Adam's life in every unregenerated man, as Christ in us yet lives Christ's life. With all emphasis I must declare that at the very most, the worst offender on earth, has committed a crime WHICH IS INHERENT IN HIS OWN NATURE, and the eye of the all-seeing God sees what even we, in most cases, cannot see, that the most wicked sinner on earth IS SIMPLY DOING THAT OVER WHICH HE REALLY HAS NO CONTROL. People tell me that "man has a choice," but I declare to you that when I came into this world some 77 years ago ADAM HAD ALREADY MADE MY CHOICE FOR ME. I wasn't consulted, God didn't ask me whether I would prefer to be born a sinner or a saint - Adam answered that question for me in the dim and distant past! WHAT "CHOICE" DO DEAD MEN HAVE? Never in my life did I have a choice until the blessed day when the Spirit of God came and illumined my mind, convincing me of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment, and showing me the things of Christ, taking the glories of Him and unveiling them to my astonished soul; then,

and not until then did I have a choice - and it did not take me long, beloved friend, to make that choice!

The Psalmist acknowledged that he had been "shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me" (Ps. 51:5). This was not a confession of some illicit act on the part of his mother, which resulted in his birth. Perish the thought! For the following verses bear out the fact that it was the hereditary "mystery of iniquity" which was passed upon all men, stamped upon the very "genes" of his makeup, the "seed of Adam" has blueprinted into its genes the propensities for evil, which he acknowledged, and for which he sought deliverance. "Behold, You desire truth IN THE INWARD PARTS: and in the hidden part You shall make me to know wisdom. Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. Create in me a clean heart, O God; renew a right spirit within me" (Ps. 51:6-7, 10).

Men have, in their very blood, been saturated with sin, with lawlessness, with nervous temperaments and diseases WHICH HAVE BEEN THE DIRECT CAUSE OF THEIR TRANSGRESSION. God in His great mercy knows this, and thus it is written, "And the Lord said in His heart, I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake; for the imagination of man 's heart is evil from his youth; neither will I again smite any more every living thing, as I have done" (Gen. 8:21). I do not hesitate to say that all the multiplied sins upon earth today ARE THE RESULT OF HEREDITARY WEAKNESSES - inherited from Adam! And if God in His great mercy will not send a flood again, because He pities man in his weakness, shall He then proceed to commit an even more horrendous act by torturing men in everlasting hell-fire?

Any penalty which does not take into account the fact that a poor miserable human creature has been the victim of such an inheritance is an unjust penalty. The law of man may punish without mercy, but even that law should be merciful to the ignorant. But even when the extreme penalty of death has been visited upon the transgressors, the bigot adds to it a penalty far in excess of the crime when he says that a man who has not been drawn to the Lord will go to a burning, torturing hell and live on in misery, without hope or mercy, through unending eternity. That is a vile and devilish doctrine, which has no support in the Word of God. Those who say otherwise are ignorant or perversely wicked. It is foolish to say that it is necessary to preach an everlasting hell to keep people from being wicked. I should be wicked if I preached it, and in conflict with both the love and the justice of God who is the Father of my spirit, and the Creator of my soul and body. I clearly see that it would be vile and wicked to make punishment so tremendously exceed the guilt. One should take into account what God remembers in dealing with humanity. He never forgets that we are "dust," and He remembers just the kind of muck from which our souls and bodies came. "Oh," you say, "when people are wholly bad, and their thoughts are evil, and that continually, they must go to hell!" Yes, that is right! they cannot go to heaven! "And they must stay there for ever and ever!" you erroneously add. Then why did God send His Son to get them out of hell? Why did the Christ, after He arose from the dead, grab the keys of death and hell and descend into hell? What was He doing there? WHY does the blessed Redeemer HOLD THE KEYS? Thank God! hell is not the end of the matter. Banishment and torment do not spell the ultimate results of God's great plan. The end of all God's dealings is one of victory, deliverance, and full redemption and restoration.

THE GOOD SHEPHERD

To tell me, as I find in the Westminster Confession of Faith, that God had, by a predestined plan, so constructed man that he was born, and from all eternity designed to be wicked, and a vessel of wrath, that God Almighty might show His power by sending him to everlasting hell that is the most infernal lie that a man's tongue could utter, or type could print. That my God, the infinitely good and holy God, was the predestinator, and creator of multitudes of harlots, whoremongers, thieves, murderers, liars, to let them grow up, and to live and lust and die, and then glorify Himself by torturing them in eternal hell! Horrible! I tell you that all the divines that ever hatched a cockatrice egg could never make me swallow that.

Write it between your eyes and never forget it. The Good Shepherd who came from heaven, and gave His life, will seek, and seek, and seek, and save, and save, and save, until He has brought all men back to God. This is the work of the Redeemer and the redeemed. I desire to make this perfectly clear, because it is necessary to do so. When Jesus came He sought for sinners, wherever Satan had gone. He sent His disciples into the world to seek even farther for them. He seeks for sinners still. And He shall seek for them throughout ages yet unborn. The Good Shepherd will seek them until He finds them. If He didn't, He wouldn't be the Good Shepherd! He will seek them on earth and in hell. "Where shall I go from Your presence?" the Psalmist asks. That question is unanswered and unanswerable. It has stood upon the page of Scripture for three thousand years, and no one yet of all the myriads that have read it has been able to devise a reply. Heaven says, Not here. Hell says, Nor here. It is not among angels, or demons, or the lost, or in the vast silent spaces of eternity. There is no creature anywhere not manifest to His sight. He who made vultures, able from immense heights to discern the least morsel on the desert floor, has eyes better than they. Then David says, "If I make my bed in hell, behold, You are there!" (Ps. 139:8). Thanks be to God that He will seek His lost ones through all the Universe - through all the Earths and all the Hells until He has found and saved them all. He must seek until He finds.

"Where are you going Shepherd?
To find My sheep.
How far will you go?
As far as My sheep.

How far may that be?
To the world's end.
How long will you seek it?
Until I find it.

When you find it,
will it come to you?
No, it will flee from Me.
Where will it go then?
To the rocks and the sand.

When will it stop?
When it can run no more.
What will you do then?
Carry it home.

Friends, you will never get away from Jesus. Jesus will follow you everywhere and demand your heart's surrender. I am so glad for a Gospel that is coextensive with, and greater than, the devil's work in spirit, soul, and body. I am so glad for a Gospel that is not limited to this age, but reaches out to all ages! I am so glad for a Gospel which tells me that God has made a way by which even His banished may return. I am so glad for a Gospel that is not limited to earth, but reaches into the depths of death and hell. I am so glad for a Gospel of Everlasting Hope, of Everlasting Expectation, and for the conviction and divine revelation that the miserable and the wicked shall at last be brought to repent of their sin, and to find their God and Father. I should not want to be an elder, or pastor, or leader, of a people that would wish me to preach eternal damnation.

TO HELL AND BACK

Mothers, your boys have sinned. They were dragged into sin and died in sin, and you have been weeping because they went to hell. Mothers, if the Christ would guide you down to hell to talk to your son there, would you not go? Would you not go and plead with your son to come back with you to the Kingdom of God? If I had my choice of any mission field, I think, if the Lord would send me there, I would like to have a lick at the devil at his headquarters in hell. I have never been afraid of him on earth, and I will not be afraid of him in hell. I would like to take the captives out of his hands. I mean what I have said, that if ever I am permitted in the good grace of God, there is not a hell in the universe to which I would not ask to be sent as a revelation of the Christ, that He might fill even that part of the "all things." There is nothing I should like better than to be sent on an evangelistic tour down to hell, and clean it out.

There is no hell that could be more vile than the hell I see around me right here in El Paso; the hell of sin, sorrow, torment, fear, demon possession, hatred, murder, strife, drugs, vile rock music, immorality, rebellion, cursing, nervous breakdown, godlessness and wretchedness. We have a great deal of hell here in El Paso, and there are no hells that could be worse than Miami, San Francisco, New York, Chicago, London, Hong Kong and Calcutta. "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 yet another hell that is filled with liars, fornicators, and blasphemers!" you say. Well, these cities today are filled with liars, fornicators, and blasphemers. "Ah, but there is a hell where the devil himself dwells!" you say. Well, the devil himself is also right here on this earth, cursed to crawl upon his belly, to eat the dust of the carnal mind and nature of man. He that is joined to the devil is one satanic spirit. 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, inhuman 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 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? He that is joined to Satan is one spirit with him! That is why Cain slew Abel. The devil is a murderer and liar from the beginning and that murderous spirit entered into Cain.

We have lots of hell beyond us, but our work is to follow Christ, to be willing, as Sons, not only to ascend the throne, exalted far above all heavens, 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 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 Amsterdam 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 to 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 lower 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 "chosen ones" to help in the delivering of 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. Rivers of Living Water must, even now, pour forth from out of our innermost being, bringing hope and victory and life to all who will come and drink!

While preaching about the harlot who washed the feet of Jesus, J. A. Dowie related the following story which graphically illustrates the truth of which I write: "This poor woman who came in from the streets is called 'Hamartolos'; in the original word, that is to say, a prostitute, a harlot; a poor, wretched, outcast woman. Oh, is there any being upon God's earth so much to be pitied, so deplorably miserable, as such an one? Perhaps she had known virtue, and a happy home. She may have been pampered and petted; perhaps educated and made to think that she was the cynosure of all eyes. Now she finds herself, by the betrayal of her heart's affection, a poor wretched outcast, whose only means of sustenance is to prey upon unclean and vicious and foul humanity. I know nothing so sad as this. In all its naked horror it appeals to no one. I have never ceased to shrink almost with terror, man of mature years though I now am, whenever I have been accosted in the street by such an one.

"One night in Melbourne, Australia I had been engaged in writing in a newspaper office. I had been asked to write something for that paper, and I had written it for God, and for the people. It was very late. I came downstairs, and stood out in the cold night air for a moment, with bared head. I was looking up at the stars from the quiet, silent street. A little way off was a great thoroughfare where the people were coming out of the theater, and were crowding the street. I was in a quiet part of the street, standing there thinking what way I should go home; whether I should take a cab or whether I should walk.

"I was enjoying, for a moment or two, that cool, fresh air, when I heard a clear and beautiful voice say to me, 'Good evening, sir.' I turned around and saw the lovely face of a very beautiful girl. I said, 'Good evening,' but I trembled as I said it; because I knew at once what kind of woman she was. Yet she did not seem to be deeply stained with sin. 'Good evening,' she said; and I again said, 'Good evening,' and that was all. She said, 'Will you go home with me?' And then, having silently prayed, I turned to her and said, 'Home with you?' 'Yes.' 'Where is your home?' So she told me. 'Oh, no,' I said, 'that is not your home. Your home is the house of her which is the gate of hell. The dead are there. If I went home with you I should share the fate of all who enter there, unless God delivers them. But will you go home with me?' She was trembling violently, holding on to an iron post with a ring at the top of it, and her fingers were grasping the ring. 'Home with you?' she said. 'Yes, sir, but where do you live?' I said, 'I live on earth, but my home is in the

heavens. Oh, won't you go home with me to heaven, I will take you to a lovely woman tonight in Melbourne who will be as kind to you as to her own daughter.' She then knew that she had spoken to one who was a child of God.

"I am sure that she had not been long in sin. She opened her eyes wide and held up her hand, and I will never forget her cry - 'It is too late. The waters have gone over me. It is too late,' and with that she darted away. I went after her, but she was lost in a moment amidst the great multitude that was surging up and down the streets. 'Too late! The waters have gone over me.' I went home that night with these words ringing in my ears: 'Too late! Too late! The waters have gone over me.' I said, 'It is not so, God; we shall search for that woman in this city until we find her.' And blessed be God, today that woman is living a holy and happy and virtuous life" -unquote.

This is the ministry of the Good Shepherd.
This is the ministry of the Son and the Sons.

Rescue the perishing, Care for the dying,
Snatch them in pity from sin and the grave;

Weep o'er the erring one, Lift up the fallen,
Tell them of Jesus, the mighty to save.

Down in the human heart, Crushed by the tempter,
Feelings lie buried that grace can restore;

Touched by a loving heart, Awakened by kindness,
Chords that were broken will vibrate once more.

Oh God! Every man of the untold billions of earth is Your creative offspring. They may have wandered far from You. The mark of Cain may be upon the brow; but even Cain You would permit no man to kill; and You did send into the abyss Your sinless Son to bring back those who had sinned when the whole world rejected You thousands of years before. Here in this land, and in all lands, there are many spirits in the prison house of sin and darkness, and damning lust and fear, and vile habits and wretchedness, and all kinds of devious and guilty ways. God bring them out into the light! Help us, Oh Father, to BE THE LIGHT and shine, and shine, and shine, till there is no more darkness anywhere. Help all who read these lines to understand Your great love.

Jude tells us to "convince some, who doubt; save some, by snatching them out of the fire; on some have mercy with fear, hating even the garment spotted by the flesh" (Jude 22-23). It is our job to do the snatching. Christ has shed His blood and poured out the Holy Spirit of power! Our part is to pick up our weapons and go out against the powers of darkness and drive them off the land. Christ bought us with His own blood - we belong to Him. And so, by the same token, do all men. John said that Jesus "is the expiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the WHOLE WORLD" (I Jn. 2:2). No person is exempt from Christ's work of salvation. What remains is for us to work with God - to fight the good fight that loosens Satan's bold on lost men and women and compels them to come into the banquet hall. Do you believe that the weapons with which God has equipped you are effective? Do you believe that merely speaking the Word of Reconciliation in faith, in utter dependence upon the Holy Spirit, will cast down strongholds and bring down every high thing that exalts itself against God? Do you believe that your weapons can and will bring minds - rebellious minds to obey Christ?

They will! Let us challenge hell's gates. They cannot prevail against God's Church! Let us break them down in order to bring out the captives that they might serve Christ and know true freedom.

I do not wonder sometimes that those who only read my writing think that I am a hard and vindictive man, especially as I warn men of the error and abominable apostasy of the nominal Church systems. But if you only knew, I am one of the most peaceable and gentle men in the world. I am a very quiet man (except in the pulpit), and believe that I am merciful and compassionate toward every sinner. I have only been a fighter because I had to fight. Was Jesus Christ not a great fighter? Is He not a great fighter still? And is He not the Prince of Peace? Is He not God's Lion, the Lion of the tribe of Judah? And is He not the Lamb of God? God's Lion is a Lamb! God's Lamb is a Lion!

I call God to witness and you to witness that when I have had to fight - for whom have I fought? I fought for God. I fought for Truth. I fought for reality. I fought against the false shepherds who were taking away the key of knowledge, who entered not in themselves, and them that were entering in they hindered. I fought those who fought the right ways of the Lord, deceiving the people and holding them in bondage to slavish forms of empty religion. Stephen fought the devils in the Jewish system to their very faces although he knew he would die. He saw his Master in the heavens. Do you see your Master in the heavens? Do you see Him by your side? Do you know Him within, in the depths of your spirit? Do you hear His voice? Do you know what He wants you to do? He wants you to follow in His steps, to BECOME HIS SALVATION unto the ends of the earth. He wants you to deliver His creation from sin, sorrow, death, hell, and the demonic power which curses this world. Who follow in His train? Not those whose Christianity consists in a feeble conformity to a creed, and go through the motions of a Sunday morning ritual. The peace of God means war with sin. He that is a friend of evil is the enemy of God. This is the kind of peace Jesus left. He made warriors of men. They went forth to fight the world and the devil, in Greece and Rome, with thirty thousand gods. They marched up the Acropolis; they marched upon the Parthenon; they threw down the altars of the boni dei; they threw down the altars of Venus; they destroyed the altars of Jove; they threw down the altars of Mercury. They smashed them, by the Spirit's power they trampled upon them; they triumphed, and they died.

Oh, that is such a sublime verse where Jesus said, "ALL AUTHORITY is given unto Me in heaven and in earth. Go therefore and teach all nations..." (Mat. 28:18-19). Do you see that? There is a tremendous power in that "Therefore," I am with you. I will back you. Every angel in heaven if needful will come forth and surround you. Fight! What does it matter, the puny governments and armies and courts of THIS WORLD? All authority is given to the Christ of God, and we are His body! The hosts of God will troop over all the skies, ten thousand times ten thousand millions, if need be. "I command. Go therefore, you poor fishermen, and tax-gatherers and discredited rabbis, go, I am with you." If only we realized what power there is behind us!

General Grant marched out because he felt that it was an honest nation behind him that would lay all its millions of dollars down to carry that thing through, and can we not march out and take the devil's forts, knowing that we have got all the omnipotence of heaven with us? Cowards you are, talking about "holding the fort"! Get out of your forts! What is the use of going inside of fortifications? I tell you, the army that fights behind entrenchments is whipped every time. God is raising up a SONSHIP COMPANY that will go for the devil's fortresses, to batter him, shatter him and break up his kingdom. God is

even now, in the end of this age, preparing an army of OVERCOMING ONES who shall go forth in the fullness of the power of the Spirit to pull down the strongholds of creed and ritual and religious ignorance and set the captives free; who will beat down the strongholds of sin and rebellion and let the prisoners go free!

I am not afraid to take the blows from the devil, and I am not afraid to give blows! I have a shield upon which I can take the fiery darts. I am glad for the fight. It is the good fight of faith. It is the good fight of love. The thing, however, that buoys up my heart above everything else is the hope, the hope that springs perennial in this breast, that I shall see victory; victory for purity and righteousness and peace; that I shall hear a song of universal joy from the whole earth, and from hell, and from the farthest reaches of the universe when they sing: "Hallelujah! For the Lord God omnipotent reigns, and the kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ." Blessed hope!

We must have it! We shall fight it out to the end, and we will win. Sin shall be abolished. Disease, death, pain, and hell shall pass away. Then, O Christ, and then alone, will You see the travail of Your soul and be satisfied. Then, O Christ, and then alone, can we be satisfied; when the last rebel has bowed at Your feet, and there is no more fight; for there is no more rebellion anywhere. Hallelujah! God shall reign forever! It is a living hope; this hope that, at last, every poor sinner will have heard the glad sound, and that at last every poor spirit in earth and heaven and hell will bow before the Christ, and will own His sway, and there shall be harmony and peace and unity everywhere, for God shall be All in All. That is my hope.

THE GREAT GULF

"Oh," you reply, "the story of Lazarus, and the rich man who in Hades lifted up his eyes, being in torments, teaches us that there is no bridge between heaven and hell, no way to escape the tormenting fire." I shall speak very plainly about that. In the first place the story of the rich man and Lazarus is usually considered without any reference to its setting. Near the close of Jesus' ministry He had eaten dinner with a Pharisee, at which time He not only healed a man with dropsy, but gave some pointed instructions about how to give a dinner party. When He left the house, great throngs followed Him (Lk. 14:25).

Many of this crowd were publicans and sinners. In Lk. 15:1-2 we read, "Then drew near unto Him all the publicans and sinners to hear Him, and the Pharisees and scribes murmured, saying, This man receives sinners, and eats with them." It is against this background of criticism from the scribes and Pharisees that the teaching of Lk. 15 and 16 are given. That whole discourse is called a parable. "And He spoke this parable unto them, saying" (Lk. 15:3). The Greek is very definite in making the word for parable clearly a singular noun. It is "the parable this." Five seemingly separate stories enter into His teaching to carry the truth of "THIS PARABLE." His usual method of teaching all but the inner circle of His disciples was by a parable. "All these things spoke Jesus IN PARABLES unto the multitudes; and without a parable spoke He nothing unto them" (Mat. 13:34). "But privately to His disciples He expounded all things" (Mk. 4:34).

Now, it is not my purpose to explain the meaning of the parable in this writing, for that is another story altogether. I would be remiss if I did not point out, however, that while the story itself IS A PARABLE, in all parables there must be a correspondence between the

type and the antitype or they fail to have validity as parables. Let me illustrate. Jesus spoke a parable, saying, "Behold, a sower went forth to sow." He then explained how the seed fell upon various kinds of soil, and the result from each. Now, since this is a parable, it is obvious that Jesus is not just relating a series of facts; He is not talking about a certain literal farmer sowing actual seed such as wheat or corn. Each part of the story is a symbol, a metaphor, an illustration of something else, and we know, of course, that the sower is the Christ, the seed is the Word of the Kingdom and the soils are different kinds of hearts. But - if there were no such thing as seed, and no such activity as sowing, and no actual soil in existence, then the parable would have no base, no strength, no meaning - it would not be a parable at all, but merely a fantastic, unrealistic, imaginary fairy tale! It is the FACT of seed, sowers, and soils that gives the parable its strength.

So, in the parable of Lazarus and the rich man, if there is no such thing as Hades, and if there is no sense of suffering of punishment in Hades, then the application of the parable fails. There must be some reality to these things or the parable is not a parable at all! But in the parable Lazarus is said to be in "Abraham's bosom." The phrase "Abraham's bosom" was a well-known one, current among the people of Judea to express the state of the faithful Israelite who had died and been "gathered unto his fathers." Abraham's bosom typifies a position of acceptance and favor in the Kingdom of God, for, "If you be Christ's, then you are Abraham 's seed, and heirs according to the promise" (Gal. 3:29), and "many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham in the Kingdom of Heaven" (Mat. 8:11).

The rich man wanted Lazarus to come and cool his tongue. He had been a very bad man, and so was tormented in the hell he had created for himself. But when he asked that Lazarus should cross, Abraham said, "Between us and you there is a great gulf fixed; no one can cross it." Abraham could not cross that gulf. It was a fixed gulf to him. Ah, no, Abraham could not get across to him! I know Abraham could not pass over it, and I do not wonder at Abraham's not being able to pass over it. I am not a great admirer of Abraham. A man that will hide behind his wife and say she is his sister in order to save his own skin, is not to be greatly admired! That is just what Abraham did. Abraham got behind Sarah's robes, saying to her in effect as follows: "Now, when Abimelech comes along, you say to him that you are my sister, and not my wife; you are so beautiful that if he knows you are my wife he will kill me. But it won't matter, even though you are carried off to his harem, you will know Abraham's skin is alright." I think that was a very pitiful kind of a man, if his name was Abraham. I do not wonder that he could not cross the gulf.

I do not wonder that Isaac could not cross. He was just the same kind of fellow, and did exactly the same thing. I do not wonder that Jacob could not cross. He was one of the cutest scamps that ever lived. He persuaded his brother to sell him his whole inheritance, his entire birthright, for a mess of portage, and then deceived his poor old blind father and brazenly lied and stole his brother's blessing. A very mean man was Jacob. "But these are Patriarchs!" you say. I know that, that shows what a poor lot the best of them were. Wonderful that God Almighty could make so much out of them! And we are a poor lot, too, and it is wonderful what God can make out of us!

The Bible says that Abraham could not cross that abyss, nor could Lazarus. 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, 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 it! And even if you could, you did not have the keys to the gates. But 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 Israelite and Gentile, between bond and free, between male and female, between rich and poor, and between heaven and hell. 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 you are all one in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 3:28). 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!

My greatest desire is to be filled with all the fullness of God and come into the image of Jesus Christ. My greatest obsession is that I might be counted worthy to stand in that glorious company of the MANIFESTED SONS OF GOD. As God knows my heart, it is not a selfish desire. The reason I want to be like Jesus is because I love Him so; but also because it is the only way I can ever be used in the restoration of fallen creation. I see the desperate needs of the world around me, and realize that I am powerless to do anything about it on a sufficient scale. Oh, yes, I can pray, agree with God, and see occasional conversions, deliverances, and victories. But anyone who says that they have reached the place where their ministry is meeting the needs of this sin-cursed world is either blind to the needs of man, a proud hypocrite, or a compulsive liar.

But God has a purpose in His people. God's purpose is NOT to redeem a bunch of people to sit at a bus stop and wait for a heavenly bus to come along and take them out of this mess. God is preparing SONS to change the world, to seek and save, to redeem and restore all back into God. These Sons will not be found looking up into the sky, expecting Jesus to come and snatch them away to heaven! God has redeemed us and is putting Himself into us so that He may send us to clean up the mess that the devil has made.

For this day of deliverance the whole creation groans! For these Sons who shall bring the deliverance all creation travails! "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared to the glory that shall be revealed in us. For the earnest expectation of the creation waits for the MANIFESTATION OF THE SONS OF GOD...

because the creation itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groans and travails in pain together until now" (Rom. 8:18-22). From within the prison house of sin and death and hell can be heard the groaning and the travailing of the whole creation. We know this groaning is not a groaning for the manifestation of merely God or of His Son, Jesus the Christ. Somehow, through the infinite wisdom and work of God, there is a faint ray of knowledge deep within the sub-consciousness of the prisoners, that their release is going to come through the ministry of the SONS OF GOD. God will not singlehandedly deliver the prisoners, and neither will Jesus the Christ. But some of the very prisoners of that prison, who once mingled with all the rest, have been ushered out to become a FIRSTFRUIT OF HIS REDEMPTION and commissioned of God, chosen of God to pass through a process of training, preparation, testing, and transformation that they may return and release the captives.

The processing, the purging, the change, the transformation and the testing that the chosen ones must go through is of great importance to us. Hear now the inspired admonition of the apostle Paul in whose spirit this hope burned brightly: "I entreat you, therefore, brethren, by the tender compassions of God, to present your bodies a living sacrifice holy, well-pleasing to God, your rational service. And do not conform yourselves TO THIS AGE, but transform yourselves by the renovation of your mind, that you may ascertain what is the will of God, the good, and well-pleasing, and perfect" (Rom. 12:1-2, Diaglott).

In God's wonderful plan there is the call for the PRESENTING OF OUR BODIES. There is the ASCERTAINING OF HIS WILL, and the being CONFORMED TO THE AGE AND THE AGES THAT ARE TO COME. We are not to be married to THIS AGE, but we are to remain unmarried to it that we might be married to that age and those ages that are coming. The children of this age, Jesus said, marry and are given in marriage to this age, but the children of the resurrection, the Sons of God, those destined to deliver the creation, neither marry nor are given in marriage to this age, but are keeping themselves unto the age and the ages to come, and the gracious and glorious ministry reserved for that time.

Ah, let us surrender ourselves unto God for the blessing and deliverance of ALL CREATION!

Chapter 7

The Lake Of Fire

THE PRODIGAL SON

A king in Europe, a kindly monarch, went to visit a school. Children were being taught concerning the various kingdoms into which nature and man were divided. The King wished to ask the children some questions. A sweet little maid stood forth, and the King said, "Now, my dear, tell me what these are," holding objects in his hand. She said, "A flower, a bird, a beast." "Tell me to what kingdom the flower belongs." "To the vegetable kingdom, sire," said the child. "Tell me," said the monarch, "to what kingdom do these animals belong?" holding up various animals. "To the animal kingdom, sire..... Tell me, my dear," said the King, "to what kingdom do I belong?" Now, I think if she had said he belonged for the most part, to the animal kingdom, she would not have been far wrong; but the little one had great reverence for the King, although he had so often failed to recognize the Kingdom to which he belonged. The little, blushing maid did not want to say that he belonged to the animal kingdom, but "out of the mouths of babes and sucklings God perfected praise." The little one, with her eyes full of tears, for she had heard the tittering laughter which was running through the school at her embarrassment, looked up into the face of the King. "Now, tell me, dear," he said, "to what kingdom do I belong?" "You belong to the Kingdom of God, sire." And the King bowed his head, for the arrow had gone to his heart. He said, "My dear, pray that I may be worthy of that Kingdom, and of God."

The answer of the child is the answer which I give you. Do you desire to teach the child that which will enable it to triumph over the lusts and passions of a mere animal nature? Teach it that it is the Offspring of the Father of spirits, and that first and greatest of all is the spiritual nature which it has and not the psychical or the physical nature. "And God said, Let us make man in our image, and after our likeness ... so God created man in His own image, in the image of God created He him" (Gen. 1:26-27). "And has made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and has determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation; that they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after Him, and find Him, though He be not far from every one of us: for in Him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, for we are also HIS OFFSPRING. Forasmuch then as we are the OFFSPRING OF GOD..." (Acts 17:26-29). Teach the child that sex, race, or nationality is nothing in the Kingdom of God. Teach them that "there can be neither Jew nor Greek, there can be neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 3:28). Teach them to seek for that New Creation which God's Spirit alone can impart, that they may be worthy of that Kingdom and that they may have the love which rules in that Kingdom from its divine center to its utmost circumference, and which crushes lust and sin and death beneath its feet.

"...which was the son of Enos, which was the son of Seth, which was the son of Adam, which was the son of God" (Lk. 3:38). Adam - the SON OF GOD! God has a wayward sinner for a son, that wayward boy sprang, originally from the heart of God after a creaturely manner. He was created out of the glory of God and was a radiant creature,

more radiant than an angel; and that boy, dead in scarlet sins, is still God's son, but he is a prodigal son. Some fathers may disown their sons, but the Father of the prodigal son never said that that wayward boy of His was not His son. The Bible says that such become the children of the devil; but, nevertheless, God still has a double claim upon them: they are His by creation; and they are His by right of redemption. They are dead in trespasses and sins. They need to be saved, to be converted, regenerated. They need to repent and come home; but when they do, the sorrowing Father is made glad and says, "For this My son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found." God is a bereaved God. It brings sorrow to our hearts, too, to think that our God and Father is bereaved of His children!

But to whatever depths of depravity, destitution, emptiness, sorrow, pain, and disaster the prodigal finally comes, it is good for him, for it ultimately destroys the pride and arrogance, the independence and selfhood, and the wickedness and rebellion in his heart. It would be well worth our time to consider prayerfully the deep import of the piercing words of the prophet: "Your own wickedness shall correct you, and your backslidings shall reprove you" (Jer. 2:19). Those who suppose that hell and the lake of fire represent the eternal doom of the sinners of Adam's race are ignorant and understand nothing whatever of God's great laws, and purposes, and dealings in judgment. The apostle Paul wrote to Timothy about two apostates in the Church: "Holding faith, and a good conscience; which some having put away concerning faith have made shipwreck: of whom is Hymenaeus and Alexander; whom I have delivered unto Satan, that they may learn not to blaspheme" (I Tim. 1:19-20). Were these two reprobates turned over to Satan to be tormented for ever in the lake of fire? Nay! They were delivered unto Satan that they might LEARN! Learn what? "Learn NOT TO BLASPHEME. " It should be obvious to every thinking mind that as soon as the lesson had been learned, the apostle called Satan off the case, and the erring one was restored to God and His people!

There is a beautiful story in Luke chapter fifteen, the parable of the Prodigal Son. While feeding hogs in the "far country," the prodigal came to himself. It was the lack of food that changed him. His body was made to need food, even as his heart was made for friendship and love, but he was destitute. "No man gave unto him," the story says. Alone! Forsaken! Stripped! Then he remembered: "How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger!" He was suffering the results of his own selfishness, and lust, and rebellion. His body was in agony without the sustenance it was created for. Rags, and filth, and stench were his surroundings. All this the result of his sin! To be "without God in the world" is life's ultimate in desolation and despair. The reality of judgment is separation from God's love and fellowship and blessing and the consequent recognition of condemnation and the processes of wrath and judgment.

We often forget that God not only allows Satan and sin and evil, but that He also uses them. Again and again, when trouble stalks his path, a man turns back to the God he has despised. When his wife dies, or his children go wrong; when loss and disaster fall upon him, again and again he will seek the God he has neglected. Many of our men who fought in past wars found that danger and privation turned their minds toward God. Foxholes cure atheism, they say. Weeks on a lifeboat adrift in the ocean do something to a man, and he is often a very different person when he lands on shore again. That is not because God coerces the man, but because God brings upon him such experiences as change his attitudes and priorities. And God brings such experiences upon men, not in vindictive hatred, but in love. He is too wise to err, too loving to be unkind!

Some argue that because we affirm that the judgments of God are not eternal, but corrective, we teach a "hell redemption." We are accused of believing that hell can accomplish in a man what the mercy and blood of Jesus could not accomplish. Many years ago Charles G. Finney (and we respect his ministry) opposed the teaching of the ultimate salvation of all by ridicule. Finney was a master of the invective. He said that those who were saved after this "age of grace" ends would unceasingly sing, "Thanks be to the hell that saved us by our own suffering!" Just how much weight is there to that criticism? It is a marvelous truth that CHRIST ALONE can save! There is no other way! How we rejoice that it is so! But there is one thing that must be dealt with before any man can come to Christ and be saved. MAN'S REBELLION MUST BE REMOVED. His pride and self-confidence and stubbornness and trust in things and pleasures that damn and lead away from God must be broken. And this is where judgment comes in. Judgment destroys the power of the carnal mind which blinds, which is enmity against God, but judgment does not grant redemption. It only breaks rebellion! It breaks man's stubborn will! But redemption was purchased upon the cross.

It is a small matter for God to break the resistance of men. Men without God live like animals. They eat, sleep, entertain themselves, labor, but they are not in touch with God at all. He has no place in their thoughts nor in their lives. Finally man awakens. Like the old country preacher who was telling of the prodigal son. He said, "He took off his coat and spent that. Then he took off his vest and spent that. Then he took off his shirt, and when he took off his shirt, he came to his self." We come to ourselves in various ways! When the prodigal was feeding hogs in the "far country" he "came to himself," according to Jesus. Did he, then, have a "hog pen redemption?" Not at all! The hog pen didn't save him, but he did get some sense knocked into him there. It was there his willfulness and rebellion left him, but he was not saved until he got back to his Father. I have read about men in the foxholes on the battle front getting saved. Did they get a "war redemption?" Did the war save them? No! No! No! Men in the danger and horror of war often begin to think as they never thought before, but war does not save. At best, it can only awaken them, and turn men to the Christ they have ignored. And if they are saved at all it is because they call in all sincerity upon the Saviour who died for them on Calvary's cross.

Now the prodigal didn't have to go home. He was not compelled to do so, no one dragged him. He wanted to! But he didn't want to until all his money was gone and he got to feeding hogs. The circumstances had to crowd in upon his life which caused him to come to the place where he chose to "arise and go to the Father." The heart of the Father is calling, calling, calling to His wayward children, "Come unto Me." Long before the prodigal son had come to his home, the Father was waiting, and looking for him. He saw him coming along the weary way, no longer with servants attending, no longer in rich robes; but ragged, poor, dirty, in worn out sandals, he came along the road, with the stench of the swineherd and the stains of the fleshpots upon him. Creeping along, sick, sore, and weary, he said, "Oh, if I could but be one of my Father's hired servants! "Is it he? Can it be - O God, can that be he who left only a few months ago, so strong, so happy, so bright, with the world all before him? Can that be he?" "It is. It is he." Will the Father reject him? Will the Father not say, "I gave him his portion and he has spent it all in riotous living; let him stay away for ever?" No, no. The Father saw him afar off, and he ran and fell on his neck, and kissed him, not heeding his filthiness and his rags. The Father interrupted the prayer, after the son told him of his sin, that he might become a slave in the Father's house; for there are no slaves in our Father's house. They are all sons and daughters of the Most High God.

Thank God for that! Why, then, should we be slaves to Satan, and to sin, and to death, and to hell? The Father took him and kissed him. He told the servants to bring the best robe and the signet ring that made him controller of his Father's estate. He told them to get out the musical instruments and the dancers, and to make merry and be glad. "Spread the feast, for this my son was dead; dead to me; dead to mother; dead to purity; dead to truth; dead to love; dead to God; and he is alive again. He was lost and is found." Whenever judgment has done its work; whenever a man comes to himself and says "I will"; "I will arise and go to my Father, and I will say to my Father, I have sinned against heaven and in Your sight and am no more worthy to be called your son," then the Great and Eternal God and Father will take that man, sin-stained and foul as he is in spirit, and in soul, and in body, and He will make him whiter than snow. If you ask Him to give you the lowest place as a servant, He will lift you up, and kiss you and say, "My Son! My Daughter!" The robe of the Father's righteousness will be placed upon you, you will be bountifully fed from His very own table with the wisdom of His Word, and the signet-ring that gives you power and authority over all things in His Kingdom, will be upon your finger. Cleansed and robed and empowered by the Father, you can go out and do His work. All creation groans for the FIRSTFRUITS of His redemption to be revealed in all the majesty and power and glory of their regained inheritance! Blessed be God for ever.

GOD GAINS ATTENTION

You may remember the story of the man who was trying to get his mule into the barn. The man was tugging on the rope and pulling with all his might. He got behind the mule and pushed; he put his shoulder to its back but he could not budge the mule who just stood there, stiff legged, and would not move. He could not get it into the barn! A fellow walked up and watched for quite a while. Finally he said, "Mister, I'll get your mule into the barn for you if you like." The man stopped in astonishment and said, "Can you?" He said, "Of course, it is easy." The stranger walked over and picked up a two-by-four, came over to the mule, quietly lifted the two-by-four, and whacked him on top of the head, right between the eyes. The mule went a little cross eyed! Then he hit him behind the ears. Before the mule could quite straighten up again, he struck him underneath the chin. With that he took hold of the rope and with two fingers led the mule into the barn! The man stood there astonished. The fellow came out again and said, "You see, mister, actually this mule is a very cooperative critter. You just got to get his attention!"

Sometimes God has to GET OUR ATTENTION. And to do that He chooses to use events which are instruments of His judgment. God told Moses that the reason for His judgment upon the Egyptians was to make them know that He is God. Everything God does shows us something about who He is, but in this instance of judgment God particularly expressed that His intent was to show Himself to the Egyptians. And He was successful in this, for in chapter eight of Exodus Moses records the magicians telling Pharaoh, "This is the finger of God." Our God has foretold the blessed era when He shall be ALL IN ALL. How can God ever be ALL- IN - ALL? Are there not some creatures and men too calloused and hostile to bend to His omnipotence? Let each one who knows Him as their ALL give answer thus: "He who has broken my stubborn will and brought me to His feet can lead the most obstinate to Himself." His will is more than a match for any man's. Were it His decree to become their DOOM, they could not stop Him. But as it is His will to become their ALL (which is a far nobler, greater goal), their ALL He shall become. His indignation may break and destroy pride and rebellion for the ages, but His love will endure endlessly and He will pursue all men until at last they surrender to His love.

Ah, yes, God knows just how to GET OUR ATTENTION! He can get it here and now. If He doesn't get it here, He will get it in hell. If He doesn't get it in hell, He will get it in the lake of fire. He will get it by gracious words and tender mercies, if He can. But if not, He will get it by severe judgments and awful wrath. But, blessed be His name, He will get our attention!

God gives us power, in the positive realm, to get men's attention, to subdue them to Christ. Jesus has said, in effect, "All Authority has been given unto Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore, I give you authority to tread upon serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy. I give you this authority. I am behind you, and all the powers of heaven are on your side. Go therefore and MAKE DISCIPLES." They were a poor lot to go. They were nearly all fishermen, with one honest tax-gatherer. If you can find one honest tax gatherer in America, I think you might make him an apostle without further investigation. These men whom Christ sent out were uneducated for the most part. They had no political clout and no social rank, until Christ took them in hand. They did not know very much until He took them in hand for three years. It was astonishing what He made of them. They did not realize their mission until the Holy Spirit came at Pentecost and brought to their remembrance the things which Jesus had said, and showed them the meaning of Jesus' words after He had risen from the dead, when, on the mountain side in Galilee, He gave them authority to make disciples.

Dr. J. A. Dowie, years ago, related the following incident: "A man said to me once, 'You talk as if you could make people believe.' I said, 'I can; of course I can. You give me a chance at you, and I will make you believe before I am through.' He said, 'You will never make me believe.' I said, 'Will you come and attend services at Zion Tabernacle for ten consecutive Sundays, and see if I cannot?' 'Yes,' he said, 'I will, but you will be just as far away from it at the end of the ten weeks as you were at the beginning.' I looked for that man every Sunday, and I studied him from every point of view. I got to know all about him. I got to know all of his meannesses. I got to know the wickedness he had done. I 'spanked' him for about five consecutive services. I had him writhing in his seat and swearing under his breath, and wondering who had given him away. Every now and then I would look at him from this platform and say, 'I will have you yet.' He was wondering what I meant; but he was breaking up fast. After about five weeks I did not know if he would come any more. But on the sixth Sunday I forgot about him and did not know whether he was in the place or not. That day I said, 'There are some of you whom I have been pounding, and I suppose you have about come to believe that there is no hope for you anywhere on earth or in hell.' Suddenly I saw him and said, 'There is hope for you. You are a mighty hard case, but I will have you today. You will be a disciple today. Dare you to put it off any longer?' When I said, 'Stand,' I saw that fellow try to sit when thousands arose, but he could not. Before the ten weeks were up he said, 'Doctor, I surrender.' I said, 'All right; come and be baptized next Sunday.' God enabled me to MAKE HIM A DISCIPLE" -end quote.

But at times God has to use more severe means. Some months ago I turned on my car radio while en route to a meeting on a Sunday morning and heard a preacher relate a most interesting and illustrative story. He said, "I remember a friend of mine that I was in school with. He was a pastor in the East Texas oil fields at the time of the explosion at the New London School. I shall never forget that night when word came in over the radio that that school had exploded and that over 300 boys and girls had been killed. I was speaking the next morning on the radio in Dallas, Texas. And that morning I directed

everything I had to say to the parents and loved ones of those boys and girls. We had cards and letters from New England, from Cuba, from Mexico, from all over the country.

"But this pastor friend of mine told me this story. He said, In the parish in which I was the pastor, there lived a man that had become suddenly rich. He was a Texan who had become oil rich, even had put up a small refinery. And he had made already several millions of dollars. He had built a lovely home. He had a wife and two beautiful boys. And the wife and two boys were Christians, fellowshipping in our Church. And this pastor went on and said, This man was the worst blasphemer I had ever met in my life. I've never heard a man talk as that man would talk. He would blaspheme God, curse God. And his wife was so concerned about him and asked me to go see him. I went to see him, and I've never been treated like that in my life. He cursed me from the time I opened my mouth until I got out of earshot. He called me everything that was in the book and some things I didn't know were in the book. He was vile. His wife and one of his little boys took sick during the flu epidemic and both died at the same time. I went over that night to see them. I went in and there sat the father and the little boy that was alive. I went over and sat down beside them and began to talk, and he began to abuse me again. And curse - I've never heard anything like it! It was vile beyond description. He blasphemed God's name. There was nothing left for me to do but get up and walk out of there, which I did. I had the funeral. The man wouldn't even speak to me. And he became more vile after that. But all of the love that he'd had for his family, and that seemed to be the only thing about the man that was a redeeming feature, was now turned to this one little boy that was left.

"That little boy was in the New London School. This man, when he heard of the explosion, went out to that school and went through that rubble like a madman until he found the torn and twisted, broken body of that little boy. Then he took it in his arms and walked up and down that schoolyard like a madman until they actually took it away from him and carried it to the funeral home. You know, I felt it was my duty to go and talk with him. So that night I went over to that big home, and I went in and there was that little white casket and there he sat, the same place he'd sat before. I just steeled myself for the cursing that I was to get. I was afraid to say anything. I just sat down. Then that great big hulk of a fellow looked up and our eyes met. He hadn't cried before, but there were tears in his eyes. And instead of cursing me, he said to me, God has been after me all the time. He's tried to speak to me all my life, and I turned my back on Him. He took my wife and my other little boy, and I knew He was talking to me. But I was afraid of what men might say, those I worked with and was associated with. Oh, what a coward I've been. And now He's had to take this one! Well, he said, God can have me now. And that man got down on his knees beside that casket and took Christ as his Saviour. The last time I saw that pastor friend of mine he told me that that oil man was still serving God" - end quote.

That man did not respond to the POSITIVE witness of the Gospel of God's grace, so corrective measures were needed, and God stretched forth His hand and brought NEGATIVE forces into action, thereby getting his attention. Once broken under the judgmental dealings of God, he knelt before the Lord and received the goodness and mercy and deliverance so graciously proffered. Hallelujah! It should be clear to every thinking child of God that God does not use the same means and measures with every man to bring them to Christ. It would be very simple to fill this book with instance after instance from Holy Scripture which loudly and unmistakably proclaim the nature and purposes of all God's judgments from the banishment of Adam and Eve from Eden's fair

garden in Genesis to the blazing inferno of the lake of fire in Revelation. But I would point you briefly to one plain and positive illustration which proceeded from the lips of our Lord Jesus Christ. "But and if that servant say in his heart, My lord delays his coming; and shall begin to beat the menservants and maidens, and to eat and drink, and to be drunken; the lord of that servant will APPOINT HIM HIS PORTION WITH THE UNBELIEVERS. And that servant, which knew his lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be BEATEN WITH MANY STRIPES. But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be BEATEN WITH FEW STRIPES. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more" (Lk. 12:45-48).

In this parable it is plain that Christ is teaching degrees of punishment. The Christ teaches that those who have committed things worthy of many stripes, will receive many, and those who were ignorant, and with lesser light did not know or understand the will of God, yet did things worthy of stripes, shall receive but a few. Here is set forth in the plainest of language not only varying degrees of punishment, but also varying lengths of time for the punishment. What ever the judgment typified by the "stripes," it takes longer to inflict many stripes than just a few, so it should not be difficult to understand that some men are punished for a longer period of time than others. The Word of God declares that the Judge of all the earth shall do right, and I believe that He shall do just that. As our children were growing up we did not have one stock punishment for all their misdeeds. We suited the punishment to the disobedience, yet we haven't granted the same privilege to God! We have said that everyone is to receive the very same common punishment, hell fire, and that that judgment would endure for the very same length of time for all - eternity! How, then, I ask, can some be beaten with "many stripes" and others with "few stripes" if all receive the same punishment of endless hell fire? How foolish can we be! It is always extremely foolish to hold to a doctrine that clearly contradicts the Word of God.

I can almost feel the holy wrath, I can almost hear the stinging invective of some who think they have me now -"Ah, " they say, "but Jesus is not talking in this parable about the condition of the lost; He is teaching about the punishment of disobedient SERVANTS OF GOD!" And you are so very right, my friend! We never want to forget it. Nothing could be plainer, for Jesus prefaces His remarks with these significant words: "Who then is that FAITHFUL AND WISE STEWARD, whom his Lord shall make ruler over His household, to give them their portion of meat in due season? Blessed is that SERVANT, whom His Lord when He comes shall find so doing. Of a truth I say unto you, that He will make him ruler over all that He has" (Lk. 12:42- 44).

There would be no answer to your argument; I would be forced to throw up my hands and admit that these words of our Lord apply only to the correction and discipline of servants of the Lord, and have absolutely no bearing whatever on the judgment of unbelievers, or on hell, or on the lake of fire, were it not for one significant statement that appears in verse forty-six. The Lord says, "The Lord of that servant will come in a day when he looks not for Him, and at an hour when he is not aware, and will cut him in sunder, and will APPOINT HIM HIS PORTION WITH THE U-N-B-E-L-I-E-V-E-R-S." Do you see that? Ah, the punishment of this SERVANT is the SAME PUNISHMENT as the UNBELIEVER receives! He is appointed his portion WITH THE UNBELIEVERS! The punishment, therefore, of this servant of the Lord and the punishment of the unbelievers is equal, identical, of the same intensity, for the same length of time, the very same punishment, and that punishment is? -MANY STRIPES! Not unending stripes; not everlasting whipping; not eternal torment under the hands of the tormentors; but - many stripes. And

of what precise judgment speaks our Lord when He commands "appoint him his portion with the unbelievers?" What is the "portion of the unbelievers?" Hear it! "But the fearful, and UNBELIEVING ... shall have their part (portion) IN THE LAKE WHICH BURNS WITH FIRE AND BRIMSTONE" (Rev. 21:8). The "portion of the unbelievers" is the lake of fire. And not only are the unbelievers judged there, but the unfaithful servants of God are dealt with there, too! And, by Jesus' own words, this punishment is called "many stripes," and is shown to be limited in its duration and corrective and remedial in its nature.

THE LAKE OF FIRE

I believe every word that the Bible says about the lake of fire; I don't believe what Rome says about it, nor what the apostate Churches say about it, nor what tradition says about it; but I certainly believe what the Bible says about it.

The teaching concerning the lake of fire does not appear anywhere in Scripture except in the book of Revelation where it is spoken of in the following passages: Rev. 14:10-11; 19:20; 20:10; 20:13-15 and 21:8. This last passage definitely states, "But 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 burns with fire and brimstone: which is the second death." There should be no question remaining as to the certainty of this lake of fire; neither should there be any doubt as to the awful consequence of having to be cast into it. These Scriptures with their dreadful foreboding should be a fearful warning to all unthinking and foolish people who, because of their love for the world, the flesh, and the devil, have dared to ask why we should serve God now if all are going to be saved eventually. Such people have no love for God nor fear of God, and they manifest by what they say that their professed serving of God is only a pretense, arising - not from any true love for Him - but from fear of punishment. If there were no prospect of hell these would promptly tell God to go to hell and they would, themselves, go to the devil. It is not thus with those who truly love God, for they serve not from fear, but from pure love and devotion. Remove punishment completely from the universe, and they would still serve God with all their hearts.

Because of the gross misunderstanding of almost all people concerning the lake of fire, I would like to draw your attention to three words found in the passage quoted above. "But the fearful, and unbelieving, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which BURNS with FIRE and BRIMSTONE: which is the second death." The word BURN means combustion, or to consume. To consume does not mean to annihilate, for there is no such thing as annihilation in the absolute sense. When fire consumes a log in your fireplace it does not destroy any of the elements within the log, it merely changes their form. Combustion is the process by which chemicals combine to form new chemicals. For example: a tree might be cut down, sawed into fire wood, and burned. When the wood is burning the heat causes the chemicals of which the wood is composed to vaporize, mixing with the oxygen in the air to form new chemicals, including water and the gas carbon dioxide. So what was formerly a tree is no longer identified as the form of a tree, but the substance thereof is now simply CHANGED into a DIFFERENT FORM and exists in its new form within the atmosphere as water, carbon dioxide, etc. Thus, to burn, means to CHANGE. Furthermore, it is interesting to note that fire does not burn down; it always burns up; it seeks the highest level. And all that it consumes "goes up in smoke," to exist in a new form in a higher dimension. Even if you take a pan of water and place it over a fire, before

long the water will take on the property of the fire and will begin to go up in steam. To burn means to CHANGE, and the change is always UPWARD in its motion.

FIRE is the heat and light that you feel and see when something burns. It takes heat to start a fire, but once the fire is started it produces heat that keeps the process going. Thus, fire is really HEAT and LIGHT.

In my study of the lake that burns with fire and brimstone I was very much helped and impressed by the understanding given by Charles Pridgeon and I would like to quote from his scholarly work on the subject of BRIMSTONE. He says: "The Lake of Fire and Brimstone signifies a fire burning with brimstone; the word 'brimstone' or sulphur defines the character of the fire. The Greek word THEION translated 'brimstone' is exactly the same word THEION which means 'divine.' Sulphur was sacred to the deity among the ancient Greeks; and was used to fumigate, to purify, and to cleanse and consecrate to the deity; for this purpose they burned it in their incense. In Homer's Iliad (16:228), one is spoken of as purifying a goblet with fire and brimstone. The verb derived from THEION is THEIOO, which means to hallow, to make divine, or to dedicate to a god (See Liddell and Scott Greek-English Lexicon, 1897 Edition). To any Greek, or any trained in the Greek language, a 'lake of fire and brimstone' would mean a 'lake of divine purification.' The idea of judgment need not be excluded. Divine purification and divine consecration are the plain meaning in ancient Greek. In the ordinary explanation, this fundamental meaning of the word is entirely left out, and nothing but eternal torment is associated with it" -end quote.

I realize that the above thoughts define the subject very briefly, but let us summarize the meanings thus: BURN means combustion; to change the form of. FIRE means heat and light. BRIMSTONE means divine. Putting these three together can we not see that the lake burning with fire and brimstone is, actually, DIVINE HEAT AND LIGHT PRODUCING A CHANGE! Is such a process eternal? All the laws of nature shout that it is not! More than 2500 years ago the Holy Spirit warned the wicked inhabitants of Jerusalem that God would kindle a fire at Jerusalem's gates which would devour her palaces. "But if you will not hearken unto Me ... then will I kindle a fire in the gates thereof, and it shall devour the palaces of Jerusalem, and it shall not be quenched" (Jer. 17:27). Did not God say this fire "shall NOT BE QUENCHED?" This prophecy was fulfilled and the fire did occur a few years later and it did destroy all the houses of Jerusalem (Jer. 52:13). Since God said no person or thing would "quench" this fire, did that mean that it would burn for ever? Since it accomplished the work it was sent to do, and since it is NOT BURNING TODAY, it obviously went out by itself after accomplishing its purpose! Unquenchable fire is not eternal fire - it is simply fire that cannot be put out until it has consumed or changed everything it is possible for it to change! It then simply goes out, for there is nothing more to burn. Yet I hear the preachers ranting and raving about poor souls being cast into hell fire where "their worm dies not, and the fire is not quenched" and this, we are told, means eternal, unending torment. How foolish, illogical, and deceptive! Such a view contradicts the plain meaning of the term "unquenchable" and its use in the Word of God.

Are the judgments of God permanent? Isaiah says, "When Your judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness" (Isa. 26:9). And Mat. 12:20 says, "A bruised reed shall He not break, and smoking flax shall He not quench, till He send forth judgment unto victory." Judgment, therefore, is not an eternal condition, but it is given to produce that victory. Judgments of themselves do not save anyone, but they are used by God to bring one to one's self, to effect a change of attitude and will, to

consume away the stubbornness and rebellion of men. 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. There is no better way to deal with filth than to deal with it by fire.

The punishment 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) 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 all 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 dwells righteousness. Every man's work will eventually be tested in this fire. The fire will try every man's work of what sort it is. If you and I build into our walls 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 WORD - some things begin to change! The fire is never sent to destroy the PERSON, but to purge out all that hinders and separates him from his God, to consume the pride, arrogance, hostility, defiance, and rebellion of the flesh, the carnal mind, that He might then be wooed and drawn by the Holy Spirit unto the Father of Spirits and live.

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.

We all know that a horse must be broken, that is, its will must be broken before it is of any practical use to man. God put that will in the horse, but it must be broken and made to conform to the will of man. Just as surely did God put the will in man, BUT IT MUST BE BROKEN and we will benefit by the very process of breaking. Man may do a lot of crying and wailing, but when he is broken to HIS will, what a wonderful condition it is. God may take man over some rough places, even through the lake of fire and brimstone, but the love of God will break every man to His will.

If you think the Kingdom of God is rosewater, or eau-de-cologne, you are mistaken. You cannot war on the devil with that. You cannot war on the carnal minds of men with that. You have to make war on the world, the flesh, and the devil with a sword sharper than any two edged sword. You have to make war on the carnal mind with fire, divine fire that must burn up every inherent altar of Baal, and lick up the very dust around. Make no mistake! OUR GOD is a consuming fire! He is man's "horse breaker" and He will break you, precious friend of mine, and bring you to the foot of the cross of Jesus no matter how hot He has to build the fire around you! Even if long ages of fiery judgment and tormenting darkness fall upon you, they will last no longer than till the Great Fire of God has melted all arrogance into humility, and all that is self has died in the bloody sweat and all-saving cross of the Christ, which will never give up its redeeming power till sin and sinners have no more a name among the creatures of God.

THE SECOND DEATH

The book of Revelation is a book of symbols. In the introduction to this marvelous book the beloved John explains, "The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto Him, to show unto His servants things which must shortly come to pass; and He sent and signified it by His angel unto His servant John" (Rev. 1:1). The word "signified" is from the Greek SEMAINO meaning to indicate or communicate by means of signs and symbols. The meanings of all the symbols of the Revelation are given, either in the book itself, or elsewhere in the Scriptures. The first things John beheld when in Spirit was One like unto the Son of man, standing in the midst of seven golden candlesticks, holding seven stars in His right hand. The One like unto the Son of man is identified as the resurrected and glorified Lord, for this One says, "I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: I am He that lives, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore" (Rev. 1:10, 17-18). The other symbols of that first vision are interpreted as follows: "The mystery of the seven stars which you saw in My right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels (messengers) of the seven Churches: and the seven candlesticks which you saw are the seven Churches" (Rev. 1:20).

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. He tells us exactly what certain things are. And in the Scripture just quoted He has told us exactly what the seven stars and the seven candlesticks are. Those are God's definitions. And in Rev. 20:14 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 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. The second death is not merely the lake of fire. The second death is not men being tortured for ever in the lake of fire. The Holy Spirit has made it very simple and plain. The second death is the first death and hell CAST INTO THE LAKE OF FIRE. That is the Holy Spirit's definition, not mine.

Can we now open the eyes of our understanding to see that everything cast into the lake of fire pertains to DEATH? Death itself is cast into the lake of fire. Hell, the realm of the dead, is cast into the lake of fire. And those whose names are not written in the Book of Life, those who are dead, in trespasses and in sins, who inhabit hell, are cast into the lake of fire. That is the end of death and hell and sin, 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! The time is coming, praise His name! when God's Kingdom 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 SIN and DEATH and HELL that are destroyed.

"And 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 fresh 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 coverage, into the greater and 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 an end in 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 lives unto God, and so fulfills all righteousness. The first made all men sinners, the last makes all men righteous. The lives and the deaths of the two Adams are thus greatly contrasting the one to the other. The FIRST DEATH was a transition from life to death, the SECOND DEATH is a transition from corruption to incorruption, from mortality to immortality. Transformed from the carnal mind to the spiritual mind, which is life and peace, which transformation is wrought by a dying out to the one realm, to come alive to the higher realm. Because - the second death is prepared to purge out and burn away sin and its results, and so doing cleanse all of God's universe.

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

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 burns with fire and brimstone: which is the second death." These are men saturated with 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 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 terrible and severe than anything we now know. 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 that second death which is to come. It can only be described as the "lake of fire." This terrible death 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 and 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 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" (I Cor. 15:26), 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 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 are no more sinners, for sinners are DEAD MEN, dead in trespasses and in sins. 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. 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. To say there is no more death is to say there is no more sin, for "the wages of sin is DEATH." What a universe of truth is contained in three little words: NO MORE DEATH!

This grand truth seems to be almost unknown in the Church systems. Although the very climax and fulfillment of all revelation, it has been eclipsed by human perversions. As a result the God of the popular Churches has lost the essential attributes of Deity. He is like the foolish man who started to build but could not finish. Man's theology brings nothing to a conclusion. It attains no definite goal. Sin, suffering, and insubjection are never conquered. Death is never destroyed. Redemption is never fully secured. God is compelled to work an eternal miracle in order to maintain a never-ending eyesore in His creation, once so subject, so sinless, and so good. He has to eternally keep His great foot on the lid of hell; for if even one of the devils should get out there would be hell everywhere! But death in all its forms shall be destroyed until it shall be said, "There is no more death!" Jesus is Conqueror! Then shall every creature in the universe bow and in glad chorus sing, "O death, where is they sting? O grave, where is your victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be unto God, which gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ!" (I Cor. 15:55-57).

NOT HURT OF THE SECOND DEATH

There is a strange and wonderful statement found in Rev. 2:11. "He that has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says unto the Churches; He that overcomes 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 these three men Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, fell down bound into the midst of the burning fiery furnace. Then Nebuchnezzar the king was astonished, and rose up in haste, and spoke, 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 you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow you: and when you walk through the fire, you shall not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon you" (Isa. 43:2).

The word "hurt" is from the Greek ADIKEO meaning to be unjust, do wrong, injure or offend. Armed with this understanding we may paraphrase Rev. 2:11 thus: "He that overcomes shall not be done an injustice, wronged, injured or offended by the second death." 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, cursing, and resisting all the way, while 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 MEN MUST DIE UNTO SIN.

When the natural man becomes the spiritual man, the great change is described by the Holy Spirit as a passing from death unto life. Before the transition occurred, the practical difficulty was this, how to get into harmony with the new environment of the Kingdom of God? But no sooner do we enter into the Kingdom of God than the problem is reversed. The question now is, how to get out of harmony with the old environment of the flesh, the world, and the devil? The moment the new CHRIST LIFE is begun there comes a great anxiety to break with the old, for the regenerated spirit has nothing in common with the old. The former way of life now becomes embarrassing. Because of "sin in our members" it refuses to be dismissed from our consciousness. It competes doggedly with the new nature of the Christ. And in a hundred ways the former traditions, the memories and passions of the past, the fixed associations and habits of the earlier life, now press in to draw us to walk after the flesh, complicating the new walk. The complex and bewildered soul, in fact, finds itself confronted by two contrasting faculties, the flesh and the spirit, each with urgent but yet incompatible claims. It is a dual consciousness of a double world, a world whose inhabitants are deadly enemies, and engaged in perpetual civil war! The position is perplexing. It is clear that no man can attempt to live both lives. No man can walk both after the flesh and after the spirit anymore than one can walk down two roads at the same time.

His testimony will agree with the apostle who wrote: "For I know that nothing good dwells within me, that is, in my flesh. I can will what is right, but I cannot perform it. I have the intention and urge to do what is right, but no power to carry it out; for I fail to practice the good deeds I desire to do, but the evil deeds I do not desire to do are what I am ever doing. Now if I do what I do not desire to do, it is no longer I doing it - it is not myself that acts - but the sin (principle) which dwells within me. So I find it to be a law of my being that when I want to do what is right and good, evil is ever present with me and I am subject to its insistent demands. For I endorse and delight in the Law of God in my inmost self - with my new nature. But I discern in my bodily members - in the sensitive appetites and wills of the flesh - a different law at war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner to the law of sin that dwells in my bodily organs - in the sensitive appetites and wills of the flesh. O unhappy and pitiable and wretched man that I am! Who will release and deliver me from the shackles of this body of death?" (Rom. 7:18-24, Amplified).

To walk both after the flesh and after the spirit is morally impossible. "No man," as Christ so often emphasized, "can serve two masters." And yet, as a matter of fact, here is the new-born child of God being in relation to both worlds - flesh and spirit. With sin and purity, with light and darkness, with God and the devil, the confused and undecided soul is now in relation. What is to be done in such an emergency? How can the New Life deliver itself from the ever-persistent call of the flesh?

The ready solution of the difficulty is - TO DIE! Not for our "old man" to die, for he is already crucified with Christ, but for us to DIE TO SIN, or to KILL THE EVIL DESIRE LURKING IN OUR BODILY MEMBERS. To die to any reality is to withdraw correspondence with it, to cut ourselves off from all communication with it. The solution of the problem will simply be this, for the spiritual life to REVERSE CONTINUALLY the processes of the fleshly life. The spiritual man having passed from death unto life - the fleshly man must next proceed to pass from life unto death. Regeneration of the spirit in short must be accompanied by degeneration of the flesh, the carnal mind. And this DEATH PROCESS is the SECOND DEATH - the DEATH OF DEATH! Now it is no surprise to find that this is the process everywhere described and recommended by the Holy Spirit! Paul asked the burning question, "Who will deliver me from this body of

death?" and swift came the answer, "O thank God! - HE WILL! through Jesus Christ our Lord! " (Rom. 7:24-25).

Listen to the words of the apostle as he presses this beautiful truth home to the hearts of the understanding saints in Colosse: "If then you have been raised with Christ to a new life, thus sharing His resurrection from the dead, aim at and seek the rich, eternal treasures that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. And set your minds and keep them set on what is above - the higher things - not on the things that are on the earth. For as far as this world is concerned you have died, and your new real life is hid with Christ in God. So KILL (DEADEN, DEPRIVE OF POWER) the evil desire lurking in your members - those animal impulses and all that is earthly in you that is employed in sin: sexual vice, impurity, sensual appetites, unholy desires, and all greed and covetousness, for that is idolatry. It is on account of these very sins that the holy anger of God is ever coming upon those who are obstinately opposed to the divine will, the sons of disobedience, among whom you also once walked, when you were living in and addicted to such practices. But now PUT AWAY AND RID YOURSELVES COMPLETELY OF ALL THESE THINGS: anger, rage, bad feeling toward others, curses and slander and foulmouthed abuse and shameful utterances from your lips! Do not lie to one another, for you have stripped off the old unregenerate self with its evil practices, and have clothed yourselves with the new spiritual self, which is ever in the process of being renewed and remolded into fuller and more perfect knowledge upon knowledge, after the image (the likeness) of Him who created it" (Col. 3:1-10, Amplified).

Let me repeat - all men shall die to 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. In the measure that we are identified with the cross of Christ, and made conformable to His death, in which it is no longer our will but HIS, in that measure we are "dying out" to the first death, via the process of the second death, the death of death, our whole being coming up in the likeness of His resurrection. The second death, the destruction of the carnal mind and its hostility and enmity against God, is not to be feared by the blood-bought over-coming saints of God - it is God's arrangement whereby all the effects of the first death shall be disannulled, and all carnal-mindedness shall cease. For us who willingly submit to this process "no man takes 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.

To quote the timely words of Ray Prinzing once more: "Now - while we see the victory of the ultimate, a complete triumph over death, first death, second death, ALL DEATH to ultimately be brought to an end, there is a present-tense application which is before us. 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 and lusts of the carnal mind. To those who now OVERCOME, the same shall not be 'hurt' of the 'second death,' when it is manifested in its more severe forms, as portrayed in the term of being 'a lake of fire.' Praise God, with the inworking of the Holy Spirit, enabling us to overcome all the evil of this present age, and all the carnal mind, we shall not be done an injustice by the second death. THE WHOLE PROCESS IS

UNTO VICTORY. There may be suffering involved, for indeed, it means death to all our pre-conceived ideas, death to all the rebellion of our self-will, but it also means that we shall be loosed, set free from the shackles that bind, and with the inflow of His life we shall walk in the glorious liberty of the sons of God" -end quote.

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 die to sin now! Let us die to our own stubborn wills now! Let us die to our fleshly ways 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 overcomes NOW shall not be HURT by the second death!

TORMENTED IN THE PRESENCE OF THE LAMB

The words torment, tormented, tormentors, and torments occur twenty-one times in the King James version, and all in the New Testament. Three of these are in connection with the lake of fire. Let me give you the quotations. "The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of His indignation; and he shall be TORMENTED WITH FIRE AND BRIMSTONE IN THE PRESENCE OF THE HOLY ANGELS (MESSENGERS) AND IN THE PRESENCE OF THE LAMB: and the smoke of their torment ascends up for ever and ever (Greek: unto the ages of the ages): and they have no rest day nor night..." (Rev. 14:10-11). "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 (Greek: unto the ages of the ages - see Part One of this series -'Just What Do You Mean ... ETERNITY!')" (Rev. 20:10).

Notice please, in both instances, the subjects are tormented with fire and brimstone, and we have previously established what the fire and brimstone are. But Rev. 14:10 sheds further light, those are also tormented by and through another agency, which in reality sums up and constitutes the fire and brimstone, and that agency is THE PRESENCE OF THE LAMB and the holy angels, or messengers. What an amazing divine paradox! The Lamb - precious embodiment of the very character of innocence, patience, meekness, gentleness, holiness, sacrifice, and redemption - being made TORMENT to men for whom He died! The very thought seems incongruous. You see, dear ones, IT IS NOT THE NATURE of a lamb to torture anyone. It is simply not in the nature of the lamb to want to hurt in any way. Really! What could a lamb do to torture anyone? It has no capability for such a thing. And so it is with the LAMB OF GOD! The Lamb of God has no desire, no ability to inflict torture in any way - His desire is entirely redemptive - that men might have life and have it more abundantly! I cannot imagine One with the nature of a lamb packing poor lost souls like brick into a kiln, standing there blowing the fires of hell through them for ever. Such a grotesque representation charges the blessed Redeemer with crimes more heartless than those of Adolph Eichmann.

Ah, the torment comes not from the Lamb. The torment lies within the bosoms of the tormented. The Scripture does not say that the Lamb torments them! If you think it does, you are mistaken. It states that THEY ARE TORMENTED IN THE PRESENCE of the Lamb. What a thought! TORMENTED IN THE PRESENCE. The Lamb is merely present. He does not torment. The condition is within themselves. Because they are wrong and sinful in nature, wicked in their hearts, selfish in their minds, and impure in their desires, they are CONDEMNED IN THEIR CONSCIENCES by the very PRESENCE of the pure,

holy, sinless, selfless, sacrificing Lamb of God. Hell is at its fiercest when it sees heaven, and not till then. When these realize the presence, or the character of the Lamb, they are tortured in their consciences, for in the Light of the Lamb they see themselves for the wretched little devils they are. The very PRESENCE of TRUTH torments the deceitful and the liar. The very PRESENCE of HOLINESS torments the immoral and corrupt. The very PRESENCE of LOVE is torment to the mean and hateful. The PRESENCE of Him who is the PRINCE OF PEACE is torture to those who live by violence and the sword. The very PRESENCE of the LIFE OF THE LAMB is the most awful torment and torture to all the opposing forces, both deceiver and deceived, until all the deceit and hostility has been taken out of them, and they come to KNOW THE LORD. When these have been exposed for a sufficient time to the PRESENCE of the Lamb, the Lamb will overcome them; His love and power will conquer their hearts; the rebellion and waywardness will be taken from them and they will at last ENJOY the Presence of the Lamb!

When the maniac of Gadara encountered the Christ the devils cried out, saying, "Have You come here to TORMENT US before the time?" (Mat. 8:29). IT WAS TORMENT FOR A POSSESSED PERSON TO BE IN THE PRESENCE OF THE CHRIST. It is torment for any enemy of God to be ushered into the presence of God. Anyone who is unacquainted with God and happens to come into a group who are worshipping and praising God, is in torment all the time he is there. The sooner such a person can leave, the better he likes it. Such an atmosphere is hell for that person! Why is it so hard to get your unsaved loved ones and friends to go to Church? They are unhappy and miserable in a Church meeting! They are tormented when with the saints worshipping God. They are estranged from God, citizens of the devil's kingdom, and cannot relate to the praises of God, the moving of the Holy Spirit, giving tithes, and the Word that is ministered. This all makes them unhappy and uncomfortable.

Peter Marshall said that when the apostles preached the Gospel there were either riots or regeneration. The fact of the matter is that in most cases there were both, for the same Gospel melted some hearts and turned others to stone. People were led either to faith in Jesus Christ or they were stirred to the most violent animosity and enmity. Jesus Christ has always been either a stone of stumbling or the sure foundation stone. We build upon it or we stumble over it and are crushed by it. Riots or regeneration! Joy unspeakable and full of glory or torment!

A person under deep conviction is tormented. Tormented with what? He is tormented with the fire of God's holy presence, the fire of His penetrating, burning Word. He has no peace or rest, day or night. His conscience troubles him continually. When you and I were under deep conviction for our sins and past life we were tormented by the Holy Spirit, the presence of God. And we had no rest day or night. When we were finally broken by the Holy Spirit's dealing and repented and confessed those sins to Jesus, we cried often and shed many bitter tears of remorse and regret. THAT, my friend, is exactly what the rebellious will do in the ages to come as God deals with "every man in his own order." There was no short cut to salvation for us, and there will be none for them. In some cases it took months and years, sometimes a lifetime, of preaching and dealings to win our hearts to the Lord. And I am sure that it will take much preaching and many dealings along with the convicting power of the Holy Spirit to win the ignorant, disobedient, and defiant masses who lived and died in this world outside of Christ.

A brother in the Lord shared this illustration of wicked people being tormented in the presence of the Lamb: "A few years ago, we often preached to ALL the women in the

state penitentiary for women. They were forced to sit and listen while we sang about Jesus, talked about Jesus and preached about Him. Some wept, some stared, and some faces showed bitter hatred toward us. Others seemed to writhe and twist in mental anguish and physical torment. Why? Because they were forced to listen. There was no escape" -end quote.

Suppose a few filthy, vile men and a few immoral women from some house of prostitution were forced to sit in the midst of a large congregation of singing, shouting, worshipping saints. This certainly would be torment to most of them. They would be tortured in the flames of the blazing glory of God in that place! If they were not held in their seats by force, most of them would rush out of there. I have been in meetings where I witnessed three responses to the glorious manifestation of the Lord's presence. First, the saints who loved the Lord rejoiced and adoringly worshipped. Some who were not Christians, but whose hearts were tender toward the Lord, came under deep conviction and, weeping and broken, gave themselves into the loving hands of Jesus. But others, filled with self, haters of righteousness, I have seen jump up and literally run out of a meeting - **TORMENTED IN THE PRESENCE OF THE LAMB!** Sure, they would rush, even run to get away from the convicting power of the Holy Ghost! I have seen it, and so have you.

To the unsaved, HIS GLORY is a LAKE OF FIRE AND BRIMSTONE - divine, cleansing, purging, purifying, consuming fire! In ages yet unborn God shall expose ALL MEN to the sweet abiding presence of the Lamb. They will come under such severe processings, under such profound conviction that they will be tormented and have no rest day or night until they finally yield. And when they do, many fountains of tears will flow with weeping, praying, and calling upon the Lord.

I believe it!

God hasten it!

Chapter 8

Reconciliation

JUST WHAT DO YOU MEAN ... RECONCILIATION!

In the Bible there are a great number of words, phrases, and expressions that are especially significant in the creative and redemptive plan of God. One of the first such phrases was uttered by God Himself before ever He brought mankind into being when He said, "Let us make man in our image." This was the purpose of God condensed into about as few words as can be used. Then there were the inspired words of Isaiah when he prophesied, "Unto us a child is born; unto us a Son is given." Connected with this were the words of the angels unto the shepherds, "For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord," and the proclamation of the Voice from heaven at the Jordan river, "This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." Now God and man were united together in one body, never to be separated, never to be divided. And there were the meaningful words spoken by Jesus on the cross, "It is finished!" and then the wonderful words of the messenger at the tomb, "He is not here, He is risen." I am quite sure that no man as yet has ever plumbed the depths of those words or their meaning to all mankind. Innumerable works have been written, countless sermons have been preached, and many beautiful hymns have been intoned about the unsearchable riches of Christ and the unspeakable glories of redemption; but truthfully, no one has yet fathomed the depths of such glorious and awe-inspiring realities.

There are many other examples of such words and phrases, but one we want to consider in this message is the declaration of Paul in Col. 1: 20 "...by Him to RECONCILE ALL THINGS unto Himself." The full text reads, "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... 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. And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now has He reconciled" (Col. 1:16-17, 20-21).

The word "reconcile" in the Old Testament means "to cover" or "to make atonement." The many sacrifices made upon the altar served to cover over the sins of the people, making a certain kind of peace between God and man. Yet under the limited meaning of the word "atonement" we do not have the complete answer to our need, for we need more than a covering over of sin, but a complete and finished putting away thereof, never to be remembered any more. "But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year" (Heb. 10:3). "But now once in the end of the world has HE appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself" (Heb. 9:26). In Christ there is no more remembrance of sin, for HE brings forth a new creation life, old things passing away, and behold, all things becoming new.

The dictionary defines the English word "reconcile" to mean: to unite; to bring back into harmony; to settle; to make consistent or compatible. The basic Greek word dealing with reconciliation in the New Testament is ALLASSO. This simple verb means "to change" or

"to exchange" . From this verb comes the compound KATALLASSO which is translated "reconciled" in Paul's epistles. Then there is an intensified compound, APOKATALLASSEIN, which is used in two places and rendered "reconciled" and "reconcile". ALLASSO is used in Acts 6:14 where Stephen is accused by false witnesses of preaching that Jesus of Nazareth would "change" the customs delivered to the Hebrews by Moses. In Rom. 1:23 the apostle Paul declares that reprobate men "changed" (in the sense of exchanged) the glory of the creator for images of the creature. In I Cor. 15:51 the apostle tells of a "mystery" concerning the resurrection when we are "changed" from corruptible to incorruptible beings. Again ALLASSEIN is used in Gal. 4:20 for a "change" of voice, and in Heb. 1:12 for a "change" of garment.

KATALASSO is a word which had an interesting history of usage in secular Greek before it was taken up by the Holy Spirit for use in the New Testament writings. It early acquired the technical sense of money exchange or of changing precious metals into money. Later it expanded to include the idea of giving one's life as a mercenary soldier in exchange for a small salary and adventure. Finally, in the Hellenistic writers, the term is found in constant use to describe the bringing together of individuals and nations who have been estranged.

Have you ever received your bank statement only to discover that the balance therein was not in agreement with the balance shown in your checkbook? If so you know something about the Bible teaching of reconciliation! When the balance shown by the bank and the balance shown on your check stub are not identical, there is bound to be error on the part of someone. In most cases you have probably discovered, as have I, that the mistake was on your part - a simple error in arithmetic, or, perhaps, a failure to register a deposit or a change of one kind or another. At any rate it became necessary to "reconcile" your balance with that submitted to you by the bank. To do this you traced down the error, corrected it, changed the sum, and brought the figure in your checkbook into conformity to that given by the bank.

The basic idea of reconciliation is, therefore, "to change thoroughly, to cause to be conformed to, or adjusted to a specified norm or standard." In the case of your home bookkeeping you found it necessary to adjust your check balance so that it "conformed to" the amount published by your bank in their monthly statement. In the case of Divine Bookkeeping there was found a necessity to have an adjustment made on man's books which were out of balance with the Divine Norm or Standard. God's act in bringing conformity of man's account to the Divine Norm, by rectifying the "errors" (sin) that brought about the imbalance, was accomplished through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

How meaningful, then, these words of Ray Prinzing: "In the New Testament Greek we really find the depth of meaning for this word (reconcile), which is TO CHANGE THOROUGHLY. There can be no true unification without first a thorough change. Thus we are not seeking for just a present-time harmony, covering over the past, and hoping for the best in the future, but we desire that the Spirit of God, working within, shall bring a thorough change in us, and then we shall be united with our Lord. There will be no fear of the things we covered over rearing their ugly heads and distressing us again, making a break in our fellowship, for there will have been a thorough correction, and all things made new. Thus, we repeat, there must be a change before unification, 'for what fellowship has righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion has light with

darkness? and what concord has Christ with Belial? or what part has he that believes with an infidel?" (II Cor. 6:14-15) -end quote.

MAN - NOT GOD - IS RECONCILED!

Our Lord Jesus Christ is the Prince of Peace. He came to bring peace. Peace is alien to earth. When sin entered, peace fled. The moment that sin entered, peace fled, and Adam and Eve themselves were at strife with God and each other, so that their firstborn son had the spirit of the devil and was a murderer from the beginning. He slew his own brother. The second Man, the last Adam, was the Lord from heaven. When He was once rejected, in the days of His flesh. His disciples, with indignation, besought Him to command fire to come down from heaven and destroy these evil people. His answer comes down to us through the ages: "You know not what manner of spirit you are of. For the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them" (Lk. 9:55-56). The firstborn son of Adam was a murderer, but the firstborn Son of God was a Saviour. One was the peace breaker shedding his brother's blood, the other was the Peacemaker shedding His own blood that He might make peace with God. Yet the Christ had power to destroy men's lives if He had the will. When He stood there with the cross in full view, He said to His persecutors that it was in His power to call twelve legions of angels. If that heavenly host which hovered about that Son could have once made itself manifest, oh how they would have swept that doomed city, that accursed conclave of false priests, and those wretched, blind and filthy-minded heathen soldiers! How the breath of these heavenly angels could have swept the life out of them and swept them down into hell and the grave. But that is not God's way in redemption. That is not the mission of the Son of God nor of the Sons of God.

Now this leads to a point of immense importance. We often hear it said that "the death of Christ was necessary in order to reconcile God to man." This is a pious stupidity, arising from inattention to the language of the Holy Spirit, and indeed to the plain meaning of the word "reconcile." God never changed - never stepped out of His normal and true position. He abides faithful. There was, and could be, no derangement, no confusion, no alienation, so far as He was concerned; and hence there could be no need of reconciling Him to us. In fact, it was exactly the contrary. Man had gone astray; he was the enemy, and needed to be reconciled. Wherefore, then, as might be expected, the Scriptures never speak of reconciling God to man. There is no such expression to be found within the covers of the New Testament! "God was in Christ RECONCILING T-H-E W-O-R-L-D unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them." And again, "All things are of God, who has reconciled US to Himself by Jesus Christ" (II Cor. 5:18-19). In a word, it is God, in His infinite mercy and grace, through the cross of Christ, bringing us back unto Himself.

We have seen that the ideas in the simple and compound verbs translated "reconcile" that "change" and "exchange" form the keynote. However it is not God who must undergo a change, nor is it His account which is in need of alteration even one single iota! There is no need for a change in the attitude of God toward man, for it has been Love from eternity. There is no equality of footing in this truth for it is the story of the Absolute One who is Infinite in Power condescending to act towards rebel man in perfect grace in the latter's desperate need for reconciliation. It is the Lord Himself changing the accounts from "Sin's Wages" to "God's Gift," from "Legal Righteousness which condemns" to "Divine Righteousness which exalts." It is the Mediator exchanging the "Hostility of Man" for the "Peace of God." It is that which GOD DOES and which GOD GIVES which is at

the heart of the cross whereby man is reconciled. Only God Omnipotent COULD ACCOMPLISH RECONCILIATION! The books are cleared. And God did it!

"Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ; whom God has set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; to declare, I say, at this time His righteousness: that He might be just, and the justifier of Him which believes in Jesus" (Rom. 3:24-26). The following words penned by George Hawtin are true and graphic on this point: "The word propitiate means to appease, to soothe, to cause to be favorably disposed, and to conciliate. When Paul says, therefore, that God has set forth Christ to be a propitiation, the great question that must be answered is this: Whom is Christ propitiating? Whom is He appeasing? Whom is He soothing? Whom is He causing to be favorably disposed? Whom is He conciliating? Is this propitiation for His benefit? Or is it for the sinner's benefit? Is God trying to conciliate Himself or is He conciliating the sinner? You know as well as I do that the Church system has always erroneously taught that it is God who must be propitiated, conciliated and soothed, but I want you to know that such teaching is utter rubbish and the brashest sort of nonsense. It springs from that Romish tradition that likens God the Father to a fearful and offended despot, spoiling for the blood of the offenders, and it makes Christ to be the one who pleads with God on behalf of the victim until the Father is consoled and conciliated.

"The Church all down through the ages, including all evangelicals of the past and present, have taught that Jesus came to propitiate God and to endeavor to dispose Him to be kind toward His fallen race. If you search in a thousand places, I doubt that you will find one man who does not make this incorrect assertion. How often I have listened to preachers describe Jesus Christ as a lawyer who stands up before God to plead our cause and beg for our lives on the grounds that He, being innocent, died for us and God is propitiated by Him and we are forgiven. This gross misunderstanding of the truth of propitiation is everywhere evident in sermons, in writing and in hymns. Notice how this error is brought out in the words of the following hymn:

Five bleeding wounds He bears,
Received on Calvary.
They pour effectual prayers;

They strongly plead for me.
Forgive him, O forgive, they cry,
Nor let the ransomed sinner die!

The Father hears Him pray,
His dear anointed One;
He cannot turn away

The presence of His Son.
My God is reconciled;
His pardoning voice I hear.

"This is Church tradition, but it is not the truth. Nowhere in all Scripture are we ever taught that God has to be reconciled to the world or to man. God never ever became an enemy of man nor does He need to be reconciled to man. The opposite is the truth and always the teaching of Scripture. Man is an enemy of God and man must be reconciled to God. Oh that sinners would be told that it was God the Father who gave His Son, not to

appease or reconcile Himself, but to appease and reconcile man! Therefore the Scripture loudly proclaims, 'We beseech you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God' (II Cor. 5:20).

This is the message that I bring,
A message angels feign would sing:
Be ye reconciled!

Thus says my Lord and King,
O be ye reconciled to God.

"Oh, the wonder of it all just to know that God the Father has sent Christ to be His propitiation toward us and that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them (II Cor. 5:19), and has committed unto us the word of reconciliation! So then, when the great apostle says that God has sent Christ as a propitiation, he means that He sent Christ to propitiate US and dispose US to kindness and repentance before God and to reconcile US to Himself. The Father did not send Christ to appease Himself, though that is the way the Church has always erroneously taught propitiation. The idea that God would send forth His Son to propitiate and appease Himself is exceedingly absurd. The truth is that Christ came to propitiate you and me that we might repent of our rebellion and iniquity against Him, believe and be reconciled to God, who has always loved us and been our friend and not our enemy. We might also take notice that in referring to the Scripture, 'There is one God and one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus,' the preachers have also turned this backwards and made Christ to be our mediator with the Father, but that is not what Paul said. He said that the mediator was between God and man, not between man and God. So Christ was sent as a propitiation, a propitiator, or one sent by God the Father to dispose man to repentance and kindness, love and faith toward God" -end quote.

"For if, WHEN WE WERE ENEMIES, we WERE RECONCILED to God BY THE DEATH OF HIS SON, much more, being reconciled, we SHALL BE SAVED by His life" (Rom. 5:10). What wonder there is in these few words! We were ENEMIES, yet reconciled to God, and that reconciliation came through the death of the Son of God. We were not converted people when we began to be reconciled. We were not saved people at that reconciliation. If we had been saved or converted or righteous at the time of reconciliation, THERE WOULD HAVE BEEN NO NEED FOR A RECONCILIATION. A reconciliation is for the purpose of bringing people of opposing ideals and desires together.

Two things many Christians have not known. One is that when we were reconciled we did not even know that we were enemies of God; the second is that we did not know it until the knowledge of it was brought to us. In fact, at the time of the reconciliation, we had absolutely no knowledge of it at all. No one is reconciled at any altar, or anywhere else, except at THE DEATH OF THE SON OF GOD. The joy and the happiness comes to the sinner, not because he has just been reconciled, but because he has discovered that in actuality he was reconciled to God a long time ago. Preachers and people are quick to say that we are not healed NOW, but that in all actuality we WERE healed by His stripes two thousand years ago. In like manner, in God's estimation, we, WHEN WE WERE ENEMIES, WERE RECONCILED to God BY THE DEATH OF HIS SON.

When Jesus the Christ died on the cross, excepting the very few disciples who stood there, HE DID NOT HAVE ONE SINGLE FRIEND. ALL were His enemies! In Acts 4:27-28 we read, "For of a truth against Your holy child Jesus, whom You have anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together for to do whatsoever Your hand and Your counsel determined before to be done." This people had no choice in this matter. GOD gathered them together on that fateful day! Why was this so? In order that all of them together with the whole world might come to know the wonderful love of God that would save mankind, even against its will, so that God might fulfill HIS WILL for the entire race. All this was in the will and purpose of God and nothing was amiss or out of order, or in opposition to the will of God. The wondrous and gracious words of Jesus confirm this when, as He was dying, He cried, "Father, forgive them, THEY KNOW NOT what they do." What was it that made this manifested love of God so gloriously known? It was the opposing character in all the multitude that crucified the Christ. Had the nation of Israel and the empire of Rome supported Jesus and His teachings, no such manifestation of the LOVE OF GOD would ever have been revealed. The hatred and violence of the mob actually illuminated God's love and made it known.

Every soul has been at war with God; in order for reconciliation to take place, there must be a cessation of the warfare, the hostilities, which exist between the individual and the Creator. The question that must be answered, therefore, is: How is the warfare that exists between the soul and God to come to an end? The first part of the answer is that we must realize that the war exists and confess the fact. A man who tries to insist that there is nothing wrong between him and God is dodging the truth. There is warfare between every man and God by the very nature of man's ego, his self-seeking, sinful heart. God says that the warfare exists, and we have to admit it. Paul expresses the matter with finality: "For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God, for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be" (Rom. 8:5-8). Phillips graphically translates these verses: "The carnal attitude sees no further than natural things; but the spiritual attitude reaches out after the things of the Spirit. The former attitude means, bluntly, death; but the latter means life and inward peace. And this is only to be expected for the carnal attitude is inevitably opposed to the purpose of God, and neither can nor will follow His laws. Men who hold this attitude cannot possibly please God."

Let us examine how a war between two nations comes to an end. A French statesman once pointed out that there were only two types of peace that ever followed a war: A peace imposed upon the defeated by a conqueror; or a peace accepted by the defeated through surrender. There is a vast difference between the peace which is imposed or the peace which one accepts. It should be evident that if there is to be peace between a man and God, the terms must be imposed by God Himself. God, the eternal God, omniscient and omnipotent, must have His way for it is the only right way in the universe. Every other way is the self-will of the creature, the way of earth, the way of limitation, blindness, finiteness. Men who will not submit their wills to the Creator go their horrible way into judgment.

Yet in spite of the fact that our position and our condition are defenseless, there have been those who have talked about "making their peace with God," as if they had a right to set the terms. The phrase has long been in use to describe settling differences between men. Shakespeare, in Twelfth Night, has one of his characters say, "I will make your

peace with him, if I can." Thomas Fuller seems to have been the first man who ever spoke of making one's peace with God. But the phrase is incorrect and an absurdity in such a connection. If you are to know the joys of what God has for you, you must get that idea out of your mind. You must realize that GOD HAS ALREADY MADE THE PEACE and that you are simply to accept it! And when you come to God, the wonderful thing is that you find Him merciful toward you. The man who flings himself upon the promises of God finds that God is the loving Saviour. God has already made peace and is ready to receive that soul with all grace and tenderness. In the epistle to the Colossians, we read of the Lord Jesus Christ that "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 " (Col. 1:19-20).

Note especially the tense of the verb: Having made peace. This is of paramount importance: God has made peace! There is no other peace that can be made except that which God has made. A man who talks about making his peace with God is ignorant and denies the peace which God has already made. God will have no other peace with man than that which He made at the cross. God established the terms for this peace. He set these terms BY THE DEATH OF HIS SON. He declared that only by the death of man's ways, the death of man's will, the death of man's attitude and hostility, could there be peace. In all this God does not change at all. But God works a mighty work upon man, placing him in the Christ upon the cross, crucifying all that he is and all that he does, and bringing him forth out of that death into the resurrection of a new creation in Christ Jesus. Oh the wonder of it! And now, if you will come with an absolute capitulation and unconditional surrender, you will find that God is all peace toward you. It is then that you can go on to find that FULLNESS OF PURPOSE which God fulfills in all who surrender to Him.

What a hideous affront it is to the God of our salvation to wickedly accuse Him of needing to give His own Son as a propitiation TO APPEASE HIS OWN WRATH, though this is the inexcusable lie we hear continually from the pulpit and over the air waves! God is portrayed by the preachers as so mad at sin and sinners, so violently angry and beside Himself that He is metaphorically foaming at the mouth with uncontrollable rage which can only be appeased by looking upon the bloody sweat and cruel, ugly death of His Son upon a Roman cross. All sermons and songs that picture God as a God of rage who must be "appeased" and "soothed" by blood are heathenish and should be piled on a bonfire and burned.

The Old Testament sacrifices serve as a beautiful revelation of God's love towards us, in His reconciliation. Whatever Israel brought to God was brought at HIS COMMAND and was an expression of their dependence upon Him. Sacrifice was not intended to make God gracious; it was brought in recognition of a grace which He Himself had assured. Every sacrifice was offered from this point of view, and free from any thought of appeasing an angry and hostile God. The idea of man being able through the death of a victim, or through some act of self-immolation, to appease the anger of an offended deity or to change His mind toward the worshipper, has clung persistently to most pagan religions. How alien it was to the Israelitish conception of the relation between God and man is clear from the statement in Lev. 17:11, "For the life of the flesh is in the blood: and I HAVE GIVEN IT TO YOU UPON THE ALTAR TO MAKE AN ATONEMENT FOR Y-O-U-R S-O-U-L-S." Ah, God gave the sacrifice, and not to change His attitude toward man, but to CHANGE SOMETHING ABOUT MAN! How could the blood of the sacrifice appease the wrath of God and make Him merciful toward man? It was the gracious,

loving character of God that gave the sacrifice! "I have given it to you upon the altar." How clear that the blood of the sacrifice was not God-ward, it did not avail to make God gracious, for HE AGAINST WHOM THE OFFENCE HAD BEEN COMMITTED HAS HIMSELF PROVIDED THE MEANS OF RECONCILIATION!

Never was holiness more vindicated, than at the cross, when Jesus "suffered for sins, the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God" (I Pet. 3:18). Never was love more lavishly outpoured than when "God SO LOVED the world that HE GAVE His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him should not perish, but have the life of the ages" (Jn. 3:16). Notice, dear reader, it does not say that God was so mad at the world, or so offended by the world, or so angry with the world, or so vengeful toward the world, or so caught in a dilemma because of His justice - but GOD SO LOVED the world that HE GAVE. Hallelujah! We stand in awe before this fulfillment of Gen. 22:8, when by the Spirit Abraham prophesied to Isaac, "GOD WILL PROVIDE HIMSELF a lamb for a burnt offering." As one has pointed out: "And that is just what He did, He provided HIMSELF! Stripping Himself of His glory, He who was in the form of God, took upon Himself the form of man, and offered that form in that great sacrifice, yea, Poured out the life contained in that form, which life was freely given to reconcile all things back into Himself. Never was grace more majestic in its operation, than when 'He made Him to be sin (Greek, literally, A SIN-OFFERING) for us, Who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him' (II Cor. 5:21)." How inspired the words of John the Baptist when he declared of Jesus, "Behold the LAMB OF GOD, which takes away the sin of the world" (Jn. 1:29). Ah, this Lamb was no sacrifice to appease - it was the perfect and purposeful embodiment of God's grace and mercy and love and life to reconcile a hostile world unto Himself!

Appeasement is the basis of the offerings and sacrifices in all pagan religions. J. A. Dowie once wrote: "The religions of the world are worldly, are sensual, and are devilish for the most part. No one will doubt that is true in China. No one will doubt it, notwithstanding the clever philosophies and moral axioms of the Chinese Analects, or the works of Mencius or Confucius or the commentators upon these. No one will doubt that the worship of the Chinese is essentially a Devil Worship. I remember once going into a very fine Chinese joss-house (temple), in Australia, where offerings of the costliest kind hung upon the walls, where many interesting things were to be found. I was talking with the chief priest, and said - to him: 'Tell me how you worship,' and he told me. 'Why,' I said, after I had heard attentively, 'My dear fellow, it seems to me that you are worshipping bad divinities.' 'Oh,' he said, 'Of course we do. The good ones we do not need to worship. They will do us no harm. To protect ourselves we have to get right with the bad ones, so we make it right with the devils.' I thought to myself that there were some other people like that in America and Europe, who are not Chinese' " - end quote.

Can we not see by this that the Christians have copied the heathen and have made a fiendish devil of their God, and have then used the sacrifice of Jesus to "appease" this God who is more like a malicious devil than a loving and gracious Creator and Redeemer? Most Christians know, by hearing at least, that "God is Love," but the sense of condemnation from His Presence beclouds the vision of the heart, so that The Face which He has revealed in Christ Jesus cannot be seen. Often that is because of the continual preaching which describes God as a destroyer, a vindictive punisher. Even as a child many were taught to think of Him as an avenger of every little thing they did wrong. Parents have said, "Now don't you do that because GOD will punish you! He will punish you!" And even much stronger things are told to little children. It is one thing to describe

God as a LOVING Father, and all the relations of the little child to a LOVING Father who corrects in order to bless. It is quite another thing to darken the heart of a little child with threats of the certain vengeance of a Being who is a constant terror over the life. It is a false and terrible thing to leave upon the heart of a little child, as their first impression of God, that He is always waiting, lurking around, to punish them.

Think of it! That little child whose whole being is susceptible to LOVE; who is always looking for and wanting LOVE; who is capable of the purest and fullest simplicity of response to LOVE - think of it! marked and stamped with the impression that "God" is one to be constantly scared of. As though He is waiting everywhere with a punishing whip of large dimensions! Such impressions remain through a whole lifetime as an actual foundation of belief and action. That Wonderful Father! That Gracious Redeemer! That most Loving of all Beings! Oh, how I LOVE Him! He turned my heart back again and restored me into His life. God, the Father, the Most High, sent Jesus - the very fullness of His own heart - sent Him into the world to die on Calvary's cross. But the real grasp of what that love and mercy actually IS, may often be nearly destroyed by the impression of WRATH deeply ingrained in the mind. If our basic understanding of "God" is that He is a Destroyer, that impression can discolor and influence our thought and our prayer life and our faith so that we can with great difficulty SEE HIM AS HE IS. How wonderfully He changes that when we come to Him repenting and believing in His loving Word. We cry out with an almost inexpressible joy that we LOVE Him. It is love, HIS LOVE, which does it! He flows into our lives in WHAT HE IS, and we no longer think of Him as a great force out there somewhere or a great destroyer, but as the LIFE GIVER.

RECONCILING ALL THINGS

"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. 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. And you that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now has He reconciled" (Col.1:16-17, 20-21). "And all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself by Jesus Christ, and has given to US the ministry of reconciliation; to wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself by Jesus Christ, and has given unto US the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God" (II Cor. 5:18-20).

It is utterly impossible for any man or any creature on earth or in heaven to exclude himself from this most precious ministry - the ministry of reconciliation. Before the reader can shut himself, or any other man or being out from the application of this grace, he must prove that he does not belong to either the earth or heaven, or that he is not a part of the "all things" that were created by and in the Christ in the beginning, and that therefore he is excluded from being reconciled, since he has no identification with any of the "all things" that were created and that are being reconciled into the Christ. This he cannot do, and hence he must see that God is beseeching him and all to be reconciled! Every foot of this earth and every man upon this earth belongs to Christ, for He made the earth and He made every man. On that wonderful day when God created "all things" in earth and in heaven He also said, "Let us make man in our image, and after our likeness." Christ made every man and tasted death for every man, and therefore every

foot of the earth and every man on the earth belongs to Christ my Lord, first by right of creation, and second by right of redemption.

This leads us to look, for a moment, at the features which characterize this glorious ministry of reconciliation. First, let us mark God's attitude. He is beseeching sinners. What a thought! It seems too much for the heart to conceive. The words "to sin" in either Hebrew or Greek mean, TO ERR, TO MISS THE MARK. It speaks of that which turns away from the true course, causing a separation by its own selfhood course. "All we like sheep have gone astray, we have turned everyone to his OWN WAY" (Isa. 53:6). Only think, precious friend of mine, of the Most High and Mighty God, the Creator of the ends of the earth, think of HIM as beseeching and praying you to be friends with Him! And more than that, to be unified with Him, made one in His life! It is not a question of your desiring to be like Him and your praying to Him and His hearing. No: but the very reverse - HE is praying you! He simply asks you to be unified into Him because He has made the provision at the cost of His own Son. Think of this. He spared not His only begotten and well beloved Son, but met the demand of divine law, made HIM to be a sin-offering for you, judged your sin in the person of His Son, opened up the fountain of the life-giving stream of His incorruptible life, in order that He might be able to reconcile you. And now He stretches forth His arms and opens His heart to you, and prays you to be reconciled - to be unified in Him. Surpassing grace! It really seems to me as though human language can only tend to weaken and impoverish this grand reality.

I would further suggest that the force of verse 20 is greatly weakened by the word "you," which, as the reader will observe, is in italics, showing that it does not appear in the original text but is supplied by the translators. "Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God." What an inexcusable error! The inserted "you" makes it as though God through Paul was beseeching the saints, NEW CREATION MEN for whom old things had passed away and all things had become new to now be "reconciled" to God! What an unmitigated absurdity! The word "you" doesn't belong in the text at all. It makes it appear as though the apostle were beseeching the Corinthian SAINTS to be reconciled, whereas he is only setting forth the terms and the style adopted by all "ambassadors" for Christ wherever they would go through the whole wide world - the language in which they were to address "every creature" under heaven. It is not, "Do this or that" or "Give this or that," it was not law or ritual or ceremony or creed; but simply, "Be reconciled." The message, "Be ye reconciled" is not for saints, but for THE WORLD, for "God was in Christ reconciling T-H-E W-O-R-L-D unto Himself, not imputing THEIR (not our) trespasses unto THEM (not us); and has committed unto US (the saints, now) the ministry of reconciliation." The next verse, purged of the erroneous "you," then declares, "Now then WE are ambassadors for Christ, as though GOD DID BESEECH BY US: WE PRAY IN CHRIST'S STEAD, BE (the world) reconciled to God."

Consider now Col.1:16 from the Emphatic Diaglott: "Because IN Him were created ALL THINGS, those in the heavens and those on the earth; the visible and the invisible, whether thrones or lordships, or governments, or authorities; ALL THINGS HAVE BEEN CREATED THROUGH HIM AND FOR HIM." The King James version says that all things were created BY Him, but the more literal Diaglott says that all things were created IN HIM. Paul is here speaking of God as the Creator and as creating everything IN THE SON.

I must emphasize that God is the Creator of ALL THINGS. Notice the things that the inspired apostle includes in creation. ALL things in the heavens, or all things that are in and constitute the RULING ELEMENT -"the heavens do rule" (Dan. 4:26). ALL the things on the earth, or all things that are in or constitute those elements which are ruled, or under authority. ALL things that are visible, or that are discernible to the physical senses - ALL that the eyes can see, ALL that the ears can hear, ALL that we can touch, feel, taste or smell - has been created by God. ALL things that are invisible were created by our God - ALL the wisdom, ALL the knowledge, yea, even that which has not yet been tapped or conceived of by the mind of man - GOD CREATED. ALL of the myriad machines and devices that shall yet come out of the mind of man, were created by God. ALL of the vast forces and powers and universal laws that science has not yet discovered, were created by God. ALL the thrones, and the glory and the power of those who occupy them, were created by God. ALL the dominions or lordships, the mastery and the supremacy, were created by God. ALL the principalities and powers, angels, intelligences, chief ones, in heaven and in earth, were created by God. And it is not just the fact that all of these were created by God that startles us the most, but it goes on to say that BY THE BLOOD OF HIS CROSS ALL THESE THINGS ARE RECONCILED TO GOD IN HEAVEN AND IN EARTH. This implies that the principalities and powers in the heavenly realms needed reconciling and are reconciled by the blood of God's Son. This is why the redeemer was both a HEAVENLY BEING and an EARTHLY BEING. He was the Word from heaven made flesh upon earth, heaven and earth blended into one, so that the Son could say, "No man has ascended up to heaven, but He that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven" (Jn. 3:13). Praise God, even the principalities and powers IN THE HEAVENS are included in the glorious reconciliation and peace secured by the blood of His cross, the Man who was from heaven, born on earth, reconciling both realms into one IN HIMSELF. Glory!

If God be the Creator of ALL THINGS, then it must of necessity follow that GOD IS THE SOURCE OF ALL THINGS. We read in Rom. 11:36, from the Diaglott, "Because OUT of HIM, and THROUGH HIM, and FOR HIM are ALL THINGS, to Him be the glory for the ages, Amen." All things are out of God, all things are through Him, all things are for Him, and all things are unto Him, ending in Him. The clearest possible rendering is given by Goodspeed, "For from Him everything comes; through Him everything exists; and in Him everything ends! Glory to Him for ever! Amen." The Amplified Bible also expresses it beautifully, "For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. - For all things originate with Him and come from Him; all things live through Him, and all things center in and tend to CONSUMMATE AND TO END IN HIM. To Him be glory for ever! Amen - so be it."

Some misguided individuals have argued that the reconciliation of all "things" does not mean men or beings. But, pray tell me, what "things" in the whole vast universe, apart from men and other creatures, are described in the Word of God as "enemies" of God, "alienated" from God, "blasphemers" of God, "haters" of God, etc. in need of reconciliation? These are not mere "offices" or "governmental positions" for they carry the qualities of personality and being. And it is an important and incontrovertible fact that the Colossians were themselves part of the "all things" to be reconciled! "...by Him to reconcile all things to Himself...and YOU, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked words, YET N-O-W has He reconciled" (Col. 1:20-21). The internal evidence within these verses demonstrates beyond question that the "all things" to be reconciled are LIVING CREATURES. That persons is meant is clear to all except those who do always resist the Holy Ghost, ever searching for some excuse not to embrace the

all-inclusive scope of God's reconciliation. To say that "things" is not persons, or that "all things" does not include all persons is to violate the whole testimony of the Scriptures. Of course ALL THINGS includes ALL PEOPLE! Numerous passages could be cited, but I share only two briefly, to establish the point. "Therefore let no man glory in men. For ALL THINGS are yours; whether PAUL, or APOLLOS, or CEPHAS, or THE WORLD, or LIFE, or DEATH, or THINGS PRESENT, or THINGS TO COME; ALL are yours" (1 Cor. 3:21-22). It should be clear to anyone that people - Paul, Apollos, and Cephas - are among the ALL THINGS that Paul enumerates as belonging to the saints. Such other items as "the world" and "life" and "death" are included with them as "things." No less illustrious a personage than our blessed Lord Jesus Christ is called in Scripture a "thing." "The angel answered and said unto her ... that HOLY THING which shall be born of you shall be called the Son of God" (Lk. 1:35). It is deceitful to say that "all things" is something other than people! Paul was teaching us and all who have ears to hear that there is coming a time of UNIVERSAL RECONCILIATION in which all things - all men, and every created spirit, whether they be in heaven or on earth, whether they be visible or invisible - shall abide in the conscious awareness of having been wonderfully and gloriously CONCILIATED TO GOD!

THE MINISTRY OF RECONCILIATION

Far too many Christians testify like this: "Thank God I'm saved, sanctified, and baptized in heaven's sweet Holy Ghost - but its too bad for the rest of you people. Thank God He laid His hand on me, so I believed and am on my way to heaven - but it is going to be hell for the rest of you. Come quickly, Lord Jesus, and take me out of this sin cursed world and let it go to the devil." Few people, even if they had the authority, would condemn anyone, even their worst enemy, to a burning, scorching, tormenting, eternal hell. Yet they expect God to do it! Some, as we have spoken of the good consolation and everlasting hope we have for all men, have said, wistfully, "I wish it were true." But sadly they confessed that their own sense of hope and mercy obviously exceeded that of God's. Other folk would never be satisfied for God to judge the world in a way that would bring the world back to Himself. Their attitude is, if men have spurned God's love, if they have lived in sin, if they have done wickedly, if they have drawn their last breath blaspheming His name, then let them burn in hell - they deserve it! And these so-called followers of the Lamb of God who died to take away the SIN OF T-H-E W-O-R-L-D would personally join in shoveling the coal and seeing to it that they get everything they deserve - and perhaps a little bit more! I have no hesitation whatever in saying that people who hold that attitude are not Christians at all. They are devils.

The most abusive and vindictive letters I have received through the years have come from people who claim to be in the sonship company through which God will set all creation free. Only this week I received a letter from one of these "creation-deliveringsons" bitterly denouncing me and the teaching of the "reconciliation of all things." He said it is "destructive" and "Satanic" and said that he was sick of it all. When people call these precious truths Satanic, they unwittingly blaspheme the Holy Spirit, for it was He and none other who inspired Paul to write these words: "And, having made peace through the blood of His cross, by Him TO RECONCILE ALL THINGS UNTO HIMSELF." It was the Holy Spirit who said that "God was in Christ, RECONCILING THE WORLD unto Himself, NOT INPUTING their trespasses unto them, and has committed unto us the WORD OF RECONCILIATION." And in the face of such wonderful and all-inclusive statements as these, these have the brazen audacity to write to me and make such Holy Spirit-defying statements as: "I don't believe in the reconciliation of all things!" The simple truth is, my

beloved brethren, that until we are able to embrace God's immutable intention of reconciling all things unto Himself, we will never be able to clearly see God's plan for this present age nor for other ages yet to come. And most certainly God will not entrust into our hands the blessed ministry of reconciliation as long as we remain hostile toward God's gracious purpose and vindictive toward men for whom Christ died and the creation we are sent to rescue and redeem.

Some have asked what good it does to believe that God will save all men. You might as well ask what good it does to believe that God will save some men! If a man does not believe that Jesus Christ saves sinners he will not spend his time preaching to and pleading with sinners. If a man is convinced that God will not save any men in this age then he will not exert one ounce of energy to accomplish what he believes God will not do. Every evangelist believes that it is God's will to save some men during this present time, or he would not be an evangelist! And if a man does not believe that God will save any men past this present age, is it not obvious then that he will not spend his time ministering to men in the ages to come? To what end, then, is such a man's "sonship ministry"? Why strive and labor to be a Son, to set creation free, if what God is accomplishing in redemption during this present age is all there is! We may as well join a good Church, become the very best evangelist possible, and give ourselves to getting the few saved that can now be won for Christ. If there is no out-working of redemption in the ages to come, no extension nor expansion of the Kingdom of God beyond the formation of the body of Christ, then why not settle for the fundamentalist's heaven and content ourselves with spending eternity shouting up and down the golden streets, waving palm branches and strumming harps? All who say out of one side of their mouth that they are called to sonship to bring deliverance to the whole creation, while out of the other side of their mouth they denounce as heresy the doctrine of the reconciliation of all, foolishly contradict themselves. You simply can't have it both ways, my friend!

In II Cor. 5:18 the apostle Paul states the matter very clearly. He tells us that something wonderful has been given unto us. He tells us WHY God has given us this understanding of His plans and purposes. He admonishes us that we have work to do. He says that "God ... has reconciled US to Himself by Jesus Christ, AND has given to us THE MINISTRY OF RECONCILIATION." Let us notice the logical sequence of this statement. Having first reconciled US to Himself by Christ, God then gave to US the ministry of reconciliation, having put in us the word of reconciliation. And this ministry of reconciliation is on behalf of whom? The Church? NO! "God was in Christ, reconciling THE WORLD unto Himself." God has reconciled the Church, so that He might give to the Church the ministry of reconciliation on behalf of the world that He has reconciled through Christ. The great God of the universe, He who is from everlasting to everlasting, from the ages to the ages, the Creator of all things, has invited us to be His associates in this great plan of reconciling T-H-E W-O-R-L-D! This grand project of reconciliation, in which it is our privilege to have a part, begins with the Church in this age, it carries over into the ministry of the Sons of God on behalf of the whole world of mankind, and ultimately to the whole vast creation of God in all realms. God will, in the ages to come, put on display in His Sons all His power, wisdom, love, mercy and righteousness which are even now specially operating on behalf of the "firstfruits" followers of the Lamb. But our part now in this great work of reconciliation, in this present age, is to preach the Kingdom of God and grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ, being conformed to His image. The Kingdom is in the world, but how sorely the world needs the Kingdom! And God's wonderful plan shall not end until all things have been subdued unto Him and delivered up INTO HIS KINGDOM.

Reconciliation brings harmony and peace. "And having made PEACE by the blood of His cross, by Him to reconcile all things unto Himself." The distinguishing characteristic of a Son of God is that he is a peacemaker above all things. "Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children (Greek: Sons) of God" (Mat. 5:9). How are we to be peacemakers? We are peacemakers, first of all, by being at peace with God. We cannot make peace; we cannot assist in ministering God's peace, unless we are ourselves at peace. If I am to be an ambassador for God, I must surely be at peace with God. If the ministry of reconciliation is my ministry, then I must possess the peace of God. I must be reconciled to God. Christ has "made peace" by the blood of His cross. Therefore do I say unto you, "acquaint now thyself with Him, and be at peace." Many Christians are not at peace. They ought to be, but they are not. They talk about being justified by faith and having peace with God, and they have no such thing. Some are justified by faith but they are at controversy with God because they are not obedient. All within has not been stilled, reconciled. All within has not been subdued, reconciled. You may be God's child and yet be at controversy with your Father. Some who now read these lines are children of God but they are at controversy with the Holy Spirit of truth over the doctrine of the reconciliation of all things! My message to you today is: BE RECONCILED TO GOD. Accept God's beautiful plan and stop fighting against the truth and He will receive you and be a Father unto you and you will be His Son, a fit instrument to bear the word of reconciliation to the ends of the creation.

In II Cor. 5:18-20 the Holy Spirit has given us a direct word concerning the RECONCILIATION OF THE WORLD as well as the members of the body of Christ. Having said that we who trust His word have been (past tense) reconciled to God by means of Christ, we are told that we now have been given the "ministry of reconciliation." This is explained as a sharing with the world that THEY ALSO ARE RECONCILED. This "word of reconciliation" is committed to us. The Lord is trusting us with the job of seeing to it that the lost men and women of "the world" know that God has reconciled them unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them. Now, as representatives, as ambassadors of Jesus Christ and His Kingdom, you and I are to minister this reconciliation to the world. The debt of sin has been paid in full. The books are balanced as far as God is concerned. Divine righteousness is theirs, also, when they will finally lay down their rebellion and surrender, believing God's Word of Love and accepting the Life He offers them in exchange for their death. And what is the ultimate result of such a ministry? Hear it! "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. 1:20). Amazing grace! Stupendous and glorious plan! What a ministry!

As Ray Prinzing has so aptly written: "A ministry of reconciliation, of changing others so that they might be drawn into unification and harmony with God. This is a NEW ministry, based upon a new covenant, 'established upon better promises' (Heb. 8:6). 'Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think anything of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God; Who also has made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the Spirit: for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life' (II Cor. 3:5-6). Herein is a ministry of mercy and grace! 'To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, NOT IMPUTING THEIR TRESPASSES UNTO THEM' (II Cor. 5:19). Not charging them with guilt, to heap upon them loads of condemnation, but simply to give them the GOOD WORD, namely, that GOD LOVES THEM, forgives them, and is ready to receive them back to Himself. All is well, come home - forsake your wayward course, the Father waits

to forgive and receive you. No word of condemnation, not imputing a list of sins against you, but a word of hope, of grace, of love.

" 'Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ.' This word 'for' is the same word as used later 'in Christ's stead.' In behalf of Christ, as though God did beseech by us, 'we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.' God is going to beseech the whole creation through the enchristed (anointed) company of which The Christ is the Head. The word 'beseech' is a strong word, bespeaking of laying hold in earnestness. This company will be filled with divine compassion, 'for the love of Christ constrains us' (II Cor. 5:14). And will this ministry be effective? Ah, yes, 'And I heard every created thing in heaven and on earth and under the earth and on the sea and all that is in it, crying out together, to Him Who is seated on the throne and to the Lamb be ascribed the blessing and the honor and the majesty (glory, splendor) and the Power (might and dominion) forever and ever' (Rev. 5:13, Amplified).

"Yes, He purposes in His sovereign will that all human history shall be consummated in Christ. Everything that exists in heaven and earth shall find its perfection and fulfillment in Him. All things shall 'center in and tend to consummate and to end in Him' (Rom. 11:36, Amplified). Though the ages run their course, and the time seems long; though judgments are required and the discipline is severe; though there be many paths washed with tears, and the valley be deep; yet God has purposed that all shall be fully restored, and the great age of jubilee shall see a universe redeemed from the tyranny of change and decay, delivered into the glorious liberty which rightfully belongs to the children of God, and the whole purpose of the ages shall redound to the glory of God. We bow to worship HIM who truly 'does all things well' "-end quote.

And this glorious work of RECONCILIATION has now begun - IN US! I would quote once more from Brother Prinzing's writings: "The law demands, 'the soul that sins, it shall die.' Why? Because the only way to end the wayward course of self's rebellion is to DIE OUT to that course of action, and be reconciled back into the will of God. But how can we 'die' to that which has captivated us, especially when we are 'dead in trespasses and sins,' and cut off from the LIFE of God, and His power which is needed for our overcoming? Death - which came as an enemy, and separated us from righteousness, and the life of God, must now be REVERSED, so that we DIE to this carnal realm, and are restored into fellowship and harmony with our God. THIS DEATH-ROUTE WAS BLAZED OUT FOR US BY CHRIST. 'That He by the grace of God should taste death for every man' (Heb. 2:9). And now He is able to indwell us by His Spirit, and give us the power to walk in His steps, and follow through the process of 'death to self' that we might come alive to God, praise Him!

" 'What are we then to say to FACTS like these? If God is for us, who can be against us' (Rom. 8:31, Williams). This is not some weird figment of a vain man's distorted imagination, dreams of the night, THESE ARE FACTS. God is working a THOROUGH CHANGE, and He has already begun with a firstfruits company, gathering a remnant out of each generation, until the appointed hour when He shall begin the greater scope of the restitution of ALL THINGS spoken of by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began" -end quote.

A THOROUGH CHANGE! THAT, my dear friend, is what we mean by ... RECONCILIATION! We have possessed "in part" the life of God, and we have thrilled to its surgings within us, and the transformations wrought, but we must have the WHOLE,

being thoroughly changed into His same image. What a tremendous process, for man is not a noble ruin, but he is an utter ruin of what was once a noble nature. God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion..." But, alas, how the glory has grown dim, how the fine gold has tarnished! The crown has fallen from man's head. His kingly nature is deformed, and the image of God is destroyed. Thus we see that so little remains in the unregenerated man of that copious flow of love and life and light and righteousness and power which at first poured forth from man to the creation.

How can it be restored? "And, having made peace through the blood Of His cross, by Him to RECONCILE (THOROUGHLY CHANGE) all things unto Himself." With the climax of the cross bringing final death to the carnal mind, mankind will emerge out of the barren tomb as a NEW CREATION. If man is to be restored to the image of the all-loving God, reconciled, thoroughly changed and unified INTO HIM, it will only be done by God Himself. A little child can take an egg in his hand and crush it. All of the skill of all of the men in all of the world, all of their wisdom and all of the power that can split the atom, and all of the technology that can place men on the moon, all these combined CANNOT RESTORE THAT EGG TO WHAT IT WAS BEFORE. How much less can man, by his own strength or wisdom, restore the destroyed image of God in his being unto that which God originally made him to be? Nothing will suffice but a thorough change, a new creation, a reconciliation wrought by God Himself. "Therefore if any man be in Christ He is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. And all things are of God, who HAS RECONCILED US to Himself" (II Cor. 5:17-18).

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 system teach that since sin and death have entered upon the scene in God's universe, they have come never to go out again, unconquerable, ineradicable, endless. Charles Schmitt has asked the burning question: "Is God, who is sovereign Lord, destined to possess 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 all the works of Satan (I Jn.3:8) destined to reign in a universe where sin shall exist in staggering proportions, and even as some purport, in increasing proportions throughout all eternity? The counsels of God, according to Sacred Scripture, have declared an emphatic NO! Through the consuming fires of God's holy Love (Heb. 12:29) God has deigned to cause all men everywhere eventually to drop the sword of proud rebellion and willingly acclaim the Lordship of our Lord Jesus Christ, and that to the glory of God (Phil. 2:10-11)! 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 love and the mercy of God? No, we have rather upheld it in its infinite scope! " -end quote.

And what a wonderful effect the truth has upon those who see it with spiritual eyes, hear it with spiritual ears, and believe it with pure and reverent hearts! The witness of spiritual giants like Andrew Jukes, William Law, Andrew Murray, John Alexander Dowie, and Mrs. Pearsall Smith, not to speak of precious saints living today and known to the writer, men and women of holiness and deep spirituality, whose lives emit the fragrance of Christ, is

no mean tribute to this beautiful truth. As for myself, I humbly bear witness to the blessed sense of the thrill of the Holy Spirit whenever I touch upon this subject.

This blessed hope, in the words of A. E. Saxby, "gives a fuller vision of HIS glory; it arouses greater love to men; it inspires intenser hope over the fallen; it furnishes an argument to utmost patience with the worst; it leads to a deeper humbling of self; it divides aright the Word of God and meets the unanswerable problems of the otherwise dark mysteries of human destiny; it restores the character of God to its Scriptural poise; it brings the sob of pity even over the vilest offender; it stirs to service and sacrifice for God and men; and lastly it evokes such an admiration of, and affection to, the God who is Creator and Redeemer, that all the soul can do is to abandon afresh all life and ministry to Him, to bear for Him the stigma that must be suffered in advocacy of His thoughts and ways, which ever surpass ours as the heavens are above the earth" -end quote. To which my ransomed spirit shouts, Amen!

How we long for that day when
ALL THINGS SHALL BE RECONCILED!
God shall grant it! God hasten it!

Chapter 9

God All In All

GOD'S PLAN OF THE AGES

GOD has a plan! At the beginning of the Church age the world was visited by events so momentous in their power and glory that all things were changed from that time onward. In the eternal realm before the ages were formed, and ages before man first saw the light of earth's day, the almighty Lord set in motion His omniscient and immutable purpose for the ages which were to follow. As a year is filled with weeks and a week is filled with days and a day is filled with hours, so time is filled with ages and ages with dispensations. Let it be thoroughly known that our all-wise heavenly Father planned the events of each successive age from the very first age unto the ages of ages far beyond the comprehension of mortal man.

The plan of the ages conceived in the heart of Him who purposed all things after the counsel of His own will is being worked out one step at a time in each succeeding age in like manner as people who read these lines have often planned in advance the work for each successive day of a week or each week of a year. Is it not true that many of the wives and business men now reading this booklet have plans in mind for today and tomorrow and perhaps even months and years in the future? Whether consciously or unconsciously we all plan ahead, daily and hourly working toward some human goal.

Each week a portion of your pay check goes into social security or some pension plan in preparation for a day of retirement that lies years distant in the future. Accumulation of property, savings, investments, etc. are all part of well-laid plans for a day when there will be time for relaxation, travel, and other projects and accomplishments. If you remove plan and purpose from your life then your sheltered harbors will become whirlpools and all your cherished hopes and dreams will become dark clouds and empty holes. And, precious friend of mine, if you remove GOD'S PLAN OF THE AGES from your understanding, then your spiritual treasure house of hope is left full of gaping holes where thieves break through and steal, and you yourself are left as hopeless as a crow in the ocean or a prince-charming lost in the great Sahara.

When we think of a plan, we think of something involving more than just a single element. An architect's plan for a building consists of drawings and specifications descriptive of its several floors, including styles of plumbing, decoration, arrangement of rooms, etc. Unless each floor of the building is to be identical to every other floor, necessarily the drawings and specifications for any given floor do not harmonize with the details of the other floors. No one, however, would construe this to mean that the architect is incompetent, nor that his plans and specifications are contradictory. God's plan, like the plan of a building, is also made up of many parts. Instead of different floors, however, it embraces EPOCHS AND AGES. Through each of these ages the divine plan has steadily progressed toward completion. Only when it is complete, and mankind sees the final result, will they all be able to appreciate the wisdom, justice, love, and power of the Divine Architect.

Such a view as this opens to us entirely new and greater vistas of the love and mercy and wisdom and power and glory of God. It is not any longer a question of the Church working to get a few souls saved, but it has become a question of the working out of God's plan and purpose for all people and for the ages He has created. All the ages are created for Jesus the Christ. As we read in Heb. 1:2 from the Diaglott, "In the last of these days, spoken to us by a Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, and ON ACCOUNT OF WHOM, also He constituted the ages." Eph. 3:11 also speaks of this, the Diaglott says..... "according to a PLAN OF THE AGES, which He FORMED FOR THE ANOINTED JESUS, our Lord." Herein lies the great work of God in this age and in all ages yet to come. It is all for Jesus Christ!

In God's blessed Book numerous ages are visible, stretching in a vast panorama from the first ray of light in chapter one of Genesis to the end of the dispensation of the fullness of times when all shall be subdued unto God and God becomes all in all. As the years have gone by the Holy Spirit has convinced me more and more that it is intensely important to the spiritual growth and understanding of every Son of God to know the intention of God in each successive age as it unfolds. Some precious saints have in ignorance stated, "I am not concerned about what God may do away out there in the ages to come; it is enough to know what He wants me to be doing right now!" That sounds very wise and spiritual, and it gives me pain to say it, but the truth cannot be denied that such a statement is really an excuse, a "cop-out" to absolve these dear ones from searching the Scriptures or exposing themselves to the revelation of God's beautiful plan of the ages. Furthermore, it saves them the trouble of getting involved in some controversy! What spiritual cowards we are!

Failure to understand God's plan of the ages will leave us on the rocks of ignorance and unbelief and we will spend our lives in the shallows, chanting aimlessly about God's acts and blessings, but never knowing or embracing His purposes. I am convinced that those who reject or deliberately side-step the great truth of God's plan of the ages and the reconciliation of all things to God will never be a part of that blessed company of Sons who are destined to set creation free! How can any one be God's instrument to bring deliverance to the whole creation while he closes his eyes and stops his ears and shuts up his heart to the beautiful revelation of His purposes?

There is nothing that opens the wellsprings of love, of faith and understanding, in the human heart like the knowledge of His purpose. What infinite joy, what satisfaction and assurance floods our souls when for the first time in our lives our great and wonderful Father is seen to be a God of purpose, knowing the end from the beginning because He planned the beginning and planned the end! He created all things and made all things and brought all things into being that His glorious purpose might be fulfilled. It was this triumphant knowledge that gripped the heart of the apostle Paul when writing to the Romans, he drew aside the veil to give the saints a clearer view into the mysteries that lay hidden in God's mind from the foundation of the ages. This is what he plainly stated: "I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us. For the earnest expectation of the creation waits for the manifestation of the sons of God." Now take particular notice of the words that follow: "For the creation was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him (God) who has subjected the same in hope. Because the creation itself ALSO shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the sons of God" (Rom. 8:18-21).

Frankly, I never cease to be amazed at those who profess to yearn for the Sons of God to be manifested, who continually quote the Scripture about the WHOLE CREATION GROANING, WAITING for the manifestation of the Sons of God, because THE CREATION ITSELF SHALL BE DELIVERED FROM THE BONDAGE OF CORRUPTION INTO THE GLORIOUS LIBERTY OF THE SONS OF GOD - and then when you tell them that the Sons of God shall really, truly, actually, factually, completely SET ALL CREATION FREE they get upset and call you a heretic, or ask foolish questions like, "What good is it to believe that?" If God isn't going to do what He said; if Christ isn't going to actually draw all men unto Himself; if the whole of creation is not going to be delivered into the glorious liberty of the children of God; if God will not make all men alive in the Christ; if the last enemy, death, and hell shall never be destroyed; if the devil is going to possess the souls of the vast majority of men forever; if God is never going to become ALL IN ALL; then I fail to see what is the purpose of all this qualifying for sonship, for a glorious ministry in the age and ages to come, for THERE IS NO MINISTRY FOR THE SONS. We may as well forget about sonship, forget about being kings and priests unto God, forget about God setting all creation free, content ourselves with the present Church program, and be satisfied that while untold billions are damned for ever God shall have His sweet little handful of saints to rejoice with Him in heaven!

THE PURPOSE OF GOD IN THIS AGE

While the preparatory features of God's plan of the ages have all been related to the one harmonious program, they have varied in detail. This means that in our study of the Bible it is necessary properly to apply its promises and prophecies, else there will be seeming contradictions. That part of the divine plan which was developed prior to Christ's first advent was different from that which God has been doing since. His plans for the ages yet to come are again different from what is being done today.

An example or two will help to illustrate this point. In the second Psalm there is a prophecy which applies to Christ. Here the heavenly Father says to His beloved Son, "Ask of Me, and I shall give You the heathen (nations) for Your inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for Your possession. You shall break them with a rod of iron; You shall dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel" (Ps. 2:8-9). When Jesus came in the flesh, He did not ask for the nations of the world at all. Instead of that He said, "I pray not for the world, but for them which Thou hast given Me out of the world" (Jn. 17:9). Does this mean that the prophecy of the second Psalm is not in harmony with what the Christ came to do? Not at all! It simply means that the fulfillment of this prophecy belongs to a different epoch in God's plan of the ages.

In Rev. 2:26-27 Jesus quotes a portion of the second Psalm and applies it to the overcomers out of the Church age, promising that they are to share with Him in ruling the nations with a rod of iron when the time comes for Him to ask for and receive the nations for an inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for a possession. "And he that overcomes ... to him I will give power over the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of My Father." This is in harmony with numerous other New Testament promises to the overcoming saints of God, which show that they are to be joint-heirs with Him in His inheritance of the nations (Rom. 8:17; II Tim. 2:12). It is in harmony also with Jesus' prayer on behalf of His disciples, wherein He reveals that His purpose in calling them to be associated with Him in the Father's work is that THE WORLD MIGHT BELIEVE ON HIM THROUGH THEM. Can we not see by this that when the time element is properly

understood Jesus is to possess and rule the nations, but first there is the great task of calling and preparing those who will be partners with Him in that universal rulership which will bring the triumph of His Kingdom in all realms from pole to pole!

In the true and eloquent words of another: "The plan and order of God for this age was stated by the apostle James with clearness, brevity and eloquence when he, speaking to the apostles and brethren at Jerusalem with the anointing of the Spirit upon him, uttered this remarkable statement: 'Simon has declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles (nations) to take out of them a people for His name. And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written, After this (that is, after He has taken out a people for His name) I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up; that THE RESIDUE OF MEN (the rest, the remainder of men) might seek after the Lord and ALL THE GENTILES (nations) upon whom My name is called, says the Lord, who does all these things. Known unto God are all His works from the beginning of the world (ages)' (Acts 15:14-18).

"Once God's plan for this age, outlined above by the inspired lips of the apostle James, has gripped your heart and laid hold upon your understanding, then you will clearly see that everything - yes, absolutely everything in this entire age - is working out just exactly as the omniscient God intended that it should. God is taking out a people. He is not calling all people now. He is taking out a people for His name. Jesus is the Christ. To be in Christ means that you have taken His name. To be in Christ is to be a Son of God, born of incorruptible seed as Jesus is a Son of God. To be in Christ is to be a member of the body of Christ. To be a member of the body of Christ is to be a king, a priest, a royal generation, an holy people. To be a sharer of His glorious name is to be prepared by God for the ages to come in which those chosen ones shall show forth the praises of Him who has called them out of darkness into His marvelous light. Being thus called to bear His name is to be prepared to reign with Him in the ages to come, in which ages the Lord will gather the residue of mankind and eventually all the Gentiles whosoever and wheresoever they may be. That is the true purpose of the ministry of the Sons of God for which all creation groans and travails. Once you see the clearness of this plan, confusion drops away like a millstone into the depths of the sea and the order of the plan of God begins to take its place.

"The reason God's children make such frantic, though futile, efforts to compass land and sea to get the whole world converted in this age is because they cannot see that God is first calling out a people for His name that through them in the dispensation of the fullness of times He will gather all things into Christ. Be it known that in this age God's special purpose and program is to take out a people for His name - that is, a people to bear the name of Christ, the in-Christed - that in ages yet to come (and there are several of them) these elect saints shall rule the world and gather all things in earth and heaven into our wonderful Lord and Saviour (Eph. 1:10) " - The Page.

These "called out" people are, also called the "firstfruits" company. "Of His own will begat He us with the Word of truth, that we should be a kind of FIRSTFRUITS of His creatures" (James 1:18; Rom. 8:23; 11:6). Those who stand on Mount Zion with the Lamb are called "the FIRSTFRUITS unto God and the Lamb" (Rev. 14:4). Praise God! Just as, year after year, a sheaf of grain (Lev. 23:10) was waved before the Lord as a token of the coming crop, so the members of Christ's body in their triumph over the power of sin and death are but a beginning of what God shall gather unto Himself, to be followed in due course by the whole harvest of all the grain in the field - "the field is the world" (Mat. 13:38). It is

an obvious fact that there can be no "firstfruits" except there be a great HARVEST to follow! But before God's salvation can be realized by "the residue of men," there must first come forth the "firstfruits" (a redeemed, holy people) through whom this reconciliation might be ministered.

God not only chose the members of the body of Christ, He not only predestinated them to the adoption of Sons, but He also did for them exactly what He did with Christ. He has "quicken'd us together with Christ, and has raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus" (Eph. 2:5-6). God has given the body of Christ the highest standing that it is possible to give, in Christ, to be like Him, and to sit upon His throne. But that is not just to honor those who have been transformed by His grace. It is part of God's program for the Sons of God "in the ages to come."

What is that program? Here it is: "That in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Jesus Christ" (Eph. 2:7). "That He might show..." "Show" is from a Greek word meaning "to exhibit, to put on display like a work of art, to demonstrate." The Amplified Bible reads, "He did this that He might clearly DEMONSTRATE through the ages to come the immeasurable (limitless, surpassing) riches of His free grace in kindness and goodness of heart toward us in Christ Jesus." Kenneth Wuest translates, "In order that He might EXHIBIT ... in the ages that pile themselves upon one another in continuous succession the surpassing wealth of His grace in kindness to us in Christ Jesus." Show ... demonstrate ... exhibit the riches of His grace - to whom? Not to those who already know it - that would be useless nonsense. But to those who do not know it! And not as an expression of God's scorn, ridicule, or cynicism, saying to the multitudes of hopelessly lost men and women, "Just LOOK at what you missed!" That would be no demonstration of the riches of GRACE nor would it be an exhibit of His unsurpassed KINDNESS! But, praise His name, in the ages to come He shall put His grace and kindness toward us ON DISPLAY that the entire creation may walk across the stage of His cosmic theater and behold and see and finally come to understand WHAT GOD HAS PROVIDED FOR ALL MEN IN CHRIST.

But the objection will be made that "in the ages to come" men will not deserve an opportunity to accept Christ. Of course there will be countless billions there who have never had an opportunity for salvation, who never heard the name of Christ, whose hearts were never touched by His gracious Spirit. But there will be other countless millions who have heard the message and have rejected it. So men who ought to know better say, "Let them go to hell! They will be getting just exactly what they deserve!" Alas, how many so-called Sons of God I meet across the land who actually fear that some poor, lost, hell-bent sinner might not get everything he deserves! God have mercy upon them.

May I now state that I do not deserve the grace of God. And without any thought of being insulting, but just to state the fact according to God's estimation, you do not deserve the grace of God, either! All men are undeserving sinners. That is why it takes grace to save. "For by grace are you saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast" (Eph. 2:8-9). Have you noticed that these beautiful verses follow immediately the statement, "That in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Jesus Christ?" And why do these verses begin with the word "for"? The word "for" shows a relationship between what precedes and what follows. In the ages to come He will demonstrate and exhibit His grace, for He has already shown it to us, the members of His body, whom He

will use AS THE DEMONSTRATION! So God chooses a "firstfruit," a few undeserving sinners in this age; calls them, saves them, sanctifies them, transforms them into the image of Christ, fills them with His mind, clothes them with His glory, that through them He may demonstrate His grace to other undeserving sinners "in the ages to come." And the demonstration will be convincing, too. It will accomplish what God intends that it shall accomplish, praise His wonderful name!

REDEMPTION IN TWO PARTS

Paul wrote to his beloved son Timothy, "For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time" (I Tim. 2:3-6). Praise God, He "gave Himself a ransom for all," in order that he might bless all, and give to every man all that Christ purchased for men. To claim that He gave a "ransom for ALL" and yet to claim that only a mere handful of the ransomed ones will ever receive any benefit from it, is absurd; for it would imply either that God accepted the ransom-price and then unjustly refused to grant the release of the redeemed, or else that the Lord, after redeeming all, was either unable or unwilling to carry out the original benevolent design. The unchangeableness of the divine plan, no less than the perfection of the divine justice and love, repels and contradicts such a thought, and gives us blessed assurance that the original plan, of which the "ransom for all" was the basis, will be fully carried out in God's own "due time," and, will bring to all men everywhere the blessing of release from the power of sin and death, and a return to the rights and liberties of sons of God, as enjoyed before sin and the curse.

In his statement to Timothy, Paul gives us the key to the seeming delay in the blessing of the whole race with the life-giving streams of that precious fountain flowing from Immanuel's veins. He says that Christ "gave Himself a ransom for ALL, TO BE TESTIFIED IN DUE TIME." In I Jn. 2:2 the apostle John makes it clear that "Christ is the propitiation (satisfaction) for OUR sins; and NOT FOR OURS ONLY, but also for THE SINS OF THE WHOLE WORLD." Thus it is plain to all who have eyes to see that the application of the merit of Christ's sacrifice on behalf of sin is to be made in TWO SEPARATE PARTS - first for "ours"; that is, for the members of Christ's own body; and then, later, in due time "for the sins of the whole world."

Surely these are simple words that even a child can understand! I do not hesitate to emphasize the blessed truth that during this Church age the merit of Christ's atonement is being applied only on behalf of the members of Christ's body, the Church, which is the firstfruits of the result of that all-inclusive sacrifice.

In relation to this truth it is important that we get a clear idea, not only of the structure of the Tabernacle in the wilderness, but also that we should know something of the actors therein, and their significance as types. There are three groups: first, Israel, called "the Camp," then the Levites, and finally Aaron and his house, "the Priesthood." Israel is used in many instances to typify the Church, the body of Christ. For instance, when they left Egyptian bondage, they were a type of God's children who hear His call to come out from the world and follow Him into His Kingdom.

The wilderness journey represented the tedious pilgrimage through which many pass, seeking the promised Canaan of rest - "Come unto Me, and I will give you rest." As in the

type, so in reality, the promised Canaan of rest is not far off, if God's children had faith enough to go up and at once enter in by faith. God has made abundant provision for them: yet they journey through the Wilderness of Sin, seeking rest and finding none, because they lack faith in God's promises. Some wander thus a long time; and some never enter the Kingdom realm because of unbelief. But while Israel, according to the flesh, is thus and in other ways used to typify Spiritual Israel, yet as we are now examining it, in its relation to the Tabernacle, it is a totally different type. The whole of Israel lay totally outside the Tabernacle, outside of the place of sacrifice, outside of the ministry of the Priesthood, outside of the presence and glory of God, separated by the white curtain of Christ's righteousness from all that lay within. Thus "the Camp" was separated from all holy things by the curtain of white linen, representing to those within a wall of righteousness by faith, but to those without a wall of unbelief which hindered their view of and access to the holy things within. There was only one gateway to enter the "Court"; the type thus testifying that there is but one way of access to God - one "gate" - Jesus. "I am the way ... no man comes unto the Father but by Me. " "I am the door, by Me if any man enter in he shall be saved" (Jn. 14:6; 10:9). The sin-offering, sacrifice, atonement, etc., made typical for them, were typical of the "better sacrifices" made on behalf of the whole world; for thus we read, "He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world" (1 Jn. 2:2; Heb. 9:23).

In a word, Israel, as well as the Tabernacle, Priests, Levites and sacrifices, was a type. And what was there done in symbol with and for Israel is, since the coming of Christ, being carried out on a higher plane, and on a larger scale, the latter being the reality, of which that was the type or shadow. As Israel typified the world so the tribe of Levites typified the "household of faith," or all believers in Jesus who know Him in the forgiveness of sins. But the Priesthood, the house of Aaron, one body under one chief or High Priest, was typical of the "little flock," the "overcomers," which, with its "Head" or High Priest, is a Royal Priesthood, the members of which, after this present time of preparation and processing, are **KINGS AND PRIESTS** unto God, and given authority over all nations and over all of mankind (Rev. 5:10; 2:26-27). Thus viewed, we see Jesus the High Priest, not a priest of the Aaronic order, which was but the type of a greater and grander profession or order, the Head of the real Priesthood of which others were but figures (Heb. 3:1; 4:14). The Aaronic Priesthood typified chiefly the humiliation and sufferings of the Christ, less His future glory - Melchizadek being the type of the Christ as a Kingly or Royal Priesthood.

The "Outer Court" of the Tabernacle represented the condition of Justification, entered through faith in Christ, the "gate." Into this "Court" only Levites (typical of all believers) were allowed to come, during the Day of Atonement. These had access to the "Brazen Altar" and to the "Laver," and did service in the "Court," but had no right as merely Levites (believers) to go into the Holy Place or the Holiest of All; no, nor even to look into it (Num. 4:19-20).

The apostle Peter shows who were typified by the Aaronic Priests when, addressing those who were sanctified, he says, "YOU are ... an holy priesthood to offer up sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ." "YOU are ... a royal priesthood" (1 Pet. 1:2; 2:5,9). That the Head or Chief Priest of this Priesthood, this "little flock," is our Lord Jesus, is repeatedly mentioned by the apostles. I give but one quotation: "HOLY brethren (the Royal Priesthood), partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the apostle and High Priest of OUR PROFESSION (our order of priests), Christ Jesus" (Heb. 3:1).

On the Day of Atonement the High Priest carried the blood of the sacrificed bullock into the Holiest Place, there to be sprinkled upon and before the mercy seat in the presence of God. This was done on behalf of Aaron "and for his house" - the Priesthood (Lev. 16:6, 11, 14). Paul says this transaction was a picture of the presentation before God of the merit of Christ's sacrifice ON BEHALF OF THE CHURCH. He writes, "For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for US (saints)" (Heb. 9:24). It is important to note that on the Day of Atonement there were TWO SETS of sacrifices offered, two rams, two goats, and two burnt offerings. All these sacrifices point to Christ and His redeeming work, and this in no way indicates that Christ died twice; but it clearly reveals two distinct and separate aspects of the atonement - showing that the merits of Christ's sacrifice are applied in TWO PARTS: first for "us," the body of Christ during the Church age, and later for "the whole world."

That the merits of Christ's redemption are applied in two separate parts is clearly seen in the offering of the two rams on the Day of Atonement. Many Scriptures could be cited, but we shall content ourselves with one example which clearly points out the two aspects of the application of Christ's redeeming work. "And Aaron shall come into the Tabernacle of the congregation (the Holy Place) and shall put off the linen garments which he put on when he went into the Holy Place (the "Most Holy") and he shall leave them there; and he shall wash his flesh with water in the Holy Place and put on his (usual) garments and come forth and offer HIS BURNT OFFERING and the BURNT OFFERING FOR THE PEOPLE, and make atonement for HIMSELF (the Christ, Head and body, the Church) and FOR THE PEOPLE" (Lev. 16:23-24). It is obvious that no atonement needed to be made for our great antitypical High Priest, Jesus, for He was "holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners," yet, in the shadow of good things to come, an atonement was made for Aaron and his house. This ram for Aaron included ALL THE MEMBERS OF HIS FAMILY, THE PRIESTHOOD, and in type, therefore, covers ALL THE MEMBERS OF CHRIST'S BODY, THE ROYAL PRIESTHOOD - and we did indeed need an atonement! Can we not clearly see by this that there were two rams, two sacrifices, one for the Priesthood, and another for the people? There should be no question in the mind of any who are willing to face facts that there are two applications of Christ's atonement, first for the body of Christ during this age, and later "for the whole world". Glory!

When every living stone has been readied and permanently placed within the living walls of that glorious body of Kings and Priests, that wonderful temple of Sons, then from this glorious living temple shall flow forth the Living Waters that Ezekiel saw in the Spirit many centuries ago and wherever the river flows everything shall live. All the waters of the sea (restless surging masses of humanity) shall be healed and even the owls and the dragons of the deep shall lift up their voices in praise and worship to the Lord of hosts, praise His worthy name!

In the hour in which we live the vast majority of Christians are more miserable than most other people in the world. They are only enduring this life in order to eventually get to heaven where they imagine they will spend the next billion trillion years or so singing, playing harps, and dancing. I am quite sure that if such people would admit the truth, they would admit that even a thousand years of singing, shouting, playing harp music and dancing around in white robes would become very boring, to say the least. I find that most of these people can't endure five hours in a meeting even if the glory is failing all around! The problem is that their theology leaves them with nothing constructive to do and all eternity to do it in!

To possess the fullness of the mighty anointing of God's Spirit of power and holiness for this life only would be like putting a five thousand horse power engine in a common automobile. That would be more power than could possibly be used in any automobile made for common use. Such power would actually destroy any automobile in which it was placed. It would be of no benefit in any way, but become a very real danger. We are admonished to "go on to perfection" and "put on the whole armor of God" and "be filled with all the fullness of God" and "grow up into Him in all things" and are promised that "we shall be like Him" and do "greater works" than Jesus did. But if such awesome glory and power is to be used only through the fleeting years of this present life, or expended throughout eternity in singing, shouting, and dancing - what a waste! This life could not under any circumstances endure to possess the FULL anointing of God. Therefore this anointing must be for another work than we find in this life or this present age. There must be something beyond upon which this anointing is to be used, else why would the Lord spend such long time, and work with such meticulous care to bring forth a body in the fullness of His life and victory? If we do not see any ministry beyond this life for which we can use this anointing, we are then truly the most miserable of all men, for we actually possess something which is of very little use. God has not allowed anything like the real fullness of this mighty anointing to come into actual use. It is, for the most part, resting in a dormant state within the body of Christ. The anointing of God is far, far greater than the Church has ever witnessed, even as the hydrogen bomb is far more powerful than the hand grenade. Truly that is but a feeble comparison, but what comparison can we make between ALL THE FULLNESS OF GOD and the "measure" we have thus far experienced?

Perhaps now we can understand why God has reserved the ages to come to put the fullness of His grace and glory and power on display and in demonstration through the perfected, overcoming, and fully anointed Sons of God! Thank God! He has not called us to such glory and virtue and authority to see nothing more come of it than we now see about us, but all we are learning and acquiring and attaining during this present time is but preparation for the greater glory yet to be revealed in us and the greater work still to be done.

AS IN ADAM - SO IN CHRIST

One of the grandest passages of Scripture to be found in all the pages of God's wonderful Word is in I Cor. 15:20-28 and is accentuated by this remarkable proclamation: "...as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." Would God that I had the voice of a trumpet that I could sound from the highest mountain peak this message that "as in Adam ALL die, even so in Christ SHALL ALL be made alive!" Just what does it mean for ALL to be "made alive"? First we must understand what it means for ALL to "die." I will speak very plainly about that condition or state of being that we call death. Who are the dead? Of course some one will say that is a foolish question because it is so obvious that the dead are those who have departed this life, their bodies lie buried in the earth.

But far more than our decease was brought in by Adam, and something which affects our souls much more than the sleep which ends our earth consciousness. God did not say to Adam, "In the day that you eat thereof you shall surely die" (Gen. 2:17). If He had, Adam would have fallen over dead in the very day he sinned. He would then have had no progeny of sinners. In the precise language of the Hebrew He said, "And dying, you shall die." That is, there would be a process of dying as well as a condition of death. As we

now know, there is a long process of disintegration, with which we are all acquainted, even though we are accustomed to calling it life! Ever since Adam sinned, he and his descendants have been dying. It isn't that death "catches up with us." Death is a part of us, from the very moment of conception until the day it triumphs over us. Like ripe fruit plucked from the tree, our bloom soon passes away. In Adam, all are dying, even while they walk about on two feet. That is the "life" that we inherited from our disobedient parent.

But death is much more than this! No more precise definition of death can be given than the one provided by God Himself : "For to be carnally minded IS DEATH; but to be spiritually minded IS LIFE and peace" (Rom. 8:6). This is the process of death, descending from the purity of the realm of the spiritual, to thus awaken to the realm of the flesh, to mind the things of the flesh. And as long as we remain carnally minded, we remain in the state of death. It is not speaking of dead bodies, but of a dead-consciousness of God. Those who are not in any sense conscious of God, or His life, or what God is doing about them. They know not God or His will or His work, it is as foreign to them as though they were far away in some other part of God's universe. The sad part of it is that many of the dead are professing Christians. The apostle Paul wrote to the Ephesians and said, "Awake you that sleepest, and ARISE FROM THE DEAD, and Christ shall give you light." Were these words directed to bodies in the cemetery? How foolish! It was written to professed Christians in the Church at Ephesus. Can we not see that in God's sight, death is not so much concerned with the fleshly body as with the consciousness of God's life.

The carnal mind is enmity against God, for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can it be, for it minds only the things of the flesh, and fulfills the desires of the self-will, all of which perishes. Paul describes this natural state this way, "And you - who were DEAD IN TRESPASSES AND SINS; wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now works in the children of disobedience: among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others" (Eph. 2:1-3). The wages of sin is death (Rom. 6:23), and death has passed upon ALL MEN, for that ALL HAVE SINNED. This inworking of the mystery of iniquity has brought every man into the death of the carnal mind, terminating our consciousness of the spiritual realm, and causing us to become very self conscious in the flesh realm. Anybody apart from God in Christ is dead, whether in this life, or in any other. "He that hath the Son hath life, and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life" (I Jn. 5:12). Physical death is only one of the results of a previous spiritual death. When Adam sinned, fellowship was broken between himself and the realm of God. It was not merely his physical demise after 930 years that constituted his death, but his separation from God on the very day he sinned was the inner reality of his death. That is the real death! And all the sorrows, frustrations, heartaches, pains, sicknesses, sufferings, disappointments, tragedies, and torments of this poor mortal existence are all part and parcel of the realm of death - truly the condition and state of being of all men "in Adam."

Let us now see how it is that "in Christ" all shall be MADE ALIVE. The verse under consideration is found in I Cor. 15:22, and this whole chapter deals with resurrection. The word resurrection is so inadequate to express the true thought or idea that the Holy Spirit is conveying to us. The common conception of this word carries with it the idea of opening all the graves in the world and the arising out of them of the physical bodies of

those who have died. But since death is something more than dead bodies, you can be assured, dear ones, that resurrection is something far beyond bringing bodies out of tombs. To have a false or limited view of the resurrection is to have a false and limited view of God's work throughout the ages until now. If our view of the resurrection is dwarfed, then our whole view of God's plan is dwarfed.

So we read that in Christ ALL SHALL BE MADE ALIVE. The contrast is not between corpses and walking bodies, but between the dying process and the life process in God. The Greek text actually reads, "As in Adam all are dying, so in the Christ shall all be made alive." The terms "are dying" and "shall be made alive" are in the incomplete tense in the original, which denotes an action in progress. The long drawn out activity of death in dragging men down to sin, death, and the grave is put in contrast with the endless activity of life imparting holiness, power, incorruption, and glory. All who endured the first shall enjoy the second. Here is a message for mankind which should lift it above its misery! The process of His life, and hence, the process of resurrection has already commenced with us! Truly "He hath quickened us together with Christ...and hath raised us up" so that "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above" (Eph. 2:5-6; Col. 3:1).

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

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

Truly the resurrection is not a future hope - it is a present reality. As those in Adam "are dying" so in Christ men "are being made alive." Receiving of His life we find it to be a

RESURRECTION LIFE. The word "resurrection" is from the Greek word ANASTASIS meaning a standing or rising up. It denotes much more than our English word resurrection which we term to mean a restoring to life again. The Greek word means the WHOLE PROCESS OF ADVANCING AND RISING UP UNTIL THE HIGHEST POSSIBLE REALM IS REACHED, and our goal is nothing short than full conformation into the image of God that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him. Resurrection is the process of STANDING UP and ADVANCING, it is arising from the dust and the low realm of the earthy, to bear the image of the heavenly. Resurrection is the process of having our life lifted up from the earth, to be raised to the heavenlies, joined in one with the fullness of the Spirit of God. Our alienation and separation from God, with all the dreadful attending sorrows, are already beginning to end in this life as through Christ we ARE MADE ALIVE! And, blessed be His name, in Christ shall ALL be made alive!

EVERY MAN IN HIS OWN ORDER

In the face of a hope so blessed and glorious as this, some have raised an objection, contending that not ALL who die in Adam will be made alive in Christ. These assert that in each case the "all" is limited, so that it is only ALL WHO ARE IN CHRIST that shall be made alive. The idea is that it is not the same all who die in Adam that are made alive in Christ. All who have ever lived were "in Adam" and therefore died, they say, but only a few have by faith come to be "in Christ" - and only "all in Christ" are given life. If that were true, this booklet would be a short one and our story soon told. I do not hesitate to say that that is indeed a crafty and cunning - but devious - argument. It reveals the crass ignorance of those who employ it. It shows that either they have not read the Scripture, or they have read it but, like the Ethiopian Eunuch, understand not what they read and need "some man to teach them."

It has been said that if the average Christian knew what his Bible is talking about, he would burn it as a dangerous and heretical writing. There is much more truth to this statement than most of us would like to admit. False doctrine is founded on error. While professing to believe and teach the Word, yet it can do nothing but contradict it. Most of its efforts are therefore an attempt to make the Word conform to its own ignorant imaginings. While it loudly proclaims the Bible to be true and professes to believe it, yet it must continually change and explain its truths in such a way as to make them uphold its own reasonings. God's true ministers are those who have come to the place where they dare to believe God, though it makes all men liars. And anyone who will serve the Lord faithfully by declaring His truth is bound to be unpopular with all the ministers in apostasy, because he must then continually expose their shame.

And the assertion that all who die in Adam will not be made alive in the Christ is very sly and cunning and deceptive. It is a flat contradiction of the Word of God. Furthermore, it is a Christ dishonoring blasphemy straight out of the pit. The simple truth is that the argument is a subtle play on words, while missing or ignoring altogether what Paul REALLY SAID. His statement in I Cor. 15:22 can be made to say what these deceivers make it say only when it is taken out of context. It must be read in connection with all the verses surrounding it. As soon as this principle is faithfully followed, it becomes plain.

Here is what Paul says in the verse under consideration: "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive" -but that is not the end of the matter! Paul does not drop his thought or change his subject at the end of that sentence. The very same thought is continued in the next verse where the apostle states, "BUT EVERY MAN IN HIS OWN

ORDER." That is, all who shall be made alive in the Christ will be made alive by an order, in sequence, according to a progressive arrangement, determined by group, position, degree or rank. The Scriptures make it very plain that all are not saved at the same time. "Who gave Himself a ransom for all; to be testified in due time" (I Tim. 2:6). At the present time God is saving only those He has called unto the special salvation of the ages (I Cor. 1:26-30; 1 Tim. 6:12). He will use these to bring about the salvation of the rest (Eph. 1:9-12; 2:6-10; Rom. 8:18-23).

The Greek word translated "order" is TAGMA and means a "group," or "rank," or "band," or "company." TAGMA actually comes from a root word meaning to appoint, determine, or set in array, as used in Acts 13:38, "and as many as were ordained (set in array) to eternal life believed." The thought is of soldiers marching in bands, companies, regiments or battalions. As in times of war the country calls age groups and forms them into companies of men, so in like manner the Spirit of God calls to resurrection and life every man in his own time, order, and rank. Man holds no power to hasten that order even for an hour; neither has he power to delay it.

While men who understand nothing of the plan of God go rushing far and wide, desperately trying to convert the world "before it is eternally too late," the almighty God in matchless serenity sits on His glorious throne, beholding with joy His on-going purpose of the ages as it develops in magnificent harmony, and sends forth His Spirit at just the proper time to call "every man in his own order." As one has so beautifully written, "Jesus clearly taught that No man can come to Me, except the Father which hath sent Me draw him,' giving indication that the initiative is God's, as He causes us to come in His time, to be in that order, that rank that He has determined for us. But He also made it clear, that regardless of the timing of our call, when the Father draws us to Himself, the process continues until ALL have been brought to Him, for He said, 'And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, WILL DRAW ALL MEN UNTO ME' (Jn. 12:32). 'Every man in his own order' is also very reassuring, for it promises that in His own time and calling for each one, He will bring them into the fullness of His life. The Spirit draws, awakens, illumines, imparts life - according to the will of God for each individual. EACH IN HIS OWN RANK. There is no merit upon man for this choosing - 'It is not of him that wills, nor of him that runs, BUT OF GOD that shows mercy' (Rom. 9:16). And when He draws us we can only bow in humble thanksgiving for this expression of His love toward us, and receive Him, yield to Him, and follow after Him with our whole heart." - Gospel Echoes.

And now, let us see WHAT THE ORDER IS. "In Christ shall all be made alive - but every man in his own order." And then the apostle lists three unmistakable and successive orders in which EVERY MAN is made alive. Hear it! "But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at His coming. Then comes the end, when He shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when He shall have put down all rule and authority and power. For He must reign until He has put all enemies under His feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. For He hath put all things under His feet ... and when all things shall be subdued unto Him, then shall the Son also Himself be subject unto Him that put all things under Him, that God may be ALL IN ALL" (I Cor. 15:23-28). Let me present the three orders:

1. Christ the firstfruits
2. Afterwards those who are Christ's at His coming
3. Then the end ... all enemies ... all things subdued ... until God is ALL IN ALL.

Those who insist that only the small handful of saints who during this age find life in Christ make up the "all" who will be made alive fall short for they fail to get past the first two companies. These believe that the Christ was Himself made alive, and they further believe that those who are now His are being made alive, but in their terrible blindness they miss entirely the third order in which ALL MEN AND ALL THINGS, including God's very worst enemies, are SUBJECTED AND SUBDUED UNTO HIM and then delivered up in His Kingdom unto God, even the Father, that God may then be "all in all"! Ah, beloved, it takes not two, but all three of these "orders" to constitute the ALL who are MADE ALIVE IN CHRIST. And to say that "all" is anything short of this is to horribly distort and impiously wrest the Word of God!

What a demonstration of love and grace and power! The mighty working of HIS LIFE in this third group shows us that the impetus given to God's purpose by the resurrection of Christ from the dead does not expend itself until all others are made alive in Him; until all sovereignty and authority and power in opposition to Him is broken; until all enemies are placed under Christ's feet, subdued unto Him; until the last enemy, death itself, is abolished and there is no more death abiding in any creature anywhere; until all in the universe is included in the Kingdom of the Son; until the Son Himself has handed over the Kingdom and all its subjects to the Father and God has become All in all - everything to everyone everywhere! What an impetus! The resurrection of Christ from the dead sets in motion a chain of happenings which carry on and do not stop until God's great purpose in the ages is fully consummated.

What love! What wondrous love! The might of God's strength which operated in Christ, raising Him from the dead, was sufficient to exalt Him to the highest pinnacle of the universe, thus ensuring that all His enemies would be reconciled to Him, that every opposing power would be made subordinate to Him, that all sin and death in every realm and in every man and in every creature throughout all the unbounded heavens would be so swallowed up of HIS LIFE until God would be ALL IN ALL, bless His glorious name! The gospel of the grace of God! May it flood our hearts that they may, indeed, be illuminated with the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

After "Christ the firstfruits" and "those who are Christ's at His coming" notice the words - "then comes the end." Paul is talking about the "order" in which all are to be made alive. As I have pointed out, the word "order" means a group, or rank, or band, like succeeding groups or bands in a parade. "Christ the firstfruits" is the first order; "they that are Christ's" are the second order; and the Greek says, "Then the end," an expression that is not unlike "bringing up the rear." It constitutes the "end rank" or the last order to be made alive in Christ. Paul is writing about three orders or classes of mankind to be made alive in Christ, and these three orders constitute ALL of mankind. Paul seems to pile up words to make clear his meaning that ALL THINGS IN THE UNIVERSE are to be brought into subjection to God. In I Cor. 15:22-28 he uses the word "all" twelve times, and in just the last two verses he repeats the idea of subjection six times. One wonders what else He could have written to make men understand his meaning. He is saying as clearly as words can say that the ultimate GOAL OF GOD is the bringing into subjection of all beings in the universe, in heaven, in earth, and in the underworld!

ALL THINGS IN SUBJECTION

"Then comes 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. For He must

reign until He has PUT all enemies UNDER HIS FEET. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. For He hath PUT ALL THINGS UNDER HIS FEET. But when He says all things are PUT UNDER Him, it is manifest that He is excepted, which did PUT all things UNDER HIM. And when ALL THINGS shall be SUBDUED UNTO Him, then shall the Son also Himself BE SUBJECT unto Him that PUT ALL THINGS under Him, that God may be all in all" (I Cor. 15:24-28).

In the 27th and 28th verses one single verb meaning "put in subjection" is used six times. It is variously translated as "put under," "subdues," and "be subject." Paul chooses this word to make clear his meaning that ALL THINGS IN THE UNIVERSE are to be brought INTO SUBJECTION to God. To bring into subjection is to bring into obedience. There can be no reconciliation, no harmony, no orderly Kingdom, no "God all in all" without a subjugation; and as God accepts nothing but a willing obedience, He plans to bring ALL to a willing obedience to His will. God does not make anyone do anything. But He certainly knows how to "make" us WILLING! God didn't "make" Jonah go to Nineveh, but He DID MAKE HIM WILLING to go!

"Who will transform the body of our humiliation into a conformity with His glorious body, according to the energy by which He is able to SUBJECT ALL THINGS to Himself" (Phil. 3:21). The power that transforms our bodies into the likeness of His glorious body, is the same power that will subdue ALL THINGS unto Him. They will become His subjects, and own Him as their King. Some erroneously teach that THINGS does not mean people, that it only means nature, thrones, governmental positions, etc. If so, God loves the created inanimate THINGS more than man who was made in His image! That is but another of Babylon's infamous lies, a deceitful smokescreen to keep the Lord's precious people from the truth. The Scriptures plainly repudiate such an untenable position. Of course ALL THINGS includes ALL PEOPLE! Numerous passages could be cited, but I share only two briefly, to establish the point. "Therefore let no man glory in men. For ALL THINGS are yours; whether PAUL, or APOLLOS, or CEPHAS, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; ALL are yours" (I Cor. 3:21-22). It should be plain to anyone that people - Paul, Apollos, and Cephas - are among the ALL THINGS that Paul enumerates as belonging to the saints. Such other items as "the world" and "life" are included with them as "things." No less illustrious a personage than our blessed Lord Jesus Christ is called in Scripture a "thing." "The angel answered and said unto her ... that HOLY THING which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God" (Lk. 1:35).

The real proof, however, lies right within the passage under consideration. "For HE hath put ALL THINGS under His feet. But when He says ALL THINGS are put under Him, it is manifest that HE is excepted, which did put ALL THINGS under Him" (I Cor. 15:27). Now, I am sure that all will admit that GOD is a person. God is not an inanimate object or an abstract governmental position. He is a living being! And He is the only thing, according to Paul, that is NOT SUBDUED UNTO THE CHRIST. Thus the internal evidence in our text reveals beyond any shadow of a doubt that within the scope of the "all things" subdued unto Christ and delivered up to the Father are ALL LIVING BEINGS other than God Himself. None can contradict this fact but those so bound in the darkness of error that they no longer care what the Word of God says - they will fight to the end for their man-made traditions!

The description, moreover, of this consummation in the verses quoted is so sweeping that words and terms mean nothing at all if it does not set forth total and universal homage paid by WILLING HEARTS to Christ, and thus to God. Some have the idea that

the subjection referred to is something like the subjection of the Jews in the Nazi concentration camps during the second world war. Those who hold that view envision billions of people confined to the lake of fire screaming, cursing, hating and blaspheming God in their torments, but subjected, confined, held by force, unable to escape, or to ever again be free to spread their sin and rebellion through God's universe - but never changed. But notice, precious friend of mine, the very same Greek word that suffices to describe the complete and loving subjection of the Son to the Father, is used to declare what is the nature of the submission of all things under the Son's rule and reign. There will be nothing anywhere that is any longer antagonistic to God, therefore the reason why Christ's REDEMPTIVE REIGN comes to an end, and He hands over to God all the subjugated and loyal realms of heaven and earth and hell is that He may become "All in All." The same word for "subdue" is used in other places for the kind of subjection that Christ yielded to His parents, that the Church gives to Christ, and that God's children render to their Father - the identical subjugation into which Christ will bring all things when the consummation of His reign arrives.

This kind of total subjugation to God is that which is being wrought in the "firstfruit company" in this hour. Have you totally surrendered yourself to God? This is what God demands. In numerous places, in various ways, in different words, God says the same thing over and over again. And yet, sometimes it seems that we fail to get the message: Yield yourselves to God. Submit yourselves to Christ. Offer your bodies as living sacrifices. Die to self. Lay down your life. Present yourselves to God as those who are alive from the dead. Yield not your members as instruments of unrighteousness but as instruments of righteousness unto God. Put off the old man. Put on the mind of Christ. Walk in the Spirit. Over and over again, God says the same thing. And what He now requires of us, His firstfruits, He ultimately requires of the whole creation! He wants us to yield ourselves to Him. Andrew Murray, in a great monograph on this subject, calls our attention to the encounter that King Ahab had with Ben-hadad, king of Syria. From that encounter, Murray draws a very significant lesson. Perhaps you recall the situation.

Ben-hadad ruled over Syria, located to the north of Israel. The wicked King Ahab was the monarch reigning over the Northern Kingdom from the capital city of Samaria. Ben-hadad gathered together his hosts which he described as more numerous than all the dust of Samaria. He, along with thirty-two other kings, attacked and devastated the countryside of Israel. Finally they surrounded the capital of Samaria. And here they stood in a vast unnumbered seriate array of tanks, thousands upon thousands of foot soldiers, chariots, and horsemen - all with their bright and beautiful shields and spears and armor shining in the sun. Totally surrounding the city for as far as the eye could see, they "warred against Samaria," we are told.

Just how long the battle continued, we are not told. It may have been an extended period of time, but one thing is certain. The rebellious King Ahab of Samaria was brought to complete submission to Ben-hadad. All hope for King Ahab fled. There was to be no victory for him. There was to be no conditional surrender. Instead, he lost everything. The message came from Ben-hadad: "Thus says Ben-hadad, Thy silver and thy gold is mine; thy wives also and thy children, even the goodliest, are mine. " When Ahab received this message he didn't resist - and curse and blaspheme Ben-hadad. No! He responded, "My lord, O king, according to thy saying, I am yours, and all that I have." Now, what Ben-hadad demanded was ABSOLUTE AND TOTAL SURRENDER. And what Ahab gave was total surrender: "I am yours, and all that I have." Ah, here is a picture of that which God demands of us, who are in rebellion against Him, the just and only Potentate. God

comes to us and demands that we surrender to Him. He demands it of the whole creation! This is what it means when it says that He subjects to Himself ALL RULE AND ALL AUTHORITY AND POWER AND ALL THINGS. Glory to His name!

It seems that, usually, we are ready to do almost anything but surrender ourselves to God. I recall the time when the British general came to surrender to Washington. The general began with a flowery speech in which he praised Washington for his magnificent military tactics and the way he had conducted the campaigns. He was eloquently praising Washington when Washington suddenly interrupted him with these words: "Your sword, sir!" Similarly, we come to offer God the flattery of our lips, the praise of our hymns. And God is saying to us, "Your sword, sir!" Surrender is what God wants! Total surrender of our lives!

The following words by George D. Watson will help us see the unsurpassable beauty and majesty of what it really means to be SUBDUED UNTO God. "Before God can launch us out into the breadth and sweetness of His service, and entrust to us great things for Himself, we must be perfectly subdued in every part of our nature to His will and disposition of His mind. We must be subdued in our hearts, in our wills, in our words, in our tempers, in our manners; subdued through and through so thoroughly that we will be flexible to all His purposes and plans. We must be subdued that harshness, severity, criticism, sluggishness, laziness, impetuosity, and all wanting our way, even in religious matters, must be subdued out of us. Conversion will not finish this work.

"We must be subdued, not merely in our own opinion, not merely think ourselves subdued, not only subdued in the esteem of our friends and fellow workers, but subdued so perfectly that the all-seeing eye of God can look us through, and the omniscient One knows that we are subdued. God must conquer the man that He can trust with His great thoughts and plans. The Holy Ghost must saturate us with a divine conquest, before He can use us to conquer other souls. The Lord will begin to subdue us with gentle means; and if we sink lovingly and promptly into His mind, the work will be done; but, if we have flint or iron in our nature, and it is necessary, He will use heroic means and put us between the millstones and grind us to powder, until He can mold us without any resistance to His purpose. We must be so subdued that we can hold our tongues, and walk softly with God, keep our eyes upon Jesus, attend to our own work, and do God's will promptly and lovingly, glad to have a place in His Kingdom.

"Oh! it is grand to be absolutely conquered by the Holy Ghost, and swing out a thousand miles from everybody and everything into the ocean of God's presence. When we are subdued in the sight of God, He will work miracles in us, and power in experience, in healing, in finance, in service, in gentleness, and in sweetness of the inner heart life; miracles of grace that will astonish us and surprise our friends, and utterly amaze our enemies, when they come to know the magnitude of what God has wrought. Let us get subdued in every way, in everything!" -end quote.

Oh, the ineffable glory to be revealed when ALL RULE AND ALL AUTHORITY AND ALL POWER AND ALL ENEMIES AND ALL THINGS SHALL BE SUBDUED UNTO CHRIST AND GOD SHALL BE ALL IN ALL! What anticipation this stirs in our hearts!

Oh! the beauty of God's plan of the ages! "Salvation is of the Lord" (Jonah 2:9). It is a fundamental and wonderful fact that salvation is of the Lord and not man, but the Lord does not save all in this age. Why not? He does save some; and if He saves some, why

not others? Is it because they are too sinful and depraved? No; for the apostle wrote, "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief" (I Tim. 1:15). Therefore, if God saved the "chief" of sinners, none are excluded because of their depravity. Why then does God not now save all? Is it because some are too stony-hearted to be won? No; because of the most stony-hearted people of all it is written, that God will yet "take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them a heart of flesh" (Eze. 11:9). Then is it because some are so stubborn, so intractable, so defiant, so incorrigible that God is unable to woo them to Himself?

I shall answer that question by asking another. Beloved, was there not a time when you walked in the counsel of the ungodly, stood in the way of sinners, sat in the seat of the scornful, and with them said, "We will not have this Man to reign over us" (Lk. 19:14)? Was there not a time when you "would not come to Christ that you might have life" (Jn. 5:40)? With shamed face most of those who read these lines have to acknowledge there was. But how is it that all is now changed? What was it that brought you from haughty self-sufficiency to a humble suppliant, from one that was at enmity with God to one that is at peace with Him, from lawlessness to subjection, from hate to love? And, as one born of the Spirit, you will readily reply, "By the grace of God I am what I am" (I Cor. 15:10).

What is it that caused you to put your trust in Christ? Is it because you were more intelligent than your fellows, and quicker to discern your need of salvation? Perish the thought - "Who makes you to differ from another? And what have you that you did not receive? Now if you did receive it, why do you glory, as if you had not received it" (I Cor. 4:7)? Then do you not see that it is due to no lack of power in God, nor to His refusal to coerce man, that other rebels are not now saved too? If God was able to subdue your heart, then is He not able to do the same for others? Assuredly He is! Then how inconsistent, how illogical, how foolish of men to argue that God is unable to save the masses of hell-bent humanity because THEY WILL NOT LET HIM. Do you say, "But the time came when I was willing, willing to receive Christ as my Saviour." True, but it was the Lord who made you willing! (Ps. 110:3; Phil. 2:13).

Why then does He not make other sinners willing? The answer is of course: HE WILL! "As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall ALL be made alive. BUT EVERY MAN IN HIS OWN ORDER: a firstfruit Anointed; afterwards they that are Christ's at His appearing. Then... the end, when ... ALL SHALL BE SUBDUED UNTO HIM ... that God may be ALL IN ALL." I shall fight that battle for the supremacy of Christ while there is a drop of blood in my body. I shall claim that every foot of this earth and every man upon this earth and under the earth belongs to Christ, for He made the earth and He made every man. He tasted death for every man, and therefore, every foot of the earth; and every man on the earth and under the earth belongs to Christ my Lord. They are His by right of creation and by right of redemption. I claim for His this great and universal Kingdom. The Church has forgotten that Christ came to establish a Kingdom and that it must break in pieces and CONSUME (take into itself) every other kingdom including the devil's kingdom. The Gospel which Christ preached was the Gospel of the Kingdom of God. The hope and aim of all His work was the establishment of the Kingdom of God. When the end shall come, He shall deliver up the Kingdom to God, even the Father, and in it will be everything God created, that God may be ALL IN ALL. We who preach this Gospel of the all-inclusive redemption of Christ preach not a Gospel of limited atonement, nor of a partial Kingdom, nor of a Christ who was a failure, nor of a devil who wins the battle for souls and possesses the souls of untold billions throughout an endless eternity. Such a doctrine

would be blasphemy! We preach the Gospel of the Kingdom of God and of the triumph of that Kingdom in every realm. We demand that every man upon this God's earth, and under the earth, and in heaven and hell and throughout the universe, shall bow the knee and glorify God by calling Jesus Lord and serving and obeying Him with a willing heart. God shall grant it! If it takes ages upon ages, God shall grant it! After all, what difference does it make as to how long God chooses to take to bring any given thing to pass? The Church world has long been in a frenzy to get the world destroyed and the sinners into hell and all the saints into heaven for eternity. It sort of reminds me of someone driving at dangerous speeds to get somewhere in a hurry so he can sit down and do nothing. Such people have no conception at all of God's all-wise plan, nor of the intensity of His love, nor of the omnipotence of His power. But God will have the last laugh! Life and death are in HIS hands, none other. God gives life or takes it away. His express will is that ALL be saved, for God "will have all men to be saved" (I Tim. 2:4). He will get His way. You can count on it!

GOD ALL IN ALL

GOD ALL IN ALL - this will be the grand conclusion of the great drama of the world's history and of Christ's redemption. There will come a day - the glory is such we can form no conception of it, the mystery is so deep we cannot realize it - when the Son shall deliver up the Kingdom that God gave Him and which He won with His own blood and established and perfected from the throne of His glory. "He shall deliver up the Kingdom unto the Father ... that God may be all in all." ALL IN ALL - such is the grand goal of our God! He will yet be everything to everyone of His creatures, as it is fitting He should be. Nothing less will satisfy His heart for "He has created all things, and for HIS PLEASURE they are and were created" (Rev. 4:11). Nothing less will vindicate His love or form a fit conclusion for the sin and sorrow and death of the ages. Let us with joy believe it! Let us exult as we receive it! Let us be "laborers together with God" to accomplish it! May this simple phrase, that the smallest child can utter, become the very basis of our being, the background of every act, the key to every occurrence, a light in every darkness, a balm for every wound, and our ages-lasting consolation and good hope.

Let us awake from the terrifying nightmare of Babylon's delusions and let us wing our spirits to God's glorious consummation. Here is a vision worthy of the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ - GOD ALL IN ALL. And now, this ultimate reality must begin in us who have received the call to sonship. If this is what fills the heart of Christ; if this expresses the one end of the work of Christ, then, if I would have the spirit of Christ in me, the motto of my life must be: Everything made subject and swallowed up in Him "that God may be all in all." What a life that will be when that really becomes our banner! To serve the Father fully, wholly, only, to have Him all in all! I am praying, believing, and pressing on "that God may be all in all;" that the day of glory may be hastened. I am fighting the good fight of faith, and the Holy Spirit makes His wrestling within me with unutterable longing, "that God may be all in all." Would that all the saints of God realized with what a grand cause we are working and praying; that all had some conception of the Kingdom we are partakers of, and what a manifestation of God we are preparing for! That He is not All in all at the present is quite obvious, for only a fraction have faintly felt that God was indeed ALL to them. Some have known Him as their Saviour, some have experienced Him as their healer, some have received gracious gifts from His hands, some have acknowledged Him as their Lord, some have found Him as their ALL. Happy are they who know Him thus! They have tasted of the cup ineffable, which quenches every thirst and brims with every blessing.

I am living for this, that Christ may have the Kingdom to deliver up to the Father, and then God will be all in all. I am living for Him, and I shall be there not only as a witness, but I will have a part in it all. The Kingdom delivered up, the Son made subject, and God all in all! I shall have a part in it and in adoring worship share the glory and blessedness. Let us take this home to our hearts that it may rule our lives - this one thought, this one faith, this one aim, this one joy: Christ lived and died and reigns; I live and die and in His power I reign only for this one thing, "that God may be all in all!" Everything in history is moving inexorably toward a day when Jesus will have conquered everything and everyone. Like a mountain of soil before a gigantic bulldozer steadily moving forward, all that can be conquered is being collected into the loving arms of Jesus, whose right it is to rule. He will then turn it over to God the Father "that God may be All in All."

When Christ ascended on high after His resurrection, He led many captives out of the pit and also set forth this greater purpose: "Now that He ascended, what is it but that He also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, THAT HE MIGHT FILL ALL THINGS" (Eph. 4:9-10). The message is clear - redemption does not include only the salvation of mankind, as wonderful and glorious as that aspect is, but it also includes the complete transformation of the entire universe so that God shall FILL ALL THINGS. There shall not be left one corner of this vast universe where He shall not be LORD AND KING. EVERYTHING EVERYWHERE SHALL BE RESTORED TO THE BEAUTIFUL HARMONY AND ORDER OF THE LOVE OF GOD. Indeed, HE SHALL FILL ALL THINGS SO THAT "GOD MAY BE ALL IN ALL."

V. Gelesnoff wrote: "The current Evangelical Theology involves in its system belief in the deathlessness of sin, the indestructibility of error, and permanence of evil. That though there was a time in the history of the universe when sin in any shape or form did not exist, when no cry of pain or sense of guilt darkened the all-extensive bliss and holiness of creation, yet since sin has once effected an entrance into such a scene, it has come in NEVER TO GO OUT AGAIN, indestructible, unconquerable, ineradicable, endless. Absolute happiness and sinlessness have forever vanished like the phantom of a dream. The 'eternal state' is a universe endlessly finding room for myriads of souls rolling and writhing in the burning agonies of ceaseless flame, eternally sinful, vile and morally hideous. It pictures the final perfection (?) yet to be attained as having room for a vast cesspool of immoral and degraded beings, continually existing in opposition to God.

"This system of doctrine, though as old as man, as venerable as the tradition, as hoary as the pyramids, as 'orthodox' as anything in ancient or modern theology, is a misconception, a travesty of God's character, a caricature of His wisdom, and must be relegated to the scrapheap of ancestral error.

"GLADLY DO WE TURN FROM THIS figment of natural reason to the grand, simple statements of the unadorned Word of God. It looks forward to a time when God shall be all in all, when heaven and earth shall be purged from every stain of sin's pollution. It anticipates that glad occasion when every heart shall beat in unison with the heart of God; every mind shall harmonize with the Divine Wisdom and Purpose; every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord" -end quote.

While we praise God for every moving of His Spirit and each step of His all-wise plan, the fact remains that none of the revivals of history have ever once-for-all defeated satan, sin, and death. No revival in any land has turned the whole world to God! No dealing of

God with humanity has ever brought to pass the TOTAL TRIUMPH of His Kingdom in all realms! Sin and death still stalk across the earth, the vast masses of humanity held tight in their terrible clutches. Is there no deliverance for these? How truly the whole creation groans and travails in pain together, waiting, not for another Luther, nor another Paul, nor another Finney, nor another Peter, nor another Moody; waiting not for another Pentecost, nor for another healing campaign, nor for another prophet. "For the earnest expectation of the creation waits for THE MANIFESTATION OF THE SONS OF GOD" (Rom. 8:19). And why does all creation wait with bated breath, standing on tiptoe to see the wonderful sight of God's Sons coming into their own? "For the creation itself ALSO shall be delivered ... INTO THE GLORIOUS LIBERTY OF THE SONS OF GOD!" (Rom. 8:21). Praise God!

Thank God, Dan 7:27 is really true! "And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom, under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and A-L-L DOMINIONS S-H-A-L-L S-E-R-V-E H-I-M!" Thank God, Eph. 1:10 is actually the fully inspired Word of God! "And this is in harmony with God's merciful purpose for the GOVERNMENT OF THE WORLD when the times are ripe for it - the purpose which He has cherished in His own mind of restoring the whole creation to find its one Head in Christ; yes, things in heaven and things on earth, to find their one Head IN HIM" (Weymouth).

A little seed is the beginning of a great tree. A mustard seed becomes a tree in which the birds of the air can nestle. That great day of which our text speaks, when Christ shall deliver up the Kingdom to the Father, and God shall be All in All - that is the great tree of the Kingdom of God reaching its perfect consummation and glory. Oh, beloved, let us take the seed of that glory into our hearts and let us bow in lowly surrender and submission, saying "Amen, Lord; this be my one thought, this be my life - to yield myself to the unutterable yearnings of the Holy Spirit that I may not rest, but ever keep my vision set on that day, the day of glory, when in very deed God shall be ALL IN ALL." God help everyone who reads these lines, God help us all to yield ourselves to Him, that we may be in the fullest and total sense the FIRSTFRUITS OF HIS REDEMPTION. Amen!

WILL GOD BE
- ALL in Few?
ALL in Many?..
ALL in Most?..
SOME in Some?..
SOME in All?..
or - ALL in ALL?..

Chapter 10

God Is Love

"Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but for the sins of the whole world" (I Jn. 4:10; 2:2).

To us it is almost a commonplace. But to the times in which it was first spoken and to the people who first heard the words, it was the most astounding, the most startling revelation that had ever fallen upon human ears. In a way I could wish that somehow we might be plunged back into that heathen era so that we, ourselves, might hear those words for the first time - those words which we take so much for granted that their meaning for the most part eludes us entirely; that we might hear them in their pristine freshness when first they fell upon this earth - "GOD IS LOVE!"

It is helpful to understand how men viewed their God; the way in which they conceived of Him who created them. Would that we could go back to those ancient days in India or China or Japan and see the hideous idols with their grimacing countenances, their devouring teeth, their many arms and sharp claws, something of the devouring, hateful nature of their deities - or go back to the cruel Assyrians or Babylonians or Egyptians and the monstrosities, the tyrannies, which they worshipped as gods.

If you will examine the ancient pagan literature, you will find the concept of a loving God was alien to people. We take that so much for granted. Why, of course, God loves us! I want you to know that until Jesus came, people did not know that. They knew God according to superstition, or after the law. They knew that God was angry with people. God punished people. God woke up and threw thunderbolts at people. But that God loved them? God would accept their sacrifices. God would even put up with them, and they would propitiate Him and appease Him (or so they thought!), but they did not love God. But now our relationship with God is one of a Father infinitely loving a son. You can see this, for example, in one of the famous Confucian stories that our missionaries discovered when they got to China. It is a story about a young man of a wealthy father, who one day stole a large portion of his father's wealth and ran away from home. He took that money and wasted it in riotous living. The years passed, and finally it was all gone, and he came into destitution. Finally, through an intermediary, he appealed to his father to take him back again. With open arms, his father accepted him back into the home and prepared for him a great feast. Does this sound familiar? As they sat feasting together, all eyes were fixed upon the son. There was a big smile beaming on the face of the father, which broadened, as a look of horror suddenly spread across the countenance of the son. He grasped at his throat, finally realizing too late that he had been poisoned! And Confucius says, "So it shall be with every son that dishonors his Father." How infinite is the gap between that and the story Jesus told of the prodigal son! Jesus came to reveal the FATHER'S LOVE.

The Greeks had a little different conception. They viewed God in terms of beauty or truth as revealed in their architecture or sculpture or their philosophy. The Romans who were led in a thousand battles by the Caesars, had become convinced that the Roman eagle

never turned backward. They conceived of their god in terms of might and strength. God was might! Even the Jews, as they looked back to the time of Moses when God descended upon Sinai and caused the mountain to quake and poured out upon them His law, conceived of God, basically, as the great Lawgiver and Judge.

It waited for the apostle John - that one who had leaned his head upon the breast of Jesus, that one who had stood before the cross to drop those words which no man had ever dared to dream before. These words were the most startling revelation when they were first spoken - "GOD IS LOVE!" We all know that, you say! Do we indeed? It is my deep conviction that for most of us the words are so trite that we haven't the faintest conception of what they mean, nor have they ever begun to grasp our hearts as they should.

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

But have we really made that much progress? The same beloved John who wrote so extensively of God's marvelous love left us this solemn warning, "Little children, keep yourselves from IDOLS (that is, false gods, or false ideas and representations of the true God)" (I Jn. 5:21). Do we have false ideas about God? I fear we do. We say that God is all-wise, all-knowing, and all-powerful, and then turn around and deny it. We say that God "so loved the world" and that Jesus is "the Saviour of the world" and then turn around and say that only a few will be saved while God sends the vast majority to suffer the excruciating pains of fire and brimstone for all eternity without His feeling any concern for their suffering - without mercy! We say that God is all-powerful, and then turn around and say that God has "provided" salvation for all men, that God is "trying" to save the world, that God is "pleading" with men to repent, but the devil who blinds and possesses men's souls is so much more powerful than God that he will carry captive into eternal hell countless billions of men for whom Christ died!

Also, folk who claim that they are true to the Bible say that God the Creator and God the Redeemer are the very same God, but they deny it in their attitude toward the question of the salvation of all men. As Dr. Hurley has written, "They have an infinite Creator, but a very little Redeemer. Their Christ is a comparatively helpless and puny Saviour who is going to lose most of those for whom He died. He can pay the price for the sins of the whole world, but the stubborn will of man makes it ineffective. Man's will is mightier than God's will. God is infinite to create, powerless to redeem! But either God is all-powerful, or He is not. Either God is all-wise, or He is not. Either God is all-loving, or He is not. Either God's will is sovereign, or it is not. Either God's grace is infinite, or it is not. Isn't it time for the Church of Christ to decide one way or the other, and then make her theology fit her expressed faith?" -end quote.

"Little children, keep yourselves from false ideas of God!" False ideas about God. How the world and the Church are filled with them! Many people view God as a schoolboy did: "...the sort of person who is always snooping around to see if anyone is enjoying himself and then trying to stop it." Then others make God out to be a tyrant, or a vengeful, wrath-filled FIEND. The Riverside Daily Press had an Associated Press report from San Francisco as follows: " 'A Father's Curse' was the legacy left by Dennis Donohue III, fifty-four, member of a well known family here, to his two daughters by a former wife, in a will filed for probate in Superior Court. 'And to my two daughters, Frances Marie and Denise Victoria Donohue,' he wrote in his own hand, 'by virtue of their unfeeling attitude toward a doting father, and because they have repeatedly thwarted my efforts to see them, I leave the sum of one dollar to each and a father's curse. May their respective lives be fraught with misery, unhappiness and poignant sorrow. May their deaths be soon and of a lingering, malign, and torturous nature. May their souls rest in hell and suffer the torments of the damned for eternity.' " I am sure that my readers agree with me that such an attitude is not that of a true father; it is only that of a fiend. But what may not be clear to all is that, in this respect, he is a perfect example of the God of popular theology! Because His children were unfeeling He consigns them to the torment of hell fire for ever! We loathe such a character when we see it in a mere mortal, but justify it as the character of our God who IS LOVE!

But the Bible knows of no such God. No more terrible insult was ever given to the God of all grace who came in Jesus Christ reconciling THE WORLD unto Himself. This story is told about a little girl. After she had heard her father preach a sermon on the awful wrath of God, and that the unsaved would go to a red hot, sizzling, burning hell the moment they died, and that they would twist in agony and torment forever, without mercy, this little girl said, "I wish Jesus were as good and kind as my father." God does bring judgment upon sinners - swift, strong, effective, corrective judgment - but never meaningless, sadistic torture.

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

"He that loves not knows not God; for God is love. And we have known and believed the love that God has to us. God is love; and he that dwells in love dwells in God, and God in him" (I Jn. 4:8, 16). Charles H. Pridgeon wrote, "When Edgerton Young, a successful missionary in Northwestern British America, taught some of the Indians to read by the simple syllabic characters, he wrote on the rock for them to read the words, 'God is Love.'

One old Indian chief looked and pronounced the characters, and as soon as he uttered them he caught their import. He arose to his great height and said, rubbing his eyes, 'Has there been sand in my eyes all these years? I have seen the Great Spirit in the lightning, I have heard Him in the thunder, but I never knew till now that GOD IS LOVE.' How many have really learned this truth?" -end quote. You see the old Indian chief knew something of the attributes and greatness of God, but he had never KNOWN WHAT GOD IS.

Would that my tongue were eloquent enough to explain it, or that my mind were great enough to comprehend it. But neither is sufficient. I would ask that you join me as we descend into the great wealth of the glittering mine of God's attributes. As we look into this mine we find that it is scattered everywhere with precious jewels of the attributes of God that glitter and scintillate in the light that comes in behind us. Pick up one and examine it and perhaps you shall see something more of the greatness of God. Pick up the jewel of God's power and look at that. As you look into that gem you see omnipotence beyond comprehension - God speaks, and the universe leaps out of nothing into existence! God thinks, and vast myriads of beings spring into being to sing His praises! By a thought He creates; by a thought He could think them into nothingness and they would disappear as the foam on the ocean wave sinks back into the sea as if it had never existed at all. Our mightiest telescopes through which our astronomers gaze cannot begin to pierce the length and breadth of this universe which God in His omnipotent power has created. We cannot in our finite minds begin to comprehend the power of Him who can create the Milky Way or even the solar system we know. And yet, as limitless and infinite as the power and omnipotence of God is, even so limitless is HIS LOVE. It is without measure and without boundary. It is absolutely illimitable. You might as well try to drink up the ocean until it is dry as to ever exhaust the infinite love of God who sent Jesus to be the Saviour of the world.

Or consider God's wisdom. Pick up that jewel and gaze into its many glittering facets and you will behold something that will benumb your mind. God who knows all things that ever were, are, or ever shall be, is a God whose omniscience enables Him to comprehend not only what is, was, or shall be, but even contingent things: what might have been under all possible circumstances. There is nothing that escapes His mind. We are told that there are birds that fly high in the sky, who have not only microscopic but telescopic vision, and yet they are gropingly blind compared to the eye of God who sees all things; who sees the flashing neurons in your brain as the thoughts flash through your mind; who knows everything about you. And yet, as vast and incomprehensible as the wisdom and omniscience of God is, even so vast and incomprehensible is HIS LOVE through which He reconciles us to God!

When we speak of God's attributes we may say, and many do, that God is a Spirit, infinite, eternal and unchangeable in His being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness and truth. This is a very beautiful definition; but it largely defines only God's attributes, whereas the text, "God is Love," tells us WHAT HE HIMSELF IS. This text reveals His nature, His state of being. For instance, in speaking of justice, we know that God has justice as one of His attributes, but He is not justice; God IS love. This fact gives us a revelation of GOD'S VERY NATURE.

This brings us face to face with the great central message of the Bible which is a message of love. We need to remember that the Personage about whom the Bible is written IS LOVE - a Being whose very nature is love. In our day that is something that can become distorted because we live in an age of distortion; we live in a time when even

the truth of anything, whether it be the nature of God or the nature of human sexuality, is distorted and perverted. The fact that God is love is perverted into some sort of a mish-mash that God is a wishy-washy old grandfather who would never punish his grandchildren lest they stop coming to see him. We have met some brethren in this end-time move of the Spirit who have exaggerated the bright side of the love of God out of all proportion to its other aspects. The love of God has been presented in such a way that it is a weakness rather than a strength. It has been presented on the sunny side of the street with nothing on the other side ever mentioned. There is a "love" of God preached that sounds to me like the doting indulgence of rather senile grandparents instead of the vital and vigorous concern of a Father for the best interests of a son. They have used the old shopworn cliché "God is love, God is love, God is love" until love has become such a one-sided, mushy, gooey, syrup-sweet thing, and they have not told about the dark side of the love of God: "Whom the Lord loves, He chastens, and scourges every son whom He receives" (Heb. 12:6). They have watered love down, making it sickening rather than stimulating, causing it to slop over on every side like a sentimental feeling rather than an abiding concern for the object of love. Some have no concern at all, they have settled into a drowsy complacency, into a do-nothing, don't-care disposition, for, they say, "Everything will turn out alright in the end, anyhow!" They have no passion for lost souls anymore, they have thrown judgment and hell out the window, and would not lift a finger to warn any man to flee from the wrath to come. Sometimes where we would endeavor to teach the whole truth of God, we might lean so far to the other side of the boat to balance it, that again the truth might be lost. The balance in the love of God was summed up by the sweet singer of Israel thus: "Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other" (Ps. 85:10).

In the conception of God that we have found and created in our own mind, if anything other than love is paramount, we have a distortion and an idol of the mind. If we have a concept where the justice of God becomes greater than His love, a concept where the omnipotence of God overrules His love, where the sovereignty of God outshines His love, and the omniscience of God puts His love into the shadows, then we have a false concept of God. For we have been told by one who knows, that God IS LOVE! That does not mean that He is not just, righteous, sovereign and wise, but all these are rooted in the fact that He is preeminently THE LOVING CREATOR AND REDEEMER OF THIS WORLD!

A famous preacher of yesteryear related the following story. "I was visiting one day with a religiously divided family. The wife was a devout Christian; the husband, a hard, rancorous unbeliever. He was hardly courteous to me. Why should he be? As a minister of the Word of God I was in his eyes little better than a fool. When the evening paper came, he grasped it eagerly as a fortunate escape from what he considered a boring conversation. I had been talking with his wife about the marvelous love of God. Suddenly he threw the paper in front of me. 'Look!' he shouted, pointing to the headlines - THOUSANDS ARE SLAUGHTERED IN BIG PUSH - 'how can you say that God is. love? Nonsense! If He were alive and loving as you say, would He not stop it all?' His question was put very sharply, but it was not new. It was as old as the race" -end quote.

Any thinking mind will be quick to consent that the problem in the world today is not with God - it's with MAN! The vast majority of the pain, sorrow, suffering, cruelty, heartache, war, bloodshed and despair in the world today really reveals nothing at all about the nature of God; it merely points out the barbarity, selfishness, ruthlessness, brutishness, and savageness of MAN! It is MAN who wars, lies, exploits, divorces, deserts, deceives,

cheats, ignores, intimidates, does drugs, steals, murders, and breaks the hearts and destroys the lives of those about him. Not GOD!

Why should men doubt the love of God? How dare they place a question mark after His beneficence? What reasoning has brought them to this fearful interrogation? Betimes their doubts have arisen because they have listened to the ambiguous oracles of nature, rather than the revelation of God in Christ Jesus. Nature impresses men with the awful mystery, power and wisdom of God. The storm with its jagged lightnings and rolling thunders, the proud mountains with their dizzy heights mantled in snow, the heaving bosom of the ocean with its foam-crested waves, yes, and the tiny violet on the hillside - these eloquently proclaim a God of infinite power, wisdom and riches; but they do not convince the unconverted heart of God's infinite love. The forces in nature that sometimes work for our good often turn about and seem to work for our ruin and destruction. The sunlight that warms our fields to produce the golden harvests also beats down unmercifully upon the earth and produces a dust bowl making thousands homeless and hungry. The warm rains that help to germinate the seed that has been sown sometimes come in ruinous abundance, producing floods in whose wake are destruction, disease, despair and death. How apparently contradictory! Possibly in the midst of some tragedy you, too, are asking the question, "Is God loving?" "Why does God permit war?" you ask. "If He is a loving God, why does He permit the roar of bombers and the barking of guns to silence the joyous laughter of innocent children? If God is a God of love, yes, why does He not stop it all?"

We do not have the answer to many of the dark questions of life, for our vision is so limited, and unlike God, we cannot see the end from the beginning. Ah! If only we could see the end - God's glorious end, THEN we would understand all the "whys" and "wherefores" and how even all of these things WORKED TOGETHER FOR OUR GOOD. We do not have the answer to many of the dark questions of life because we cannot fully understand the wonderful interplay of God's justice, chastisement and mercy. We only know that man has sinned, the whole planet is in rebellion, mankind continually rejects the ways of the Lord and spurns the love of God, and sin takes its awful toll, and all of nature is thrown into chaos in the process. The ambiguous testimony of nature alone cannot supply you with an adequate answer. Only those elect saints who are spiritually enlightened can discern the love of God, even in the adverse and fearful demonstrations of nature, and in the terrible judgment that stalks through the earth. Ah, let us turn from these oracles with their double answers and turn to a LIVING DEMONSTRATION of the loving nature of God - a demonstration that all the ages have not been able to contradict, namely, the great fact of the Incarnation, the deathless, eternally glorious fact that "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (Jn. 3:16).

From childhood most of us have heard these blessed words, yet they are so freighted with heaven's riches that one instinctively shrinks from talking about them. Who presumes to be able to measure the magnitude of God's love? "God so loved the world." Charles Spurgeon once struck off a bold figure when he exclaimed, "Come, you surveyors, bring your chains, and try to make a survey of this word so. Nay, that is not enough. Come hither, you that make our national surveys and lay down charts for all nations. Come you, who map the sea and land and make a chart of this word so. Nay, I must go further. Come hither, you astronomers, that with your optic glasses spy out spaces before which your imagination staggers, come hither and calculate imaginations worthy of all your powers. When you have measured between the horns of space, here is

a task that will defy you - 'God so loved the world!' " Although we may completely despair of calculating the love of God, there are nevertheless in these classic words of Jesus some very clear statements that help us compute, to some extent, the greatness of the heart of God. This little word so finds its definition, I think, in the object and the gift of God's love.

God loved "THE WORLD" - the world that then was and now is, the world rebellious against God, morally depraved and lost in degradation and shame. "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and send His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him" (I Jn. 4:9-10). You see, it was while we were dead in trespasses and sin, while we made no response to God, while friendship with Him was cut off and the urge of faithfulness and goodness lay smoldering in the grave of our depravity - it was then that the love of God's great heart embraced us. God so loved the world - that means His love sweeps around the whole earth and flows out to men of every race and tongue and nation; but it means more. It means He loves the men and women of the world who by their own evil have wrenched themselves away from Him. It means that He loves the blaspheming atheist, the scornful skeptic, the lecherous outcast, the criminal behind the bars, the grafter who swaggers about as a good citizen and the unscrupulous leeches who drain the very lifeblood of widows and orphans. God so loved THE WORLD. ALL of it! And He loves it still. He loves the men living now upon the earth, and He loves those who have lived and died in dim and distant ages past. He loves them on earth and He loves them in hell. God so loved! Herein is manifested the love of God: He loves the unlovely, the unloving, and the humanly unlovable! Let holy and powerful angels from the extended galleries of heaven sing it! Let the redeemed in rapturous wonder take up the song and let sinners fall prostrate in penitence before the almighty Creator and Redeemer!" God IS LOVE!" Do you believe it?

Love has been described as AN ETERNAL WILL TO ALL GOODNESS. This is THE ONE ETERNAL, IMMUTABLE GOD that, from eternity to eternity, changes not, that can be neither more nor less, but an ETERNAL WILL TO ALL GOODNESS that is in Himself and come from Him, so that as certainly as He is Creator, so certainly is He the blesser of every created thing, and can give nothing but blessings, goodness, and holiness from Himself, because He has in Himself nothing else to give. The judgments of God can never be rightly understood apart from His nature of love. If God's judgments spring not from His love then they come not from God at all, for He IS LOVE. What ought this to teach us about His judgments! The pen of inspiration wrote, "My son, despise not the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when you are rebuked of Him: for whom the Lord LOVES He chastens, and scourges every son whom He receives ... for our profit, that we may be partakers of His holiness" (Heb. 12:5-10). God doesn't go around purposelessly punishing or vindictively torturing any of His creatures. But He does go about precise paths of bringing forth correction UNTO RIGHTEOUSNESS, as the prophet says, "When Your judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will LEARN RIGHTEOUSNESS" (Isa. 26:9). God's judgments, whether upon saints, nations, or the wicked in general are all corrective in nature, accomplished by the motivation of His nature which is LOVE.

"Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son ... beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another. No man has seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwells in us, and HIS LOVE IS PERFECTED IN US" (I Jn. 4:10-12). Can words make it plainer that God's love in Christ is given to pass into us and

to become our life? We shall then love God as He loved us. We shall then love one another as Christ has loved us. And we shall then love the world with the same love which God in Christ revealed upon the cross!

Some who read these lines may be bruised and battered by life. Some of you may be lonely and cast down. Some of you may feel all alone. If you are a father, or a mother, then you know something of the love of a parent for a child. You know something of a love that reaches out after a child, even in its waywardness; a love that reaches out to a child that has been hurt; a love that reaches after a child who has deserted its family; a love that NEVER LETS GO. All of that tender compassion of a parent's love is but the faintest shadow of the infinite love of God which knows no measure; a love that, indeed, could never let us or any man go. When we become children of God, we enter into that parental love of God. How sad that so many who call themselves children of God are, as the apostle warned, "without natural affection," stubbornly willing to consign the vast majority of God's wayward sons to everlasting damnation, yea, demanding, as judge and jury, that they be damned, rather than loving them infinitely and omnipotently as God loves them!

While reflecting upon the parental love of God, a story came to mind that I read some months ago. In this story a man who was entirely careless of spiritual things died and went to hell. And he was much missed on earth by his old friends. His business manager went down to the gates of hell to see if there were any chance of bringing him back. But, though he pleaded for the gates to be opened, the iron bars never yielded. His cricket captain went also and besought Satan to let him out just for the remainder of the season. But there was no response. His minister went also and argued, saying, "He was not altogether bad. Let him have another chance. Let him out just this once." Many other friends of his went also and pleaded with Satan saying, "Let him out, let him out, let him out." But when his mother came, she spoke no word of his release. Quietly, and with a strange catch in her voice, she said to Satan, "Let me in." And immediately the great doors swung open upon their hinges. For love goes down through the gates of hell and there redeems the damned! Our Father and God, incarnate in the Person of Jesus Christ, holds in His nail-pierced hand the keys of death and hell. O grave, where is Your victory? O gates of hell, you shall not prevail, for the Redeemer of Israel and the Saviour of the world, the God who IS LOVE holds in His triumphant hand your key!

THE POWER OF GOD'S LOVE

It is my deep conviction that this opening of Divine Love will melt more hearts for God than any other exercise. A mother may forget her child, but the Word says, "For God SO LOVED THE WORLD that He gave His Son" (Jn. 3:16). How can God ever forget the world, or give up on the world with a love so fierce as that! The Scripture declares, "But God commends His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom. 5:8). And again, "In this the love of God was made manifest, where we are concerned, in that God sent His Son, the only begotten or unique Son, into the world so that we might live through Him. In this is love, not that we loved God, but that HE LOVED US and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours alone, but also for the sins of THE WHOLE WORLD" (I Jn. 4:9-10; 2:2, Amplified).

J. A. Dowie relates the following story: "I remember how touched I was to look upon a grave once which had only these words: 'MY BROTHER. HE LOVED ME AND GAVE HIMSELF INSTEAD OF ME.' I turned to a person and said: 'Tell me the story of that

grave.' He told me that it was erected by a man in memory of his brother who was killed in war. The man was drafted as a conscript; but when this younger brother, who had no wife or family, heard of it, he went to him and said: 'John, you have a dear wife and a nice family, and I have none. Let me take your name and go for you.' So he went under the name of his brother, John, and was killed in the battle. John went down to the battlefield and brought the body home and buried it. He erected a tombstone on which were only these words: 'My brother. He loved me and gave himself instead of me.' " -end quote.

Christ loved us, and gave Himself instead of us. He died for us, when we were not like that man's brother. We were not good. We were not worthy. The whole race was wicked and vile and hostile. When we were yet ungodly, the Word of God became the Son of man and died for us. So let us love Him and all mankind whom He loved, and for whom He died.

Here is love, vast as the ocean,
Loving kindness as the flood,
When the Prince of Life our ransom
Shed for us His precious blood;

Who His love will not remember?
Who can cease to sing His praise?
He can never be forgotten
Through Heaven's everlasting day.

On the Mount of Crucifixion
Fountains opened deep and wide;
Through the floodgates of God's mercy
Flowed a vast and gracious tide;

Grace and love like mighty rivers,
Poured incessant from above,
And Heaven's peace and perfect justice
Kissed a guilty world in love!

The story has been told of when John B. Gough, the great temperance orator, was entertained by some friends in an eastern city, the mother of the household called him aside and asked him to go to her son Edward and have a talk with him. She said that Edward had been a wayward son; in fact, had gone so far in disgracing them that the father forbade him to enter the house. She said that she had pleaded with the father and had prevailed, and that the father had consented to permit Edward to have a room where he would never have to see him. She said, "Mr. Gough, Edward came home intoxicated a couple days ago and is still in his room. I have been caring for him. Will you not go and have a little talk with him?" Mr. Gough said, "My dear mother, if you with all your love and patience can not do anything with him, I scarcely think that I can." With a mother's persistency she finally persuaded Mr. Gough to talk with her son. He knocked at the door and entering found Edward. Mr. Gough said, "Edward, aren't you tired of the kind of life that you are leading?" Edward said, "Yes, Mr. Gough, I am sick and tired of it." "Then why do you not quit it?" "Quit it? I can't, Mr. Gough; I am bound hand and foot with an evil habit." "Then why do you not pray, Edward?" "Pray! I don't believe in prayer; I don't believe in God; I don't believe in anything." "Oh, yes, you do, Edward," replied Mr. Gough. "You believe in something. You believe that your mother loves you." Edward

replied, "I do not believe anything about it, I know she loves me." "Then, Edward," continued Mr. Gough, "you believe that there is such a good thing in this world as love, and I am going to leave you here and I want you to promise me that after I go out, you will get down on your knees and pray to love." "Pray to what?" said Edward. "Pray to love, for that is the only thing that you say you believe in." After much persuasion Edward promised. He afterward said that he felt very foolish when he knelt down to pray to love, but he had promised, and he tried to fulfill his promise. He kneeled and cried, "Oh love, love help me"; and straightway, as if through the cleft heaven, this text sounded as a voice in his heart, "God is Love"; and, still looking up, he said, "Oh God!" and there came to him the verse that he had learned years before, "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." And he cried, "Oh, Christ!" - and it was done. He rushed out of his room to find his mother, and, when he did, he threw his arms around her neck and said, "Mother, I have found the Christ!"

Our poor, lisping, faltering tongues cannot proclaim the Gospel as we would like; but we have God's Word that is true for the present time, and for all the times of all the ages. God IS LOVE! IS - unchangeably! IS - eternally! God is love in heaven, in earth, in hell! IS - everywhere! And the great practical consequence is for you and me to respond to that God and to that love, to become filled with that love, one with that love, the embodiment and manifestation of that love to all men in all realms. The best and most wonderful word in the universe is Love. For God is Love. And the best and most wonderful word in the inner chamber of our heart must be - Love. For the God who meets us there is Love. What is Love? The deep desire to give itself for the beloved. Love finds its joy in imparting all that it has, to make the loved one happy and fulfilled. And the heavenly Father, who offers to meet us in the inner chamber - let there be no doubt about this is in our minds - has no other object than to flood our hearts with His love.

But the spirit of love is not in you till it is the spirit of your life, till you live freely, willingly, universally according to it. It knows no difference of time, place, or person; but whether it gives or forgives, bears or forbears, it is equally doing its own delightful work. The spirit of love does not want to be rewarded or honored; its only desire is to become the blessing and happiness of everything that needs it. The wrath of an enemy, the treachery of a friend, only gives the spirit of love an opportunity to be more triumphant. The rebellion of Adam but opened up avenues for mankind to experience and know the incredible depths of the love of God! God IS LOVE! And His SONS are of His own nature. The Sons of Love! What a blessed title! Little wonder, then, that the whole vast creation, sold under slavery and bondage to sin, sorrow, and death GROANS for the manifestation of THE SONS OF LOVE!

To know this is a wonderful help to faith. It teaches us that to love God, or the brethren, or our enemies, or the whole wretched race of men, is not a thing self-effort can attain. We can do it only because the divine love is dwelling in us; only as far as we yield ourselves to the divine love as a living power within, as a life that has been born into us, and that the Holy Spirit strengthens into action. Our part is first of all to rest, to cease from effort, to know that He is in us, and to give way to the love that dwells and works in us in a power that is from above. The love of God reigns. The Spirit of God still waits to take possession of hearts where He has hitherto had no room. Love is timeless, eternal. God so loved. He loves still. Though one hundred and sixty billions of men have lived and died and gone to Christless graves, HE LOVES THEM STILL. Oh, my dear friend, can

you believe that? His mercy endures for ever, throughout all ages, and love will conquer, praise His name!

Hence it is that God, wanting to show us what love was, sent One who from the beginning was sinless; who was conceived without the aid of lust, who was conceived of the Holy Spirit of Infinite Love, and into whose being there entered no evil passion, since the virgin was sanctified in her spirit, her soul, and her body; so that the Holy Thing that was born of her was the Incarnation of Love in every part of His spirit, in every drop of His blood, and in every organ of His body. People have great difficulty relating to an abstraction or an invisible force. It must be personalized and that is why God has come in the person of Jesus Christ, so that we might see Him and see what God is like. God has been personalized. Love has been personified. God so loved this Son that He placed Him at the head of all the ages. God so loved Him that when He died the very heavens were darkened, and the earth trembled under the noonday sun veiling all nature, while silence in earth and heaven lasted until Love had finished His sacrifice upon the cross. That was Love so divine, so wonderful, so awful, that it could only have been possible for God in Christ to have revealed it at all. This Love is the Love which God imparts to us. This same Love that was in Him must be in us. The Sons of God must be the Sons of Love. Go and learn what that means and the hope of sonship will gleam brightly in your soul.

Some time ago, I read a story designed to illustrate the meaning of love. It touched me deeply and perhaps it will help you. It was a story of an incident that took place in mid-nineteenth century Russia. A Russian nobleman accompanied by his faithful servant of many years was making his way home across the frozen steppes of Russia in a dogsled. They had traveled many, many miles across the barren wastes and were now but twenty or so miles from home, when the servant spied something which, indeed, brought great terror to their hearts. About a mile or two behind them they could make out the form of a huge pack of wolves that had scented them and was now descending upon them. They gave the reins to the dogs, cracked their whips, and shouted whatever the Russian equivalent of "mush" is. The dogs strained their muscles and tried to go faster. Yet, irresistibly, the wolf pack closed the gap until finally there were only a hundred or so yards behind them... then only fifty ... then only ten ... then five. Their red eyes glowed like coals out of hell and their large yellow fangs were visible. The growling deep within their throats and the panting noises of their breathing, could be heard as they drew closer and closer. There was no hope; there was no place of escape. Suddenly, unexpectedly, the servant threw himself off backward from the dogsled, with predictable results. The onrushing pack converged and stopped, tearing the servant to pieces while his master escaped. I thought to myself, "What a wonderful illustration of love!" But upon more mature reflection, I realized that it only vaguely glimpsed the real meaning of love. It hardly touched the fringe of its garment. Ah, it would have come much closer if the nobleman had thrown himself off for the servant. "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins" (I Jn. 4:10).

Think ye, sin nailed Him to that cross?
For sin the hammer swung,
Sin lifted up the cruel tree

On whose broad arms He hung;
Sin triumphed, when from anguished lips
His bitter cry was wrung?

So seemed it. But not sin, nor men,
Nor nails had held Him there;
Love was the nail that held Him up

And made Him strong to bear
For us that weary weight of woe -
That tempest of despair.

A brother in Christ has shared the following experience with us. "Shortly after I became a Christian, I recall a story that was in all of the news, including a picture on the front page of Life Magazine. It was the story about five young men from America that had gone to Ecuador to try to bring the Gospel to the Auca Indians - supposedly the most primitive people on the face of the earth. No one had ever made contact with them and lived. They killed everyone that came within their domain. They had no contact with the civilized world; they were a Stone Age type people. These five young men determined that they were going to bring to them the Gospel of Christ. They laid their plans carefully. They lowered presents into the midst of the villages from their circling planes. Finally, months later they landed their plane on the beach of a river that flowed nearby and there were some initial contacts. The people seemed remarkably friendly. Then, suddenly, unexpectedly, without warning, a group of these warriors burst out of the jungle with eight foot spears in their hands and plunged them through the bodies of these five young men, each of whom was armed, yet none of whom used his weapon.

"Some years later, the father of one of these men spoke at a local hotel. He was a great hulk of a man, about six-four, two hundred and forty or fifty pounds. He said that when he had heard what these savages had done to his son, he boarded a plane in Chicago and flew to Quito, Ecuador, where he got on a train and went back into the jungle as far as he could. With a group of guides he made his way into that jungle village. He found the particular Indian that had plunged the spear into the body of his son. He grasped this man in his arms and said to him, 'In the name of Jesus, I love you.' I remember that I just about went out of my chair when he said that. I thought, 'Ah, this is love! ' ' -end quote. Truly this was a manifestation of the love of our heavenly Father. The Sons of God must be preeminently the Sons of Love. "For God so loved the world..." And so will all who are called to sonship! Small wonder, then, that the glorious message of the reconciliation of all things is sweeping like a giant tidal wave through the ranks of those who treasure the beautiful hope of sonship to God. It could not be otherwise! Only those who are possessed with the spirit of Infinite and Omnipotent Love shall be able to minister on the level that will persevere through all obstacles and all ages until ALL CREATION is reconciled unto God and delivered from the realm of death. I do not hesitate to tell you that those who fight against the ultimate triumph of Jesus Christ, those who wage war against the salvation of all men for whom Christ died, those who set themselves up as a Prosecutor and plead before us and God and His Word for the eternal damnation of the billions of helpless souls who have lived and died like beasts upon this darkened planet are not the sons of God at all - they are the DEVIL'S ADVOCATE! They plead not for Calvary's cause, but for Satan, demanding that he be allowed to keep and imprison and torture forever all those whom he has gained through subterfuge. These are not sons of the God who is Omnipotent Love; they are the offspring of a weird, distorted notion of justice; and they will never reign as sons of God in His glorious, redeeming Kingdom of life and light and love.

LOVE YOUR ENEMIES!

While living here on earth, our Lord was extremely kind. He picked up little children and blessed them. He healed all who were suffering with pain. While relatives were weeping over dead loved ones, He raised four of them to life again. The Saviour of ALL men said to the woman caught in adultery, "Neither do I condemn you; go, and sin no more" (Jn. 8:11). His KINDNESS made an evangelist out of that wicked woman at the well (Jn. 4:29). Because Jesus really loved the weak, helpless creatures whom He had created, He wept over them, prayed for them and taught them continually. Except those religious Pharisees, Jesus never spoke one cross word to the unconverted masses. He was very tender and kind in all His dealings with men. His approach to them was very gentle, delicate, and considerate. Surely then, we are safer in His hands than anywhere else! The things He has in store for every one of us are far greater than we could plan for ourselves.

Does God expect His Sons to be better than Himself? In Lk. 6:35-36 we read, "But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and you shall be THE SONS OF THE HIGHEST; for HE IS KIND UNTO THE UNTHANKFUL AND TO THE EVIL, BE YE THEREFORE MERCIFUL, AS YOUR FATHER also is merciful. "In this instance Jesus plainly says that if we desire to be the SONS OF THE HIGHEST, we must be merciful as He is merciful. THE HIGHEST IS MERCIFUL TO ALL.

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

If we see a God who loves only those that love Him, then we have a very small and fickle God indeed. But Jesus taught us the principles of the Kingdom of God: "You have heard that it has been said, you shall love your neighbor, and hate your enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; THAT YOU MAY BE THE SONS OF YOUR FATHER WHICH IS IN HEAVEN: for He makes His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. And if you love them which love you, what reward have you? do not even the publicans the same? BE YE THEREFORE PERFECT AS YOUR FATHER WHICH IS IN HEAVEN IS PERFECT" (Mat. 5:43-48).

Are we to suppose that God requires us to behave in one way toward the unrighteous, while His own disposition toward them is exactly the opposite? Are we to believe that our Father commands US to be merciful, to love our enemies, bless them that curse us, do good to them that hate us, and pray for them that persecute us ... while HE banishes HIS enemies to everlasting damnation, torturing endlessly those that curse HIM, meting out eternal vengeance upon those that hate HIM, and shutting up all mercy from those who persecute HIM? What great nonsense! What horrible blasphemy!

There is a time to fight and a time to hate. "To everything there is a season, a time to every purpose under heaven ... a time to love, and a time to hate..." (Eccl. 3:1,8). The Word of God not only allows for hatred - it commands it. Love, true love, involves hatred even as true wisdom involves ignorance of evil. True love necessitates true hatred. The greatest hater is God! Have you ever thought about that? In this wishy-washy, mushy theology age of ours, where God is considered a lovey-dovey, spongy old grandfather who would never think of hurting anyone, we often fail to realize that God is a God of wrath who hates sin with an infinite hatred. He is a God who is ablaze with love, but He is ablaze with a holy wrath as well. The Scripture says, "Therefore I hate every false way" (Ps. 119:104).

"These six things DOES THE LORD HATE; yea, seven are an abomination unto Him: a proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood. An heart that devises wicked imaginations, feet that be swift in running to mischief, a false witness that speaks lies, and he that sows discord among the brethren" (Prov. 6:16-19). In the first chapter of Hebrews the Father speaks to Jesus Christ, as He heaps this great encomium upon Him: "Your throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a scepter of righteousness is the scepter of Your Kingdom." Why? "You have loved righteousness, and HATED INIQUITY; therefore God, even your God, has anointed You with the oil of gladness above Your fellows" (Heb. 1:8-9). What did Jesus do? He loved righteousness and hated iniquity, and you cannot have one without the other! Jesus said to the Church at Ephesus: "But this you have, that YOU HATE the deeds of the Nicolaitanes, which I ALSO HATE" (Rev. 2:6).

The Scripture says, "You that love the Lord, HATE EVIL" (Ps. 97:10). Evil serves its purpose but we are told what the proper objects are for that hatred that springs from the love of God. We are to hate evil; WE ARE NOT TO HATE PEOPLE! Furthermore, we are told that we are to begin to hate evil in our own souls. It is not until we have truly and honestly hated it within our own hearts and minds that we are qualified to begin to strike out against it in the world around us. That is why Paul, who spoke so eloquently against the evils of his time, could also say of those things which he did that were wrong, that he hated them. Do you hate the carnal mind and the evil that lurks in your own life or do you ignore it? Are you indifferent to it? Are you indulgent to it? Are you moderately concerned about it? Or do you hate it with a burning hatred? God hates it! He hates all evil. God is the greatest hater. We are told in the Scriptures that unless we hate sin we cannot truly love God or know the love of God. If God had not hated evil HE WOULD NOT HAVE SENT JESUS TO REDEEM US FROM ALL EVIL AND RESTORE US TO THE IMAGE OF GOD AGAIN. Pure, divine hatred springs from pure, divine love!

In order to follow on into sonship to God, we need, first of all, to have a right attitude and understanding of what sin really is. We need to see it for the pernicious, and devilish and destructive, and hateful, and damning, and destroying thing it really is. We need to have a holy fear of it which should develop into a holy hatred of it. Do you see sin for what it really is or do you see it as something to play with? Do you think that it is a little kitten that doesn't know it is a roaring lion which can destroy you? There is not one person who has not felt the ravages of sin in his own life and its destructive power, for it is inevitably true that when sin comes of age, it produces death. When you see sin for the pernicious and hateful thing that it is, and then when you see God for what He is, the all-holy One, the One who is ablaze with a holy love for every creature in His vast creation and a holy hatred for sin, you will at last understand the purpose of REDEMPTION and you will love what God loves, and hate what God hates. Only then will you truly be a Son of the Highest.

Paul commanded Timothy, "Fight the good fight of faith" (I Tim. 6:12). To deliver the creation and restore all back into Christ again, the Sons of God must go forth to war! They must FIGHT and they must HATE. Fight with love for humanity. Fight with hatred for sin. Fight with hatred for disease. Fight with hatred in your heart for death. Fight with hatred against the works of the devil. Fight with hatred against the powers of hell. Fight with hatred against evil. Hate evil. Hate it! But do not hate the evildoer. Love him, love her; but hate evil. Hate drunkenness, that which creates famine, heartbreak, violence, crime, and death. Hate drugs; and hate the heathenish, hellish, satanic jungle-beat of rock music, that which destroys the mind, impairs the hearing, perverts the emotions, and saturates our youth with the unholy spirit of rebellion. Hate lying, deception, and dishonesty. Hate the filthiness of the flesh. Hate it! Hate it in yourself. Hate it in others. Hate pride and selfishness. Hate worldliness. Hate the swaggering, harlot system of Mystery Babylon and her empty, lifeless, meaningless forms, and her blinding, spirit-enslaving traditions. Hate sin, and God will cause you to know His love, and God will flood your life with unspeakable happiness and blessing. God will make you strong, He will make you His son, and He will receive you and be a Father unto you. God will put the armor of the Army of Heaven upon you and will help you to smash the strongholds of sin and Satan. Do that and be that. Hate and fight while you love and reconcile. Hate sin, but love the sinner. Condemn sin, but do not condemn the sinner. "For God sent not His Son (or His Sons) into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. "Make sure, dear one, that there is no complacency in your heart about sin; and make just as certain that there is never any vindictiveness in your spirit against the sinner! That is how God loves and hates! That is why He is a Saviour, a Deliverer, and a Redeemer. He loves the sinner enough to be patient even for long ages with him; He loves the sinner enough to forgive him any depth of vileness, insult, or blasphemy; He loves him enough to pardon, cleanse, and transform him by His Infinite Grace and Omnipotent Power. And He hates sin enough to deal with it, He hates death enough to destroy it, He hates hell enough to empty it!

KNOWING THE REAL JESUS

A dear brother in Christ has penned these valuable words of admonition: "The opinions we form by hearing about people are usually found to be wrong after we have come to know them personally. This is also true concerning God. When you come to know Him, you will find Him very unlike the description given by theologians. You will come to know that much that they teach is only rubbish because it is contrary to the nature of God. It certainly was so with the Jewish theologians and doctors of the law. When Jesus came He smashed their theories to bits and tore the robes of their ecclesiasticism to ribbons. He ate with sinners, cast the devil out of the Syrophenician, let a sinful woman of the street wash His feet, forgave a thief, healed on the Sabbath, ate with unwashed hands, called the best religionists of His day liars, hypocrites, serpents, children of the devil, whited sepulchres, and a generation of snakes. They thought that they knew God, but they didn't. He was more pleased with the sincerity of sinners than with the ritualism of scribes and Pharisees. When you come to know Him, you will find that it is the same now as it was then.

"Furthermore, to know Him who is truth empowers one to immediately recognize all that is error. The more you come to know Christ, the more you come to recognize the flagrant error of so much that is taught in the name of truth. If the doctrines that men try so hard to prove run contrary to the very nature of Christ, then know that all that is contrary to His gracious Spirit is error. For years without number the evangelicals in their missionary

fervor have taught that all heathen men will be condemned forever to groan in eternal flames in unremitting torment because they did not accept Christ, their ignorance of His existence being no excuse whatever. I have no hesitation whatsoever in calling this a lie, because everything about it is contrary to the very nature of the blessed Christ I know. It is contrary to His love, contrary to His kindness and mercy, contrary to His foreknowledge, contrary to His immutable wisdom, and contrary to His great and all-inclusive redemption, of which it is stated that as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.

"I care not how many wonderful acts of God you see or bear witness to, you will always remain a spiritual baby, living for and lusting after outward things, until your spirit is awakened to grasp the eternal, immutable purposes of God. Sadly we confess that the Church system is filled today, as in the centuries past, with those shallow souls who praise the excitement, the revival meetings, physical hearings, baptisms, seminars, building programs and acts without number, but who know not God's ways. Tell such super-spirituals that God had a purpose in the fall of mankind and they will brand you as a fanatic or a false prophet from the pit. Tell them that it is God's purpose to reconcile ALL THINGS unto Himself and they will begin their name calling and put the worst possible interpretation upon all you say. If you preach that ninety-and-nine out of every hundred of God's creation will burn in torment eternally, they will admire you as a man of truth and understanding, but if you say that every knee shall bow and every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father, they will gaze upon your ignorance with the sympathetic understanding generally reserved for lunatics. Like Israel of old, they have seen God's acts, but have known none of His ways. Ever learning, but never able to come to the knowledge of the truth; they pride themselves in being hell-fire preachers and love to try to dangle people over the flame, hoping to scare them into becoming believers. Well did the Lord say, 'I have not sent these prophets, yet they ran: I have not spoken to them, yet they prophesied' (Jer. 23:21)" -The Page.

A man who knows God can answer questions about God because he KNOWS God. I know my wife. We have lived together, sacrificed together, suffered together, laughed together, loved together, prayed together, and triumphed together for some fifty-seven years. I believe I know her fairly well. There are some things that if I were told that she did them, I would not believe it for one moment, though there be all manner of circumstantial evidence to support the claims. I would not believe it BECAUSE I KNOW HER. I know how she thinks, how she is; her nature, her character, her ways.

I have served God all my life. I did not throw away my youth on filthy, disgusting and shameful practices. I have been preaching the Gospel of Christ practically full-time since I was fourteen years old. God kept me. He filled me with an intense hatred of evil, and an intense love for God. I love Him and have always wanted to walk with Him. I have been sitting at His feet for nearly 80 years. To me the Christ has filled my life, and for me there is no life, no love, no power apart from Him. He has been to me, All. He is more to me now than ever, and I know Him. I know something of the power of His resurrection and I know something of the fellowship of His sufferings, and I have trod somewhat in His footsteps, and I love to speak His Name. Jesus! Jesus! Jesus! The Name that charms our fears, that bids our sorrows cease; 'Tis music in the sinner's ears, 'tis life, 'tis health, 'tis peace! Bless His name!

I would never preach anything I cannot find plainly indicated in the Holy Scriptures. However, if there was not even one small passage in all the Word of God that clearly

states that God will have all men to be saved, that He will reconcile all unto Himself, I would still, in my deepest heart, believe it to be the truth because I KNOW GOD. I know something of His ways. I know something of His nature. I know something of His character. I know something of His power. I know something of His purpose. "That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you" (I Jn. 1:3). "That I may know Him!" cried Paul in the longing of his soul. "That I may know Him!" patriarchs and seers of all ages have prayed. "That I may know Him!" is the echo of my own longing heart. Yet I DO KNOW HIM in a measure. And I know that in all of His ways, in all of His intents, and in all of His doings GOD IS LOVE.

Why did God make the universe, the earth and sky above? Scripture gives the answer when it says that "God is love." Before God made the universe He worked a master plan, He knew how everything would end before it all began.

He made mankind so He could have an object of His love,
But man was blind and did not see - it came from above.
So God created evil as He had created night,
So man could see the good in Him - in darkness we see light.

He made the "blackboard" very black, with evil, sin, and woe.
He made an adversary to be His cunning foe.
He made the earth to be a "stage" to show the hosts above,
By all of our experiences, His wisdom and His love.

He locks up all in stubbornness to make His mercy clear;
Lets Satan lure all men away, so He can draw all near.
He gives His only firstborn Son to die and save us all;
Yet each in his own class we read; we're blind until our call.

You ask me why God made the earth, the glittering stars above.
The Scriptures give the answer when they say that GOD IS LOVE!

Anyone who dares to proclaim the beautiful truth of the restoration of all men to God and pins people right down to the Word of God is immediately accused by the unthinking masses of teaching heresy, and is accused of teaching doctrines which give the sinner nothing to flee from, no reason for accepting salvation. Such thoughtlessness! These poor simple folks are merely admitting in this that they themselves have never yet had a revelation of the abounding love of God. They are but admitting their shame in upholding a false gospel which would attempt to scare men into God's Kingdom. It never has worked. It never will. Christ leads and draws through love. Sometimes love disciplines and breaks, but it does not play games by "scaring" people into God! Fear is not the instrument of God to bring men unto Himself.

If fear of hell were a legitimate tool in turning men to God, we should expect to find that the community where the flames of hell were the stock argument of the preachers to woo men from sin would be noted for its spirituality and holiness of life. As one has written, "Witness, then, the Roman Catholic Church in its most prosperous times in the Dark Ages holding over its adherents a ceaseless threat of purgatory and hell, and fattening on the proceeds from the pockets of her poor hunted sheep. Was there such a striking scene of righteousness then, that a Luther should not be needed? Fear is the weapon of man and of law. Love is the all-conquering scepter of God. 'God has not given us the spirit of fear, but of love and of power and of a sound mind.'

"It is love, not fear, that has bound those of us who love the Lord as willing captives to His chariot wheels. Love that does not spoil but lures and conquers: love that, while it loves the sinner, hates his sin: love that disciplines with unstinting hand, that the chastened may, at last, be a partaker of His holiness. This love is the power that has overcome men so far, and that is destined to do its perfect work till God is all in all" -A. E. Saxby.

And instead of preaching a false gospel to sinners, instead of holding up before them fancied horrors which they may escape, the true Gospel tells them of the unsearchable riches of Christ, of the glory of the Kingdom of God, the Kingdom of righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. The sinner misses nothing by accepting Christ, nothing but the horrible fruit of unrighteousness, the terrible wages of sin. He does cease to be a degraded mortal under the curse of sin and death and becomes a child of God. Who wants to remain a faltering mortal when one can be translated into the highest realm of all infinity, when one may become the very same manner of being as the One who created the worlds?

How men struggle and strive and suffer here to obtain ownership of a mere particle of this little speck of dust known as our sin-cursed earth! How they sacrifice for a mere shelter for these sin-sick bodies, which must soon be left behind! Friends, I own a world, maybe a whole galaxy of worlds! For my Lord and Saviour owns the universe. He is "heir of ALL THINGS" (Heb. 1:2). And we are "joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with Him" (Rom. 8:17). Who wants to fritter away time and energy on this passing shadow which is earth, when such eternal and fadeless wealth and position and glory and power may be gained by merely coming into an experiential knowledge of THE ABOUNDING LOVE OF GOD?

Oh, that all men might learn God's one and only everlasting Gospel, the Gospel of love - and then preach it! and BE IT! Love alone can draw A-L-L MEN to Calvary's crimson fountain. Only a Calvary love can transform a world gone mad, and revive a sleeping Church obsessed with her deliriums into a thing of beauty and praise and usefulness. And anyone who is lifting up to a lost and dying world anything or anyone other than Jesus and His wonderful love is simply living a wasted life. The Love of God must be lifted up IN US. The Sons of God are the Sons of Love, for GOD IS LOVE!

The love of God is greater far
Than tongue or pen can ever tell;
It goes beyond the highest star,
And reaches to the lowest hell.

The guilty pair, bowed down with care,
God gave His Son to win;
His erring child He reconciled,
And pardoned from his sin.

When hoary time shall pass away,
And earthly thrones and kingdoms fall;
When men who here refuse to pray,
On rocks and hills and mountains call;

God's love so sure, shall still endure,
All measureless and strong;

Redeeming grace to Adam's race -
The saint's and angel's song!

Chapter 11

The Judgment

Just What Do You Mean... THE JUDGMENT!

WHEN we come to this thought of God's judgment we approach a subject upon which there has been a fathomless sea of ignorance and misunderstanding. Contrary to the popular opinions of the religious systems there is no such thing as a GENERAL JUDGMENT for all men. Such a doctrine is pagan in origin and flows from the philosophies of demons. The idea that there is in the future one particular time and circumstance in which all creatures, whether celestial or terrestrial, shall be brought before the bar of Divine Justice is contrary to the Word of God. The view generally entertained is of Christ coming to earth, seated upon a great white throne, and that He will summon every sinner in rank and file before Him to be judged, amidst great convulsions of nature - earthquakes, opening graves, rending rocks and falling mountains; that the trembling sinners will be brought from the depths of everlasting woe to hear their many sins rehearsed, only to be again returned to an eternal and merciless doom of torture; and that the saints will be brought from heaven (of course many saints have a fear that they may appear at that judgment as one judged) to witness the misery and despair of the damned, and return to heaven for eternity. I do not hesitate to say that this is a very crude conception, and is entirely out of harmony with the whole picture of judgment. This distorted picture arises from a too-literal interpretation of a few verses of Scripture which were given merely as SYMBOLS, to be understood by the Spirit.

There are far more judgments than people have ordinarily recognized. The fact is, the Scriptures speak of MANY JUDGMENTS! Some judgments are already past, some are continuously present, and some are yet future. It is misleading to speak of "THE JUDGMENT" as though it were only one event limited to some time in the future. A careful and prayerful study of the Word will show that there are judgments of unholy angels (messengers), of Satan, of Israel, of cities, of nations, of sin, of death, of the believer, of servants, of sons, of unbelievers, etc., etc. Each takes place at a different time, in different surroundings, and in a different way.

It may aid our comprehension to list a few of the judgments of God upon sin. Before proceeding, however, we need to understand exactly what is meant by the word "judgment." Judgment is translated in the Old Testament most often from the Hebrew word MISHPAT. MISHPAT means simply "a verdict" which may be either favorable or unfavorable. The only judgment most people understand is the negative aspect of judgment, the unfavorable verdict, which is unto condemnation and wrath. It should require only a moment's reflection, however, to enable anyone to see that the very same judge who sentences one man to pay a fine, another to die in the electric chair, may suspend the sentence of a third man and declare yet a fourth man "not guilty"- acquitted! It is plain that a great many different "judgments" or "verdicts" may come from this one judge. Thus, the work of the judge is not merely to condemn and mete out sentences, but to weigh all the facts and take all the circumstances into consideration in each case and render a just verdict, favorable or unfavorable, as the case may demand.

Furthermore, the "judge" of a beauty contest does not condemn or damn any of the contestants who fail to receive the highest recognition. He merely renders a "verdict" as to whom, in his estimation, is "the fairest of them all"! In keeping with these principles the Hebrew word MISHPAT indicates merely the rendering of a judicial verdict or decision, favorable or unfavorable, as the case may warrant. The Psalmist spoke of this when he said, "For promotion comes neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south. But GOD IS THE JUDGE: He puts down one, and sets up another" (Ps. 75:6-7). The positive aspect of judgment, the rendering of a favorable verdict, is implored of the Lord by David in Ps. 43:1-2: "JUDGE ME, O God, and plead my cause against an ungodly nation: for You are the God of my strength."

The word "judgment," moreover, signifies even more than the rendering of a verdict. It includes the idea of a trial, as well as the decision based upon that trial. And this is true not only in the English word judgment, but also of the Greek word it translates in the New Testament. In the Greek New Testament there are a number of terms used in connection with the judgments of God. Each is based on the "KRI" stem of "KRINO" meaning "I judge." There is the word KRISIS from which we derive our English word "crisis" and which carries basically the same meaning as our English word "crisis." It denotes an experience and time of crucial testing, and has reference to the experience one undergoes out of which a decision, or judgment, is made. KRIMA relates to the condemnation of the criminal. KRITES and KRITIKOS ("critical" in English) both speak of the judge and his decision, while yet another Greek word, KRITERION, refers to the basis for his decision or sentence (as "criterion" in English).

PAST TIMES OF JUDGMENT

The first great judgment (trial and sentence) was at the beginning, in Eden, when the whole human race, as represented in its head, Adam, stood on trial before God. The result of that trial was the verdict - Guilty, disobedient, his sin being worthy of punishment and correction; and the penalty inflicted was death - "Dying you shall die" (Gen. 2:17, margin). And so it is that "In Adam ALL DIE" (I Cor. 15:21-22). Most have never thought of this as a JUDGMENT DAY for mankind, but such it was, for there was a trial, a sentencing, and the sentence was, and is, as we all know, fully carried out. That trial time in Eden was the world's FIRST JUDGMENT DAY, and the decision of the Judge has ever since been enforced. Again we read, "The wrath of God IS REVEALED from heaven against all unrighteousness of men" (Rom. 1:18). This wrath of God which is revealed against the ungodliness of men may be seen in every funeral procession. Every tomb and every grave stone is a witness to it. Dread diseases such as syphilis, gonorrhea, herpes and aids are a part of it. It is felt in every ache and pain, in every tragedy and sorrow, in every frustration and torment, in the ignorance, poverty, and fear men experience daily - all of which are the results of the first trial and sentence - the righteous sentence of God, that we are unworthy of the life and blessings originally provided for man when obedient and walking in union with God. But, praise the Lord! mankind is to be recovered from the sentence of that first trial, for the penalty was not to be inflicted forever, only until the Redeemer should come and offer Himself as one sacrifice for ALL. And so it is written of Jesus: "Now we know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of THE WORLD" (Jn. 4:42). "The bread which I will give is My flesh, which I give FOR THE LIFE OF THE WORLD" (Jn. 6:51). "God sent not His Son into THE WORLD to condemn THE WORLD; but that THE WORLD through Him might be saved" (Jn. 3:17). "And He is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of THE WHOLE WORLD" (I Jn. 2:2). "God was in Christ, reconciling THE WORLD unto Himself, not

imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation" (II Cor. 5:19). "Therefore as by the offence of one JUDGMENT CAME UPON ALL MEN to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of One THE FREE GIFT CAME UPON ALL MEN unto justification of life" (Rom. 5:18). Thus we see the scope of man's first judgment and the provision for his release from the penalty inflicted. Bless His name!

There have been many other judgments beyond this general judgment that fell upon man in the beginning. At various times in the past God has called peoples and nations to account for their actions and executed His judgments by bringing destruction upon them. The best known of these is the world-wide deluge in the days of Noah of which we read: "And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And the Lord said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; for it repents Me that I have made them" (Gen. 6:5-7). The destructive judgments of God have always come as a result of the wicked conduct of the people in their daily lives. Sodom and Gomorrah are graphic examples of this. God inspected those cities and determined that the sin of the inhabitants was very heavy; He judged that the cities must be brought to ruin (Gen. 18:20-21; 19:14). Later Jude wrote that those cities underwent the "vengeance (Gr: judgment)" of "fire" which brought destruction (Jude 7). So these cities experienced a "day" of judgment.

God conducted a legal case against ancient Babylon, the long-time enemy of God and His people. Because of being unnecessarily cruel to the house of Judah, not intending to release them after the seventy-year captivity and crediting the god Marduk with the victory over God's people, Babylon was in line for a destructive judgment. That came to Babylon in the year 539 B.C. when it was violently overthrown by the Medes and Persians (see Jer. 51:36; Isa. 14:3-6,17; Dan. 5:1-4). Similarly, Jeremiah prophesied that God would "put Himself in judgment" with Edom, among others (Jer. 25:17-31), hence that nation that had shown repeated hatred for the Lord and His people experienced destructive judgment and was obliterated from the earth. Likewise, when Judah and Jerusalem became unfaithful and merited the Lord's displeasure, He promised to "execute JUDGMENT in the midst of her" (Eze. 5:8). This destructive and corrective judgment came when Nebuchadnezzar came and plundered the land, destroyed the city, and the temple, and carried the people away slaves to Babylon (Eze. 7:19). However, another and more severe "day" or time of judgment on Jerusalem was prophesied. Joel foretold an outpouring of the Spirit of God which would begin "before that great and terrible day of the Lord" (Joel 2:28-31). Under the anointing of the Spirit Peter, on the day of Pentecost, explained that they were then experiencing the fulfillment of that prophecy (Acts 2:16-20). That particular day of destructive judgment came in A.D. 70 when the Roman armies executed judgment upon the Jews, destroying their city and temple, pillaging their land, murdering more than a million of its inhabitants, dispersing the survivors and catapulting them into a "judgment day" that lasted for nineteen long and tortuous centuries!

FUTURE TIMES OF DESTRUCTIVE JUDGMENT

The Word of God specifically foretells a number of yet future judgments which are destructive in their nature. Revelation points to the time when "Babylon the Great" or "Mystery Babylon" will be judged. Mystery Babylon signifies the universal worldly church system. Now, I am aware that there is even a higher meaning of Babylon which is found

in a condition within the mind and spirit of man, which means that we have all, at one time or another, and perhaps even until now, been partakers of her even if we have separated from the religious systems of this world. The Lord has special inward dealings, judgmental processings by which He shall purge the very last vestige of Babylon out of the hearts of all His elect sons, praise His name. But the Spirit of the Lord makes me know that in the framework of the prophecies in Revelation chapters 17-18, He is specifically speaking of the CHURCH SYSTEMS, as such. Babylon is called "a woman." A woman, used as a symbol in the New Testament, signifies a church. The woman in Rev. 12 is the true church, the glorious body of Christ walking in the Spirit of God. The woman of Rev. 17 also signifies a church, but her character is impure and corrupted, for she is herself a harlot, and the mother of daughters like herself.

Mystery Babylon is not limited to any single ecclesiastical body, but is composed of many, indeed of ALL who are walking apart from the LIFE OF THE SPIRIT and the HEADSHIP OF JESUS CHRIST. For two thousand years God has been forming a heavenly people, born from above, filled with the Spirit, walking in the Spirit, led by the Spirit, growing up in the life and power of the Spirit, the workmanship of GOD BY THE SPIRIT, the true church of the firstborn whose names are written in heaven. Along side this glorious company of the Spirit-born and Spirit-led the enemy has planted the tares: the doctors of the law, the bishops, ministers, and priests performing empty ceremonies and rituals, and teachers poring over the dead letter of the Word, but never being quickened by the Spirit of Truth. These blind leaders of the blind are they who are the lords of a vast and powerful system which calls itself "the church," but which is not the church at all, but a blinding, restricting, abyss of incomprehensible darkness and confusion that holds men's spirits in such bondage to lifeless traditions that they can never see the glory of God nor His transcendent purpose in their lives. It is only when the blazing fire of the Omnipotent Spirit sovereignly penetrates the darkness and death of Babylon's walls that men first catch a glimpse of the living Christ of God and rise up to FOLLOW HIM. The chains fall off, the prison doors swing open on their rusty hinges and these followers of the Lamb behold a world of freedom and revelation and reality and life beyond the constricting walls of denominationalism, ritualism and tradition.

Men will never attain to sonship within the walls of Babylon! The piercing voice of the Spirit commands: "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, says the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and ye shall be MY SONS AND DAUGHTERS, saith the Lord Almighty" (II Cor. 6:17-18). Sects and denominations have absolutely nothing to do with the true church. Denominations are ALL man-made systems, structured contrary to the ways of the Spirit of God, and they are ALL the prison houses of Babylon. The church is a people related to God by Jesus Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit. They are a people born from above, born free. And yet, many of the Lord's precious people sit in Babylon. Unto them our blessed Lord speaks today: "Come out of her, My people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye RECEIVE NOT OF HER PLAGUES" (Rev. 18:4).

God has decreed HIS JUDGMENT against this idolatrous system of Babylon, and has already established by His own counsel HOW THE JUDGMENT SHALL BE EXECUTED. "And there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying unto me, Come hither; I will show unto thee THE JUDGMENT OF THE GREAT WHORE that sits upon many waters: so he carried me away in the Spirit into the wilderness: and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet colored beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads, and TEN HORNS ... and the ten horns which thou

sawest are TEN KINGS (kingdoms) ... and the ten horns which thou sawest upon the beast, THESE SHALL HATE THE WHORE, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and BURN HER WITH FIRE. For God hath put it in their hearts to fulfill HIS WILL, and to agree, and give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled" (Rev. 17:1-3,12,16,17).

How clear it is to any who have eyes to see that this work of destructive judgment upon the harlot system of Babylon has already commenced! The real reason behind the ecumenical movement is not the fulfillment of Christ's prayer "that they all may be one in Him;" the truth is that it is a desperate and last-ditch effort to SAVE THE SYSTEM through unity, for the pews and coffers of most of Babylon's churches have been emptying out with ever increasing rapidity. The communist countries have wrought great havoc upon the organized churches, breaking their power completely in some areas. So many of God's people today, not seeing by the Spirit what God is doing in this hour, oppose the Spirit of God and fear, groan, lament and demonstrate because of what He is performing. How often, in our blindness, we get the cart before the horse! Christians spend great sums of money and expend much time and energy "fighting communism" because communism persecutes the saints and destroys religion and religious systems. But the Christians of the early church NEVER FORMED A POLITICAL ACTION COMMITTEE to fight the PAGAN ROMAN EMPIRE! They did not fear, neither did they cry or lament the fact of their persecution, tribulation, and martyrdom. They never lent their support to some "opposition government" which might by military might liberate them from the oppression of the Caesars. The Christians did not organize or promote demonstrations against the Jews who persecuted them. They DID pray for them! The spirit of the saints in that day was: "And they departed from the presence of the council, REJOICING that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name" (Acts 5:41). Paul said that he REJOICED in his sufferings, and Peter exhorted the saints: "REJOICE, inasmuch as ye are partakers of CHRIST'S SUFFERINGS; and when His glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy" (I Pet. 4:13).

The great principles that govern our present walk in the Kingdom of God are laid down by Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount. Jesus declared, "BLESSED ARE THEY which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: FOR THEIRS IS THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN. BLESSED ARE YE, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for My sake. REJOICE, and be EXCEEDING GLAD! for great is your reward in heaven" (Mat. 5:10-12). The Word of God resounds with this note of triumph and joy in the face of trouble and tribulation. And, yet, in this hour many Christians shrink in horror and fear exceedingly before the advance of communism throughout the world. But let me assure you that communism has not been able, anywhere, to destroy THE TRUE CHURCH OF THE LIVING GOD, those born from above, walking in the Spirit of God! The true church does not need fine temples or halls, ritual-performing priests, Sunday School quarterlies, robed choirs, tax-exempt status, seminaries, or denominational hierarchies. Many thousands of followers of the Lamb have taken up their crosses, and in the underground churches behind the Iron Curtain have become strong in the power of HIS MIGHT and are doing exploits.

In the meantime, however, we need to be wise to the purposes of the Lord. We are not to fear communism nor be dismayed when it comes right to our borders. We must not be upset because of the tribulation upon God's people in those lands, or upon ourselves should it spread across our land. Communism can never defeat nor destroy the chosen of God, but I declare to you by the word of the Lord that it can, has, and shall DESTROY

BABYLONIAN RELIGIOUS SYSTEMS. Why is there so little religious freedom in communist countries? Why is it the communist's objective to remove all religion and the knowledge of God from the face of the earth? Why have the church properties been confiscated, the leaders killed, and the ministers jailed? Why have the religionists of all stripes been hounded and harassed, stripped of their former power when the state churches controlled the governments and dominated the lives of the people? Why? I ask. Because the almighty God, long centuries ago, decreed that BABYLON WOULD BE JUDGED! God has raised up communism as one of the instruments of that judgment. And when Mystery Babylon is obliterated from the face of the earth God's saints are admonished: "REJOICE OVER HER, thou heaven (those seated with Christ in the heavenlies), and ye holy apostles and prophets; for God hath avenged you on her" (Rev. 18:20).

God has His means for destroying Babylon in America, too! For a number of years now the trumpet call has been going forth by the spirit of revelation: "Come out of her, My people, THAT YE RECEIVE NOT OF HER PLAGUES" (Rev. 18:4). God is even now calling out of Babylon "HIS PEOPLE" that have so long been held captive within her precincts, her static creeds, idolatrous doctrines, empty rituals, dead ceremonies and programs, fleshly methods, and unspiritual institutions. The Spirit of God shall accomplish such a thorough job of calling His people out "unto Himself," that the inspired apostle John was emboldened to write: "Rejoice over her (Babylon), thou heaven (those seated in the heavenlies, caught up in the Spirit), and ye holy apostles and prophets; for God hath avenged you on her. And the voice of harpers, and musicians, and of pipers (praise and worship), and trumpeters (ministries sounding forth a message from God), SHALL BE HEARD NO MORE AT ALL I-N T-H-E-E; and the sound of a millstone (the grinding of meal for bread, the Word of God) SHALL BE HEARD NO MORE AT ALL IN THEE, and the light of a candle (even the little light left in Babylon) SHALL SHINE NO MORE AT ALL IN THEE; and the voice of the bridegroom (Jesus) and of the bride (the elect) SHALL BE HEARD NO MORE AT ALL IN THEE: for by thy sorceries were ALL NATIONS deceived" (Rev. 18:20-23).

Pointing to yet another destructive judgment, Peter drew upon what occurred in Noah's day and foretold a "day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men" (II Pet. 3:7). But Peter informs us not only of the time when wicked men shall be destroyed, but speaks of "the heavens (ruling powers) and earth (social order), which are now," which are "kept in store, reserved UNTO FIRE against the day of judgment and perdition (destruction)" (II Pet. 3:7). Yes, my friend, this present world order is coming to an end! This evil world will end in A DAY OF JUDGMENT. Fiery judgment. It will all pass away. Communism. Democracies. Economic systems. Ecclesiastical institutions. Science. Technology. Lodges. Seminaries. Schools. Denominations. Political parties. ALL will pass away amid great commotion! "Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for a NEW HEAVENS (government of God) and a NEW EARTH (social order), WHEREIN DWELLS RIGHTEOUSNESS!" (II Pet. 3:13).

JUDGMENTS OF THE BELIEVER

The average Christian today has the idea that there is only one judgment at the Great White Throne; and that there everyone, good and bad, saved and lost, saint and sinner, will meet and be separated like sheep and goats. It may come as a shock to many to learn that the Bible teaches no such thing! Apart from the past and future destructive judgments already considered, the Scriptures reveal many, many other judgments, and

also three distinct judgments that must be experienced by every saint who would press forward into the fullness of sonship to God. Of these three judgments that pertain to saints, one is already past; one is continuously present; and one is yet future. In one we are judged as sinners; in one we are judged as servants; and in one we are judged as sons.

The first, the judgment of our sins and of us as sinners, is already past for every Christian. I Pet. 2:24 says, "He personally bore our sins in His own body to the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness." Again we read, "Christ died FOR OUR SINS" (I Cor. 15:3). Christ died for our sins 1900 years ago - and there is absolutely nothing that you or I can add to its effectiveness except to trust in it! The sins of the believer in Christ were judged at the cross - IN JESUS. Whether they are the sins of the past, or of the present, or of the future - ALL were judged at Calvary. The omniscient God in His foreknowledge of all things from eternity laid all of the believer's sins upon Christ as He hung there upon that cruel tree on our behalf. Because the Father chose every one of the elect "in Christ" before He ever made the universe or framed the ages of time (Eph.1:4-5), He saw us under wrath as He placed the judgment upon the Christ at Calvary. This is why Paul could say, "I am crucified WITH CHRIST" (Gal. 2:20). Every one of God's elect, having been chosen "in Christ" in eternity past, was seen to be "in Christ" at Calvary, and the never-to-be-repeated sentence was carried out in full on the cross and the death that followed. He who was without sin has paid the penalty for the sins of all who believe, therefore through faith we are absolutely without condemnation by the grace and verdict of the all-glorious God! This is why Paul cried out: "There is therefore now NO CONDEMNATION to them that are IN CHRIST JESUS" (Rom. 8:1). Christ descended, first in the incarnation, secondly in the judgment of the cross, and thirdly into the darkness of Hades. He descended into the LOWEST PARTS OF THE EARTH (Eph. 4:9-10), into the deepest woe of mankind. The Son of God left His glory, and descended to the depths of shame and reproach. He came and took our place of disgrace. Our Lord was the Mighty God. But He descended from that state. He humbled Himself, and took upon Himself the likeness of sinful flesh. He became despised and rejected, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. "For He hath made Him to be sin (a sin offering) for us, Who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him" (II Cor. 5:21). "Sin for us," not sinful, but a sin offering, taking unto Himself the whole sin of our race, one vast aggregate of sin, of all men, past, present, and future. He made our CONDITION His own. He made our DOOM His own. He tasted of what we are; experienced the pangs of the lowest hell into which men have sunken. "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being MADE A CURSE for us" (Gal. 3:13). He descended into this!

Thank God, the good old Book is true! The wages of sin is actually death, and Jesus died that death. THE DEBT IS PAID I-N F-U-L-L. Thank God, Rom. 8:1 is actually true! "There is therefore now NO CONDEMNATION to them which are in Christ Jesus..." No condemnation! The word in the Greek is KATAKRIMA and speaks of an "adverse sentence, to be judged against." I cannot be judged against! N-O J-U-D-G-E-M-E-N-T! "There is therefore NOW NO JUDGMENT to them which are in Christ Jesus." He does not say, "There is nothing in them that deserves judgment," for this there is, and they see it, and own it; but it shall not be to their ruin. This one glorious truth should deliver a whole world full of believers from "guilt complexes," "depressions," and "condemnation." There are other judgments for the believer, but in the judgment of sin and sinners THE BELIEVER CANNOT AND SHALL NOT APPEAR. The judgment is past. It is accomplished. Jesus appeared for us. The debt is paid in full. Hallelujah!

Thank God, Rom. 3:23 is really true! "For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God; BEING JUSTIFIED FREELY BY HIS GRACE through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." Thank God, II Cor. 5:18-21 is not an infamous fairy tale! "And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; to wit, that God was in Christ, RECONCILING THE WORLD unto Himself, NOT IMPUTING THEIR TRESPASSES UNTO THEM ... for He hath made HIM to be sin (a sin offering) FOR US, Who knew no sin." Thank God I shall never stand in the judgment for my sin. My case will not even be reviewed. It is settled, forever, bless His wonderful name! Our judgment as sinners is forever past!

The next point I wish to present is THE JUDGMENT OF SONS. Through the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit God has given us new birth, making us His own children. "For ye are all the children of God by faith in Jesus Christ" (Gal. 3:26). "Beloved, now are we the sons (children) of God" (I Jn. 3:2). "And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father. Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ" (Gal. 4:6-7). "The Spirit itself bears witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God" (Rom. 8:16).

It has been the Father's good pleasure to bring us into this relationship of sonship to Himself and now His supreme desire for us is that we may truly grow up and become mature, that we may be SONS INDEED. He has given us the standing of sons through faith in Jesus Christ. But He purposes for us to become sons in state of being as well. He wants His sons to be son like! And being the great and faithful Father that He is, He deals with us unto this expected end. In order to make us son-like He brings us into judgment - SON JUDGMENT. The prodigal son was not son-like, but he was still a son. So you, beloved brother, sister, if you are in Christ by faith, you have been birthed into God's family and so are His son. The Father plans for His sons to be completely and exactly like unto Himself in mind, will, purpose, power, and glory. In order to make us so He faithfully brings us into judgment - son judgment. God wants His sons to be son-like. If we are not, He judges us!

Paul sets forth this judgment in I Cor. 11:31-32: "For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. But when we are judged, we are CHASTENED OF THE LORD, that we should not be condemned (judged) with the world." There are several thoughts in this verse which we should note in passing. First, when we are judged, we are CHASTENED of the Lord. Thus, the chastening of the Lord upon His sons IS the son-judgment of which I speak. The chastening of sons and the judgment of sons are the same thing. Secondly, if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged (chastened). The message is clear - if we would chasten ourselves we should not be chastened by the Lord. Judgment and chastening; the two terms are identical. The meaning is the same. Furthermore, when we are judged we are chastened by the Lord THAT WE SHOULD NOT BE CONDEMNED (judged, chastened) WITH THE WORLD! How plain that there is appointed a great day of judgment, chastening, and correction for the world! "He hath appointed a day, in the which He will JUDGE THE WORLD in righteousness by that Man Whom He hath ordained" (Acts 17:31). The saints of God, the members of the Corporate Son, will be the instrument through which that judgment of the world shall be executed. "Do ye not know that the saints SHALL JUDGE THE WORLD?" (I Cor. 6:2). Paul emphasizes that we must be judged now, so that we will not be judged with the world. We must be chastened and corrected NOW, that we be not chastened and corrected WITH THE WORLD. The judgment, chastening, and trial of the sons of God must take

place at this present time, in this present age, because it is the Christ, Head and body, which is to initiate and administer the work of judgment upon the world in the age and the ages to come. It is with this great truth in mind that the Holy Spirit faithfully declares that if we are judged now, by either judging ourselves, or coming under the chastening of the Lord, then we "shall not come into condemnation (Gr: krisis, judgment) with the world;" we shall not share in the world's judgment day of chastening and correction, being fully dealt with in advance of the world, already passed from death unto life, brought unto obedience as elect members of His body, the firstfruits of His redemption, to be used in the disciplining of the nations when the time is ripe for it.

So, then, 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. The apostle Peter's words are in harmony with this: "Judgment must begin at the house of God!" (I Pet. 4:17).

Let all men know that the hour has come when judgment must begin at the house of God. Judgment beginning 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. He chastises us - and chastise comes from a root word meaning chaste or pure. As Ray Prinzing has so aptly stated, "Those who are apprehended for this hour will find that their ways are under the watchful eye of the Lord, He orders every step of their path, and He will bring pressures to bear upon them which help to turn their feet in the right direction. In due time there will be an outreach, as this correctional working proceeds to those who yet wait to be called and drawn by the Spirit, for He is to be the Saviour of all men. But remember, for us, it is a present-time process, as we seek to be filled with His fullness, we must be daily purged and cleansed, and there are these ordained TURNING POINTS, CRISIS', JUDGMENTS to work His way in us. There are many conditions and situations, confusions and frustrations, limitations and complications, which, if we but knew it, are judgments. They are brought our way by the hand of God, to hem us in, to subdue us, to bring us to the point of complete submission to His will.

"How lovingly the Father watches over His own. What tenderness and faithfulness are seen in the way HE 'girds up' our way. It would be a real mark of learning if, when we find ourselves frustrated and confused, to simply sit down and ask the Lord for more understanding of HIS way - to learn to USE these situations as sign posts along the way, telling us that God would put a bend in our path, and turn us more towards His plan for us. There seems to be so much 'fight' yet left in men. We are so determined to push our way through, regardless of how rough the going becomes. And so the frustrations continue to build up, the limitations are increased, and the complications multiply until we come to the end of ourselves, and then cry out, 'Lord, show me Thy way.' Yes, thank God for these little measures of His judgments, divinely used to correct us, to instruct us, to bring us into alignment with His will and purpose.

"If these judgments are effective in us now, then we read, 'He that hears My word, and believes on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life' (Jn. 5:24). The word 'condemnation' is actually the Greek word KRISIS, the process of judgment. To yield to the mighty hand of God NOW is to escape the future, general judgments which will yet come. For after the HOUSE has been thoroughly judged, and brought up to divine specifications and

qualifications, and found approved in His sight, then shall the process of judgment pass onward to the next order" - end quote.

The final judgment of believers is to be judged as servants. This is a judgment that is both present and future reality for Christians. It involves rewards for works, not a dealing with sin or development of character. It is reward for works, not a discipline for the perfecting of sons. It is vital to our understanding of this subject that we see clearly the distinction between three important biblical terms: salvation, inheritance and reward. Salvation relates to the sinner, inheritance relates to sons, and reward relates to servants. SALVATION means to be rescued from the power of sin and death and is the free gift of God to the believer. "And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shall call His name Jesus: for He shall save His people from their sins" (Mat. 1:21). "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast" (Eph. 2:8-9). INHERITANCE, on the other hand, is that which a son receives by virtue of his relationship to the Father. It is not a gift; it is not earned; it is his by right. "Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an HEIR of God through Christ" (Gal. 4:7). "And if children, then HEIRS; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ" (Rom. 8:17). REWARD, furthermore, is something that is given for service rendered. It is not a free gift, as is salvation, nor is it bestowed because of right, as an inheritance. It is earned by work! "For the Son of man shall come in the glory of His Father with His angels; and then He shall REWARD EVERY MAN ACCORDING TO HIS WORKS" (Mat. 16:27). "And the nations were angry, and Thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that Thou should give reward unto Thy servants" (Rev. 11:18).

We are aware that we were all included in the JUDGMENT OF SINNERS that was meted out upon Jesus Christ at Calvary. Furthermore, we know that we may each be included in the JUDGMENT OF SONS as we follow on to know the Lord and remain yielded unto all His processings. It is when we come to this thought of SERVANTS that there arises a great deal of misunderstanding among the Lord's people. When we speak of servants, some boast that this calling does not apply to them, for they are no longer servants, but sons. And that is true in the spirit in which Paul argues in Gal. 4:6-7 wherein he states, "And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father. Wherefore, THOU ART NO MORE A SERVANT, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ."

It is far from the truth, however, to say that there is no sense in which those who are sons are also servants. Paul is speaking of OUR RELATIONSHIP TO GOD, THE FATHER, Under the Old Testament economy the people of God had not received new birth by the Spirit and so were not, by spiritual generation, the children of God. They are called a "house of servants" (Heb. 3:2-6). Their relationship to God was the relationship of servants. They were not sons. Now, bless His name, He has redeemed us from the curse of the law that we might receive placement as sons, and He has birthed into our hearts the Spirit of His Son, the Spirit of Sonship, whereby we cry, "Abba, FATHER!" This has brought a change of relationship to God. To Him we are no longer servants, but sons. However, as sons we enter not only into a relationship to God, but we also become UNIQUELY RELATED to men. It is here that we must be very clear in our understanding. Unto GOD I may be a son, but unto MEN I may be a servant - because I am a son! I cannot be a servant TO GOD, for I am a son. But I cannot be a son TO MEN, therefore I must approach unto men in a relationship through which I can minister to them the LIFE OF THE SON which indwells me. The only way in which I can minister the life of the Son

unto men is as a SERVANT. To minister means "to serve," and both "minister" and "servant" are frequently translated from the same Greek word.

Can a son be a servant? Jesus, the Pattern Son declared: "Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister (serve), and to give His life a ransom for many" (Mat. 20:28). Jesus was a Son to His Father, but He came as a servant unto men. It is the SON that SERVES! The Son is a Servant-Son. The very same Jesus, the Son, of whom the Father witnessed, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased," of Him the Father also witnessed, "Behold My SERVANT, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom My soul delights; I have put My Spirit upon Him: He shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles" (Isa. 42:1). Mat. 12:15-21 shows unmistakably that this SERVANT of the Lord is JESUS. The Son came into the world as a Servant-Son. The beloved John understood this beautiful truth, for the same John who wrote in I Jn. 3:1, "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God," later penned these significant words: "The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto Him, to show unto His servants things which must shortly come to pass; and He sent and signified it by His angel unto His servant John" (Rev. 1:1). The great apostle Paul also understood this truth, for the very same Paul who wrote in Gal. 4:7, "Wherefore, thou art no more a servant, but a son," also said in Rom. 1:1, "Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle." Is Jesus a Son or a servant? Was John a son or a servant? Was Paul a son or a servant? And lest we would exalt ourselves above John, or Paul, or Jesus, we further find of the 144,000 in Revelation, that glorious company of the manifested sons of God which stands with the Lamb upon Zion's holy hill, that even of this exalted company it is written, "Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed THE SERVANTS OF OUR GOD IN THEIR FOREHEADS" (Rev. 7:3). So there you have it! The sons are the servants! Not servants to God, of course, but sons who are servants to men, humble ministers of the life of the Father.

At this point I wish to mention again the divine order: Men receive salvation from God as a GIFT; sons receive from the Father an INHERITANCE; servants receive in consideration of their WORK, a REWARD. Inheritance is given on the basis of relationship, while rewards are given because of work done. All believers are saved by grace, but rewarded for works. There is great glory and heavenly wealth awaiting those who become profitable servants, fully equipped to serve. As sons we shall truly receive our inheritance, but as servants we shall in no wise lose our reward. "For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; every man's WORK shall be made manifest: 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 which he hath built thereupon, 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" (I Cor. 3:11-15).

This wonderful passage speaks so adequately of the JUDGMENT OF SERVANTS. Paul mentions this judgment in Rom. 14:10-12, saying, "But why doest thou judge thy brother? or why doest thou set at naught thy brother? for we shall all stand before THE JUDGMENT SEAT OF CHRIST. So then everyone of us shall give account of himself to God." Paul shows that Christ, the FOUNDATION OF THE HOUSE OF GOD, is being built upon by every child of God. Some of our works which we are seeking to build on Him are referred to as "wood, hay, and stubble." These are all works which are built on Christ but they are not of the nature of Christ, works of the flesh rather than works of the

Spirit. Without doubt the vast majority of the "works" being done today by the harlot church systems fall into this category! Wood, hay, and stubble are not sins such as lying, drunkenness, or adultery, but so-called "good Christian works" which are built upon THE FOUNDATION OF CHRIST and done in His blessed name, although they are not products of His Spirit. Constantly we are receiving some letter in the mail telling of this great program and that great endeavor for God; a missionary program, a television ministry, a radio program, church building, recording studio, evangelistic crusade, Bible school, Christian hospital or some other GREAT WORK, with their heart-rending pleas for financial help, with their self-addressed envelopes into which the poor and the widows are urged to put their offerings. With glib tongues and plausible programs by which the world is going to be won for God, or a cure found for cancer, well-meaning people are urged to give to further grandiose programs hatched by kingdom-building preachers who live in wanton luxury upon earth, which programs are not the plan of God at all, but merely the product of an imaginative, scheming, and avaricious mind. Through long centuries billions of dollars have been squeezed from God's precious people to build huge temples, cathedrals, church buildings, Christian communities; to promote innumerable programs and methods to do this and that for God which, not only did God not ordain, but were in all truth a stench in His nostrils and an abomination before His face.

When all these good fleshly religious works are brought into the blazing presence of the holy God they will one and all go up in smoke! What a bonfire that will be! I declare to you that the fires of that judgment shall be witnessed from the farthest extremities of the universe so that every creature in heaven and on earth may understand once and for all that "Except THE LORD build the house, they labour in vain that build it!" All works which are to the glory of the creature, or the invention of the creature, and not to the glory of HIM WHO IS THE BUILDER OF ALL THINGS will be totally consumed.

But other works are identified as "gold, silver, and precious stones." These symbols speak of works of faith and righteousness wrought in and through us by the Holy Spirit. These are the works which are the product of HIS LIFE, wrought in union with His will. Gold and silver are refined by fire. Precious stones are fire resistant. These are Hebrew symbols for those works which are made pure by the consuming fire of our great and glorious God and, therefore, will remain for evermore. The apostle goes on to say that every work which successfully passes the test by fire (which "abides") will be REWARDED. Obviously, the "wood, hay, and stubble" variety of carnal works, which were not of the Spirit nor to the glory of God alone, will go up in smoke. Praise the Lord! But those works of the "gold, silver, and precious stones" variety, which are accomplished by obedience to the Holy Spirit and to the glory of God, will be rewarded. This is the order of the JUDGMENT OF SERVANTS. I would point out to you, dear ones, that it does not say a thing about being saved or lost as the result of our WORKS being JUDGED. No, our SIN JUDGMENT is already past, forever settled, hallelujah! We are neither saved nor lost by the kind of works we build upon the foundation of Christ. However, our works are judged "as by fire" in order to get rid of those that are of the flesh and not of the Spirit. I do not doubt but that there will be a lot of red faces and embarrassed countenances in that day when men who received the applause and acclaim of multitudes stand empty-handed before God with nothing to offer Him, and receive not even a nod of recognition from Him!

Then Paul makes a fantastic statement. He states plainly that a man's works may ALL BE CONSUMED by the blazing glory of God so that he has absolutely no reward, but the

believer himself "shall be saved." Even if a believer loses all reward, all credit for what he did and supposedly "accomplished for God" because he ends up with tons of empty, worthless, vain religious works, still he shall be saved "so as by fire," purged and purified, corrected and disciplined, that he might serve God acceptably. God's purpose in judging our works as servants is that He may reward (the reward is actually the increase of glory and life from the seed of faith and obedience we planted) our works of righteousness and forever eradicate all that is of self!

THE NATURE OF JUDGMENT

"And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him, the Spirit of Wisdom and Understanding, the Spirit of Counsel and Might, the Spirit of Knowledge and of the Fear of the Lord; and shall make Him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord: and He shall not JUDGE after the sight of His eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of His ears: but with righteousness shall He JUDGE the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and He shall smite the earth with the rod (authority) of His mouth (word), and with the breath of His lips shall He slay the wicked. And righteousness shall be the girdle of His loins, and faithfulness the girdle of His reins ... for the whole earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea" (Isa. 11:2-5, 9).

Through the cunning of the adversary, both the world and the popular church have been robbed of the blessed assurances of the time when God's RIGHTEOUS JUDGMENTS break forth in the earth. Most people know that the Bible tells of a "judgment day," but the average person, believer or unbeliever, regards it only with a certain sense of fear and dread. Because of this fear there is, to them, no more unwelcome tidings than that the Lord is coming to JUDGE THE EARTH. Many tremble inwardly at the thought of God's judgments, and in this mind put them far from them, preferring not to even hear the subject mentioned. They have absolutely no idea of the wonderful blessings in store for a sin-weary world under the glorious reign of the sons of God filled with all the nature, wisdom, glory and power of God!

How differently did the holy prophets and apostles regard that promised DAY OF JUDGMENT! Note the expectation in Isaiah's spirit as he announces: "Yea, in the way of THY JUDGMENTS, O Lord, have we waited for thee ... with my soul have I desired Thee in the night; yea, with my spirit within me will I seek Thee early: for when THY JUDGMENTS are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world WILL LEARN RIGHTEOUSNESS" (Isa. 26:8-9). Here Isaiah assures us that the day when God's judgments are in the earth will be a most glorious and desirable day, a day in which the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness! If the desire of your heart is anything like the desire of my heart, this is a blessed thought and a wonderful assurance: the inhabitants of the world WILL LEARN RIGHTEOUSNESS! How my ransomed soul longs to behold such a thing! Every time I scan the headlines of the morning paper I am seized with an intense yearning that the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness. Oft times as I watch the evening newscast my spirit is mightily moved within to intercede earnestly that the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness. As I drive across our great land; as I walk the streets of our cities and towns, beholding the condition of those about, neighbors, friends, relatives, strangers, my spirit groans with unutterable supplication that the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness! What a marvelous provision of our wise and loving Father that, to this very end, He has ORDAINED JUDGMENT to come forth in the earth. Bless His name!

Again I would share from the rich writings of Ray Prinzing: "Now we must examine this word 'judgment,' the Greek word, as used in the New Testament, is KRISIS, and with the letter 'K' changed to the letter 'C' it is brought directly over into our English language as CRISIS. All of the pressures and trials which produce these times of 'crisis' in our life are simply a working out of God's corrective measures, His judgments. The root from which KRISIS comes is KRINEIN meaning, 'to separate.' And so it is, a crisis is a critical period of time, a decisive moment, a turning point; hence, a separating, choosing, deciding, judging. The very purpose of judgment is to separate you from the old, that you might come into the new. To separate you from selfhood's rebellion, giving you a TURNING POINT, and heading you in the right direction, in the will of God.

"The man is very sick, he is growing steadily worse, and finally there comes a Crisis, either he begins to mend, or else death comes. It is a TURNING POINT! And when God orders the Crisis, it is to turn us towards righteousness, and bring us into HIS NEW LIFE. Ah, if we tell you that there is a turning point, things will be corrected and brought into righteousness, then you will rejoice. But if we say it is a time of judgment, you say, Woe is me! But it is all the same thing, that's what God's corrective judgments are all about" - end quote.

Another man wrote, "Judgment, not in the sense of vengeful retribution, but of that involved when a craftsman working on a mass of clay, or an ingot of metal, continually examines the results of the various processes to which he subjects it, with a view to assessing whether or not his skill and artistry are producing the desired results" - end quote.

Hear the note of triumph and exaltation when David speaks by the inspiration that the Spirit gives, saying:

"Let the heavens be glad And LET THE EARTH REJOICE; And let men say among the nations, the Lord reigns! Let the sea roar, and the fullness thereof; Let the fields rejoice, and all that are therein. Then shall the trees of the wood (people of the earth) SING ALOUD AT THE PRESENCE OF THE LORD, Because He comes TO JUDGE THE EARTH. O give thanks unto the Lord, for He is good; For His mercy endures forever!" (I Chron. 16:31-34).

Why will the "trees of the forest" (people of the nations) "sing out" when He is coming to JUDGE THE EARTH? One would think they might weep, or shrink in fear and consternation at the thought of His judgments, but why all the singing? Why the rejoicing? Because God's judgments are an expression of HIS GOODNESS and everlasting MERCY, designed to teach the inhabitants of the world RIGHTEOUSNESS! The earth shall rejoice because this means that we have reached the TURNING POINT in our degeneration, and have come to the times of regeneration. This is true even now for the church, but must ultimately reach unto the whole world and the entire creation. His presence, while it speaks of His utmost holiness and will not tolerate the continuance of evil, brings the changes needed for harmony and righteousness. There shall surely be those severe prunings, crushing, shattering, melting; but when they have accomplished their desired results, His new life shall flow in restoration and victory. Hallelujah!

This same ecstatic exclamation of joy and gladness at the prospects of the coming of God's righteous judgment into the earth is found all through the psalms and the prophets. If you are truly destined to stand among the company of the sons of God, the long-

awaited liberators of creation, you will most assuredly share the thrill of the heavenly vibration in David's inspired song: "Say among the nations that the Lord reigns: the world also shall be established that it shall not be moved: HE SHALL JUDGE THE PEOPLE RIGHTEOUSLY. Let the heavens rejoice, and LET THE EARTH BE GLAD; let the sea roar, and the fullness thereof. Let the field be joyful, and all that is therein: then shall all the trees of the wood rejoice before the Lord: for He comes, for He comes TO JUDGE THE EARTH: He shall judge the world with righteousness, and the people with His truth" (Ps. 96:10-13).

"Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, ALL THE EARTH: make a loud noise, and rejoice, and sing praise. Let the sea (raging, surging multitudes of humanity) roar, and the fullness thereof; THE WORLD, and THEY THAT DWELL THEREIN. Let the floods (armies) clap their hands, let the hills (small kingdoms, third world nations) be joyful together before the Lord; for HE COMES TO JUDGE THE EARTH: with righteousness shall HE JUDGE THE WORLD, and the people with equity" (Ps. 98:4, 8-9).

If you will take the time and effort to look up the words judge, judgment, and judgments in a good Bible Concordance, reading down the lists of scores upon scores of passages in which these words are found, you will quickly make the enlightening discovery that only occasionally do these terms denote the negative aspects of judgment: condemnation, wrath, and destruction. In the vast majority of cases judgment is presented as something altogether desirable, beneficial, and glorious! Consider these examples: "But the Lord shall endure forever: He hath prepared His throne for judgment. And He shall judge THE WORLD in righteousness, He shall MINISTER JUDGMENT to the people in uprightness" (Ps. 9:7-8). "Sing unto Him a new song ... for the word of the Lord is right; all His works are done in truth. He loves righteousness and JUDGMENT: the earth is full of THE GOODNESS OF THE LORD" (Ps. 33:3-5). "Justice and judgment are the habitation of Thy throne: mercy and truth shall go before Thy face. Blessed are the people that know the JOYFUL SOUND" (Ps. 89:14). "I will sing of MERCY and JUDGMENT: unto Thee, O Lord, will I sing" (Ps. 101:1). "Behold My servant, whom I uphold; Mine elect, in whom My soul delights; I have put My Spirit upon Him: He shall BRING FORTH JUDGMENT to the Gentiles. He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause His voice to be heard in the street. A bruised reed shall He not break, and the smoking flax shall He not quench: He shall bring forth JUDGMENT UNTO TRUTH. He shall not fail nor be discouraged, till He have SET JUDGMENT IN THE EARTH: and the isles shall wait (expectantly) for His law" (Isa. 42:1-4). "The Lord lives, in truth, in judgment, and in righteousness; and the nations shall BLESS THEMSELVES IN HIM, and in Him shall they glory" (Jer. 4:2).

THE JUDGMENT OF THE NATIONS

Nothing is more evident in the Word of God than the fact that God has a great and wonderful plan which He is working out among the nations of earth. Many saints recognize that God has a predestined purpose in the life of each of His people, an appointed end for Israel, a wonderful purpose for the church, and a foreordained plan for the overcoming sons of God. We must also understand that the Lord has a determined plan and purpose for ALL NATIONS; God is actively dealing with NATIONS.

From the first dawn of human history God has had the formation, development, and destiny of NATIONS in mind and purpose. The present nations of earth had their origins in the early days following the Great Flood. In Genesis chapter ten is found a most remarkable and comprehensive list of the descendants of Noah who became the heads

of the families and tribes which subsequently developed into nations. Even so-called higher critics have often admitted that the tenth chapter of Genesis is a remarkably accurate historical document. There is no comparable catalog of ancient nations available from any other source. It is unparalleled in its antiquity and comprehensiveness. You would do well to read the entire chapter.

Here is the one link between the historic nations of antiquity and the prehistoric time of Noah and the antediluvians. The grandsons and great grandsons of Noah are listed, each of whom is identified with the city or country established by his descendants. It has been possible in many cases to identify the names in Genesis 10 with nations and peoples known to antiquity, especially as revealed by archaeology. Thus this chapter provides the link between recorded history and the period of "prehistory" which is, except for the Bible, preserved only in ancient traditions.

An interesting verse is found in Gen. 10:25. "And unto Eber were born two sons: the name of one was Peleg; FOR IN HIS DAYS WAS THE EARTH DIVIDED; and his brother's name was Joktan." Peleg - or rather, the event associated with his name - is of special interest at this point. "In his days was the earth divided." Evidently this was a most memorable event, and Eber named his son in commemoration of it. The name Peleg means division. Almost nothing else is said about Peleg apart from mention of his family line and how long he lived. The fact that the earth was divided in his days seems the only possible item of distinction that can knowingly be attributed to Peleg himself. The important thing concerns the meaning of this indicated "division of the earth." It is obvious that this division was the division of the peoples that took place at the tower of Babel, rather than an actual splitting of the continents. We have such statements as this: "From these were the isles (coasts) of the Gentiles (nations) DIVIDED IN THEIR LANDS; every one after his tongue, after their families, in their NATIONS," and again, "These are the families of the sons of Noah, after their generations, in their NATIONS: and by these were THE NATIONS DIVIDED in the earth after the flood" (Gen. 10:5, 32).

The descendants of Noah migrated over the whole face of the earth, forming tribe after tribe, city after city, and NATION AFTER NATION. Let all men know that it is the Almighty God who is the designer and architect of all the nations in the world. The time periods and localities in which nations flourish have all been pre-arranged by the will of Him who "works all things after the counsel of His own will" (Eph. 1:11). The truth of this cannot be made any plainer than it is by Moses in Deut. 32:8: "When the Most High DIVIDED THE NATIONS their inheritance, when He separated the sons of Adam, He set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel." Paul refers to this verse in Acts 17:26-27: "And hath made of one blood ALL NATIONS of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, AND HATH DETERMINED THE TIMES BEFORE APPOINTED, and the BOUNDS OF THEIR HABITATION; that they should seek the Lord." How plain it is that it was GOD who, from the beginning, set the bounds of habitation or the national boundaries of ALL NATIONS. These boundaries were established in relation to Israel and with a view to their being able to seek after the Lord. While there may yet be a future and more glorious fulfillment of this, it is remarkable that the ancient land of Palestine was originally reserved by the wisdom and goodness of the Lord for the possession of His ancient people and the display of the most stupendous signs and wonders. The theatre was small, but wonderfully suited for the convenient observation of the whole human race - at the junction of the two continents of Asia and Africa, and almost in sight of Europe. From this spot as from a common center the reports of God's wonderful works, of His mighty power and awesome glory, of the glad tidings of salvation through the obedience,

suffering, and resurrection of His precious Son, of the wonder-filled outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost as the faithful disciples of Jesus were set ablaze by the life and power of their glorified Lord, might be rapidly and easily wafted to every part of the globe. Yes, God set the bounds of habitation for all nations and planted Israel at the crossroads, to the end that ALL NATIONS should seek after the Lord. Out of Israel came the Christ; out of the Christ has come the church, His bride (Eph. 5:21-33); out of the church shall come forth the manchild, the overcoming sons of God who are destined to bring deliverance to the whole creation that it might be fulfilled which God promised to father Abraham: "And in thy seed shall ALL THE NATIONS OF THE EARTH be blessed" (Gen. 22:18). ALL NATIONS shall be blessed! What a prospect! From the very beginning God not only designed the nations of men that dwell upon the earth; He also planned and purposed to bless them - each and every one of them! This bespeaks not the blessing of Israel, nor the blessing of the church, nor the blessing of the saints of God within the nations; it is THE NATIONS THEMSELVES that must come under the gracious hand of God in blessing and quickening.

David, the sweet singer of Israel, sang of this hope in the spirit of prophecy: "God be merciful unto us, and bless us; and cause His face to shine upon us; that Thy way may be known upon earth, Thy saving health among ALL NATIONS. Let the people praise Thee, O God; let ALL the people praise Thee! O let THE NATIONS be glad and sing for joy: for Thou shall JUDGE THE PEOPLE righteously, and GOVERN THE NATIONS upon earth ... yea, ALL KINGS shall fall down before Him: ALL NATIONS SHALL SERVE HIM" (Ps. 67:1-4; 72:11). It is obvious that all nations do not today serve the Lord, neither do all kings (rulers) fall down before Him. The godless Soviet Union does not serve the Lord, neither do its rulers acknowledge Him. China does not serve the Lord. Iran does not serve the Lord. Great numbers of nations do not today serve the Lord, and few of their rulers fall down before HIM. But the day is surely coming when all nations shall be joined to the Lord and fulfill their obligations to Him as their Maker and Saviour. If that day never comes, then the Bible will have to be relegated to the scrapheap of ancestral errors. But the promise is sure: "Arise, O God, judge the earth: for Thou shall INHERIT ALL NATIONS. A-L-L N-A-T-I-O-N-S whom Thou has made shall come and worship before Thee, O Lord; and shall glorify Thy name. For Thou art great, and doest wondrous things" (Ps. 82:8; 86:9-10). And my spirit shouts a thousand Amens!

Many precious "fragments" reveal God's ultimate purpose for mankind, when "ALL the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the Lord, and ALL KINDREDS OF THE NATIONS shall worship before Thee, for the kingdom is the Lord's and HE is the governor among the nations" (Ps. 22:27-28). For further confirmation of God's gracious intention toward the nations let us read Ps. 2:8. In this wonderful prophecy the Father is addressing the Son, saying, "Ask of Me, and I WILL GIVE THEE THE HEATHEN (Heb: nations) for Your inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for Thy possession." Surely the will and plan of God is revealed in this most gracious request, and surely this was the purpose for which Jesus came and was sent. "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners" (I Tim. 1:15). "The Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of THE WORLD" (I Jn. 4:14). With this divine plan in view, well may David triumphantly sing, "O let THE NATIONS be glad and sing for joy, for Thou shall judge the people righteously, and govern the nations upon earth ... God shall bless us, and ALL the ends of the earth shall fear (reverence) HIM" (Ps. 67:4-7). "ALL NATIONS shall call Him blessed ... and blessed be His glorious name forever, and let THE WHOLE EARTH be filled with His glory. Amen and Amen" (Ps. 72:17-19).

A most marvelous prophecy is found in Micah 4:1-3 which points to the very day in which we are now living. "But in the last days it shall come to pass, that the mountain (government) of the house of the Lord (the sons of God) shall be established in the top of the mountains (strong kingdoms, super powers), and it shall be exalted above the hills (weaker kingdoms, third world nations); and people shall flow unto it. And MANY NATIONS shall come, and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain (government) of the Lord, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and He will teach us His ways, and we (the nations) will walk in His paths: for the law of the Lord shall go forth of Zion (sons of God), and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem (the church). And He shall JUDGE among many people, and rebuke STRONG NATIONS afar off; and they shall beat their swords into plow-shares, and their spears into pruning hooks: NATION shall not lift up sword against NATION, neither shall they learn war anymore." Blessed beyond my feeble ability to describe shall be that day when it shall come to pass that "He shall sprinkle (cleanse, sanctify) MANY NATIONS; the kings shall shut their mouths at Him: for that which had not been told them they shall see; and that which they had not heard they shall consider" (Isa. 52:15).

"Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion: for, lo, I come, and I will dwell in the midst of thee, says the Lord. And MANY NATIONS SHALL BE JOINED TO THE LORD in that day, and shall be My people" (Zech. 2:10-11).

"And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof. And the NATIONS of them that are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour unto it. And they shall bring the glory and honour of THE NATIONS into it ... and there shall be no more curse" (Rev. 21:24-27; 22:3). As Jerusalem was the seat of the empire, the center of government under the Old Testament typical kingdom of God, so the New Jerusalem must occupy the same position and be the "city of the Great King" (Ps. 48:2; Mat. 5:35). A city is a symbol of a kingdom or dominion, and so God's Kingdom is symbolized by the New Jerusalem, the new dominion coming down from heaven to earth. This is the heavenly city, the heavenly spiritual government, the city for which Abraham looked, "a city which hath foundations" - a government established in righteousness, being founded upon the sure rock foundation of the righteousness and authority of the Christ. This city is composed of a heavenly and spiritual people in and through whom the mind, nature, glory, will, and power of God is expressed. This governmental city is being built now as God brings a people into union with Himself, conformed to His image, filled with His life. It is this overcoming body of the Christ that shall so demonstrate the fullness of the power and glory of the Lord that ALL NATIONS shall be swept into the embrace of the Kingdom of God. Glory to God!

Glorious City of Peace! Whose walls signify salvation, protection, and blessing to all who enter it, whose foundations laid in righteousness can never be moved, and whose builder and designer is God! It is in the light which will shine from this glorious city (kingdom) of God that the nations will at last walk on the highway of holiness, up to perfection and harmony with God. It is clear as crystal that the nations shall be saved, brought under the dominion of Christ's Kingdom, for in vision John not only beheld the nations walking in the light of the city, but he saw the kings of the earth enter it in glory. Yet none can enter who would defile it. None can enter into it - not a nation, not a king - who has not been transformed by the Spirit of God. None can become identified with that holy city who have not been "sprinkled" - cleansed and made whole by the inworking of His life. None who would work, or love to work, deceit and unrighteousness; only those whom the blessed

Lamb shall prepare as He arises with healing in His wings. "And the leaves of the tree (the Word of God) are for the HEALING OF THE NATIONS" (Rev. 22:2). Blessed day! Blessed deliverance! Long millenniums ago the prophet Jeremiah saw this day in spirit and rejoiced: "At that time they shall call Jerusalem the throne of the Lord; and ALL NATIONS SHALL BE GATHERED UNTO IT, to the name of the Lord, to Jerusalem: neither shall they walk any more after the imagination of their evil heart" (Jer. 3:17).

GOD'S PURPOSE FOR THE CHURCH

There is no Scriptural truth stated in simpler or more convincing language than that God, omnipotent and omniscient, has, from the beginning, both formed and marked out the path of destiny for every nation of men upon the face of the whole earth. Unceasingly and untiringly God has been working out His purpose, shaping all things through successive generations and ages. In the age after the Flood, beginning with Abraham, men were divided into two special groups - men in general, plus a Chosen Family. Later we recognize these two groups as Israelites and Gentiles. the Chosen Family or Israelites were selected to bear witness to a wicked and idolatrous world of the truth of the One, True and Living God. They always remembered that they were chosen, but quickly forgot what they were chosen for. Instead of bearing witness to the heathen, they only hated them! And, worse yet, copied them and became corrupted by their wicked practices and idolatrous religions.

Beginning with Pentecost another group has appeared, a group called the church (ecclesia), the body of the Christ. Its very name denotes that it is a "called out" group, composed of both Israelites and Gentiles, chosen especially to proclaim, not only the power and wisdom and righteousness of God, but particularly His GRACE. They are to proclaim to the world God's solution of the problems of sin, sorrow, and death, the solution God wrought out in Christ.

The apostle James made a statement to the council at Jerusalem in which he clearly defines the outline of God's purpose for the Church in this present age, and in the age and the ages which are to follow. "Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for His name. And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written, AFTER THIS I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down ... and I will set it up: that THE RESIDUE OF MEN might seek after the Lord, and ALL THE GENTILES (Gr: nations), upon whom My name is called, says the Lord, Who does all these things" (Acts 15:14-18). Dispensationally, this is one of the most important passages in the Bible. It gives God's great purpose for this age and the next age. James says that God's purpose during this present age has been to visit the nations TO TAKE OUT OF THEM a people for His name. I cannot emphasize too strongly that it is to the selection and training of that chosen group that the activities of God in the world are now devoted. God is not dealing with nations at this time, rather, He is calling a people out of the nations and dealing with this called out company. It may come as a shock to some, but it is absolutely true that God's plan for this present age has never been the conversion of the world! It has never been to "sweep nations into the Kingdom of God" as some of the missionary enthusiasts love to say. World-wide salvation was never in God's mind or purpose for this dispensation, and God has not been "trying" to save the world, as some ignorant souls would have us believe. Wherever the Gospel has gone it has always saved some, but never all. God's purpose, then, during this church age, is to "call out" a people for His name. Out from among the billions of earth God is choosing an ELECT COMPANY to bear His name, to be formed into His

nature, to reveal His glory. God has been forming His church, the body of Christ, the called out ones. Precisely this has been in progress since Pentecost.

It is here, in the true church, that Jesus Christ first establishes His government to rule and reign on the throne of men's lives. God's purpose in His church is not merely to save men from sin and hell and carry them off to some far-away heaven somewhere. God's plan is to first establish His dominion in the hearts of His Elect, imbuing them with the glorious MIND OF CHRIST until they become His nature and will in the earth. Sadly, most Christians never come to this! They are too busy playing church, waiting for their mansion over the hilltop, or blundering around in the carnal programs, foolishness, and shame of a wretched, fleshly, Babylonian religious system. But even as the dispensation of the law, at its consummation, brought forth that which it typified and pointed to - Jesus Christ, the Son of God - so this present church age must, in the latter days, at its consummation, bring forth even that unto which it pointed - the many membered BODY OF THE CHRIST, the CORPORATE SON, matured, overcoming, conformed unto the exact likeness of its glorious Head and so filled with the fullness of HIMSELF that it can be said in all truth, "As HE IS, so ARE WE in this present world" (Eph. 4:11-16).

God never intended that either Christ or His body should rule over all nations during this present age. His reign is confined entirely to that little company of footstep followers who have heard His voice and who follow the lamb where ever He goes. These are the blessed sons of God who become the very embodiment of His divine government. This may seem to be an extremely slow method and a very small and insignificant Kingdom for such a great and eternal King, but I cannot over-emphasize the importance of this lowly beginning for a government whose authority is destined to "subdue ALL THINGS." May God grant us vision to see that not only is He establishing His divine government in the hearts and lives of an Elect company of believers, but through His faithful dealings with them He is actually FORMING THEM INTO A GOVERNMENT - a ruling body of sons!

God is calling out a people to bear his name. But WHY? WHEN? WHERE? To bear His name merely to a small handful of people through their short lifetime in the flesh during this age? NO WAY! James says, "AFTER THIS (after the Lord has completed His work of calling out and forming His special people) I will return and build again the tabernacle of David ... THAT THE RESIDUE OF MEN MIGHT SEEK AFTER THE LORD, AND A-L-L THE GENTILES (NATIONS) ... says the Lord!" The "residue" of men denotes "all the rest" of men, all who were not included in the "called out" firstfruit company. Our wise and gracious heavenly Father is even now forming His government of faithful and obedient sons whom He shall raise up as Kings and Priests in due time to bring His Kingdom to pass in all realms. God, through 1900 long years, has slowly, surely, and wisely been choosing this company, preparing them through the fiery furnaces of trials and afflictions, purgings and processings, to reign with Him in righteousness and power. "If we suffer, we shall also reign with Him (II Tim. 2:12) "You were slain, and hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and has made us unto our God kings and priests: AND WE SHALL REIGN OVER THE EARTH" (Rev. 5:9-10). "To Him that overcomes ... to him I will give POWER OVER THE NATIONS: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of My Father" (Rev. 2:26-27).

In this age salvation is unto "as many as are ordained unto eternal life" (Acts 13:48). But in the ages to come there shall be a displaying of God's matchless grace through His

beloved sons that "the residue of men shall seek after the Lord, and all the nations over whom My name is called." If this is not true then "reigning with Christ" is absolutely ridiculous and purposeless. But, blessed be God! the word is sure: "...the God of heaven shall set up a Kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the Kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume (take into itself) ALL THESE KINGDOMS, and it shall stand for ever" (Dan. 2:44).

JUDGMENT AND RESTORATION OF NATIONS

There is a two-fold ministry of the sons of God: Judgment and mercy. On the one hand they shall exhibit His surpassing grace, while, on the other hand, they shall bring judgment in the earth. The more the spirit of revelation unfolds the truth, the more we see God's judgments in proper perspective, that they are corrective in nature and used to bring forth a state of rightness in the earth. They shall not be executed in unholy vengeance, for mercy and grace shall balance the score. Judgments are desperately needed, but they are ever tempered with mercy, and when they have fulfilled their purpose, the judgments end, and the whole earth shall be full of His mercy, life, and glory. Mercy recognizes the need of justice. Mercy knows that every mountain and hill must be brought low, but mercy is there to FILL UP THE VALLEY once the subduing has taken place. As the Psalmist wrote, "Justice and judgment are the habitation of Thy throne: mercy and truth shall go before Thy face" (Ps. 89:14). And again, "I will sing of MERCY and JUDGMENT: unto Thee, O Lord, will I sing" (Ps. 101:1).

With this thought of judgment and mercy in mind, let us consider some certain and indisputable promises of God to specific peoples and nations. We all know the awful magnitude of the sin and judgment which came upon Sodom and Gomorrah. Jude tells us that they are "set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal (Gr: age-during) fire" (Jude 7). The fire was not quenched until it had finished its work and these cities were so completely destroyed that today there is no remaining trace of them to be found. Archaeologists can only conjecture as to where they may have been located. One would think that after such a complete work of judgment you could just forget about Sodom and Gomorrah and "write them off." And yet, the Lord holds forth the promise of the eventual restoration of such an infamous city-state as Sodom! Not only that, but His engagement to do this is linked up with His promise to restore the people of JUDAH! Speaking to backslidden Jerusalem as to a harlot, God declares to her in His great mercy, "As I live, says the Lord God, Sodom thy sister hath not done, she or her daughters, as thou has done, thou and thy daughters."

"Behold, this was the iniquity of thy sister Sodom, pride, fullness of bread, and abundance of idleness was in her and in her daughters, neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy. And they were haughty, and committed abomination before Me: therefore I took them away as I saw good. Neither hath Samaria committed half of thy sins; but thou didst multiply your abominations more than they, and hast justified thy sisters in your abominations which thou hast done. When I shall bring again their captivity, the captivity of Sodom and her daughters, and the captivity of Samaria and her daughters, THEN WILL I BRING AGAIN THE CAPTIVITY OF THY CAPTIVES IN THE MIDST OF THEM. When thy sisters, SODOM and her daughters ... SHALL RETURN TO THEIR FORMER ESTATE, then thou and thy daughters shall return to your former estate. For thus says the Lord God; I will deal with thee as thou has done ... nevertheless I will remember My covenant with thee in the days of thy youth, and I will establish unto thee an everlasting covenant. Then thou shall remember thy ways, and be ashamed,

WHEN YOU SHALL RECEIVE THY SISTERS, your elder and thy younger ... and I will establish My covenant with thee; and thou shalt know that I am the Lord" (Eze. 16:48-62).

Has this wonderful thing been accomplished? History shouts aloud that it has not - not yet! But, fear not, dear ones, for the same God of faithfulness and omnipotence who declared, "And so ALL ISRAEL shall be saved," also promises, "SODOM shall return to her former estate." Not their former estate of wickedness, certainly, for then the long ages of judgment would prove fruitless. Jesus saw this coming restoration of Sodom when He announced to the people of Capernaum, "And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shall be brought down to hell: for if the mighty works that have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, IT WOULD HAVE REMAINED UNTO THIS DAY. But I say unto you, that it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for thee" (Mat. 11:23-24). When these two cities rise up in the day of judgment, under the ministry of the sons of God, it will be far easier to bring the people of Sodom into obedience to the Kingdom of Christ than the people of Capernaum. According to the estimation of Christ, although the people of Sodom were extremely wicked, yet, if the mighty works which were done in Capernaum had been done in Sodom THEY WOULD HAVE REPENTED. Capernaum, therefore, will have to be dealt with much more severely! These verses can have no other meaning. And if the judgment is the same for the people of both of these cities - eternal damnation in hell-fire - then Christ's promise that it will be "more tolerable" for the people of Sodom in the day of judgment is meaningless. How unscriptural and ridiculous the ignorant traditions of men!

A. P. Adams has written a masterful monograph on the restoration of Sodom and I here share a portion of his scholarly wisdom: "I need not dwell upon the history of the destruction of Sodom, all are familiar with it, or may very easily make themselves so. We know that the city was so wicked that ten righteous persons could not be found within its walls and God destroyed them all by a horrible tempest (Ps. 11:6) of 'fire and brimstone.' 'Terrible!' you exclaim, 'what extraordinary sinners they must have been to have deserved such a fearful visitation as this!' Why, no, 'they were not sinners above all men' (Lk. 13:4); in fact they were very ordinary sinners, not near as bad as many cities that are referred to in the Bible. Their sins were just the ordinary transgressions of all populous and wealthy cities, ancient and modern. What were they? 'Behold, this was the iniquity of Sodom; pride, fullness of bread, and abundance of idleness was in her, neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy; and they were haughty, and committed abomination' (Eze. 16:49-50). These are not extraordinary, unusual sins. What city ever existed, or does now exist, that could not be truthfully charged with every one of the sins enumerated above? Many a city has been far worse than this. The above language would not begin to describe the 'iniquity' of Paris, London, or New York. But more surprising still, Sodom did not begin to be so bad as the so-called 'holy city of David,' proud and magnificent Jerusalem. The sin of Sodom was 'a very little thing' in comparison with the sin of Jerusalem (Eze. 16:47). Think of it! We know that the sin of Sodom was 'very grievous' (Gen. 18:20). What then must have been the sin of highly favored Jerusalem, if in comparison therewith the sin of Sodom was 'a very little thing?'

"Suppose we take the orthodox view of this case and see how well it will stand investigation. The case of Sodom is clear-cut and unequivocal. We know that the Sodomites were exceedingly wicked sinners (Gen. 13:13). We know that when they were destroyed there were no righteous persons among them, 'no, not one' (Rom. 3:10), for if there had been the Lord would have saved him with Lot, and thus the Sodomites were a fitting type of the whole race. We know that they perished in their sins, and that none of

them escaped, all were destroyed (Lk. 17:29). Hence it is positive that these wicked sinners have all gone to an ENDLESS hell, if the orthodox view is correct. Is such a view in harmony with the Bible teaching in regard to Sodom? As we have already noticed, the sin of Sodom was comparatively 'a very little thing.' If the doom of Sodom for this comparatively 'very little' sin is endless torment WHAT OUGHT TO BE THE DOOM OF JERUSALEM? What ought to be the doom of Capernaum, and of the cities that reject the Gospel? for they also are worse than Sodom (Mat. 10:14; 11:23-24). Sodom did not sin against light; they knew nothing of the true God or of Jesus Christ the Saviour. I know that Lot was among them, a righteous man, but we have every reason to believe that he was more interested in his worldly prosperity than in the moral welfare of those around him. At any rate rejection of the truth is not mentioned in the enumeration of the sins of Sodom. Would their guilt have been any greater, if they had committed that sin? Certainly it would, for it is on that very account that other cities are spoken of as worse than Sodom. This was the very reason why Jerusalem was worse, - because it sinned against great light; this was the very reason why Capernaum was worse; and this was the very reason given by Jesus Christ Himself why it should be 'more tolerable for Sodom in the day of judgment' than for those cities that rejected the Truth. How does the idea of its being 'more tolerable' for one than for another in the future state of punishment, comport with the idea of endless torment for all? Not at all; it is arrogant nonsense to talk about more or less tolerable endless torment, and any one ought to be ashamed to believe or advocate any such absurdity. But graver still is the question, - how can we vindicate the justice of God in His dealing with Sodom if the orthodox view is correct? Jesus plainly tells us that if Sodom had had the light and advantages that other cities had, IT WOULD HAVE REPENTED; that light was withheld, through no fault of theirs, and they perished in their sins and are lost. Why did they not have that light? Why did not Sodom have as good a chance for salvation as any other class of human beings? That they did not, Christ plainly declares, and now their doom is sealed and they are hopelessly lost, according to the popular view, when if they had had as good an opportunity as others they would have been saved. You cannot reconcile this case with justice and equity on the ground of the prevailing theology. I will show presently how fully it harmonizes with the grand truth of probation after death, but it is certainly out of joint in every particular with the teaching of the nominal church.

"But now how easy to understand and how reasonable this declaration in regard to Sodom becomes in the light of the Word of God. The 'judgment day' is the period of man's probation. Within the scope of the judgment day every one receives according to his deserts 'few stripes or many' (Lk. 12:47-48). At that time it shall be more tolerable for those like Sodom, who in ignorance and mere animalism have only committed the crimes common to all mankind, than for those who, blessed with great light and large opportunities, have added to the ordinary sins of man the willful and persistent rejection of that light, and the ungrateful abuse of those favorable opportunities; highly favored Jerusalem, exalted Capernaum, and the cities blessed by the preaching of the apostles, shall be cast down into a deeper hell, than Sodom and Gomorrah, or Tyre and Sidon, though these latter cities were exceedingly wicked in their pride and cruelty, and intensely filthy with heathen corruptions and nameless abominations. It would be well if modern Jerusalems and Capernaums, in this most civilized, reformed, and intellectual of eras should take warning, remembering that, 'Unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall much be required.'

"The foregoing rational and Scriptural explanation of the case of Sodom, clears up all the difficulties of the orthodox view. Turn to the 16th chapter of Ezekiel's prophecy and read it

all through. You will notice that the first part of the chapter is highly figurative. The origin of Jerusalem is represented as that of a poor neglected female infant cast out as a low-born waif, friendless and ready to perish. God represents Himself as taking pity on the babe, caring for it, and rearing it for Himself. The figure moves on, growing more and more intense and striking. The child grows up to a beautiful womanhood, and the Lord says, 'I spread My skirt over thee (compare Ruth 3:9), and covered thy nakedness; ye I swear unto thee, and entered into a covenant with thee, says the Lord God, and thou becomest Mine.' Thus Jerusalem is represented as being married unto God. Then the figure goes on to represent the magnificence and beauty of the bride; 'Thy renown went forth among the heathen for thy beauty; for it was perfect through My comeliness, which I had put upon thee, says the Lord God.' But self-trust, pride, and unfaithfulness follow. In language most intensely significant the surpassing wickedness of Jerusalem is represented under the abhorrent figure of an unfaithful, corrupted wife, who not only plays the harlot herself, but teaches her children (vs. 20, etc.) to commit like abominations; 'Woe, woe, unto thee! says the Lord God;' a terrible heap of corruption and crime is piled up against this shameless harlot, and then the Lord declares her punishment. 'Wherefore, O harlot, hear the word of the Lord! because of thy filthiness and abominations I will bring shame upon thee before thy lovers, and I will judge thee as women that break wedlock, and destruction, and ruin, and shame, and war shall come upon thee, and thou shalt be robbed of thy wealth and of thy fair jewels and the beautiful raiment, and thou shalt be stripped and stoned, and thrust through with the sword, and burned with fire; and I will pour out My fury and anger upon thee. 'Then the Lord goes on to declare that Jerusalem had followed the tendencies of her heathen origin, and, like the Amorite and the Hittite, and other Canaanitish nations, had wrought all manner of 'abominations.' Samaria, the capital of the wicked kingdom of Israel (the ten tribes), and Sodom, the principal city of the plain, are her elder and younger or rather her greater and lesser (see margin) sisters. It is not the age of these cities that is referred to in the Hebrew terms rendered 'elder' and 'younger,' but their comparative guilt. Sodom, Samaria, and Jerusalem are represented as three sisters of one common, corrupt parentage. Sodom is called the 'lesser' because the least guilty of the three, having had the least light and fewest privileges. Samaria is next in guilt, the greater or 'elder' sister of Jerusalem, being next in favorable advantages; while Jerusalem is far worse than any of the others, having had the greatest blessings and opportunities. Therefore, God says to Jerusalem, 'Thine elder sister is Samaria, and thy lesser sister is Sodom. Yet hast thou not walked after their ways, nor done after their abominations; but as if that were a very little thing, thou wast corrupted more than they in all thy ways. As I live, says the Lord God, Sodom thy sister hath not done, she nor her daughters, as thou hast done, thou and thy daughters. As I live, says the Lord God, Sodom thy sister hath not done, she nor her daughters, as thou hast done, thou and thy daughters...thou also which hast judged thy sisters, bear your own shame for thy sins which thou hast committed more abominable than they; they are more righteous than thou.' This is a most terrible charge. So great and overshadowing was the sin of Jerusalem that the sins of these other wicked cities sink into utter insignificance in comparison; the immensely greater iniquity of Jerusalem even seems to justify (excuse altogether) the comparatively trifling transgressions of Sodom and Samaria. When we think, again, of the great enormity in itself of the iniquity of these two exceedingly wicked cities, and yet are told that their sin was 'as a very little thing,' and even 'justifiable' in comparison to the far more enormous sin of Jerusalem, we can perhaps form some faint idea of the tremendous guilt and deep corruption of this latter city. Now then ... if there is MERCY and BLESSING in store for Jerusalem, 'the chief of sinners,' SURELY WE NEED NOT BE SURPRISED OR INCREDULOUS WHEN WE

ARE TOLD OF FUTURE MERCY AND BLESSING FOR THE LESS GUILTY CITIES OF SAMARIA AND SODOM!

'I will bring again their captivity, the captivity of SODOM,' says the Lord. 'Thy sister SODOM and her daughters shall return to their former estate.' What does the personal, plural pronoun their refer to? the city or the people? The people, of course. So all through the latter part of this chapter, the most cursory reading will show that by the term Sodom, is meant in every case the inhabitants of that ancient city. The pronouns 'their,' 'they,' and 'them' in verses 47-55 cannot refer to the city nor to the land but to the people. This prophecy may be fulfilled, though neither the land nor the city ever be restored, as it has nothing to do with either, but applies entirely to the inhabitants of Sodom.

"I will conclude with noticing one more thought. A future probation for Sodom such as is taught in this prophecy would not be a second probation, or another chance, as some say, but the only probation, the only chance that the people of Sodom ever had! Probation is the period of education, breaking, training, enlightenment, and development through correction; we cannot have such probation until we have the true light of God; Sodom was destitute of all such light, hence has had no probation. Thus this prophecy of Sodom stands as a bulwark against error and for the protection of the truth. It is a most remarkable prophecy, utterly out of joint with all the denominational creeds, and all other beliefs that would narrow down the plan of God for man's redemption to the present life and the present age. But it is in full harmony with the views of those who see that the present life for the vast majority of the race is not their period of probation or trial for eternal life, but that such probation will come 'after death;' and that the present age, and all the ages past, are but the preparatory stages to the great work in 'the ages to come,' even the 'ages of the ages,' of creating man, the entire race, in the image and likeness of God. This latter view is in harmony with ALL Scripture, and is thus marked as the truth of God" - end quote.

Another striking example of God's dealings with nations and His future plans for them is found in the ancient nation of Assyria. It was once one of the six great empires that have ruled the civilized world, preceding Babylon. In Zeph. 2:13-15 the Lord pronounced His judgment against Assyria, saying, "And He will stretch out His hand against the north, and DESTROY ASSYRIA; and will make NINEVAH (the capital of Assyria) a desolation, and dry like a wilderness. This is the rejoicing city that dwelt carelessly, that said in her heart, I am, and there is none beside me: how is she become a desolation, a place for beasts to lie down in! every one that passes by her shall hiss, and wag his hand." Today there are only some dirt mounds covering the site of Nineveh, nor does the kingdom of Assyria exist any more at all! How thoroughly does God execute His word! But now, hear this! "And the Lord shall be known to Egypt, and the Egyptians shall know the Lord in that day ... yea, they shall vow a vow unto the Lord, and perform it. And the Lord shall smite Egypt: He shall smite and heal it: and they shall return even to the Lord. In that day shall there be an highway OUT OF EGYPT TO ASSYRIA, and the ASSYRIAN shall come into Egypt, and the Egyptian into Assyria, and the Egyptians shall serve with the Assyrians. In that day shall ISRAEL be the third with EGYPT and with ASSYRIA, even a blessing in the midst of the land: WHOM THE LORD OF HOSTS SHALL BLESS, saying, Blessed be Egypt My people, and ASSYRIA THE WORK OF MY HANDS, and Israel Mine inheritance." To say that there will not be a restoration of the nation of Assyria and that God will not save that nation would be a blatant repudiation of the Word of God. And notice, too, that today EGYPT is a MOSLEM NATION, but, according to the above

prophecy Egypt also shall come to know the Lord and shall SERVE HIM AS A NATION along with Israel and Assyria. What anticipation this stirs in our hearts! Glory to God!

Now hear the words of the Lord against two other peoples, Moab and Ammon: "Therefore as I live, says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, surely Moab shall be as Sodom, and the children of Ammon as Gomorrah, even the breeding of nettles and salt pits, and a perpetual desolation" (Zeph. 2:9). This judgment would seem to be final, and would be IF THE JUDGMENT OF SODOM IS FOR EVER SEALED IN ETERNAL PUNISHMENT, but it is only final till the judgment is completed. For God says of Moab in Jer. 48:47, "YET will I bring again the captivity of Moab IN THE LATTER DAYS;" and in Jer. 49:6, of Ammon He promises, "And afterward I will bring again the captivity of the children of Ammon, says the Lord." If one reads only a portion of God's word, the facts are too few to calculate rightly the curve of God's purposes. May the spirit of wisdom and revelation from God enable us to see beyond the weeping of the night that we may behold the JOY THAT COMES IN THE MORNING; when every judgment shall have fulfilled its purpose, the judgments end, and ALL NATIONS are filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea. "And He will destroy in this mountain (the Kingdom of God) the face of the covering cast over all people, and the veil (of blindness) that is spread over all nations. And he will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord will wipe away tears from off all faces. And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for Him, and He will save us: this is the Lord; we have waited for Him, we will be glad and rejoice in HIS SALVATION" (Isa. 25:7-9).

"The Lord is King! Lift up your voice,
O earth; and all ye heavens, rejoice:
From world to world the joy shall ring,
The Lord Omnipotent is King!

"The Lord is King! who then shall dare
Resist His will, distrust His care,
Or murmur at His wise decrees,
Or doubt His royal promises?

"The Lord is King! Child of the dust,
The Judge of all the earth is just;
Holy and true are all His ways:
Let every creature speak His praise.

"One Lord, one empire, all secures;
He reigns, and life and death are yours:
Thro' earth and heav'n one song shall ring,
The Lord Omnipotent is King!"

THE JUDGMENT DAY

The apostle Paul, speaking on Mars Hill, told the Athenians, "...God ... hath appointed a day, in the which He will judge the world in righteousness by that Man whom He hath ordained; whereof He hath given assurance unto all men, in that He hath raised Him from the dead" (Acts 17:31). This passage sets forth four wonderful truths:

- (1) God has appointed A DAY
- (2) In that DAY He shall JUDGE THE WORLD in righteousness

- (3) He shall JUDGE THE WORLD by that MAN whom He has ordained
(4) This ASSURANCE is given unto ALL MEN.

The judgment day is not a day of eternal doom, but a blessed day of ASSURANCE TO ALL MEN. But how is that assurance given unto all men? In just this way. God has appointed a day, an indefinite period of time in which He will in righteousness JUDGE THE WORLD by a MAN whom He has ordained for that purpose. That Man of course is His Son, and His Son died the death of all humanity, but this assurance lies in the fact that GOD RAISED HIM FROM THE DEAD. The assurance given UNTO ALL is, that as God dealt with His own Son in this particular, He will also deal with ALL HUMANITY.

This is the point that is overlooked by the vast majority of preachers and teachers and churches in this day. Today, all depends upon whether or not the person accepts the teaching of a particular church, submitting to its ordinances and rituals, embracing the doctrine which is held by all its members. Having done that, the particular church then assures the new member that he is a Christian and that he is going to a place called heaven. But the assurance of God does not rest upon any such frail foundation. God's assurance rests upon the FACT of the resurrection of His own Son, and that assurance is given not to a select few, but to ALL MEN.

The term "day," both in the Scriptures and in common usage, though most frequently used to represent a period of twelve or twenty-four hours, really signifies any definite or special period of time. Thus, for instance, we speak of Abraham's day, Noah's day, Luther's day, Washington's day; and thus in the Bible the entire time of creation is called a day, where we read of "the day that the Lord God made the earth and the heavens" (Gen. 2:4) - a long, definite period, which includes the six other "days" of creation listed in Genesis chapter one. Then we read of "the day of temptation in the wilderness" - forty years (Heb. 3:8-9); "the day of salvation" (II Cor. 6:2); also the "day of vengeance," the "day of wrath," and the "day of trouble" - terms applied to a period of forty years at the close of the Jewish nation, and to a similar period of trouble when the times of the Gentiles are brought to a close at the end of this age. Then again we read of the "day of Christ," the "day of judgment," and "His day" - terms especially applicable to the glorious triumph of the Kingdom of God in all realms, as the Christ, Head and body, reigns over, rules and judges THE NATIONS in righteousness, granting wonderful blessing as well as rendering binding sentences. And of that period it is written: "He shall judge the world in righteousness, and in HIS DAY shall show who is that blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords" (Acts 17:31; I Tim. 6:15).

Ah, God has appointed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness by THAT MAN WHOM HE HATH ORDAINED, and that MAN is the Christ, Head and body! When giving his preview of the wonderful work of this time the apostle John wrote: "Then I saw thrones, and sitting on them were those to whom authority to act as JUDGES and pass sentence was entrusted. Also I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witnessing to Jesus and for the Word of God, and who had refused to pay homage to the beast ... and they lived again, and ruled with Christ a thousand years. Blessed is the person who takes part in the first resurrection. Over them the second death has no power or authority, but they shall be ministers of God and of Christ, and they shall rule with Him a thousand years" (Rev. 20:4,6).

"Thrones" occupied by them to whom the authority to "act as judges" is given! Is this a glorious and exciting prospect, or does it cast a dark shadow upon what would otherwise

be a bright picture? Judges! Decisions handed down! Judicial decisions! Authority! How are we to view such a prospect? In conjunction with this vision John says, "Then I saw an angel (symbol of a MINISTRY) descending from heaven (the governmental realm of God); he was holding the key of the abyss - the bottomless pit - and a great chain was in his hand. And he gripped and overpowered the dragon, that old serpent of primeval times, who is the devil and Satan, and securely bound him for a thousand years. Then he hurled him into the abyss and closed it and sealed it above him, so that he should NO LONGER LEAD ASTRAY AND DECEIVE AND SEDUCE T-H-E N-A-T-I-O-N-S..." (Rev. 20:1-3). Talk about judgment! Sentencing! Judicial authority! Power from heaven! Spiritual power! A burning word of authority! John beheld this whole present world-system passing away. After six millenniums of sin, sorrow, tyranny, war, oppression, pain, and death mankind needs DELIVERANCE! The NATIONS need a change! For six-thousand years the earth has been governed by the will of carnal men and the will of man has been usurped by the mind of Satan. The nations have been governed variously by kings, emperors, dictators, prime ministers, and presidents, but the net result has always been the same, for the corrupt nature of man ever asserts itself, seeking its own purposes, fulfilling its own desires, and doing its own will.

Are the people not deeply disappointed and perplexed today by the political and judicial system that operates in this hour, even here in the United States of America? Truly I can say to you that in our time, as at no previous time, is when the words of the Psalmist have come true as a prophecy in respect to men in a political and judicial capacity who are like "gods" but have betrayed the people in their office: "They know not, neither will they understand: they walk on in darkness: all the foundations of earth are out of course" (Ps. 82:5). Or, as the Amplified Bible so aptly translates, "The magistrates and judges know not, neither will they understand; they walk on in the darkness; all the foundations of the earth (the fundamental principles upon which rests the administration of justice) are shaking."

Can anyone possibly imagine what would happen to a nation if all the members of its government were completely selfless instead of completely selfish, if they were sons of God WALKING IN THE MIND AND SPIRIT OF CHRIST, instead of handshaking, baby-kissing politicians seeking to curry the favor of men for personal advantage, or if the judges judged by the spirit of wisdom and discernment from God instead of by the tricky technicalities of the law? What if the leaders of the world were filled with the Holy Spirit of God and moved under the power of His anointing turning men to God instead of building larger armies and navies, more sophisticated missiles, and more destructive bombs? What if judges and social workers had the Word of God in their mouths and power to cast the demon spirits out of men instead of carrying them off to some ungodly psychiatrist, mental hospital, or prison? To even contemplate such things in this age of darkness only serves to bring a sad smile to our faces, but I can assure you in all confidence that this present day of darkness is even now merging into God's great DAY OF JUDGMENT and perdition of ungodly men. The whole system is rapidly sinking and collapsing around us and God is even now preparing a righteous government of holy sons of God to replace it.

Destruction of the demonized systems of this world will certainly call for a change of judgeships over mankind. In the proper course of things, then, new thrones of judgment come into existence. Nothing else but a BETTER BODY OF JUDGES could be expected to occupy those new thrones of judgment, which are established by God's authority in the heavenlies. God's judges will not be men in judicial robes sitting on a bench in a smoke-filled courtroom. God's judges shall be men possessing the mind of Christ, clothed with

the wisdom and power of God, speaking the words of God great authority. Mighty DELIVERANCE can thenceforth be expected to come to misled, misruled, and misjudged mankind! Two thousand years ago Jesus designated the first twelve of this new order of judges. On the night of His betrayal and arrest and unjust trial by the highest court in Jerusalem, Jesus said to His small handful of footstep followers: "You are those who have remained and persevered with Me in My trials; and as My Father has appointed a Kingdom and conferred it on Me, so do I confer on you the privilege and decree that you may eat and drink at My table in My Kingdom, and sit on thrones, JUDGING the twelve tribes of Israel" (Lk. 22:28-30). Those were merely the first appointed to this realm of authority and ministry, for Daniel said, "I beheld, and the same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them; until the ancient of days came, and JUDGMENT WAS GIVEN TO THE SAINTS of the Most High; and the time came that the SAINTS possessed the Kingdom" (Dan. 7:21-22). And Paul adds further light in I Cor. 6:2-3, "Do ye not know that THE SAINTS SHALL JUDGE THE WORLD? And if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters?"

THE MINISTRY OF JUDGING

In the Bible the ones whom God raised up as judges for His people did more than just settle disputes between individuals or hand down and execute judicial decisions. Those judges were actually THE DELIVERERS OF GOD'S PEOPLE! There is one book in the Bible that is specifically named "Judges." As a book it is a thriller! Therein we read of the fearless exploits of those mighty men whom God, "the Judge of all the earth," raised up for the salvation and deliverance of His oppressed and afflicted people. Hail the day of judgment that began when God raised up a judge to execute judgment for His afflicted ones! for these judges were, indeed, "saviours" of Israel by a special anointing of the Spirit of the Lord.

Throughout the administration of the judges the people were blessed. Note, for instance, how, when under oppression by their enemies because of transgression against the Lord, Israel was again and again released and blessed by the raising up of judges. Thus we read: "When the children of Israel cried unto the Lord, the Lord raised up a DELIVERER, who delivered them ... and the Spirit of the Lord came upon him, and he JUDGED ISRAEL, and went out to war ... and prevailed ... and the land had rest" (Judges 3:9-11). And again, "The Lord raised up judges that DELIVERED THEM out of the hand of those that spoiled them. And when the Lord raised up judges, then the Lord was with the judge, and delivered them out of the hand of their enemies all the days of the judge" (Judges 2:16, 18).

Those wonderful judges were raised up long millenniums ago for the deliverance of Israel; but now, in this glorious age, God is preparing a mighty COMPANY OF JUDGES whose responsibility it shall be to JUDGE THE WORLD in righteousness! "And he that overcomes ... to him will I give power over the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron" (Rev. 2:26-27). "To him that overcomes will I grant to sit with Me in My throne" (Rev. 3:21). "And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was given unto them..." (Rev. 20:4,6). So, though the church and the world have long been under the power and oppression of the great adversary, yet He who paid for the sins of all with His own precious blood will take His great power and reign in blessing over realms that hitherto have not known Him. He will judge and deliver ALL THOSE WHOM HE SO LOVED AS TO REDEEM. With this ALL the prophetic declarations agree. It is written, "With righteousness shall He JUDGE THE W-O-R-L-D, and the people with equity" (Ps.

98:9). Thank God! The very thought of an age governed by the sons of God who are filled with the seven-fold intensified Spirit of the Lord leaves me absolutely breathless! Words become totally inadequate and human ability to articulate the wonder of such a thing fails completely. Our faltering minds cannot totally appreciate nor comprehend the wonder of Isaiah's prophecy: "But with righteousness shall He judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: He shall smite the earth with the rod (authority) of His mouth, and with the breath (Spirit) of His lips (Word) shall He slay the wicked. The earth shall be FULL of the knowledge of the Lord, AS THE WATERS COVER THE SEA" (Isa. 11:2-9).

THE MINISTRY OF REDEMPTION AND RESTORATION

The day which God has appointed, in the which He shall JUDGE THE WORLD, is now at hand. The judges for this day are now in preparation for their awesome task. Yes, you shall judge the world, saints ... but you will do it in humility and with a broken heart full of compassion and love. The first aspect of the ministry of the judges in the coming age is judgment. This work, however, shall be swiftly followed by the second ministry of mercy and restoration, for God's judgments are ever unto correction and redemption. Praise God! Let us now consider the processes involved in this wonderful work of redemption and restoration.

To Israel, two millenniums ago, the hope of their coming Messiah, the Deliverer, was the fervent prayer and burning desire of the devout. When Jesus came God's people Israel were baffled and perplexed in mind, because they had learned to look only for a Messiah who would come to deliver them from their enemies and from the hand of all who oppressed them. The prophecies plainly declared that a DELIVERER would come out of Zion. Of this they were confident and assured, but their unregenerate hearts and unspiritual minds did not comprehend that the first work of the great Deliverer would be to DELIVER THEM from the awful curse of THEIR OWN SINS and to transform THEIR WICKED HEARTS by the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Ghost, which deliverance could only be accomplished by the shedding of His righteous blood and the renewing of the Holy Ghost within them.

Israel wanted to be delivered from ROME! In their clouded minds and distorted vision they could see only the flashing of Roman swords and the snapping of the heels of the Roman legions as the source and substance of their bondage. But of what value would it have been had the blessed Redeemer come only to deliver them from the power and authority of Rome if there was to be no change in their wicked and rebellious hearts? God's Word is full of accounts of His mighty acts of deliverance on their behalf, but no sooner were they delivered from their enemies than they utterly corrupted themselves and forsook the Lord.

The book of Judges records how Israel corrupted themselves utterly before the Lord. "And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord, and served Balaam: and they forsook the Lord God of their fathers, and followed other gods and provoked the Lord to anger. And the anger of the Lord was hot against Israel, and He delivered them into the hands of spoilers that spoiled them, and He sold them into the hands of their enemies so that they could not any longer stand before their enemies. Where ever they went out, the hand of the Lord was against them for evil. Nevertheless the Lord raised up judges, which delivered them out of the hand of those that spoiled them. And yet they would not hearken unto their judges, but they went a whoring after other gods, and bowed

themselves unto them. And when the Lord raised them up judges, then the Lord delivered them out of the hand of their enemies all the days of the judge. And it came to pass, when the judge was dead, that they corrupted themselves more than their fathers; they ceased not from their own doings, nor from their stubborn way" (Judges 2:11-19).

What a sordid state of affairs! Do you get the picture? Again and again, over and over, time after time, repeatedly, the cycle goes on and on..."And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord ... and the anger of the Lord was hot against Israel, and He delivered them into the hands of their enemies ... and the children of Israel cried unto the Lord ... and the Lord raised them up judges ... the Lord was with the judge, and delivered them out of the hand of their enemies all the days of the judge ... and it came to pass, when the judge was dead that they corrupted themselves more than their fathers ... and the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord ... and the anger of the Lord was hot against Israel, and He delivered them into the hands of their enemies ... the children of Israel cried unto the Lord ... and the Lord raised them up judges ... and the Lord was with the judge, and delivered them out of the hands of their enemies all the days of the judge ... and it came to pass, when the judge was dead, that they corrupted themselves more than their fathers ... and the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord ... and the anger of the Lord was hot against Israel, and He delivered them into the hands of their enemies ... the children of Israel cried unto the Lord ... and the Lord raised them up judges..." DO YOU GET THE PICTURE, N-O-W? How unmistakably evident that it was not their enemies from whom they needed deliverance - they needed DELIVERANCE FROM THEMSELVES! Their great problem was that they continually cried unto the Lord because of the oppression of the king Of Mesopotamia, or the Moabites, or the Canaanites, or the Midianites, or the Ammonites, or the Philistines; BUT NEVER ONCE DID THEY CRY MIGHTILY UNTO GOD BECAUSE OF THEIR OWN DESPERATELY WICKED AND REBELLIOUS HEARTS! How like human nature that is! Great masses of people today in the Charismatic Movement want God to solve all their problems and pour out upon them lavishly of His blessings, but they do not want to change their life style, there is no deep work of repentance, they stoutly refuse to separate themselves from the idolatrous and wicked harlot church systems at whose polluted tables they feast, and they have no desire whatever for God to come in blazing, consuming fire to purge and purify their hearts from the wicked and idolatrous spirit of this present age.

The book of Judges is a wonderful book. Over and over again it records the loving kindness and tender mercy of God on the one hand and the incredible corruption of the human heart on the other. The corruption of the human heart is beyond belief and it would have been completely useless had the Lord sent His Son to be the Deliverer of His people from Rome, or from any other external circumstance or situation, while leaving their wicked hearts unchanged and their carnal natures not destroyed. As in the days of old they would no sooner have been delivered from their enemies than they would have turned back to heathen gods and to the lusts of their own flesh. Is this not what the unregenerate are doing now? Is this not what the "blessing seeking" crowd is doing, those who preach a message of faith and power and blessing, but not balanced by the message of the inworking of HIS CROSS? Do they not worship Mammon, the god of PROSPERITY and RICHES? Are they not lovers of pleasures more than lovers of GOD? Do men not worship the god of self and the god of lust and sex? No wonder the Lord said, "Ye draw nigh to Me with your lips, but your heart is far from Me" (Isa. 29:13). How well did James proclaim: "Draw nigh to God and He will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners, and purify your hearts, ye double-minded" (James 4:8).

In this age and in the glorious age and ages to come what good would it be to raise up righteous judges to judge the people: to settle disputes between individuals and nations, to pronounce verdicts and sentences, to execute judicial decisions, while the heart of man remains deceitful and corrupt and his mind more nearly the mind of a devil than the mind of God? If ever the world is to be judged and ruled in righteousness, righteousness must first of all be established **WITHIN THE HEART OF MAN** and the rule of God removed from the external and brought into the very tables of his heart and mind. There must be a new birth, even a birth from above. The wickedness of man demands it. There must be a conversion, a total change wherein evil men who once were afar off from God are made nigh by the blood of Christ. The very well-spring of that conversion must be a birth from above by which a new heart and a new spirit are placed **WITHIN THE MEN OF ALL RACES AND TRIBES AND NATIONS**. This is why Jesus, when He appeared on the world scene, came preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom of God, and the very first word of that Kingdom Gospel is this: "REPENT, for the Kingdom of heaven is at hand!" (Mat. 4:17). "Godly sorrow works **REPENTANCE TO SALVATION** not to be repented of, but the sorrow of the world works death" (II Cor. 7:10).

The whole problem with Israel as a nation in the Bible times was that they were unconverted. While they willingly made covenants with God and swore allegiance and obedience to Him, their hearts remained unchanged. There was no birth from above! All the while they were forcing themselves to do God's bidding, their unregenerate hearts were wandering after Baal or Ashtaroth or Mammon, because these gods catered to their flesh and to every abomination that is common to the human heart. They did not serve the Lord because their hearts were not attuned to a life of holiness which begins when Jesus comes into the heart. This same condition still exists all about us in the realm of the unregenerate and unconverted people who fill the pews of our so-called churches every Sunday morning. With their lips they serve the Lord, but their hearts are far from Him! They sing, "Holy, holy, holy," while their unconverted hearts dream of business and pleasure and oft times unholy things. The world does not yet understand this truth, but the first essential step in the life of any man entering the Kingdom of God is briefly stated in these words: "Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again" (Jn. 3:7). "Except a man be born of the water and of the Spirit, he **CANNOT ENTER INTO THE KINGDOM OF GOD**" (Jn. 3:5).

I have no desire to be sarcastic or cynical, but if we aspire to be of that glorious company of God's sons who shall judge and reign over the earth-realm in righteousness and power, then we must learn first and foremost that "the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God" (I Pet. 4:17). The sooner we learn that the human heart is utterly corrupt the sooner we will come to the fountain of His precious blood, not merely for mercy and pardon, but for **CLEANSING** and **DELIVERANCE** that through the grace and power of Christ we might be soundly converted and made an entirely New Creation in Him. I can say without fear of contradiction that most christians have come only to know what it means to be saved "in their sins," but the sons of the Most High must now become the firstfruits of them that are "saved from their sins." Out of the midst of all the empty form and ritual of man-made religion, the violence and war, the cheating and lying, the drugs and heathenish rock music, illicit sex and filth of lesbians and homosexuals, and the plague of every abominable eastern cult and devilish religion, God shall bring forth a blessed "firstfruit company" of people who are **UNDEFILED BEFORE GOD**. These are they that have repented of sin and every work of the flesh. With Christ, their victorious Head, they have died to all the desires of the flesh and mind. They are a people who have fixed all their hopes in Christ the Lord. Their hearts cry not for the tinsel

of the world, nor yet for the trinkets of popular religion, but their prayer ascends to God day and night, "Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven" (Mat. 6:10). Purged of all Pride, self-interest and filthiness of flesh and spirit these shall be accounted worthy to reign with Christ as kings and judges from the spirit realm, and those who will rule from henceforth are a royal priesthood like unto their Lord, after the order of Melchizadek.

We have noted that it is utterly useless to deliver men from their external enemies unless first they have been delivered from their own corrupt and wicked hearts. All mankind desperately needs DELIVERANCE, and the sons of God, the righteous judges to be raised up unto all nations SHALL BECOME THE DELIVERERS. Hallelujah! "And saviours shall come up on Mount Zion (the government of God) to judge the mount of Esau (flesh); and the kingdom shall be the Lord's" (Obad. 21). The "mount of Esau" typifies the RULE OF THE FLESH. Let all men know that the triumph of the Son of God begins within, then, that which is first accomplished in the midst of our own being shall be wrought out in the midst of the earth, and that which is being wrought out in the midst of the earth shall also be fully wrought out in the entire universe, for "He planned for the maturity of the times and the climax of the ages to unify ALL THINGS and HEAD THEM UP and consummate them in Christ, both things in heaven and things on earth" (Eph. 1:10, Amplified).

The salvation of the nations shall not be accomplished upon principles nor by processes other than those that are now working in the firstfruit company for our redemption and perfection. The process for us is clear: "Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God" (Rev. 1:5-6). And again, "And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for Thou was slain, and has redeemed us by Thy blood ... and has made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth" (Rev. 5:9-10). The glorious God of power and holiness who has constituted us "kings and priests" is the One who first of all "washed us from our sins in His own blood."

Zechariah prophesied of a day, saying, "In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and uncleanness," and Isaiah spoke of that fountain of cleansing performing its redeeming work upon MANY NATIONS: "So shall He sprinkle (wash, cleanse, sanctify) MANY NATIONS; the kings shall shut their mouths at Him: for that which had not been told them shall they see; and that which they had not heard shall they consider" (Zech. 13:1; Isa. 52:15). In Rev. 21:6 John calls the cleansing and life-giving stream of the blood of Christ a "fountain of the water of life." The words of the old hymn are so appropriate: "What can wash away my sin? Nothing but the blood of Jesus! What can make me PURE WITHIN? Nothing but the blood of Jesus!" Washed by His blood - cleansed and quickened by HIS LIFE! This is the process for the firstfruit company. And then in proportion as the sons of God learn, in their own experience, how far-reaching and all inclusive the effects of the blood are, their hearts are opened up to long for the ultimate and complete experiencing of the power of this blood in the world around them. If the blood can so redeem, cleanse, and perfect the firstfruits that they are suitable to be made KINGS AND PRIESTS UNTO GOD, then surely nothing less than the power of this blood must be ministered to the hearts and lives of the sin-blighted creation unto whom they are sent as kings and priests and judges. Truly it is the blood-washed PRIESTS OF GOD who shall SPRINKLE THE BLOOD OF THE LAMB upon MANY NATIONS in the glorious age and ages yet to unfold before our eyes!

This is the plain teaching of Scripture. "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 TO HIMSELF, whether they be things on earth or things in heaven" (Col. 1:19-20). The power of the blood avails for every creature. The experience of what the blood can accomplish for those who believe, will teach them to regard their fellow men as living under the tender mercy of God, under redemption, and under the call to salvation and deliverance through the precious blood. It will fill them with an irresistible impulse to consecrate their lives, which have been bought and transformed by blood, to be blood-sprinkling PRIESTS OF THE MOST HIGH, fellow-workers with God for the deliverance of all nations, that the blood may ultimately have the full honor which belongs to it.

Hear it! "And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders stood a LAMB as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are THE SEVEN SPIRITS OF GOD SENT FORTH INTO ALL THE EARTH" (Rev. 5:6). The seven Spirits proceed from the SLAIN LAMB. The seven Spirits from the slain Lamb are sent forth INTO ALL THE EARTH. The seven Spirits are nothing short of the FULL AND COMPLETE POWER OF THE BLOOD OF CHRIST. The blood is the life of man; the Spirit is the life of God. "The life is in the blood" (Lev. 17:11). This is why we find, in Scripture, that what in one place is ascribed to the spirit, is in another place ascribed to the blood, and the work of sanctification and cleansing is ascribed to both the blood and the Spirit. Life is also ascribed to both. Our Lord said, "He that eats My flesh and drinks My blood hath everlasting life," adding, "It is the SPIRIT that quickens (makes alive); the flesh profits nothing" (Jn. 6:54,63). We find similar expressions in the epistle to the Ephesians. After having said, "Ye ... are made nigh by the BLOOD of Christ," a little later Paul declares that "We ... have access by one SPIRIT to the Father" (Eph. 2:13, 18). So also in the epistle to the Hebrews, the contemning of the blood and of the Spirit is treated as one act. We read of those who "counted the BLOOD of the covenant an unholy thing, and have done despite to the SPIRIT of grace" (Heb. 10:29). The blood and the Spirit proceed together from the slain Lamb, for the blood of the Lamb and the seven Spirits of the Lamb are the fullness of the redeeming, cleansing, quickening, and perfecting LIFE OF GOD! And, bless His wonderful name, this stream of divine life is SENT FORTH INTO ALL THE EARTH, a mighty river of life to cleanse and revitalize the whole of creation.

Where does this cleansing take place, and what is it that the life-giving blood washes? It is the heart. It is the deep, hidden, inner life of man that experiences the effect of the blood. Jesus said, "The Kingdom of God is within you." Sin has penetrated into the heart, and the whole nature of man has become saturated with it. The blood too must penetrate the heart; as deeply as the power of sin has gone, so deeply must the inner being be cleansed by the blood. We know that when some article of clothing is washed, the water with its cleansing power must soak in as deeply as the stain, if it is to be removed. Even so must the blood of Jesus penetrate to the deepest roots of our being: our heart, our entire personality must be reached and quickened by His divine life. Where sin has reached, there too must the blood follow it; where sin ruled, there His life must rule: the entire heart must be cleansed by the blood! However great may be the depths of the human heart, however manifold and lively its activities may be, the life of the Lamb is just as wonderful and penetrating. It is INTO ALL THE EARTH that the seven-fold fullness of THE POWER OF THE BLOOD is sent. Blessed thought! Blessed deliverance! Blessed reality!

And so we read of the seven Spirits of God: "And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord ... with righteousness shall He JUDGE ... the wolf shall dwell with the Lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice' den ... for THE WHOLE EARTH SHALL BE FULL OF THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE LORD, as the waters cover the sea" (Isa. 11:2-9).

As the seven-fold Spirit of the Lord flows over the earth from the many membered body of Christ, what peace, what joy, what blessedness this will result in for the earth-realm! What changes shall be wrought, what altering of attitudes, what changing of personalities, what transforming of lives! Imagine the human personalities and characteristics that are here symbolically likened to the wolf, the leopard, the lion, the bear, the asp, the cockatrice! And while God could certainly alter the whole constitution of the animal kingdom if He so chose, our present application of the type must be to the peace and life of the Kingdom of God on a higher level where men of the most wicked, corrupt, and fierce dispositions have their natures so entirely transformed by the matchless grace of Christ that they live in love and righteousness with the meekest of men and those who formerly were an easy prey. Christ, who is our peace, came to establish PEACE IN THE HEARTS OF MEN! Thus the asp and the cockatrice (poisonous serpents) cease to be venomous, so that parents let their little children play with them. In other words, a "generation of vipers" shall be so converted and made a "seed of saints" that the "little ones" of the Kingdom of God shall be trustingly committed into their care! Matchless grace! Glorious triumph! Wonderful peace! Precious blood! "The seven Spirits of God SENT FORTH INTO ALL THE EARTH." Who would not desire it?

The nations shall indeed be saved! All creation shall be gloriously reconciled to God! I know some do not believe it, but I do not hesitate to tell you that their unbelief shall not make the faith of God of none effect, nor shall it hinder God's program one bit. Their refusal to embrace God's glorious plan shall only disqualify them from being a part of that wonderful company of the sons of God through which the redemption and restoration shall be effected. I feel a great pity for those who cherish the beautiful hope of sonship, yet fail to permit the perfect work of God's grace and mercy to all men to be fully inworked in their lives. They would still damn men who failed to believe in this life, and the fact that they would consign them to eternal torture without mercy disqualifies them from ministering deliverance to those poor souls for whom Christ died. It is my deep conviction that none who oppose and reject the precious truth of the ultimate salvation of all men and the reconciliation of all things to God will stand in the company of the MANIFESTED SONS OF GOD. For this company of DELIVERERS to have within its ranks men who shut the mercy of God up from men, who have not sufficient faith to believe that Christ can and will save all, and who would damn men to eternal hell would mean the destruction of the MINISTRY OF THE SONS TO ALL CREATION.

The nations shall be saved. All creation shall be set free. God shall, in His great mercy and love, raise up JUDGES, DELIVERERS unto them. At long last, thank God! deliverance shall come to the great masses of mankind. And it shall not be merely a deliverance from Communism, or Nazism, or Fascism; not a deliverance from Moscow, or Peking, or Washington; not a deliverance from taxes, or tyranny, or bureaucracy, or joblessness, or hunger; but deliverance from SIN and SELFHOOD and SATAN: a

powerful cleansing which strikes at the root of all the multiplied sorrows and tragedies of mankind. Deliverance from WHAT WE ARE, blessed be His name!

"Joy to the world! the Lord is come;
Let earth receive her King;

Let every heart prepare Him room,
And heaven and nature sing.

"No more let sins and sorrows grow,
Nor thorns infest the ground;

He comes to make His blessings flow
Far as the curse is found.

"He rules the world with truth and grace,
And makes the nations prove

The glories of His righteousness,
And wonders of His love."

Chapter 12

The Restitution Of All Things

THERE IS ONE GOD

It has pleased the Lord to leave great truths obscure and well hidden from the prying eyes of the curious and the unbelieving. He shrouds His precious truths in mystery so that none but the earnest seekers who partake of the spirit of revelation are ever permitted to see beyond the outer shell of the letter, and behold the unfolding glories which lie concealed within the inner kernel. There is a grand statement of infinite truth which fell from the lips of God's spokesman, Moses, more than thirty-five centuries ago: "Hear, O Israel: the LORD our God is one Lord" (Deut. 6:4). For long ages men have read this amazing declaration about God and supposed it to be nothing more than a doctrinal statement about the Godhead. It is the basis for the belief in only one true and living God, which belief is called "monotheism." This verse of scripture has become the most distinctive and important statement of faith for the Jews. They call it the Shema, after the first word of the phrase in Hebrew, and they often quote it in English as "Hear, O Israel, the LORD is our God, the LORD is One." Traditionally, a devout Jew always tried to make this confession of faith just before death.

This surface truth of the oneness of God cannot be denied by any who believe the testimony of the scriptures. All through the Old Testament God revealed Himself to His people as one God. All the nations around Israel had many gods. They had a god for almost every need, but Israel had one God who was the all-sufficient One, and this was emphasized very strongly to the children of Israel. The Ten Commandments begin with, "You shall have no other gods before Me" (Ex.20:3). God said there is no other God with Him. There is none like the LORD and there is no God beside Him (II Sam. 7:22; I Chron. 17:20). He alone is God (Ps. 86:10). There are the emphatic declarations of God in Isaiah: "Before Me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after Me. I, even I, am the LORD; and beside Me there is no Saviour" (Isa. 43:10-11). "I am the first, and I am the last; and beside Me there is no God" (Isa. 44:6). "Is there a God beside me? yea, there is no God; I know not any" (Isa. 44:8). "I am the LORD that makes all things; that stretches forth the heavens alone; that spreads abroad the earth by Myself" (Isa. 44:24). "There is none beside Me. I am the LORD and there is none else" (Isa. 45:6). "There is no God else beside Me; a just God and a Saviour; there is none beside Me. Look unto Me, and be saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else" (Isa. 45:21-22). "Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like Me" (Isa. 46:9).

This truth of one God is accentuated in the New Testament by both Jesus and His apostles. "Seeing it is one God which shall justify" (Rom. 3:30). "There is none other God but one" (I Cor. 8:4). "But to us there is but one God, the Father" (I Cor. 8:6). "But God is one" (Gal. 3:20). "One God and Father of all" (Eph. 4:6). "For there is one God" (I Tim. 2:5). "You believes that there is one God; you do well: the devils also believe, and tremble" (James 2:19).

God is the universal source of all things. He is invisible and unapproachable. The scriptures refer to Him as "the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man has seen, nor can see" (I Tim. 6:16). Again, "Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God" (I Tim. 1:17). The Bible declares that "God is a Spirit" (Jn. 4:24) and since God is a Spirit, He is invisible and unknowable unless He chooses to manifest Himself in some form visible to man. God told Moses "You can not see My face: for there shall no man see Me, and live" (Ex. 33:20). "No man has seen God at any time" (Jn. 1:18; I Jn. 4:12). How can we see the invisible Father? If God is only an invisible, unapproachable light, He would be totally inaccessible to man. The physical eyes of man have never beheld a spirit. Since God is an invisible Spirit and is omnipresent, He does not possess a body as we know it. Although man cannot see directly the invisible Spirit of God, throughout the Old Testament, every time God wanted to talk personally with someone or manifest Himself, He embodied Himself in a form that could be seen, touched, handled, understood and comprehended on the earth plane. He borrowed, as it were, a body to veil Himself in and manifest Himself through. In Old Testament times God revealed Himself and dealt with man on man's level through what theology calls THEOPHANIES. A THEOPHANY is a visible manifestation of God, and we usually think of it as temporary in nature. To make Himself visible, to communicate Himself on the material plane, He manifested Himself in a physical form. Even though no one can see the Spirit of God, he can see a representation of God.

The apostle Paul frequently spoke of the vast mysteries of God and, in speaking of them, he left no shadow of doubt that naught but the revelation of the Lord could unfold those eternal mysteries. One of the grandest of those mysteries is set forth by the apostle John in these wonderful words: "No man has seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him" (Jn. 1:18). The Amplified Bible renders this verse thus: "No man has ever seen God at any time; the only unique Son ... Who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him - He has revealed Him, brought Him out where He can be seen; ... He has made Him known." Note the marginal rendering in the Scofield Bible; the Greek rendering is: "The only begotten Son has LED HIM FORTH, that is, into FULL REVELATION. Jesus was, therefore, the FULL REVELATION of the INVISIBLE GOD Who indwelt Him. God put Himself into His Son in order to make Himself available to man.

Concerning Jesus Christ, the Son of God, it is written, "Who is the image of the invisible God" (Col. 1:15; II Cor. 4:4); "the EXPRESS image of His person" - R.V. "the VERY image of His substance" (Heb. 1:3). Hebrews 1:3 tells us that the Son is the brightness and glory of God, and the express image of His Person. He bore the image of His Father, as many an earthly son does of his father. I have known boys, that as soon as one sees them it is not difficult to tell whose son they are; they are so much like their father. They can resemble dad so much in build and physical features; they will walk, talk and act so much like their dad that there is no mistaking whose son they are. But these are never the EXPRESS image of their father, because they inherit some characteristics from mother's side as well. So though they may look much like dad, there is always some little difference. It was not so with Jesus. He was the EXPRESS IMAGE of God! In every aspect He was exactly like His Father, so much that He was able to say, "He that has seen Me has seen the Father." He bore His image, His likeness, and in this He manifested to the world what God was like.

But more than this! All the fullness of the Father dwells in the Son (Col. 1:19; 2:9) and is expressed through the Son (Jn. 1:18). The Father, as the inexhaustible source of all

things, is embodied in the Son. The incomprehensible God is now expressed in Christ, the WORD of God (John 1:1); the invisible God is revealed in Christ, the IMAGE of God (Col. 1:15). So, the Son and the Father are one (Jn. 10:30), and the Son is even called the Father (Isa. 9:6). There was a day when the questioning Philip said to Jesus, "Lord, show us the Father, and it will suffice us." Jesus said to him, "Have I been so long time with you, and yet have you not known Me, Phillip? He that has seen Me has seen the Father; and how say you then, Show us the Father? Don't you believe that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me? The words that I speak unto you I speak not of Myself: but the Father that dwells in Me, He does the works. Believe Me that I AM IN THE FATHER, AND THE FATHER IN ME" (Jn. 14:8-11).

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

Furthermore, II Cor. 3:17 says, "Now the Lord is that Spirit." According to our understanding, who is the Lord? Jesus Christ IS LORD! But Paul tells us that the Lord is also the Spirit. Who is the Spirit? We have to admit that the Spirit must be the Holy Spirit. Therefore, the Son is called the Father, and the Son, who is the very Lord, is also the Spirit! This means, in a way not understood by most Christians, that the Father, Son, and Spirit A-R-E O-N-E! All of God's children, from Adam forward, believed in this one God. It is only when we come to apostate Christianity that we find all these various ideas about who God is, and all these different concepts have come about by men studying the Bible without the aid of the blessed Spirit of Truth.

God no longer needs to "borrow" or produce a "body" in which to express and reveal Himself to men, no more does He send the burning bush, or the pillar of fire, or the cloud, or the angel or the form of a man, as in Old Testament times. For the first time Yahweh has a permanent, eternal body in which to walk and talk with mankind - THE CHRIST, Head and body, the house of sons. In the Old Testament manifestations, the revelation of Himself was in fragments. No one manifestation could speak all truth, each was but one or two syllables in the mighty sentences of God's speech. At the best, the view caught of God was partial and limited. But in Jesus there is nothing of this piece-meal revelation. "IN HIM dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily," says the inspired apostle, hastily adding, "and YOU ARE COMPLETE IN HIM" (Col. 2:9-10). It is my deep conviction that there is but One God; truly, but one PERSON OF GOD. There is only one Person of God, and the fullness of the Godhead is manifested in and through His ELOHIM COMPANY,

the sons of God, the many membered Christ of God, Head and body. Surely these are simple truths that even a child can understand. The fullness of the Godhead dwells in Christ. And YOU are complete, or He is completed, by your UNION WITH HIM! If you can receive it, the Christ IS GOD! And you are THE BODY OF THE CHRIST!

THE LORD OUR GOD IS ONE

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

In reference to His substance, God is SPIRIT. In reference to His state of being, God is ONE. That which is ONE is that which is UNITED, UNDIVIDED, UNFRAGMENTED. Oneness speaks of unity, harmony, singleness, concord, solidarity. God is ONE! The fact that there is ONE GOD must not be confused with the truth that GOD IS ONE. Perhaps, as someone has said, this is only another aspect of viewing the same truth, for God is truly one, undivided in Himself, or in His will and purpose. And surely HE alone is God! But this One God IS ONE. It is a great and blessed fact that God is ONE. He who is united, undivided and unfragmented in every aspect of His nature and state of being cannot be influenced, affected, moved, upset, frustrated, changed, altered, damaged, destroyed, made discordant or set at variance in any way. The character of God is eternal, changeless, unaffected. The love, joy, peace, righteousness, wisdom, justice, power and will of God do not rise and fall, rise and fall, rise and fall. Matters not what happens nor what men or devils say or do, the love of God, the purpose of God, the power of God are steadfast, unmoved, unquenched, unaffected, without fluctuation. He is Yahweh, the SELF-EXISTENT ONE. He is ONE. No power in the universe can cause any deviation whatsoever in God's nature, will or action.

There can be no doubt that each aspect of God's being moves in perfect harmony and accord with every other part of His being. Here in the physical world there are contradictions in our value system because there are contradictions in moral philosophy, limited by finite and faltering human nature and reason. What is the ultimate contradiction in moral philosophy? In moral philosophy, the ultimate contradiction is between justice and mercy. The judge, if he is a good judge, will be just. He will not let somebody get off, without paying their dues. Moral justice demands that evil be punished. Because if evil goes unpunished, then the judge is a participant in the crime, by letting it go unchecked. Justice is one side of the coin. The other side, the other value is mercy. Mercy says, "I want to forgive you, when you don't deserve it. And the more undeserving you are, the deeper my mercy runs." This is a contradiction. How can you possibly combine these two creatively?

We speak of law and love, of truth and grace, of justice and mercy, and so long as sin does not exist there is no controversy between any of these. If there be no sin, law and

love are never out of harmony with grace or each other; truth and grace go ever hand in hand; justice and mercy sing a common anthem. If the law be broken, what is love to do? If truth be violated, how can grace operate? In the presence of crime, how can justice and mercy meet? This is the problem of problems. It is not a problem as between God and man. It is not a problem as between God and the angels. It is a problem between GOD AND HIMSELF.

Justice and mercy can only be harmonized by making them ONE. And this can be done only in the realm of the God who IS ONE. Every facet of God's nature is unified, so that His justice is not warring against His mercy, neither is His judgment set against His grace. Herein lies the mystery and the wonder of it all - there is no conflict in God, no contradiction! In God, and in God alone, we see the contradictions combined, and justice and mercy kiss each other. Christendom has spoken of God's justice being satisfied, as if He were an incorrigible tyrant that must somehow be appeased. They speak of eternal punishment as a self-evident result of God's eternal, unchanging nature of infinite justice. Apparently, according to this crude theory, one is to think of two parallel lines, divine mercy and divine justice, two divine properties, running close beside each other but diametrically opposed to one another, each in its own right, continuing on into infinity. Not only love, but also justice must run its full course, and thus justice and mercy are isolated from each other endlessly. In this view God is both INFINITELY JUST and INFINITELY MERCIFUL at the same time but never the twain shall meet! This crude theory is responsible for the ridiculous doctrine of eternal life for some and eternal torture for others.

I am constrained by the Holy Spirit of God to cry out against such a blasphemous absurdity! Our God is not schizophrenic, He does not have a split personality. He is not both INFINITELY MERCIFUL and INFINITELY VINDICTIVE! The Lord our God is ONE, all the attributes and powers of His Being are working together in perfect accord, each harmoniously synchronized in the same purpose and toward the same end, without any contradiction. In the scriptural view, HIS JUSTICE is linked inherently to HIS SALVATION. "There is no God else beside Me; a JUST God and a SAVIOUR; there is none beside Me" (Isa 45:21). He is a SAVIOUR because He is also JUST. His righteous nature requires that He be our Saviour. He "knows our frame; He remembers that we are dust," and He knows right well that "the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of Him who has subjected the same in hope" (Rom. 8:20).

Yes, HE WILL CORRECT US, and by this very correction make the necessary changes in us, and then He will bring us into the fullness of salvation. IN HIM "mercy and truth are met together; righteousness (justice) and peace have kissed each other" (Ps. 85: 10). These are never to be viewed as OPPONENTS to each other, they are gloriously WORKING TOGETHER to fulfill God's redemption in us. Where mercy alone cannot produce the needed change, God applies His judgment. And when judgment has accomplished its full work, "in wrath He remembers mercy" (Hab. 3:2). His wrath and His mercy COOPERATE one with the other, both designed to play their role in bringing man to the one expected end: reconciliation to God and deliverance from sin and death. There is no conflict between the two - the objective of each is redemptive, not vindictive. If we have a concept where the judgment of God is pitted against His mercy, or where the justice of God becomes greater than His love, or where wrath triumphs over grace, then we have a distorted concept of God. We have not yet learned this one simple but sublime truth: The Lord our God is O-N-E!

I have never believed that by teaching the ultimate salvation of all men we were pitting one group of scriptures against another, or one aspect of God's nature against another, for it is my conviction that the solution can only be found in the correct HARMONIZATION of all the scriptures and all the characteristics within God Himself, not ignoring one while advancing the other. God's justice and His mercy, God's judgment and His salvation must MEET TOGETHER AS CO-AGENTS IN GOD'S REDEMPTIVE PURPOSES, else there is eternal warfare and irreconcilable conflict between the two. I find all the judgments of God to be disciplinary and correctional rather than vindictive and final. Therein lies the harmonization of which I speak. According to the Word of God, God is at the same time the JUDGE OF ALL and the SAVIOUR OF ALL. He is not the Judge of some and the Saviour of some, but both Judge and Saviour of ALL! "Judge of all" must mean that He judges all; none escape. "Saviour of all" must mean that He saves all; none are left out. Within that one wonderful fact can be seen the beautiful HARMONIZATION of the justice and the love of God - His judgment leading to repentance and a knowledge of His mercy. Praise His wonderful name!

The judgments of God can never be rightly understood apart from His nature of love. If God's judgments spring not from His love then they come not from God at all, for He IS LOVE. What ought this to teach us about His judgments! The pen of inspiration wrote, "My son, despise not the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when you art rebuked of Him: for whom the Lord LOVES He chastens. and scourges every son whom He receives...for our profit, that we may be partakers of His holiness" (Heb. 12:5-10). God doesn't go around purposelessly punishing or vindictively torturing any of His creatures. But He does go about precise paths of bringing forth correction UNTO RIGHTEOUSNESS, as the prophet says, "When Your judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will LEARN RIGHTEOUSNESS" (Isa. 26:9). God's judgments, whether upon saints, nations, or the wicked in general are all corrective in nature, accomplished by the motivation of His nature which is LOVE. Truly, the Lord our God is ONE!

Do you recall the story about the wind and the sun arguing over who was the stronger? They decided that whoever could take the coat off a man walking down the street was stronger. The wind tried first. It blew and howled furiously. Twice it knocked the man off his feet, but the coat did not come off. In fact, the harder the wind blew, the more the man buttoned up. Finally the wind gave up. Next was the sun's turn. It started to shine, and the man, glad with the change in weather, unbuttoned his coat. But the sun grew warmer still till finally the man took off his coat. The sun won. One of the hidden morals of this story is that both the wind and the sun had the same objective - to take the coat off the man! While, in this case, warmth won out over violence, there was no conflict between the two. And so it is with God's judgments and His mercy. He will send what is needful to work the necessary changes in our lives - but ALL THINGS are of God, and all things WORK TOGETHER for our good. The Lord our God is ONE!

ALL THINGS CREATED BY GOD

Come, my friends, and go with me,
Away back to eternity!
Go back beyond the days of youth
Where everything that was, was truth.

Go back until within the past
You fail to find the place, at last,

Where "the beginning" you can see
Of the immense eternity.

Go back until there's not a trace
Of anything but God and space:
God all around - below, above,
Unlimited in pow'r and love.

Away back there, removed from sight,
Where everything that was, was right.
Away back there, removed from sin,
Is where our story will begin.

In thought, dear reader of these lines, we have gone back "before the ages", where, in the language of the poet, we find "not a trace of anything but God - and space: God all around - below, above, unlimited in power and love." Oh, how I wish I might be able to impress clearly and indelibly upon the heart of everyone who reads this, the fact that there was a dimension when there were no "ages", no mighty blazing suns, no spiraling nebulae, no galaxies of stars and planets and moons, to mark the dial of eternity! Away back there, God's "grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the times of the ages" began their course.

This truth is confirmed by the apostle Paul, to whom, alone, the full scope of divine revelation was made known. He tells us of the "times" outside the "ages" saying, "Who did save us, and did call with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace, that was given to us in Christ Jesus, before the times of the ages... (II Tim. 1:9, Young's Literal). In Titus he speaks of being an apostle "according to the faith of the choice ones of God, and an acknowledging of truth that is according to piety, upon hope of life age-during, which God, who does not lie, did promise before times of ages" (Tit. 1:1-2, Young's Literal). And again, when speaking of those saints who were mature and able to bear it, he says, "But we speak of the hidden wisdom of God in a secret, that God foreordained before the ages to our glory, which no one of the rulers of this age did know, for if they had known, the Lord of glory they would not have crucified" (I Cor. 2:7-8, Young's Literal).

It will be a wonderful day for you, dear one, when first your soul becomes enthralled with the revelation that God, before ever the world began or ever the ages were formed, looked forth from His temple of wisdom and omnipotence to chart with resolute care the course and purpose of every age. Your heart will throb as you read the opening proclamation of scripture, "In the beginning - GOD!" In the beginning of what? Not in the beginning of God, certainly, but in the beginning of His creation of all things, in the beginning of time, in the beginning of the orderly procession of the divinely destined ages. In the beginning stands God, omnipotent and omniscient, creating, sustaining and guiding all things and all people and all the ages of time according to the purpose of His own will. No purpose ordained by God from the beginning can possibly go astray or be hindered by the efforts of devil or man. Oh, for the hour when all creation will grasp the beautiful message, "From Him everything comes, by Him everything exists, and in Him everything ends!" (Rom. 11:36).

If God be the Creator of ALL THINGS, then it must of necessity follow that GOD IS THE SOURCE OF ALL THINGS. We read the passage quoted above from the Diaglott.

"Because OUT of HIM, and THROUGH HIM, and FOR HIM are ALL THINGS, to Him be the glory for the ages. Amen." All things are out of God, all things are through Him, all things are for Him, and all things are unto Him, ending in Him. The clearest possible rendering is given by Goodspeed, "For from Him everything comes; through Him everything exists; and in Him everything ends! Glory to Him forever! Amen." The Amplified Bible also expresses it beautifully, "For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. For all things originate with Him and come from Him, all things live through Him, and all things center in and tend to consummate and end in Him. To Him be glory forever! Amen - so be it."

The Bible opens with the simplest and yet most profound statement ever recorded by human hand, "In the beginning - GOD!" The sweet singer of Israel declared of Him, "Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever You have formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, YOU ARE GOD" (Ps. 90:2). Our God was the great active force, the cause of all that began to happen "in the beginning." How awesome the thought that there was a "time" when there was nothing - absolutely nothing - but GOD! There was no blue-green orb called earth, no silver-shimmering moon, no diamond studded heaven of stars and planets, no angels, no devils, no man nothing but GOD HIMSELF. There were not even the 100 elements out of which everything in the universe is constructed - there was only God. Paul caught something of the sublimity of this eternal and Self-existent One and wrote, "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. 1:16-17).

Let me emphasize this wonderful and important truth: "He is before all things." This can mean nothing else but that God is not one of the "things". He is BEFORE all things. He is before all THINGS and He is before A-L-L things. And just as majestic is the truth that "by Him ALL THINGS CONSIST." Young's Literal Translation renders this literally from the Greek: "Because IN HIM were the all things CREATED... and HIMSELF IS BEFORE ALL, and the all things IN HIM HAVE CONSISTED."

This raises an important and interesting question. If God was "before all things," then OUT OF WHAT did He CREATE all things? When I was a boy we had a "Sunday School" definition of the word create. "To create," I was told, means to make something out of nothing. To my young and unlearned mind that sounded altogether logical. After all I thought, if God is God, and God can do anything, then surely it is no problem to God to make something out of nothing! But as I grew older and learned something of the laws of physics, I discovered a simple but demonstrable fact, namely, that out of nothing - nothing comes! Also, out of something you get no more than that thing is able to contain. You cannot take a gallon of milk out of a pint bottle unless you refill the bottle again and again. You cannot put a hundred dollars in the bank and take out a thousand. The man who seeks to take out of the bank far more than he put in will find himself a recipient of free board and room for many months to come! This, then, is a fundamental point of natural law. We recognize that out of nothing, nothing comes. And even God, in all His omnipotence, does not violate His own creative principle, and MAKE SOMETHING OUT OF NOTHING!

If there was only God, and absolutely no thing other than God, what kind of material did God have at His disposal out of which to construct all things? If you were standing completely alone, with nothing outside your own being existent, what material would be

available for making something other than yourself? The answer is, of course, NOTHING! YOU WOULD HAVE TO MAKE THE "THINGS" OUT OF YOURSELF! And friend, this is precisely what God did. Now we can understand the full import of those words inspired by the blessed Holy Spirit through the apostle Paul: "Because IN HIM were the all things created ... and Himself is before all, and the all things I-N H-I-M HAVE CONSISTED" (Col. 1:16-17, Young's Literal).

God couldn't make the world out of magma, because the molten lava is itself one of the "things" created. He couldn't form the stars and planets of any combination of atoms, for atoms are the "building blocks" or raw material of which "things" are composed, and atoms themselves, with their electrons, protons and neutrons, are "things". Can we not see by this that God pre-dated and pre-existed the whole universe of atoms, compounds and elements! It should be abundantly clear to any thinking mind that since God is before all "things", it was IN HIM that all "things" were created, and IN HIM all "things" were set together and arranged in order - the very source and substance of all "things" is GOD HIMSELF! OUT OF THE ENERGY AND SUBSTANCE OF HIS OWN BEING GOD BROUGHT FORTH AND CONSTITUTED ALL THINGS.

ALL THINGS CREATED IN CHRIST

It would be of utmost profit for any of us to diligently study the oft repeated scriptural term "in Christ" or "in Him". With this thought in mind I would draw your attention to some scripture passages which appear to teach us that our Lord Jesus Christ is the Creator of all things. He is, of course! But that is not the truth set forth in these particular verses. The first passage we will consider is the one we have already quoted and commented upon in Col. 1:15-17. I will quote this first from the Authorized Version for this is one of the passages which seems to say that all things were created by Jesus Christ. "Who is 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."

From this scripture we would be led to believe that the creation was made by the Son; but the word translated "by" here in the first instance is the Greek word EN, and means "in", not "by", and this is the way most of the other translations have rendered it. "For IN HIM were all things created." If you have other translations, check it, and you will see that this is correct. The Greek preposition EN clearly defines location or position. The second instance in this verse where the word "by" is used, "All things were created BY HIM and for Him," the word translated "by" here is the Greek word DIA and means "through", or "on account of", or "by the agency of", and you will find the other translators have translated it this way. Weymouth's rendering of this is lovely: "For IN HIM was created the universe, of things in heaven and things on earth, things seen and things unseen, thrones, dominions, principedoms, powers, all were created and exist through Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and IN and THROUGH Him the universe is one harmonious whole." Isn't that beautiful?

You see, there is a whole world of difference between something being created BY Him, or created IN HIM, and my prayer is that the Holy Spirit will make this real to you. I think, as we continue with this study you will begin to see what the Spirit has said. It is unfortunate that the translators were so inconsistent in some of the translation. In this verse, "For BY Him were all things created that are IN heaven...", the word by, and the

word in, are both translated from the same Greek word EN, yet in the first instance it was translated "by", and in the second instance, "in", as it should be. This is misleading to the reader.

I am not a carpenter by any stretch of the imagination, but when we were on the mission field in Mexico back in the 1960's I built most of the furniture we had in our house, crude though it was. From rough lumber I constructed kitchen cabinets, tables, chairs, beds and a variety of other items. Even I was amazed at how serviceable and attractive some of these articles turned out to be! They were made by me, but when I left the place where they were, they were all sold and left behind, and I was separated from them; because, you see, they were not part of me. Though they were made by me, they had no part with me. But if somehow they had been made IN me, and not BY me, then wherever I went they would be with me, for they would be a part of me, part of my being. If the creation had been merely made BY the Son, then it could be a thing apart from Him, and not a part of Him. When we see that God the Father created the universe IN THE CHRIST, and the whole universe was in the beginning an integral part of His Being, then that is an altogether different picture.

Words are totally inadequate to articulate a truth so sublime, so I must leave this ultimately to the Holy Spirit of Truth to unfold within your spirit. You see, when God planned the universe, He planned it in and around His Christ. The Christ is the center and the circumference of it all. He is the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last. The whole vast creation was made in Him and for Him. It began in Him and it will end in Him. The present creation was created in Him. The Christ was the beginning of the creation of God. "These things says the Amen, the faithful and true witness, THE BEGINNING OF THE CREATION OF GOD" (Rev. 3:14). He will also be the end, for all things must begin in Him and end in Him, for this is the Father's purpose for His Son. Everything that can possibly exist or be, is included in the scope of creation in Col. 1:16-20. Within the compass of five verses we read no less than eight times that the things created IN Him and FOR Him are all-inclusive and all-pervading. He is the first-born of EVERY creature. ALL is created in Him, and ALL is created through and for Him. He is before ALL. ALL is BOUND TOGETHER BY Him. In ALL He is becoming first, having pre-eminence. ALL fullness, or the fullness of ALL, dwells 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 HEAVENS and ALL that is ON THE EARTH. It is said to include both visible and invisible. Nothing is omitted and nothing can be left out.

ALL THINGS OUT OF HIM

Our God and Father has been pleased to leave us in no doubt or uncertainty as to how or where all things began, but in clear, unequivocal language stated the source and goal of all things for our assurance and joy. All originated IN HIM, created from the substance of His own divine energy and Being, and held together in a harmonious wholeness in His eternal Word, or the Christ. But, for His own wise purposes, all did not remain that way.

There are four Greek prepositions which are important to us in the understanding of God's great plan of creation and redemption. We have already explained the preposition EN. EN means IN and denotes a position of rest, an established location. ALL was created IN the Christ.

The scriptures are clear, however, that all did not remain "in" Him. We are assured that there was initiated another stage of activity whereby all things were brought "out" of Him. Nothing can be clearer than the fact that "in" and "out" are opposites! You cannot be both in and out of any place or thing at the same time. Coming "out" from a place or position involves a process, an action. The Greek preposition EK means "out of". The Word of God declares that not only were all things created IN the Christ, or IN God (for the Christ was in the bosom of the Father, Jn. 1:18), but there was a process by which the all things CAME OUT of God. Let us read it: "We are aware that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is no other God except One. For even if so be that there are those being termed gods, whether in heaven or on earth, even as there are many gods and many lords, nevertheless to us there is but one God, the Father, O-U-T OF WHOM ALL IS, and we for Him" (I Cor.8:4-7). Again, "O, the depth of the riches and of the wisdom and of the knowledge of God! How inscrutable are His judgments, and untraceable His ways! For who knew the mind of the Lord? or who became His adviser? or who gives to Him first, and will be repaid by Him? seeing that ALL is OUT of Him and through Him and for Him: to Him be glory for the ages! Amen!" (Rom. 11:33-36). Now let us read these last verses from the Emphatic Diaglott: "For who knew the mind of the Lord? or who was His counselor? or who first gave to Him, and it shall be given to him again? Because OUT OF HIM, and through Him, and for Him are ALL THINGS. To Him be the glory for the ages. Amen."

This is without doubt one of the least understood statements in the whole of the Word of God. And yet, a true comprehension of the real purpose of God throughout the ages cannot be had apart from it. Considering the creation, of the heavens and the earth - the universe and all that is therein, visible and invisible - fresh from the hands of the Creator in all its primeval and pristine glory; God being all-wise and omnipotent; the question presses itself upon us: From whence came sin and evil? From whence came Satan and darkness and death? Why did God permit these to enter creation? How did it happen? Why the disruption of the primeval state?

The answer to these monumental questions is to be discovered in the great fact of creation being brought forth OUT of God. How obvious today the vast difference between those who are either "in" or "out" of Christ! "If any man be IN Christ, he is a new creation;" "...who has blessed us with all spiritual blessings IN Christ;" "IN whom also we have obtained an inheritance," etc. But of our state before we were in Christ, it is said, "At that time ye were WITHOUT (Greek: apart from, outside of) Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world" (Eph. 2:12). OUTSIDE of Christ is naught but sin, sorrow, darkness and death! In or out - what a great gulf separates these two! The very process of creation's coming out of God produced a disruption and fragmentation of the whole. "Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is ONE LORD." That which is ONE is UNITED, UNDIVIDED, UNFRAGMENTED. All is harmonized, synchronized and joined in perfect unity. IN HIM creation was one harmonious whole without a discordant note anywhere. It was pre-eminently a spiritual creation, vibrating as a symphony of unutterable beauty, a triumphant masterpiece of dynamic harmonious accord. In the glory of that celestial beginning there was no trace of sin, no evil, no death, no adversary, and no darkness or discord at all. Everything everywhere existed IN CHRIST and every spirit stood forth in its full majesty, pulsating the dynamic anthem of exulting creative glory. What a song!

When, on the barren Isle of Patmos, the beloved John heard a great voice as of a trumpet, he turned to gaze upon the glorified Lord in splendor and majesty, and the first

words uttered by this mighty One were, "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending ... the first and the last, says the Lord" (Rev. 1:8-11). Our Lord called Himself the Alpha and the Omega in Greek, the Aleph and the Tau in Hebrew, or the A and the Z in English, or its equivalent in any other language, without in the least altering the figure of its significance. Alphabetical languages usually have the letters arranged in a fixed order. The first is often used as a symbol of the beginning and the last for the ending. That is, our Lord claims to be what letters and language were meant to be, namely the expression of truth. HE IS THE W-O-R-D -- the expression of the totality of God's nature, wisdom, power and substance from first to last. God is a Spirit - an invisible, incorporeal, intangible, unapproachable Spirit. But that hidden and unsearchable One may be uttered, expressed, manifested. And that utterance, that expression, that manifestation of invisible Godhead is the Christ, the Logos, the Word - God projected from the plane of the invisible and intangible into the realm of the visible and tangible. In that long ago beginning all things were created IN THE CHRIST, and apart from Him, outside of Him was not anything made that was made. In God's revelation of Himself and His plan of the ages He has used many characters, but the first one was Christ and the last one will be Christ again. All commences and concludes IN HIM!

The First and Last brings before us both the substance and the time element of creation. Hear now what the scripture says on this most vital subject. "For from (out of) Him everything comes; through Him everything exists; and in Him everything ends! Glory to Him for ever! (Rom. 11:36, Goodspeed). "For from (out of) Him and through Him and to Him are all things. For all things originate with Him and come from Him; all things live through Him, and all things center in and tend to consummate and to end IN HIM. To Him be glory for ever!" (Amplified). Ah - everything BEGINS in Him and all ENDS in Him! HE is the FIRST and the LAST! HE is the BEGINNING! The beginning, precious friend of mine, was not a date on the calendar. The beginning was and is a glorious PERSON - our Lord Jesus Christ! Christ Himself IS the beginning! If you consider with reverent honesty these words of significance and truth, you will understand as never before the spiritual words which open our Bible in Genesis 1:1: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." IN THE B-E-G-I-N-N-I-N-G! And just what or who is "the beginning?" Christ! Thus, the spiritual translation of Gen. 1:1 would read, "IN THE CHRIST God created the heavens and the earth." Jesus Christ is "the beginning of the creation of God" (Rev. 3:14). All things were created in this beginning. The beginning is neither time or place. The beginning is a Person. Christ is the beginning. All things were created in the Christ. "For IN HIM were all things created. IN HIM all things were created and set in order in the beauty and unity and perfection and harmony of the Spirit of God.

And then something awesome happened! The creation was thrust OUT OF Christ, lowered into this gross material realm. This we have verified in the following scriptures: "But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you" (I Pet. 1:19-20). Again, "And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the lamb slain from the foundation of the world" (Rev. 13:8). I do not wish to appear to be "splitting hairs" nor do I wish to invent doctrines, but to me it is infinitely important to pay special attention to the word "foundation" in the passages just quoted. Foundation is from the Greek word KATABOLE, derived from KATABALLO, which is a compound of two words, KATA, meaning "down", and BALLO, meaning "to throw". The precise meaning of the word is "to throw down" and bespeaks, moreover, a rupture, breach, breaking or tearing asunder, schism, scission, fission - a disruption. It does not mean, as our Authorized Version has

it, the establishing of the foundation of the world, but, conversely, the breaking up or disruption of the world! The Concordant Version of the New Testament correctly renders it thus: "Christ ... a flawless and unspotted Lamb, foreknown, indeed, before the disruption of the world." Again, "...the Lambkin which has been slain from the disruption of the world."

The question readily follows: When did this disruption of the world occur? It will be helpful to turn to Gen. 1:1-2 wherein we read, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." The first verse contents itself with a simple statement of a consummated act. Not a word about the method, manner, means or procedure of creation, and nothing of its result. The second verse carries a tremendous suggestion of collapse in its touching picture of the Spirit of God brooding over the watery face of the formless void! Let us see what a careful word study of this second verse will reveal.

In the Authorized Version the text begins: "And the earth was..." This word in the Hebrew text is also translated "but", or "moreover". Thus in the Septuagint version of the scripture the text begins: "But the earth had become..." and this is the sense of the Vulgate as well. The second word to be noted is the one translated in the English Bible "was". The Hebrew language lacks a word for "became", so the word "was" is always used to carry out the sense of "became". This phrase then literally reads, "But the earth had become..." Tohu v'bohu! This phrase, "tohu v'bohu", is translated in the American Revision "waste and void". In the Authorized Version it reads, "without form and void", but the sense of this phrase is even stronger than that. The Septuagint says, "But the earth had become unfurnished and empty," the Vulgate says, "dreary and empty," and the Aramaic makes the strongest and clearest statement of all: "And the earth had become ruined and uninhabited!" Hebrew scholars have said that this is the clearest statement of all, as the term "tohu v'bohu" literally means "desolation succeeding previous life." The second verse of Genesis, then, literally should read, "But the earth had become desolate, ruined, unfurnished, disrupted, fragmented and chaotic, covered with water and shrouded in darkness. And the Spirit of God brooded over the face of the waters." Let us clearly keep in mind that all this is prior to the six days of creation, or re-creation. Isaiah states that God created the earth not a waste (Isa. 45:18) and Moses states that the earth nevertheless had become a waste.

When God lowered the creation from the realm of pure spirit existence in Christ, to the gross material realm, there occurred a mighty disruption, breaking up, or fragmentation. The creation was "made subject to vanity" and the whole downward process of disintegration and dissolution was begun. Just as our ascent back into the image and fullness of God is ever "from glory to glory," "from faith to faith," and "from experience to experience," so the process downward into fragmentation and dissolution continued through various stages and vast ages of time until the lowest depths of frustration were reached.

Let me explain as simply as I can how and why this disruption took place. When the creation came OUT OF God, lowered into the material realm, it came forth in a state of fragmentation. God is invisible. As such He cannot be seen by any of His creatures in the physical, material universe. Creation's purpose is to manifest His excellence. All things in nature point to God and are pictures, revelations of His essence. But no one thing reveals Him fully. Fragments are everywhere. His power is in the wind. His light is in the sun. Monarchs faintly mirror His majesty. The rushing, gushing crystal fountains of water figure His quickening Spirit of life. His gentleness, His compassionate heart of infinite love

is discerned in a mother's face and the touch of her hand. The "rock of ages" reveals the strength, stability and unchangeableness of His righteous dominion. Ten thousand other items proclaim His glorious attributes, character and Being. Yet each lacks the qualities inherent in the others. Each fragment tells us something about God; none tell us all about Him. Beyond these lies the vast negative realm of sin, evil, darkness and death!

It is a remarkable fact that the six creative days were as much a process of division as of constitution. The great work of separation, segregation and fragmentation continued just as soon as God said, "Let there be light!" The next act was just this: "And God divided the light from the darkness. And God called the light Day, and the darkness He called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day" (Gen. 1:4). This business of division, separation and fragmentation did not stop with that one inauspicious act. God divided the waters from the water, (Gen. 1:6). He set great lights in the firmament of the heavens, the stars, sun and moon; and made a difference between them, for "There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars: for one star differs from another star in glory" (I Cor. 15:41). 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, 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 own kind, and without her help man could not come to complete fulfillment in the producing of this progeny. "God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: ... So God created man in His own image, in the image of God created He him; male and female created He them" (Gen. 1:26-27). "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).

There is no doubt about it, when God first brought forth Adam, both the male and female were together in one, after the image and likeness of God. As to the ONENESS OF GOD we have already given reference: "Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is ONE LORD." And when God brought forth Adam there was this state of oneness, male and female in one, and "He called their name Adam." If God had originally brought forth male and female divided, saying, "These are My image and likeness," He would have been portraying in the natural the fact that He was divided in the spiritual. But He did not first bring them forth in a divided state. Adam was brought forth in oneness, and afterwards came the division. This must be very clear in our understanding, because when all is RESTORED AGAIN to that which it once was, you could not be restored into ONENESS if oneness was not the original state.

Furthermore, as the progeny of Adam increased upon the earth God divided the families of man, segregating them into peoples and nations with their unique customs and languages (Gen. 10:5, 32). Later the land mass of the earth itself was split apart, with the segments drifting away to form continents, and thus, in the days of one, Peleg, "was the earth divided" (Gen. 10:25).

To further develop this theme let us note that man himself came OUT OF God and in the process experienced the lack that naturally followed his fragmentation from the wholeness of God. The book of Genesis gives two accounts of the creation of man. As I have studied the Word of God, many things have become very evident, one of which is

that there are two distinct creations or works of God revealed in chapters one and two of Genesis. In Gen. 1:26-27 the first of these creative acts, in respect to man, is presented, and as we consider the wonderful advent of man created "in the image and likeness of God" we can only conclude that this is a SPIRITUAL MAN brought forth out of the very spirit-substance of God Almighty and bearing His own divine nature, character and attributes. The image of God is the nature of God reproduced in man. The second work of God wrought upon man is related in Gen. 2:7 where we see this significant action taking place: "And the Lord God FORMED MAN OF THE DUST OF THE GROUND, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul." Reading this passage we have the definite assurance that, as man has been first "created" in the spiritual image of God, a further work is being carried forth and the man is now being "formed" into another expression: "FORMED of the dust of the ground," thus BECOMING a "living soul" - manifest in the earth realm. The first is the created man, the second the formed man. The first is a spiritual man bearing God's image, the second a physical man. The first bears the image of the heavenly, while the second bears the image of the earthly. The first is known unto God in the Spirit, the second is manifest to the physical world. The first dwells in the ONENESS of God, the second is divided in the realm of the flesh. The very fact that the scripture states that Adam became a living soul, reveals that there was a process of descending from pure spirit existence, into a lesser realm.

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

But in the meantime we were made to lack, lowered from that pure spirit existence in the image of God. "You have made him a little lower than Elohim," the spirit was lowered, it was made to lack from the realm of fullness, so that some of the counter-balancing qualities which promote order and righteousness were missing. This immediately made man vulnerable to any temptation that might come his way and so he fell into the delusion of sin. The very moment the spirit was made to lack man fell into the power of death. This in turn produced a change in even the body of man and he became subject to this realm of gross materialism as we know it now. And so, when we come to Adam in the garden, when the Lord God formed him of the dust of the ground and placed him in the garden to dress it, guard it, keep it, and take care of it, Adam was ALREADY SHORT OF THE

GLORY OF GOD! He had already been lowered, had already "fallen", as it were, and been made to lack. He did not have sufficient resources to fulfill the command of God. And God planned it this way!

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

This brings us to a question of tremendous import. Did GOD create the devil? Well, we know he did not create himself! "For You have created all things." And he did not "just happen"! The reason some have held the view that Satan was originally an angel who, of his own free will rebelled against the Most High, is because it seems to relieve God of the responsibility of evil and sin in the world. When they are asked if a good God created a bad devil, they can reply: "No He did not create the devil; He created a beautiful and powerful angel who later became the devil - all by himself!" This sounds good on the surface, but when the Spirit of wisdom and revelation comes from God, this line of reasoning is seen to be but shallow inductions of the natural mind.

How could a good God create a bad devil? How could a holy God create a wicked devil? How could the God of infinite love create a devil of utter hatred and viciousness, a murderer from the beginning? How could the God of all Truth create a devil who is a liar and the father of it, who never did, from the very beginning, have any truth in him? How could the God who IS LIGHT, and in whom there is no darkness at all, create a devil who is the Prince of the power of darkness?

There are untold millions of Christians who do not like to believe that A-L-L T-H-I-N-G-S A-R-E O-F G-O-D - including evil. They much prefer to believe, as the harlot system has taught them, that in the beginning God made everything "perfect", then one of the "perfect" angels "made himself" into the devil, and that devil came in and wrecked the works of God's hands and so degraded God's beautiful and perfect creation that the Lord Almighty Himself was hard put to the test to discover some means to restore creation from the clutches of this wicked one. Why, oh why, can men not believe the simple, unvarnished Word of God? Ah, we have God's own word for it - His positive statement that HE CREATES EVIL. "That they may know from the rising of the sun, and from the west, THAT THERE IS NONE BESIDE ME. I am the Lord, and there is none else. I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil. I THE LORD DO ALL OF THESE THINGS" (Isa. 45:7). God creates evil! It cannot be! But here it is in the Word. What will you do with it, beloved? "We must explain it somehow," the fundamentalist says. "Surely it cannot mean that God creates evil, sin, sinners, devils, wrongdoing - it must mean that He creates physical - evil famines, pestilences, hurricanes, tornadoes, forest fires, floods, calamities, judgments, etc. which God sends upon mankind as punishment for their wickedness." Not so! The word here for "evil" is the Hebrew word RA which is used throughout the Old Testament to denote wickedness, sin and wrongdoing. In some five hundred passages it is so used!

But how could God do this? The answer is so simple, so plain, so basic, we blush and bow our heads with shame even for the asking! How can you create darkness? Just by turning off the light! Anyone can perform this simple feat at any hour of the day or night. The sequence is totally correct, as we read in Isa. 45:7, "I FORM THE LIGHT, and create darkness." The initial state is light. God is light and He was before all things - eternal, omnipresent Light. Withdraw that light and there is darkness. But the light came first, and

therefore is always able to swallow up the darkness into light itself again. "The light still shines in the darkness and the darkness has never put it out" (Jn. 1:5, Phillips). The light will always conquer darkness, but darkness shall never conquer light. But to create darkness - it is only necessary to withdraw the light!

Another illustration: Life is a cause, death is a result, an effect of the withdrawing of life. Death witnesses to how great LIFE really is! But life will not tell you anything at all about death, for as long as there be life, death is non-existent. But let us pursue this truth a little further, for Jesus spoke concerning the devil, that "He abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it" (Jn. 8:44). J. B. Phillips gives the plainest and most accurate translation: "He ALWAYS WAS a MURDERER, and he has NEVER DEALT WITH THE TRUTH, since the truth will have nothing to do with him. Whenever he tells a lie, he speaks in character, for he is a liar and the father of lies."

Now, how did the devil come into this state of being a liar, never having dealt in truth, always a murderer, and one in whom there never has been any light or life? Simple! When God brought all things forth OUT OF HIMSELF, He withheld something from this being we know as the devil, caused him to lack, created a deficiency, and made him in a condition of fragmentation or separation from certain essential elements. God withheld light. He withheld truth. He withheld life. In the same way a hormonal imbalance in a human being can cause excruciating pain, sickness, stunted growth, vicious temper, mental illness, or create a psychopathic killer - so a SPIRITUAL or PSYCHICAL deficiency or imbalance produces a spiritually deranged personality out of character with the perfect nature of God.

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

this world.' In the former, there is contained the thought of TOTAL DEPENDENCE - in the latter, the principle of INDEPENDENCE" - end quote.

Independence - separation - fragmentation - imbalance - these terms each bespeak of that which has come out of God into a state of division, disruption, disunion, thus lacking wholeness. As we pointed out earlier, all sin, evil, darkness and death is the result of an imbalance or lack. All nature provides us with graphic illustrations of the result of both balance and imbalance.

One of the great principles of the universe is the principle of balance. If the earth were a few miles closer to the sun, it would be an inferno. If it were a few miles farther away it would be a desolate, frigid desert. But in its present location, balanced at an ideal distance from the sun, our planet is in a perfect condition to sustain an exciting proliferation of life forms. None of the other planets in our solar system can accommodate life because they are all unbalanced in their relationship to the sun. The atoms that are the basic building blocks of all matter on earth are another example of this perfect balance. The nucleus of the atom is made up of neutrons and protons, an incredibly harmonious organization. Yet, it is through the splitting of one of these atoms that the cataclysmic eruptions of nuclear power take place. The disruption of the atom brings devastation, sickness and death. To function properly, every part of our world, no matter how miniscule, must be in a state of complete equilibrium.

And so it is with our bodies. The human body is just another part of the universe that is meant to be in perfect balance. We have been constructed in such a way that we need just so much exercise, no more and no less. We need just so much food of certain types. And we need just the right amount of sleep and relief from the tensions and stresses of daily life. If a person goes too far in either direction - too little or too much exercise, food, or rest - then his or her entire physical and psychological system gets out of kilter. And where there is a lack of balance, there is also a lack of personal well-being. By the same token, on the positive side, where there is balance, there is total well-being. Dis-ease is the product of imbalance in the physiological system. Cancer is one of the most dangerous and most dreaded of all diseases. In cancer, some of the cells of the body become disorganized and begin to grow so fast that they choke off organs of the body that our lives depend on. When those organs can no longer work, the person dies.

Food is an example from nature of the need for balance and wholeness. The best source of all nutritional elements is foods to which we are naturally adapted, eaten in their natural condition. If the food cannot be ingested in its raw and natural state, exactly as it came from the hand of the Creator, unprocessed and otherwise untampered with, it does not by nature belong in the human diet. We live in the day of refined foods, and refined means simply - FRAGMENTED AND DIVIDED! God provides us with the whole grain of wheat, and what technology and science does to the wheat after it is harvested is an outrage. First, the wheat grain is stripped of its most important nutritional elements by the removal of the bran. Then the germ of the wheat (the living part of the seed, which is full of enzymes and even more vitamins) is destroyed or discarded. What is left? The wheat center, which is mostly starch with very few distinctive vitamins. This lifeless form is then processed into flour; chemicals are added, and this is presented to the public as white, high quality, enriched flour. How can a food be "enriched" when all of the wholesome, natural nutrition is taken out of it and chemicals are substituted for the living vitamins, minerals and proteins? This snow-white powder, best suited for making wall-paper paste, is then formed into products called macaroni, spaghetti, noodles, bread, pastries, etc..

Humans consume large amounts of this fibreless paste (pasta), it passes from the stomach into the intestines where it clings to, and corrodes, the walls of the intestinal tract, fermenting and putrefying over long periods of time, and then we wonder why so many are dying from colon cancer!

Nutritive sufficiency depends on whole foods compounded by nature, according to God's design. Vitamins extracted from foods lose much of their value in the process of extraction. And they lose value when separated from their biochemical partners. The heat, chemicals and preservatives employed to bring them to the consumer make them liabilities, not assets. No fragmented or unnatural concoction can possibly substitute for natural, whole foods. All fragmented foods are deficient. Every fragmented food lacks wholeness. Each fragmented food is unbalanced. The result of this fragmentation is disease and death. And in the spiritual realm fragmentation means to lack something of that wholeness and fullness we knew once IN GOD before being lowered into the earth realm, made a soulish man, and separated from the life that is in Him. The lack has not been dispersed equally - demonic spirits lack far more than men of Adam's race, and one man may lack a different element than another, but "ALL have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23). The power of sin and death is to be discovered in this universal DEFICIENCY, this coming short of God's glory, this fragmentation of creation when it came out of God.

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

Bear with me as I draw your attention to yet another illustration - anger. Many Christians think any expression of anger is bad. Jesus Christ couldn't have been perfect, say some, for He lost His temper and became angry. Jesus Christ evidently was not perfect because He became angry. Is that true? I am afraid that it most certainly is true that Jesus Christ got angry. We read in the scripture that He looked round upon them with anger. Elsewhere we read that seeing the traffickers within the temple He made whips out of cords and drove the money changers out of the temple in anger. It is most certainly true that Jesus Christ became angry. It is not true, however, that this means He was not perfect. In fact, this is a demonstration of the many-faceted perfections of the Christ!

It has been argued that anger is always and invariably a sin. It is no doubt true that anger is often a very destructive and evil emotion, but it is far from true to say that anger is always that type of an emotion. Eph. 4:26 says, "Be ye angry, and sin not." "BE ANGRY." It is a command! "Be ye angry! and sin not." Furthermore, the Bible clearly tells us that God is angry with the wicked every day. Therefore, if anger is a sin, it is self-evident that

God is a sinner and this, of course, is, on the very face of it palpably absurd. No, anger may be a virtue. In fact, the absence of anger under certain conditions may be a sin. It is one of the sins prevalent in America today.

Anger is often seen as a result of the fall of mankind. However, before Adam and Eve fell, God gave them the commission to "replenish the earth, and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moves upon the earth" (Gen. 1:28). Without an aggressive drive, Adam and Eve would have been unable to subdue the earth or maintain dominion over it. Anger and emotion were part of the emotional equipment man was given for the task. However, as a result of the fall, anger has become one of man's worst enemies. Uncontrolled, unbalanced, or misdirected, it can complicate or destroy one's life.

Temper in balance is a godly emotion, but unbalanced, on either side of the scale, it becomes sin. A person whose temper is unbalanced on the passive side will sit in his favorite chair reading the morning paper while the kids break up the furniture and demolish the house. He is not stirred to action, so sits passively by, ignoring the problem. On the other side, uncontrolled anger is vicious, destructive, and often deadly. If all that power is mishandled, it can create all kinds of havoc. For literally millions of Americans, anger is their number one enemy. Some ten million of our people - in anger - physically abused their children last year. More than five million men - in anger - beat up their wives last year. And over one-half of all the homicides in our country involved two people who knew each other well but - usually in anger one shot or knifed or otherwise destroyed the other. Anger, out of control, can devastate our lives. There is no emotion which of itself is evil. It is only when it is used outside the limits and structure that God has established that it becomes an evil. Controlled, temperate, balanced anger will neither ignore a child's misbehavior nor abuse him. It will correct in the proper spirit of firmness and sternness - tempered with love. Such is the way of OUR FATHER. "And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of Him: for whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth. Furthermore, we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live?" (Heb. 12:5-9).

We want to make this as plain as we possibly can. Sin and evil are always the result of a lack, an imbalance in man. Sex is a wonderful and beautiful thing in the order of God, but out of balance it is demeaning and creates problems of guilt, distrust, broken homes, venereal disease, etc. Within the marriage union it is holy, the apt figure for the spiritual love and union between Christ and the church; but out of balance expresses itself in fornication, adultery, homosexuality, bestiality and all manner of uncleanness. The awesome power of true love will keep a man's sexual drive in order - giving him eyes only for his beloved; but when a man lacks pure love, or God's own divine nature of holiness and purity, his fleshly passions run unchecked, having no counter-balance, he is "drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death" (James 1:14-15).

God Himself possesses the qualities of hatred, jealousy, vengeance, anger, and all the dark emotions of men who steal and fight and lust and murder and destroy. But you see - each of these emotions are counter-balanced by His attributes of love, goodness, wisdom, righteousness and holiness. Every divine action therefore is balanced, nothing out of control, and God who sinneth not is One who IS light, and in Him there is no

darkness at all! Men, however, retaining these negative emotions unbalanced by the positive characteristics of God's nature, manifest such out of balance and fill the earth with evil, violence and death. Satan himself, possessing the attributes of selfhood, half-truth, hatred and vengeance, unbalanced by the positive, goes about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.

We have met some brethren in this end-time move of the Spirit who have exaggerated the bright side of the love of God out of all proportion to the other aspects of His justice and judgment. The love of God has been presented in such a way that it is a weakness rather than a strength. It has been presented on the sunny side of the street with nothing on the other side ever mentioned. There is a "love" of God preached that sounds to me like the doting indulgence of rather senile grandparents instead of the vital and vigorous concern of a Father for the best interests of a son. They have used the ship worn cliché "God is love, God is love, God is love" until love has become such a one-sided, mushy, gooey, syrup-sweet thing, and they have not told about the dark side of the love of God. They have watered love down, making it sickening rather than stimulating, causing it to slop over on every side like a sentimental feeling rather than an abiding concern for the object of love. This, too, is imbalance - sin!

Let every man and woman who treasures the beautiful hope of sonship know that there is the DARK SIDE OF GOD'S LOVE! Ah, the Great Physician will put His child on the operating table. He will use the surgeon's knife when He sees a tumor of self-will or a deadly virus of carnality sapping our spiritual lives, or when He sees the cancerous growth of sin. He does not hesitate to deal with us severely. We must learn this fact early: He loves us just as much when He is subjecting us to surgery, as when He sends us blessings and gifts and brings us into the sunshine of His glory. Precious friend of mine, He loves us most when He is dealing severely with us, "for whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth." God's great and eternal love is perfectly balanced. Truly, the Lord our God is ONE!

THE UNFRAGMENTED ONE

Humanity, at present, is a hopeless mass of conflicting interests. It is divided into a thousand fragments. There is the basic division of the sexes. It seems almost strange that this should be a basis of discord. But so it is. There are the divisions of race, color, nationality, class, station, education, ability, language, custom, creed, etc., etc. But there is one image who is perfect: the blessed Son of God, the visible manifestation of the Father, the only One who has ever walked upon this planet who answers every attribute which Deity demands. He is the only whole, united, balanced, UNFRAGMENTED MAN! In Jesus Christ a Man has stepped forth who came from God without any lack, so that He could make this astonishing declaration: "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Show us the Father? Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of Myself, but the Father that dwelleth in Me, He doeth the works. Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father in Me" (Jn. 14:9-11).

God's first begotten Son was the express image of His Father, for God had no forefathers, so when He begat a Son, He was the exact image of His Father. This Jesus was - the exact image and likeness of God, and the only One on earth so far to bear the Father's likeness. Heb. 1:3 tells us that the Son was the brightness and glory of God, and the express image of His Person. Col. 1:15 says that He is the image of the invisible God.

He bore the image of His Father, as many an earthly son does of his father. Most people think that Adam in the garden of Eden was in the image and likeness of God, but as we have shown previously, he was in the image and likeness of God when originally created a spiritual man in the heavenly realm; but once lowered into the state of a soul man, formed of the dust of the ground, subjected to the world of duality and division, made to "lack a little from Elohim," stripped of some of that glory, and the one-ness of God's nature, subjected to the bondage of vanity, emptiness and nothingness, fragmented and unbalanced in his constitution - he bore the image of the earthly!

In Christ all the attributes of God are conciliated and He is fully furnished for every phase of His purpose to reconcile the universe. Christ is both the Saviour of the world and the Judge of the world. "This is indeed the Christ, the SAVIOUR OF THE WORLD" (Jn. 4:42). "He will ... JUDGE THE WORLD in righteousness by that Man whom He hath ordained" (Acts 17:31). There is no choice between these two, and no division. Jesus Christ is not either the world's Saviour or the world's Judge. The preachers rant and rave and tell the people, "Today Jesus is your Saviour; tomorrow He will be your Judge. If you do not know Him today as your Saviour, tomorrow you will meet Him as your Judge." By this they mean that Jesus is only a Saviour today, and only a Judge in God's great tomorrow. If He does not eternally save you today, He will eternally damn you tomorrow. They have so divided God's nature and powers until it is impossible for Him to be both the Saviour of the world and the judge of the world, as the scriptures declare. In their warped, twisted, pitiful little minds God must be one or the other - He cannot be BOTH! But the glorious testimony of scripture is that the Lord our God is ONE - He is both SAVIOUR OF ALL and JUDGE OF ALL, the SAVIOUR OF THE WORLD and the JUDGE OF THE WORLD - HE SAVES THE WHOLE WIDE WORLD A-N-D JUDGES THE WHOLE WIDE WORLD! His judgment is unto salvation. "When Thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness" (Isa. 26:9). The notion that Jesus is only a Saviour today and only a Judge tomorrow is born of ignorance and contradicts the plain teaching of the Word of God. "For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son: THAT A-L-L MEN SHOULD HONOUR THE SON, EVEN AS THEY HONOUR THE FATHER" (Jn. 5:22-23). "N-O-W is the judgment of this world: N-O-W shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, WILL DRAW A-L-L MEN UNTO ME" (Jn. 12:31-32). In these verses Christ's judgment of the world is linked to the salvation of ALL MEN. He judges ALL and saves ALL - the very same ALL! The Lord our God is ONE, and our Lord Jesus Christ is ONE!

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

This restoration into oneness has not yet fully been wrought out. "Now our knowledge is fragmentary (incomplete and imperfect), and our prophecy is fragmentary (incomplete and imperfect). But when the complete and perfect (total) comes, the incomplete and imperfect will vanish away" (I Cor. 13:9-10, Amplified). As one has written, "Herein lies

much of our training and discipline, yes, and travail, because we do receive 'IN PART', and it is FROM GOD, but it is fragmentary. If we try to claim perfection from that which is imperfect, we shall be found ashamed. But if we are exercised by that which we have received, and it works in us according to His purpose, then we shall be prepared to receive more, until we come to that hour when the 'in part' shall be swallowed up in the whole. Thus we see that there is an exercise and stewardship involved in the receiving of the portion which He has given, and according to how we handle and use this part."

I am a firm believer in the manifestations of the Holy Spirit, in gifts, in ministries, in the working of miracles, in signs and wonders, in helps, governments, diversities of tongues, body ministry and the assembling of the saints, all of which are given to bring the saints to perfection; but I would be a fool indeed if I failed to recognize that even all this exists in the "in part" realm and is but a fragmentation of the wonderful fullness that dwells in the firstborn Son of God. Can we not discern this division and fragmentation in the revealing words of the apostle Paul wherein he states, "For to one is given by the Spirit the word (a fragment) of wisdom; to another the word (a fragment) of knowledge ... to another faith ... to another ... to another...to another ... dividing to every man severally as He will" (I Cor. 12:8-11).

One of the most challenging passages in all the Word of God is found in Eph. 4:15, "But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into Him in all things, which is the Head, even Christ." The key words are: GROW UP I-N-T-O HIM ... WHICH IS THE HEAD. Grow up into...the Head! Who ever heard of such a thing? Who has ever seen a body grow up into a head? The body grows, and the head may grow somewhat, but the body remains a body and the head remains a head. But in the progressive development of the many-membered Christ, the door has been opened for some members who will GROW UP I-N-T-O T-H-E H-E-A-D. It signifies a transference from one part of the body to another, from the torso, up into the Head. It means that these grow up into the measure of the stature of the fullness of the Christ, sharing all that He is. These are the sons of the MOST HIGH.

This bespeaks, a realm where you do not draw life from others, but you have life in yourself, life for yourself, and life for others. You are not a receptacle but a source. Jesus unfolded this realm when He proclaimed, "The Son of man CAME NOT TO BE MINISTERED UNTO, but to minister, and to give His life" (Mat. 20:28). Jesus did not come to receive life for HE WAS LIFE. He did not come to receive life but to GIVE LIFE. He HAD LIFE IN HIMSELF even as the Father had life in Himself. Within that life was contained every element of victory, righteousness, wisdom and power He could ever need. All the resources of God were within Him. If He needed power, the power was in the life. If He needed encouragement, the encouragement was in the life. If He needed wisdom, the wisdom was in the life. This is a nature and a life that is not dependent upon anything without, for it is a self-existent life, requiring no sustenance, underived, inherent, drawing not from anything. ALL-SUFFICIENT, ABUNDANT, GLORIOUS AND UNCHANGING LIFE!

You can always tell when people are growing up into the Head. They no longer need to BE MINISTERED TO. They aren't waiting for a healer to come to town and lay hands on them, for they have grown up into that measure of His fullness where they discover the Healer within, and are now able to appropriate FOR THEMSELVES the faith of God within to gain the victory over sickness and disease. They have no need for a prophet to give them a word, to tell them where to go or what to do, to reveal the will of God in their

life, for they have learned to hear HIS VOICE, communing daily with the Prophet within, flooded with wisdom and understanding, in the conscious awareness of Father's plan and will. They don't talk about their problems, or lament about the devil, for the joy of the Lord is their strength and the peace of God rules in their heart. They don't ring up the Elders requesting prayer for this and that need in their life, for they have discovered the river of God flowing from under the threshold of their own being, life full, abundant and triumphant! Oh, yes, they may ask prayer for others, but not for themselves. These are always ministering, encouraging, helping, blessing, lifting; but do not stop to be ministered to. This company is BECOMING ONE IN HIS FULLNESS, even those who HAVE LIFE IN THEMSELVES.

Some folk hear this word and suppose that we are "doing away with the gifts." Oh, no! beloved, we are not doing away with anything. All the wonderful gifts of the Spirit of God remain right where they have been for two thousand years - in the church - for all who need them. But I now write these lines to those elect saints who treasure the beautiful hope of sonship, and I do not hesitate to tell you that so long as we continue having to BE MINISTERED TO by the gifts, we will never know the glory of having GROWN UP INTO THE HEAD. In the "body" realm it is "fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself" (Eph. 4:16). But in the "Headship" realm it is, "As the Father hath life in Himself, so hath He given to the Son(s) to have life in Himself" (Jn. 5:25-26). It is the difference between the "in part" realm or the "fullness of God" realm. Vast multitudes are content to dwell in the former, but only a few blessed souls dare press their way into the latter. It is not a question of whether or not we have the gifts, whether or not we move in the gifts. There is liberty to exercise any gift God has given when we encounter some precious soul that needs ministry from that realm. It is, rather, a question of whether W-E NEED TO BE MINISTERED TO THROUGH THE GIFTS! I find that gifts are still a blessing, and encouragement and help from time to time, and praise God for them all, for it is manifest that we have not yet attained to all the fullness we follow after. But those who shall stand in the HEADSHIP COMPANY as SONS OF THE HIGHEST, KING-PRIESTS AFTER THE ORDER OF MELCHIZEDEK, will have the FULLNESS OF LIFE AND GLORY AND WISDOM AND KNOWLEDGE AND POWER I-N T-H-E-M-S-E-L-V-E-S -- self-existent ones, the offspring of the God who IS ONE. These will know and experience and manifest GOD IN THE HIGHEST!

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

ALL THINGS THROUGH HIM

Thus far we have considered two Greek prepositions - EN and EK - with their applications of in Him and out of Him. All things in every realm were first created IN God; all things were then lowered from that dimension of pure spirit existence, issuing "out of" God, into the fragmentation of this material realm we now know. With this lowering came the duality of light and darkness, sin and righteousness, life and death, male and female,

good and evil and the division of spirit, soul and body, not to mention a thousand other combinations.

The Authorized Version of Rom. 11:36 begins, "For of Him... " The Greek preposition EK in this phrase clearly denotes action and movement, indicating God not only as the Source, but showing a separation, disunion, disconnection between the Creator and His creation. There was a coming out from God.

Now enter redemption! "For of Him, and THROUGH Him, and to Him are all things." I would draw your attention to the precise order: (1) out of Him (2) through Him (3) unto (into) Him. All was out of Him; and now all is through Him! The term "through" is uniquely related to the redemption that we have by means of Christ Jesus. "Through" is from the Greek DIA denoting a forward action involving a passing through; in spiritual terms, signifying a sweeping up into the redemptive and reconstructive activities of God whereby God brings us again into His sphere of operation. Here we have an entirely new action - the recreative and restorative processes of God wrought out upon creation to alter its course, change its state of being, bring all back into right relationship in God again.

This preposition DIA means, among other things, "by means of" or "by the agency of". It is an action of God by means of Christ, we are the objects of the action, and transformation the result. Let us quote several scripture passages which tell us of some things that are accomplished through the Son of God. "In whom we have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins" (Col. 1:14). "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom. 5:1). "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. 7:24-25). "For through Him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father" (Eph. 2:18). "God sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him" (I Jn. 4:9). "Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ" (Gal. 4:7).

These are but a meager sampling of the vast array of scriptures that tell us what is available to us THROUGH our Lord Jesus Christ. Through Him we have redemption, even the forgiveness of sins. Through Him we have reconciliation, peace with God. Through Him we have deliverance from the dominion of sin and death. Through Him we have life. Through Him we have access to the Father. Through Him we are made sons and heirs of God. What does this mean, THROUGH HIM? It means that He is the way, the agency whereby these blessings and benefits are bestowed upon us. He is the means whereby we can receive from God all the redemptive provisions of God. It is through Him, and only through Him that this is possible. They are provided through, by means of, by the agency of the redemptive activities and processes wrought out by our union with Christ. THROUGH Him bespeaks the action of Christ on our behalf to achieve God's redemptive purposes.

ALL THINGS INTO HIM

Our next, and final, preposition reveals the ultimate GOAL! What has been provided in Christ is a re-turn, a re-storation, a re-newing, a re-demption, a re-conciliation, a re-surrection, a re-stitution. The prefix "re" means BACK, AGAIN, ANEW - and all the words with this prefix speak of something that LEFT ITS PLACE AND HAS NOW MADE ITS CIRCUIT AND COME BACK TO THE POINT OF ITS BEGINNING.

Let me give you now a scripture that shows the hand of God in this and the extensive scope of both the departure from, and the returning unto, God. I quote from Ps. 90:1-3. "Lord, Thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations. Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever Thou hadst formed the earth or the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, Thou art God. T-H-O-U TURNEST MAN TO DESTRUCTION; and sayest, RETURN, YE CHILDREN OF MEN." You could never read this word "return" here, if you had not first read that man had been "turned" away to destruction. In this passage the word "destruction" has this meaning in the original: A COMPLETE COLLAPSE, a falling apart, crumbling man to a contrite condition. After turning man to destruction God then says, "RETURN TO ME, ye children of men."

There was a day when Paul, standing in the center of the Areopagus (Mars Hill Auditorium) declared to the philosophers of Athens, "The God who produced and formed the world and all things in it, made from one common origin, one source, all nations of men to settle on the face of the earth, having definitely determined their allotted periods of time and the fixed boundaries of their habitation - their settlements, lands, abodes; SO THAT THEY SHOULD SEEK GOD, IN THE HOPE THAT THEY MIGHT FEEL AFTER HIM AND FIND HIM, although He is not far from each one of us. For in Him we live and move and have our being; as even some of your own poets have said, FOR WE ARE ALSO HIS OFFSPRING" (Acts 17:24-28, Amplified).

Oh, yes, He turned us to destruction, but planted deep within the sub consciousness of every man the secret command to return, which is revealed in that inner desire, yearning, craving, seeking, feeling, compulsion which is never satisfied until man does find himself at home in God once more. All the religiousness of men, from the witch doctor in the jungle to the modernist in the pulpit in America, is the manifestation of this FEELING AFTER GOD, IF HAPLY THEY MIGHT FIND HIM. While mankind in general is still lost in the hellish darkness of sin and death, yet there is a firstfruit company whose hearts have been charged by the inward call to return, and with the Shulamite maiden in the Song of Solomon share this blessed experience: "By night on my bed I sought Him whom my soul loveth: I sought Him but I found Him not. I will arise now, and go about the city in the streets, and in the broadways I will seek Him whom my soul loveth: I sought Him but I found Him not. The watchmen that go about the city found me: to whom I said, Saw ye Him whom my soul loveth? It was but a little that I passed from them, but I FOUND HIM WHOM MY SOUL LOVETH: I HELD HIM, AND WOULD NOT LET HIM GO" (S. of S. 3:1-4). As the Spirit has witnessed through the prophet: "And ye shall seek Me, and find Me, when ye shall search for Me with all your heart" (Jer. 29:13).

Mankind is yet groping about in the dense darkness of the carnal mind, knowing not that HE is standing right there in the shadows, were their eyes opened to see. Yet He hath appointed a day - O glorious day! - when His light shall shine forth and the plan shall be completed as the apostle saith, "For God has allowed us to know the secret of His plan, and it is this: He purposed long ago in His sovereign will that all human history should be consummated in Christ, that everything that exists in heaven or earth should find its perfection and fulfillment in Him. IN CHRIST we have been given an inheritance, since we were destined for this, by the One who works out all His purposes according to the design of His own will" (Eph. 1:9-11, Phillips).

This great law of circularity by which all things in God's creation are seen to return to the place of their beginning, in its spiritual significance, is expressed in our text: "For FROM HIM (EK: out of), and THROUGH HIM (DIA: by means of), and TO HIM (EIS: into), are all

things." The Authorized Version says "and to Him are all things." The preposition "to" is from the Greek EIS meaning INTO the exact converse of the first statement, "OUT OF Him are all things." The preposition EIS denotes motion with a GOAL - a forward movement with an arrival at a determined point. A careful investigation will show that the sense is never limited to the motion towards, but always extends to the entrance and arrival into. Thus the pen of inspiration has proclaimed the wonderful truth that not only has all come out of God, not only will all be made to pass redemptively through Jesus Christ, but all will ultimately come back into God in the same state of unity, harmony and perfection of its primeval existence.

That wondrous "Golden Text" of the Bible is the best known and perhaps the most loved passage of scripture in the world. "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (Jn. 3:16). Critics of the ultimate salvation of all men have been quick to point out the word "whosoever" in an effort to show that not all will believe in Jesus, making it a limited thing, only the "whosoever" that believes receives everlasting life. This erroneous notion arises from an inattention to the simple facts of the Greek text. "Whosoever" translates the Greek word PAS which means ALL, EVERYONE. Passages such as the following employ the word PAS: "...gathered ALL (PAS) the chief priests..." "...slew ALL (PAS) the children..." "EVERY (PAS) word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God", "...healing ALL MANNER (PAS) of sickness and disease among the people", "...giveth light to ALL (PAS) that are in the world", "EVERY (PAS) good tree bringeth forth good fruit", "...so death passed upon ALL (PAS) men, for that ALL (PAS) have sinned...therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon ALL (PAS) men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon ALL (PAS) men unto justification of life", "...the WHOLE (PAS) creation groaneth..." "...who is over ALL (PAS), God blessed for ever", "...concluded ALL (PAS) in unbelief, that He might have mercy upon ALL (PAS)", "...gather together in one ALL (PAS) things..." "...reconcile ALL (PAS) things unto Himself", and the list runs on almost endlessly, for there are literally hundreds of passages where this word PAS is translated ALL or EVERY. A literal translation from the Greek would read, "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that EVERYONE BELIEVING INTO HIM should not perish, but may be having life eonian."

Everyone believing into Him. What a thought! Certainly there is no forced limitation there, no exclusion, no set boundary; the mighty God, the blessed Redeemer of the world excludes none, leaving the gate open wide for EVERYMAN to believe and come home into God.

Our faltering English allows us to believe on Christ or in Christ. But the more truthful tongue of inspiration prefers to believe into. The word in the original is the same preposition EIS meaning INTO. "...that everyone believing into Him might not perish..." Faith is a moving force. When we believe we do not stand on, or even in, but we are transferred from without to within. Out of the world and into God's Son. Not only is He the foundation beneath our feet, but He is above us and all around us. The true force of into is seen in the very next verse. As God dispatched His Son into the world, so faith moves us from outside of Him into Him. How much richer would be our life and experience if we should imitate God as beloved children, even in His ways of speaking! He seldom refers to the great change wrought by faith as a motionless position. Never is it faith in Him until after the great transaction is accomplished. Seldom, in John's gospel, do we read of believing on the Christ. Yet nearly forty times, in nearly every chapter, we read of believing INTO. In the third chapter alone it occurs four times. INTO suggests

progression, carries with it a sense of growth, development and motion, a pressing on and an entrance into realities beyond.

Saving faith is not of our self, it is the gift of God, not of works lest any man should boast. Faith is the omnipotent power that will bring us back into ONENESS IN GOD. We shall be enabled to fully believe into Him. I think I can best illustrate it this way. If I took a bottle down to the ocean and filled it with ocean water, I could say, The ocean is in the bottle; but the bottle wouldn't be in the ocean, it would be in my hand: but if I got into a boat and went out into the ocean and dropped the bottle over the side and watched it as it disappeared beneath the waves, then I could say, The bottle is in the ocean. Now I could say, The ocean is in the bottle and the bottle is in the ocean. So you see, there is a world of difference between the ocean being in the bottle and the bottle being in the ocean. There is also a difference between Christ being in us and us being IN CHRIST. Christ can be in us without us being in Christ. Paul speaks of Christ in us, the hope of glory; and it is wonderful to know that HE dwells in one; but this is not the end of our salvation, it is just the beginning. We must follow on until we are IN CHRIST; and that means to be completely swallowed up into Him, as the bottle is swallowed up in the ocean. We are to be rooted and built up IN HIM.

In understanding how all things shall be restored into God, it might be helpful to consider what is taking place in the beginning of the new creation; for the new creation has already begun. The new creation is composed of those who are being created anew through and into the Christ. "Therefore, if any one is IN CHRIST he is a new creation; the old has passed away, and behold the new has come" (II Cor. 5:17, R.S.V.). Nothing can be clearer than this, that in this passage we are told of the beginning of the new creation. The old has passed away and the new has come.

The reference is to that firstfruit company who are the first to enter into the new. They become fully a new creation IN CHRIST. It is because they are IN CHRIST that they are a new creation. In the life of the one who is IN CHRIST, the old has passed away, and everything has become new. Now I know that this scripture is applied by most Christians to all believers; but if we will take time to consider this reverently and carefully, we can easily see that it does not pertain to the average believer today. When we first believe on the Lord a new beginning has commenced. A change has started; some of the old has passed away, and some new things have taken their place; but who among us can boast that EVERYTHING IN OUR LIFE became new when we first believed? Our salvation is a progressive work; it begins when we first turn to the Lord, and continues until we are complete IN CHRIST.

If we take this scripture in the simplicity of how it reads, it means that to be in Christ, everything pertaining to the old creation has been taken away: the old nature is gone; the old flesh is gone; the old mind is gone; the old desires are gone; the old emotions are gone; the old will is gone; the old habits are gone; all the old carnal tendencies are gone, and we have become an entirely new creation. Jesus often spoke of His Father being in Him. He said, "It is not I that do the works, it is My Father that dwelleth IN ME." The Father dwelt in the Son and worked through His Son to do His will. But this isn't all He said. When talking to His disciples in Jn. 14:10, He said, "Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me?" It wasn't just that the Father was in Him, but He was also in the Father. Several times He impressed this truth deeply upon His disciples. When He was praying to the Father for those God had given Him, that they might be one, that they might come into glorious unity, He prayed this way "That they all may be ONE;

as Thou Father art in Me, and I in Thee, that they may be ONE IN US" (Jn. 17:21). This is a mutual dwelling, "as Thou Father art in Me, and I in Thee." The Father was dwelling in Him, and He was living in the Father. Only this mutual dwelling can bring oneness, the unity, the wholeness that God desires. It is not Christ in us that restores us into the oneness of God's nature; it is us in Christ. When the ocean is in the bottle you see the bottle first, and the ocean second. But when the bottle is in the ocean you see the ocean first, and the bottle afterwards, if, indeed, the bottle is seen at all. When Christ is in us we are still seen first, and Christ is seen second. But when we are swallowed up into Christ HE IS SEEN and we are lost in HIS FULLNESS.

And now He, Who is ONE, harmoniously works this victory into us, line upon line, precept upon precept, changing us by degrees, gathering all into Himself, that we might be restored into the same identity, or state of being as Himself. Not until all our desires, drives, longings, needs, are met in the very central supremacy of Christ can we know full peace and joy and righteousness and completeness. IN HIM all deficiencies are met, IN HIM there is balance, and "IN HIM all things consist (are held together)" (Col. 1: 17).

We have been so divided in ourselves! Torn between desires for the world, and desires for God. Vacillating back and forth between the cravings of the flesh, and the yearnings of the Spirit. We speak of the "old man" and then of the "new man", and we often wonder which one we really are, or if we are still trying to blend them both together. But no man can serve two masters, and thus we have passed through the conflict, to which shall we give obedience? It is evident that we still LACK FROM ELOHIM. Praise God for the present "through" Christ process, for the purgings which are a part of the way of the cross, for gradually we find that the flesh is stripped away, the old is put off, and the new shall arise, yes, our life shall totally be found in the singleness of Christ. Then shall we become one in ourselves, even as we become ONE IN HIM.

RESTITUTION

Duality, division, imbalance, fragmentation - pulled in all directions trying to satisfy multiplied desires, this is a mark of this world's system. But there are those who have been apprehended of Him, to become firstfruits of a new creation, and they shall know the joy of oneness, unity, harmony.

Shortly after the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, Peter and John visited the temple in Jerusalem, where they came into contact with a man "lame from his mother's womb." Seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple, he asked alms of them. Peter, "fastening his eyes on him with John, said, Look on us." Then Peter said, "Silver and gold have I none, but such as I have give I thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk." Peter took this man by the hand, "and lifted him up: and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength. And he leaping up stood, and walked, and entered with them into the temple, walking, and leaping, and praising God" (Acts 3:1-8).

We read that "as the lame man which was healed held Peter and John, all the people ran together unto them in the porch that is called Solomon's, greatly wondering." It is not surprising that the people wondered, for here was a man who they knew had been unable to walk from the time of his birth, but who was suddenly walking and leaping and praising God. Peter observed the situation and said to the people, "Ye men of Israel, why marvel ye at this? or why look ye so earnestly on us, as though by our own power or

holiness we had made this man to walk? The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, hath glorified His Son Jesus; whom ye delivered up, and denied Him in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let Him go. But ye denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you; and killed the Prince of life, whom God hath raised from the dead; whereof we are witnesses. And His name through faith in His name hath made this man strong, whom ye see and know; ye, the faith which is by Him hath given him the PERFECT SOUNDNESS in the presence of you all. And now, brethren, I know that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers. But those things, which God before had showed by the mouth of all His prophets, that Christ should suffer, He hath so fulfilled."

Thus Peter set squarely before the men of Israel that fact that Jesus Christ had been raised from the dead, and that it was through faith in His name that the lame man had been given soundness of limb. He was made WHOLE, all the parts of his physical being quickened, balanced and harmonized into the state of health, vitality, and well-being. Then Peter presented a marvelously comprehensive lesson from this incident of divine healing, a lesson which embraces the great objective of the Creator's design for the redemption of mankind from the division, fragmentation and imbalance of this world of confusion, limitation, sickness and death and the restoration of the WHOLENESS of union IN GOD. He said, "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 receive until the times of RESTITUTION OF ALL THINGS, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began" (Acts 3:19-21).

Restitution means restoration of reconstitution. Something had been lost. One of the evidences of that loss was the condition of the lame man who through faith in Jesus had been restored to health; and Peter explained that in the conclusion of God's wonderful plan there would be TIMES OF RESTITUTION OF ALL THINGS. Jesus had healed a few of the sick in Israel during the short period of His ministry, and now Peter and John had restored another to health. But the people were not to suppose that these token blessings represented God's total design for the sin-cursed and dying race, nor for the whole vast creation, for later in His great plan there would be TIMES OF RESTITUTION OF A-L-L T-H-I-N-G-S. The restoration of a human body back into the state of wholeness was but a weak type and shadow of the restitution that would ultimately restore ALL THINGS.

What was lost, when was it lost, and how shall it be restored? We hear much these days on the subject of restoration. Some churches are built on the foundation of restoring the "New Testament Church". In fact, all Christian groups, movements and denominations are, to some extent, looking wistfully back to the glory of the early church. But the restoration of the New Testament Church cannot be the restoration the scriptures speak about, for Peter preached this grand message on the day of Pentecost, and we read it in Acts 3:21. At that time, THERE WAS ABSOLUTELY NO NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH TO RESTORE! There never had been, in the history of the world, a New Testament Church, and the church was only then ready to be birthed. You cannot restore something that never has existed, and this restoration is one of which all the holy prophets spake SINCE THE WORLD BEGAN.

Some entertain the notion that there is to be a restoration of mankind back to the state of Adam in the garden of Eden. There are beautiful types in the garden of Eden, and much

precious reality, with the presence of God and the tree of life in the midst of the garden, but really we have no desire to be restored to the Adam of the second chapter of Genesis, in the garden of Eden, for it is plain that he had but little to lose. He had already been lowered from his pure spirit existence in God; the image and likeness of God in him had already been fragmented and become marred; and even the dominion given into his hands never was exercised or consolidated, before the dark specter of sin thrust him rudely from the garden. We have received this idea of restoration of all that Adam lost in the garden, through the erroneous supposition that the Adam of the second chapter, and the man of the first chapter, were the same man in the same state of being, and that the man of the second chapter sinned, and thereby fell from the perfection of the man of the first chapter. We have already seen that such was not the case, so will not labor the point. But restoration back to Eden would, in effect, be no restoration at all!

Therefore, the restoration **MUST GO BACK FARTHER EVEN THAN EDEN**. Farther back than we have ever dreamed or even considered, for Acts 3:21 says, "Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets **SINCE THE WORLD BEGAN**." If the prophets began to speak about this great restoration from the very beginning of the cosmos and all time, then it must be conceded that this restoration goes back beyond any of their prophecies, beyond the foundation of the cosmos, and beyond the first moment of time.

We have been prone to think solely in terms of the natural, physical realm. But everything that has happened in this gross material realm, came out of something in the heavenly realm. All things are of God. All have their source in Him, and all have come out of Him. These things I now write and these blessed hopes I set before you that your spiritual eyes might be lifted far above the dimness of tradition and the outer darkness and foolish senility of the Babylonish church system. May the blessed Spirit of Truth somehow enable all who read these lines to understand that we speak of a restoration, not so much of what Adam might have lost, but of **WHAT GOD LOST**, for the Son of man was sent from the beautiful, bounteous and harmonic celestial realms above "to seek and to save that which was lost" (Lk. 19:10). "That," in the Greek text, means "the thing." Christ came to save, not merely he who was lost, but that, the thing that was lost. Here is **REAL RESTORATION** spoken of by the mouth of **ALL** the prophets **SINCE TIME BEGAN**. The restoration goes far beyond whatever Adam may have lost in Eden; back to a loss that God suffered when all things were lowered out of Him. There must be restitution of all into Him, with the healing of all the separation, division, fragmentation and imbalance, with a rectification of the loss suffered by each part.

"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. 1:20). The phrase "things in heaven" suggests to us one startling step further. The sphere of reconciliation is not only man - not only the created beings in the heavens above him - it is that of the very Being of God. Remember the words of the Psalmist: "Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other." Omitting for a moment the fact that they have met and kissed, let us consider them separately. They all exist in the nature of God. If we reverently think of God as apart from the mystery of evil, we recognize the perfect harmony of these: mercy, the tenderness bending over in love; truth, which is uprightness, stable, and builds; righteousness, which is a straight line without deviation; peace, which is absolute safety. All these co-exist in the nature of God. But the breaking up of the harmony of these in creation, the fragmentation of the very

nature of God Himself in the things made, necessitates not only the restoration of creation, but A RECONCILING WITHIN THE VERY BEING OF GOD.

It is most important that we thoroughly understand the meaning of the word "restitution". The Greek word is APOKATASTASIS and does not occur anywhere else in the New Testament besides Acts 3:21; but the kindred verb occurs in eight other passages, and in each is rendered "restore". Dr. Young, in his Analytical Concordance, gives the clearest meaning of all, and, in fact, gives only one simple meaning: RECONSTITUTION. Reconstitution is an interesting word. The New Webster's Dictionary defines it thus: To constitute anew, as whole milk from dried powdered milk; to reconstruct.

Let us UNDERSTAND! Nothing can be re-constituted except that which has been taken apart, separated, or fragmented. Nothing can be re-constituted but that from which some ingredient is MISSING! It has been said that should you ask a chef for his secret recipe, he will give it to you - minus one key ingredient! Because of the absence of that one ingredient your dish will never be quite as tasty as his! In most grocery stores today one can buy "reconstituted orange juice" in half-gallon cartons. "Reconstituted" is just another way of saying that the juice is made from concentrate. To make concentrate, the water is removed, leaving a strong, syrupy substance sold in super markets as "frozen concentrate". The concentrate is pure orange juice, minus the one key ingredient - water! Now you can buy the concentrate, add back the water, and you have reconstituted orange juice. Or, the company will take the water out, then put it back, call it "reconstituted orange juice", and sell it to you at a higher price to pay for all this service!

The simple truth of the matter is this: Restitution means reconstitution, and the reconstitution of all things bespeaks the reconstituting of all things back into the unity, harmony and wholeness they had in God in that long-ago beginning when all things were created IN CHRIST JESUS. It means that God will restore to each man individually, and to all men collectively, the fullness of His nature, mind, will and purpose until there is no lack in anyone, anywhere in all the unbounded heavens. Every attribute of God will be so perfectly synchronized and balanced in every creature until there are no excesses, no imbalances, no extremes, no diseases, disorders disability, dis-tress, dis-aster, disobedience, dis-cord, dis-couragement, dis-harmony, dis-orientation, dis-union or dis-integration whatever. All the negative attitudes, emotions and state of being, the result of fragmentation, are swallowed up in HIS FULLNESS. The more we enter into Christ the more we enter into singleness, for He IS oneness in every aspect. "But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ" (II Cor. 11:3). Literally, "from the SINGLENES into the Christ."

From the pen of another ready writer comes these words of confirmation: "Everything in today's confused, complex system seeks to turn us away from that singleness which leads us back into Christ. We get so entangled and frustrated by every confused work, that we hardly know which way is up, or down. Only in the central supremacy of Christ can true oneness be found. He is to be the Center, Source, and the Goal of the universe. So long as the will of man is in contra-distinction to the will of God, we do not have oneness. But the more we are brought to that place of submission, 'not my will, but Thine, be done,' then there is a unification taking place which brings us into this blessed oneness. Oneness must eventually be established in ALL, everywhere, that God, WHO IS ONE, might be ALL IN ALL. This means true unification, with singleness of mind and purpose, because everything is IN HIM.

"As soon as Christ becomes the total Center of our life, and everything is swallowed up into Him, then He is all in all for us. We shall not stroll through the ages together just hand-in-hand, but He 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). Furthermore, He has 'purposed in Himself; that in the dispensation of the fullness of times He might gather together IN ONE all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth, even in Him' (Eph. 1:9-10). But where does the fulfillment of this purpose begin? IN A FIRSTFRUITS COMPANY. Those whom He apprehends and leads out from the midst of the world, and its corruptness, into a path of righteousness, to become HIS people. And then, every man in his own order, rank after rank, until all have been brought into the fullness of His life.

"Thus, ultimately it is not just His mind controlling our mind, but it is our possessing HIS mind. This is His central supremacy within. It is more than just a 'fill me' with more of God, but a being swallowed up into Him, henceforth to be AS HE IS, a vessel that shall be truly a revelation of His life. This is not becoming a 'little Christian robot', with the Lord on high pulling the strings. Flesh and Spirit do not operate in unison when the carnal mind seeks to control. But when man is joined in one spirit to the Lord, and the Spirit of Christ fills all of man, there is a NEW CREATION which is able to fulfill God's purpose for mankind. Oh, to possess HIS mind, HIS will - becoming one in HIS purpose. This is what we are admonished in Eph. 4:23, to be 'renewed in the spirit of your mind.' This renewal, which brings the mind into oneness with the spirit realm, breaking down all the barriers of the carnal, results in a new state of being, 'to make in Himself of twain ONE NEW MAN, so making peace' (Eph. 2:15).

"The first man, Adam, was made a living soul. A division was wrought between soul and spirit, and Adam moved in a soulish realm. The new man, the last Adam, became a life-giving spirit. In Christ we see the swallowing up of the soulish man into the realm of the spiritual. Thus, when our mind is fully renewed, into the mind of Christ, we shall no more think thoughts which are different than that of the Spirit, but we shall think the Spirit's thoughts. And since all actions are thoughts expressed, it follows that all that we do will be right, for our actions shall spring out of a Christed mind". - Ray Prinzing.

Restitution is God putting things back together in UNION IN HIMSELF until all separation and division is healed, every deficiency replenished, all imbalance corrected, and all extremes harmonized. In this state of being selfhood, self-will, duality, sin and death forever cease to exist. God becomes ALL-IN-ALL.

Let us consider now in conclusion, the steps, stages, and processes by which God performs this grand work of restitution. The very first reality experienced by men who turn to the Lord is that of RECONCILIATION. Reconciliation always involves a turning UNTO, a movement TOWARD. "And having made peace through the blood of His cross, by Him to reconcile all things UNTO HIMSELF" (Col. 1:20). "And that He might reconcile both UNTO GOD in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby" (Eph. 2:16). "And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us TO HIMSELF by Jesus Christ, and hath given unto us the ministry of reconciliation; to wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world UNTO HIMSELF ... we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled TO GOD" (II Cor. 5:18-20). "For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled TO GOD by the death of His Son, much more being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life" (Rom. 5:10).

Webster's dictionary defines the English word "reconcile" to mean: to unite; to bring back into harmony; to settle; to make consistent or compatible. Now this leads to a point of

immense importance. We often hear it said that "the death of Christ was necessary in order to reconcile God to man." This is a pious stupidity, arising from inattention to the language of the Holy Spirit, and indeed to the plain meaning of the word "reconcile". God never changed - never stepped out of His normal and true position. He abideth faithful. There was and could be no derangement, no confusion, no alienation, so far as He was concerned; God was still ONE within His own Being, all was wisely planned by His omniscient mind, and man was lowered into the world of sin and strife and hostility in the hope of redemption and the restoration of all following the outworking of His purpose; hence, there could be no need of reconciling Him to us. In fact, it was exactly the contrary. Man was the one fragmented, out of balance, marred and scarred, walking in self-will and rebellion, a slave to sin and death, the enemy of God. God never ever became an enemy of man nor does He need to be reconciled to man. The opposite is the truth and always the teaching of scripture. It was God who provided redemption! God so loved the world that He gave His Son! The God who so loved the world could never have been man's enemy! But man is an enemy of God and man must be reconciled to God. Oh, that sinners would be told that it was God the Father who gave His Son, not to appease some awful anger and vengeance on His part, or to reconcile Himself, but to appease and reconcile man! Therefore, the scripture loudly proclaims, "We beseech you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God" (II Cor. 5:20).

A reconciliation is for the purpose of bringing people of opposing ideals and desires together. The way God does this is by means of the ministry of reconciliation. Jesus came that He might reconcile us to God; that means that all the barriers that exist between man and our Creator, will be taken away; and that which separates us from God will be destroyed, and we will be brought back into a friendly relationship with Him. Reconciliation is needed between two persons who are not on friendly terms. Something exists between them that keeps them apart, and whatever it is, has to be removed, so they can come together again, and enjoy each other. "For if, WHEN WE WERE ENEMIES, WE WERE RECONCILED TO GOD by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life" (Rom. 5:10). What wonder there is in these few words! We were ENEMIES, yet reconciled to God, and that reconciliation came through the death of the Son of God. We were not converted people when we began to be reconciled. We were not saved people at that reconciliation. If we had been saved or converted or righteous at the time of reconciliation, THERE WOULD HAVE BEEN NO NEED FOR A RECONCILIATION. On the other hand, we could never come to God to be saved without first being reconciled! This is why I stated earlier that reconciliation is the very first reality experienced by the man or woman who turns to the Lord. Praise God, one glad day the Spirit of God touched our heart-strings and by the transforming power of the blood of Jesus our enmity, variance, and hostility were washed away, neutralized, destroyed, and we came broken-hearted, weeping, repenting back to Father's house. We were reconciled to God!

Reconciliation is unto God, but SALVATION, on the other hand, involves an altogether opposite principle. Salvation is not basically unto, but FROM. Salvation embraces a term of which most professing Christians, though familiar with, have confused understanding. The term "saved" comes from the Greek verb SOZO and is found in the New Testament 106 times and means save, keep from harm, preserve, rescue. The noun SOTERIA is found 45 times and means salvation, deliverance, preservation. The compound verb DIASOZO is found eight times and means to bring safely through, save, deliver, rescue. In no way does it mean merely to have one's sins forgiven, or a good feeling, or be born

again, or a ticket to heaven - the meanings usually associated with it in most Christian circles.

It should be self-evident that first and foremost salvation involves a deliverance from something. If I say, "Robert saved the boy from drowning," or "The Park Ranger saved the girl from the clutches of the bear," I am describing a rescue, a deliverance, an emancipation, and escape FROM a power that would harm or destroy. Salvation is uniquely from. Let us consider a few scripture passages which confirm this fact. "And thou shalt call His name JESUS: for He shall save His people FROM their sins" (Mat. 1:21). "And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves FROM this untoward generation" (Acts 2:40). "Much more then, being now justified by His blood, we shall be saved FROM wrath through Him" (Rom. 5:9)." He offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto Him that was able to save Him FROM death" (Heb. 5:7). "He which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul FROM death, and shall hide a multitude of sins" (James 5:20). The scriptures reveal that salvation brings deliverance from the world, from sin, from the flesh, from the devil, from wrath, from death! This salvation is being wrought out in us now from experience to experience, from glory to glory. As has often been said, we have been saved, are being saved, and shall be saved. Every step of the way it is a salvation, a deliverance FROM a former state or condition.

RESTITUTION is more than reconciliation and more than salvation; it is greater than all. Reconciliation is the abolishment of our hostility toward God or our estrangement from God. Salvation is our deliverance out of the kingdom and power of darkness. Reconciliation means the removal of something from us; whereas salvation removes us from something; but restitution is greater than both! Restitution ADDS SOMETHING TO US - and the sum of that "something" is A-L-L that we were made to LACK FROM ELOHIM!

On the morning of November 1, 1952, an event took place which was to forever change our world. It happened on Elugelab, a small island in the Pacific, about one mile wide. On it were a number of buildings and weapons. Floating in the bay were several ships. Early that morning the first full-scale hydrogen bomb was exploded there and the island of Elugelab forever disappeared from this world. In its place was a hole in the bottom of the ocean, a hundred and seventy-five feet deep and over a mile in diameter. The buildings disappeared. The tanks and ships in the bay were totally vaporized. One who watched the event and sailed over the scene a few hours later, saw that the waters were perfectly clear. There was no debris, no sand, no material from the ships or buildings. There was nothing but a gaping hole in the bottom of the sea. The first fusion bomb had been exploded with a power equal to seven hundred and fifty times that which leveled the city of Hiroshima. The hydrogen age - the fusion age - began!

It had been speculated since 1934 that such a thing as fusion energy or a fusion explosion was possible. Fission was first discovered whereby the heavy element of uranium was split in two. It was known, however, that it was possible to create energy in the way stars create energy, by taking the light element of hydrogen and fusing the atoms of hydrogen together into an atom of helium. That is the way suns create their energy. But it was considered to be entirely impractical and impossible because in order to produce this fusion it was necessary to create a heat of twenty million degrees centigrade. Such a thing was totally beyond the realm of possibility in 1934. But after 1945, after Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the possibilities became very real because in the

center of an atomic explosion there is created for a moment a temperature of one hundred and fifty million degrees centigrade. So the possibility of fusion was again examined.

We have been apprehended today to participate in an event of SPIRITUAL FUSION, whereby we are told that we are being fused together into ONE IN GOD. "He that is joined to the Lord is ONE SPIRIT" (I Cor. 6:17). How does this come about? It comes about because of the white heat of the passion of Jesus Christ causing a spiritual fusion in three parts: First, the tremendous heat of the love of Christ; then the breaking down of the duality and division of selfhood; and finally the fusion of a whole new element, our spirit joined to His Spirit, and next the release of the tremendous energy as a result of that fusion. That is what Christ has called us to experience. That we, being many, should become ONE IN HIM: one body, one spirit, one loaf, one family, one mind, one will, one nature, one purpose, one power, one glory, one word - ONE ELOHIM! This is what it means to be a son of God - to be fused together into Him who IS THE MIGHTY GOD.

GOD ALL IN ALL - this will be the grand conclusion of the great drama of the world's history and of Christ's redemption. There will come a day - the glory is such we can form no conception of it, the mystery is so deep we cannot realize it - when the Son shall deliver up the Kingdom that God gave Him and which He won with His own blood and established and perfected from the throne of His glory. "He shall deliver up the Kingdom unto the Father ... that God may be all in all" (I Cor. 15:24-28). ALL IN ALL - such is the grand goal of our God! He will yet be everything to everyone of His creatures, as it is fitting He should be. Nothing less will satisfy His heart for "He has created all things, and for HIS PLEASURE they are and were created" (Rev. 4:11). Nothing less will vindicate His love or form a fit conclusion for the sin and sorrow and death of the ages. Let us with joy believe it! Let us exult as we receive it! Let us be "laborers together with God" to accomplish it! May this simple phrase, that the smallest child can utter, become the very basis of our being, the background of every act, the key to every occurrence, a light in every darkness, a balm for every wound, and our ages-lasting consolation and good hope.

Let us awake from the terrifying nightmare of Babylon's delusions and let us wing our spirits to God's glorious consummation. Here is a vision worthy of the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ - GOD ALL IN ALL. And now, this ultimate reality must begin in us who have received the call to sonship. If this is what fills the heart of Christ; if this expresses the one end of the work of Christ, then, if I would have the Spirit of Christ in me, the motto of my life must be: Everything made subject and swallowed up INTO HIM "that God may be all in all." What a life that will be when that reality becomes our banner! To serve the Father fully, wholly, only, to have Him all in all! That He is not ALL in all at the present is quite obvious, for only a fraction have faintly felt that God was indeed ALL to them. Some have known Him as their Saviour, some have experienced Him as their Healer, some have received gracious gifts from His hands, some have acknowledged Him as their Lord, but some have found Him as their ALL. Happy are they who know Him thus! They have tasted of the cup ineffable, which quenches every thirst and satisfies completely and forever.

When Christ ascended on high after His resurrection, He led many captives out of the pit and also set forth this greater purpose: "Now that He ascended, what is it but that He also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, THAT HE MIGHT FILL ALL THINGS" (Eph. 4:9-10).

The message is clear - redemption does not include only the salvation of mankind, wonderful and glorious as that aspect is, but it also includes the complete transformation of the entire universe so that God shall FILL ALL THINGS. There shall not be left one corner of this vast universe where He shall not be LORD AND KING. EVERYTHING EVERYWHERE SHALL BE RESTORED TO THE BEAUTIFUL HARMONY AND ORDER OF THE LOVE OF GOD. Indeed, HE SHALL FILL ALL THINGS SO THAT "GOD MAY BE ALL IN ALL." And ALL will find its home again IN HIM.

This, precious friend, is the RESTITUTION OF ALL THINGS!

Chapter 13

Jubilee

THE YEAR OF JUBILEE

For hours the trumpet sounds blasted and reverberated against the mountains, echoing and reechoing across the valleys of the land of Canaan. While the trumpets continued unrelentingly to proclaim their message, slaves said goodbye to their masters, forfeited farms and properties were judicially restored to their owners, and prisoners sang and shouted for joy as they left the prisons. What was going on? It was the Day of Atonement in the Year of Jubilee. Old men had waited fifty years for this to happen, and young men had never witnessed a day like it before!

The law of Jubilee is given in the book of Leviticus. "And you shall number seven sabbaths of years, seven times seven years; and the space of the seven sabbaths of years shall be unto you forty and nine years. THEN you shall cause the trumpet of the Jubilee to sound on the tenth day of the seventh month, in the Day of Atonement shall you make the trumpet sound throughout all your land. And you shall hallow the fiftieth year, and PROCLAIM LIBERTY throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof, it shall be a Jubilee unto you; AND YOU SHALL RETURN EVERY MAN UNTO HIS POSSESSION, and you shall return every man unto his family" (Lev. 25:8-10).

The rest of the chapter goes into detail about the law of Jubilee. Let us see what the word Jubilee actually means. The Hebrew word for Jubilee is YOBEL which means a loud, long blast by a ram's horn. It means first of all the ram's horn itself and the sound of the horn, but it further means the Festival introduced by the blowing of the ram's horn. In time the word YOBEL came to mean a trumpet. It is translated twenty-one times as "Jubilee," five times as "ram's horn," and once as "trumpet". Therefore Jubilee means a curved trumpet, the blowing of the trumpet, and the Festival the sounding of the trumpet introduces.

Every fifty years a change took place in Israel. There were four specific things ordained by God to take place in the Year of Jubilee. First, the land and the people were to enjoy a full year of holy vacation. A time of hilarious joy, there was to be no sowing or reaping, none of the toil of harvest or of vintage. The people were to live simply on what they had preserved from the previous year, and what they could gather from what grew spontaneously of itself. Second, all debts were cancelled. Every Israelite was released from his indebtedness and financial obligations. Third, liberty was proclaimed to all Israelites who were in bondage to any of their countrymen. It was the time of total release when every slave and every bondman in Israel working off bad debts or those in debtor's prison were released to a fresh start. The fourth feature of this year was that there was to be a return of ancestral possessions to those who had been compelled to sell them because of poverty or surrender them to creditors in payment for their debts. Every homestead was to be restored to the family to whom it had been allotted when the tribes originally inherited the land. These were the four main provisions of the Year of Jubilee: a year of sabbath for the land and for the people, release from all debt, a returning of every slave to his family, and the return of every man to his possession and inheritance.

On a practical level this law was very important. The Year of Jubilee was a refreshing sabbath-rest both to the people and to the land which God gave them. It was the chief of a series of sabbaths or rests given to Israel. They had a sabbath DAY every seventh day. The sabbath YEAR occurred every seventh year. In it the land was allowed to rest, no crops were to be planted, nor were they to prune or harvest. Walk through Israel's land at such a time, and, lo! every one sits under his vine and under his fig tree in peace. No sound of the oxen treading out the corn, no shouting from the vineyard; a strange stillness over all the land, while its summer days are as bright as ever, and its people as happy as a nation on earth could be found. Amid the rest which in a nation of agriculturists would be nearly equivalent to universal cessation from toil - how continually do the godly sing the praises of Yahweh! And, besides all this, no man appropriated to himself anything that the land then produced; all was common, to the rich, to the poor, to the Hebrew, to the stranger - a token of the restoration of mutual love. Rest on the ground, among the beasts of the field, in the dwellings of men, with praise and worship unceasingly ascending from harp and psaltery and gracious lips, while every man partook of earth's produce as freely as his neighbor - might not Israel say, "Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad; let the sea roar, and the fullness thereof. Let the field be joyful, and all that is therein; then shall all the trees of the wood rejoice before the Lord" (Ps. 96:11-12).

Beyond these seventh-year sabbaths lay the grand Year of Jubilee. Israel was given a cycle of seven of these sabbath years, embracing a period of seven-times seven years, a total of forty-nine years; then there was to be a SABBATH OF SABBATHS the FIFTIETH YEAR - the YEAR OF JUBILEE!

In that old Hebrew world that lies so far back in the dim twilight of the past, there are several customs, of more than transient interest, which claim our attention when we come to the Year of Jubilee. When Israel came into Canaan, the land was divided among them by lot, according to their tribes and families. Every family received a lot of inheritance, that is, a homestead. Success thereafter might increase, or adversity decrease, their individual possessions, as the case might be. If a man became involved in debt, he might be obliged to sell a part or even all of his property. But God made a bountiful provision for the unfortunate: He arranged that such adverse circumstances might not continue forever, but that all their accounts credits and debts - must be reckoned only to the Jubilee Year, when all must be freed from old encumbrances, etc., to make a fresh start for the next term of fifty years. The man of avarice, who had gone on adding house to house and field to field, gained no permanent advantage over his less fortunate neighbor. The fiftieth year, beyond which no lease could run, was always approaching with silent but sure speed, to relax his tenacious grasp. However alienated, however unworthily or unthrifly sold, however strongly conveyed to the purchaser or the usurper an estate might be, this long-expected Day annulled the whole transaction, and placed the debtor in the position which either he or his ancestor had enjoyed.

The property which every man had in his dividend of the land of Canaan could not be alienated any longer than till the Year of Jubilee. Now this was no worry to the purchaser, because the Year of Jubilee was fixed, and every man knew when it would come, and made his bargain accordingly. A person under God's system never did sell his land permanently, but he could make leases for any limited term of years, not going beyond the next Jubilee. That year it would again revert to its rightful owner. Today we operate by leases. People may have a five-year lease, or a fifty-year lease, or a ninety-nine year lease. When the lease expires, the property returns to the owner. God worked on that

basis, also. Anyone purchasing land, or any creditor foreclosing on a property, automatically understood that what he was receiving could only be held until the Year of Jubilee when all leases and liens expired. When selling (leasing) a property neither the buyer nor the seller must overreach. It must be settled what the clear yearly value of the land was, and then how many years' purchase it was worth till the Year of Jubilee. The scale of prices was to be regulated by the Jubilee. If that glorious event were at hand, the price was low; if far off, the price was high. It is easy to observe that the nearer Jubilee was the less must the value of the land be. "And if you sell ought unto your neighbor, or buy ought of your neighbor's hand, you shall not oppress one another: according to the number of years after the Jubilee you shall buy of your neighbor, and according unto the number of years of the fruits he shall sell unto you: according to the multitude of years you shall increase the price thereof, and according to the fewness of years you shall diminish the price of it: for according to the number of the years of the fruits does he sell unto you" (Lev. 25:14-16). Such was the law of Jubilee!

The great reason for this is revealed in Lev. 25:23. Says the Lord, "The land shall not be sold forever: for the land is Mine; for you are strangers and sojourners with Me." The Amplified Bible reads, "The land shall not be sold into perpetual ownership, for the land is Mine; you are only strangers and temporary residents with Me." The Lord, in allusion to Egyptian affairs, says, "THE LAND IS MINE." The land in Egypt was properly the king's; and all the people were his tenants, since the days of Joseph (Gen. 47:13-26). On the other hand, Israel's land belonged to Yahweh; and the people were His guests, or tenants, sojourners with Him. Here, then, we have the special feature of the Lord's land. HE would have it enjoy a sabbatic year, and in that year there was to be the evidence of the rich profusion with which HE would bless those who were tenants under Him. "And if you shall say, What shall we eat the seventh year? behold, we shall not sow, nor gather in our increase: then I WILL COMMAND MY BLESSING UPON YOU in the sixth year, and it shall bring forth fruit for three years. And you shall sow the eighth year, and eat yet of the old fruit until the ninth year; until her fruits come in you shall eat of the old store" (Lev. 25:20-22). Happy, highly privileged tenantry! What an honor to hold immediately under Yahweh! No rent! No taxes! No burdens! Well might it be said, "Happy is the people that is in such a case; yea, happy is the people whose God is Yahweh!"

The sweet singer of Israel expressed it thus: "The EARTH is the Lord's and the fullness thereof; the WORLD and they that dwell therein" (Ps. 24:1). In the light of this scripture I would like to reaffirm something which the world at large, and many Christians, seem to have forgotten: THIS IS GOD'S WORLD! Long before time began ... long before a single heavenly body inhabited the vast regions of space ... GOD WAS. I cannot imagine what it could have been like not to have a world ... with its towering mountains, its vast canyons, and its majestic waterfalls thundering down from the awesome heights in indescribable power, then sweeping on to the seas. The total absence of all these things is beyond my poor, limited comprehension. But the truth remains, as stated in the first four words of scripture: "In the beginning God..." Long before the worlds were made ... long before the billows rolled across the boundless seas ... long before the mountains thrust their towering, snow-capped peaks up through the clouds ... long before there was one flower, or the song of any bird, or the roar of any beast ... yes, long before there was anything at all ... THERE WAS GOD. Then the blessed Word of God rolls back the curtain of antiquity and shows us God at work, creating all that is, and all that ever was. This passage of scripture goes a mighty step further and establishes for all time and eternity the OWNERSHIP of this world: "In the beginning GOD created the heavens and the earth." He made it, and it is His. No one can take it from Him. It was then that God wrote

His signature of ownership - a signature that reaches from the earth to the farthest outposts of the cosmos.

For this reason no man in Israel, the Kingdom of God on earth, had any right to sell any portion of it in perpetuity. The Lord wished each tribe, and each family of a tribe, to retain its original hereditary possessions under Him, for it was given by God, and they were His people. As stated earlier, on a practical level this law was very important. The wonderful provision of the Jubilee Year can better be appreciated when one considers, not only the beneficial results to the individual Israelites, but especially the effect on the nation as a whole. The Jubilee prevented the accumulation of land and wealth in the hands of a few. It prohibited the covetous and ambitious from "adding field to field" whereby the rich became richer and the poor became poorer. It raised legally and at regular intervals families and individuals out of destitution and gave them a fresh start. The slate was wiped clean. Without Jubilee there was a good possibility of one tribe eventually incurring such debt so as to completely lose all their inheritance, their possession, their identity. So God gave them a law that every fifty years, no matter how much debt someone owed, it was to be cancelled. You can be certain that every lender took Jubilee into consideration when making a loan! The Jubilee prevented a great internal debt and its resultant false prosperity, bringing inflation, deflation and business depression. The national economy would always be stable and the nation would have no crushing debt (Deut. 15:6). If these laws had been observed, it would have made Israel the most prosperous and perfect and powerful nation ever to have existed!

If an Israelite, through the stress of bad seasons and disappointing harvests, or unwise business practices, were to fall into deep indebtedness to some rich neighboring creditor so much so that he owed him more than even the land of his inheritance was worth - he was permitted, not only to alienate his land till the Year of Jubilee, but to sell himself and/or his family into slavery so as to work off his debt. Let me give you an illustration of what this law meant to Israel. In II Kings chapter four we read of a case where a widow is faced with a large debt left by her husband, and the creditors are coming to take her two sons into slavery to pay off the debt. In this case, Elisha the prophet provided a miracle of multiplying oil to pay off the debt. But in many cases like this there was no Elisha around with a miracle, and the sons were taken away from their home and their mother to work for a stranger as a slave. But ONLY UNTIL THE YEAR OF JUBILEE!

Let me give you an example. Jacob owed a huge debt to a Hittite by the name of Ephron, and as the years passed by it became increasingly evident that he would never get it paid off. In fact, each year he fell further and further behind. Finally, there was nothing to do but surrender the property to Ephron and himself with his wife, Sarah, and their young son, Eli, as bond servants in payment for the debt. It was a painful thing for Jacob and his loved ones to say farewell to his humble home and endeared possessions, in which his forefathers had lived and thrived, to go forth into the service of another. With tears of sorrow they walked around the sprawling plot, which he might not live to revisit. Ephron turned out to be a hard task-master and compelled Jacob's family to work long hours. Within a few years Jacob's health began to fail, and soon thereafter he died. A few years later his wife, Sarah, also died of a fever. Little Eli, now fifteen years old, was left alone as the slave of the cruel Ephron. There lingered in his memory cherished thoughts of his carefree childhood on the old home place when the children played together and had such fun. No time for fun now! He was not his own, and there was nowhere to go. What a miserable way to live, he often thought, yet as long as he was alive there was hope that someday, somehow, things would be different.

Soon after Eli's eighteenth birthday Ephron departed on a journey. One afternoon Eli was strolling through his master's field when he heard an unexpected sound. It was the long blast of a trumpet in the distance. The trumpet continued to blow, becoming louder and louder, as other trumpets joined its note from various directions. While standing in wonderment as to what was the meaning of this event, he heard a great commotion. It appeared that a group of people were running along the road in a state of great excitement, shouting and laughing as they went. Finally he waxed bold and stopped an old man with a long, white beard and asked what was going on. "Why, son, haven't you heard? This is the Year of Jubilee. Just started today - this very hour, to be sure. Can't you hear the trumpet? Oh, I guess you're so young you've never seen a Jubilee before! It's the time when all debts are cancelled, and all slaves are freed, and all homesteads restored to their rightful owners." Eli stood transfixed on the side of the road, his mouth open, his eyes wide with astonishment and disbelief. "All slaves are fr ... free ... freed?" he stuttered. "Yes, my boy," the old man assured him, "all slaves are as free as the birds as of right now." "But ... but I'm a slave!" Eli blurted. "Then leave this place, lad," commanded the white-haired stranger, "you're as free as the air. Go home! Go to your family, sit under your own vine. What rightfully belongs to you is really yours now."

The chains of servitude fell from the soul of the exulting slave. Within the hour he gathered his meager belongings and set forth from the house of bondage, and felt himself possessed of liberty which no hand of power or of fraud might invade. He made his way across the miles to the old home place, to his father's farm, and ordered the strangers occupying it to vacate. He started living in his childhood home again, and eating the fruit of his own land. No more serving as a slave; he was working for himself, in his own inheritance. And it was not by anything he had done. He had not earned his freedom. It was just the sovereign law of God that set him free. All that he had to do was believe it, head for home, and claim his inheritance! Thus every fiftieth year, counting from the time of their entrance into Canaan, was to Israel a Year of Jubilee, a time of rejoicing and restitution, in which families were reunited and lost homesteads were restored. Restoration of every man to his own possession brought great joy, cancellation of all debts brought relief and gladness, and release of all slaves inspired much jubilation and celebration. So marked was the wisdom, so manifold were the blessings of this divine institution! No wonder it was called a JUBILEE!

THE INHERITANCE

"Verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be FULFILLED" (Mat. 5:18).

It is only when we recognize the typical character of God's dealings with Israel that we can rightly appreciate the wonderful history of that people, or understand why their history, in preference to that of all other nations, is so particularly recorded by the prophets and the New Testament writers. In them, as the New Testament writers show, God has given striking illustrations of His plans, both for the Church and the world. Their Tabernacle service, so minutely prescribed in the divinely given law, with its bleeding beasts and all its peculiar appointments, their festivals and holy days, their sabbaths and all their ceremonies, as types pointed forward to antitypes, larger, higher, and grander far than those shadows. And the apostle Paul assures us that those antitypes will be laden with blessings for mankind, when he says that the law foreshadowed "good things TO COME" (Heb. 10:1; 8:5; Col. 2:17); while our Lord, in the above expression, assures us that all good things thus foreshadowed are sure of fulfillment.

When our Lord said that not one jot or tittle of the law should pass away until fulfilled, He referred not only to the fulfilling of its covenant obligations for all under that Law Covenant, finishing its hold upon them, by meeting its demands against them in full with His own life, but He meant more than this: He meant further, that all the blessings expressed in it typically would also be sure of fulfillment upon an antitypical scale - the plane of reality. In all the Israelitish ceremonies, God caused no type to be made which will prove meaningless, or pass unfulfilled; for the keeping of a type is not the fulfilling of it. The fulfilling is reached where the type ceases, being displaced by the reality, the antitype.

Thus, for instance, the slaying of the Pascal lamb was fulfilled in the death of Christ, the "Lamb of God," and there began the special blessing upon the antitypical firstborn, the elect believers of the Church age. The blessing, foreshadowed in that type, is not yet completely fulfilled, though the fulfillment began with the death of Christ, our Passover Lamb. In like manner, every ceremony prescribed in the law of Moses proves to be of typical significance. And the particularity with which the observance of every detail of the types was enforced throughout the age of Law gives emphasis to our Lord's words quoted above - that every minute particular, every jot and tittle, every dotted "i" and crossed "t", must be as meticulously fulfilled spiritually as it was carefully enforced naturally in the ceremonies of the law.

Because of the tremendous importance of the time that you and I are living in, at the close of the age, it is my deep conviction that it is infinitely important for us to gain understanding concerning some of the patterns, symbols, types and shadows given to us in scripture. Whenever one receives a true revelation from God, he will find somewhere in the Word that which points to it, that which is a symbol of it, that which is a pattern to it. We are admonished by the apostle Paul that everything that was written aforetime was written for our learning, upon whom the ends of the ages have come. So I believe that as God's unfolding to us continues to bring us more and more into Himself, there are patterns that we can find which will help us to understand the wonderful purposes of God in His people.

What appears in the scripture on the surface, the letter of the Word, suddenly illumined by the Spirit of Truth, brings tremendous discovery. It has been said, and I believe it is true, that the letter of the Word or the letter of the law, could never be explained apart from the gospel of grace. But, on the other hand, the gospel of grace in its fullest measure, in its depth and width and height and breadth, could never be understood without comprehending the figures of the law.

There is an interesting passage in Matthew 5:17. "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill." Many folk would like to do away with the law. Contrary to things He came to destroy - He came to destroy the works of the devil, He came to destroy death, He came to destroy the carnal mind - but contrary to the things He came to destroy, the Christ did not come to destroy the law, rather He came to bring the law to its highest fulfillment.

In this writing we propose to examine that typical feature of the Mosaic Law known as Jubilee, and to show that it was intended to foreshadow the great Restitution, the recovery of mankind from the fall, to be accomplished by the redemptive and reconstructive and restorative activities of God outlined in Acts 3:19-21: "Repent 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 receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God has spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began." Jubilee, in its very character, was a clear and unmistakable illustration of that glorious time of the restitution of all things. Since the Jubilee was a part of the law, and since repeating it naturally does not fulfill it, and since our Lord declared that the type could not pass away without fulfillment; and moreover, since we know that no such restitution of all things as that foretold "by all the holy prophets since the world began," and prefigured in this type, has ever yet occurred, we know that it must be FULFILLED IN THE FUTURE. True, there is a present partial fulfillment in a FIRSTFRUITS COMPANY, as we shall consider in detail later, but the broadest and fullest measure of fulfillment awaits the total triumph of the Kingdom of God in all realms forevermore.

Under the law of inheritance in Israel every family received a tract of land as a perpetual inheritance. This land was a trust from the Lord. The land remained the Lord's, although He gave each family the right to produce food and clothing from it. The Israelites were to exercise stewardship of the land. The ancient landmarks showed the boundaries of each family's portion. If they rented or sold or lost the land to someone else, the property came back to the family in the Jubilee at the end of the fifty years. Thus, even if the inheritance were lost, it remained still, typically, AN ETERNAL INHERITANCE.

On the spiritual plane the very thought of our "inheritance" immediately brings to mind so many things recorded in the scriptures. How that the "meek shall inherit the earth," how that we are to "inherit the kingdom," and to "inherit the life age-abiding," to "inherit the promises," "inherit the blessings," etc. and all of this thrills the heart with the gracious outflow of the Father's love to us. In Ephesians 1:5 & 11 the apostle wrote, "Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will ... in whom also WE HAVE OBTAINED AN INHERITANCE, being predestinated according to the purpose of Him who works all things after the counsel of His own will."

An inheritance is the result of another's gain, which is passed on to you. It comes to you for another's sake, it is not the result of personal accomplishment. We are learning what it means to be a son of God, realizing God's great plan and purposes involved. One of the important rights of sonship is that of INHERITANCE. Heirship depends upon our relationship to God - our Father. If we have been born of God, if we have been born from above, we are children of God and consequently heirs of the Almighty. This is what the apostle speaks of in Hebrews when he teaches about the discipline that God applies to His sons, and he says, "Furthermore we have had FATHERS OF OUR FLESH which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection to the FATHER OF SPIRITS, and live?" God is the Father of SPIRITS. God is the Father of OUR SPIRITS. Furthermore, God is the God of the SPIRITS OF A-L-L FLESH (mankind; Num. 16:22; 27:16). When we were born of the flesh we became heirs of our fleshly parents; but when we were born of the Spirit of God we became heirs of our heavenly Father - GOD! He purposed to make the inheritance ours by way of relationship, having "begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fades not away" (1 Pet. 1:3-4). Begotten - to an inheritance! To be "heirs of God, and joint heirs with Jesus Christ" (Rom. 8:17). It is THROUGH HIM, through Jesus Christ, that we have obtained and been made heirs of this wonderful inheritance. What we receive WE SHARE IN HIM, in union with Him, for HE is the "heir of all things" (Heb. 1:2). All that we have is THROUGH our Lord

Jesus Christ, and BY GRACE. "Giving thanks unto the Father, which has made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light" (Col.1:12).

Inheritance is also concerned with nationality and law. One inherits in the country of his parentage and according to the laws of that land. Jesus explained to Nicodemus in Jn. 3:5, that in order to enter the Kingdom of God human beings have to be born-again - of the SPIRIT. The Kingdom of God is the land or realm of our inheritance, and that great land is entered into by birth!

"Blessed be God the Father ... who has begotten us again ... to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fades not away, reserved in heaven for you" (1 Pet. 1:3-4). This inheritance is "reserved in heaven for you" - in the spiritual realm. Most saints subscribe to the crude notion that our inheritance is heaven - a mansion over the hill-top in some far away celestial Disney World in the sky. Not so! The apostle says that our inheritance is "reserved in the heavens." And from this spiritual realm of unlimitations we "draw down" our source of life and blessing and glory and when we are full it overflows to all about us. Ah, from the very first moment of our begetting unto this living hope, we begin to lay hold upon our inheritance. We commence by learning through the revelation of the Word and the dealings of the Spirit, which map out that inheritance, what God is like, and what He is prepared to be to us. Next we proceed to appropriate and make use of His attributes and properties in the crucible of daily experience and need. Then we become possessed of the indwelling life of God, who works His very nature into ours. And so we come to possess God just in proportion as He possesses us. We inherit Him as our portion up to the measure in which He possesses us. Arise! oh sons of God, you are living on a vast estate. Around you on all hands are God's life and love and grace and wisdom and power and glory awaiting your appropriation. Do not be content to be circumscribed and limited, as was Israel in the wilderness. Be rather like Joshua and Caleb who march boldly into the land crying, "Give me this mountain!" taking in evermore of the rich territory allotted by God.

TRACING OUR INHERITANCE

I am deeply impressed with the words of Jesus Christ as found in Jn. 8:32. The Master was giving a discourse, explaining that He had come from God, sent from the bosom of the Father He had come from above, and they did not know Him because they did not know His Father. Then to those Jews present who believed on Him He declared, "You shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." The word "truth" there means a revealing of what was covered. You will know that which is hidden. You will understand that which has been concealed in the patterns, the types, the shadows. You will perceive that which has been obscured by the veil of the fleshly mind and hidden in God from before the dawn of the ages.

The word "know" is from the Greek GINOSKO meaning to experience or become aware of. Jesus said you would experience, you would become experientially aware of that which was formerly concealed and hidden, and that truth would make you FREE. In 1 Pet. 1:3-4 the apostle wrote, "According as His divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him that hath called us to glory and virtue: whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these you might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust." The word "knowledge" is in the Greek EPIGNOSIS meaning to recognize, recognition, full discernment and acknowledgement. This is most

interesting! COGNITION means, according to Webster, "the process of knowing or perceiving." In RE-COGNITION we have the prefix "re" which means "again". Recognition, therefore, means TO KNOW AGAIN, TO PERCEIVE A SECOND TIME. What did Peter mean, then, when he said that exceeding great and precious promises are given to us, and all things that pertain to life and God-likeness "through the KNOWLEDGE (EPIGNO- SIS: re-cognition, knowing again) of HIM who has called us unto glory and virtue." Recognition is to become fully aware of and fully acquainted with WHAT WE ALREADY KNEW BEFORE. It means to identify what was known before. If I met you on a street corner one day and then didn't see you for a couple of weeks, when I saw you again I would recognize you because I met you once before. I would remember you, bringing you back again into mind. And that, precious friend of mine, is what truth is, that is what salvation is, that is what redemption is, that is what re-conciliation is, that is what re-birth is, that is what Jubilee is - it's recognizing what we already know, it's identifying and possessing again experientially what is already ours! It's being awakened. It's a return. Hallelujah!

This beautiful truth cannot be more graphically articulated than in the following words by George Hawtin. "With these lofty thoughts of God in our minds, knowing that His ways and methods are higher and better than our own, our hearts respond with joyful accord when Paul in wisdom shows that it was God's intention that all mankind should come to know Him through faith in God's Christ and not through their own works of righteousness. Therefore, exalting mightily the grace of God rather than the works of man, he wrote to the Gentiles these almost incredible words of faith: 'For God has concluded them all in unbelief, that He might have mercy upon all. O the depths of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out! For who has known the mind of the Lord? or who has been His counselor? Or who has first given to Him, and it shall be recompensed to him again? For of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things: to whom he glory for ever. Amen' (Rom. 11:32-36). The clearest possible rendering of the final verses of Romans eleven is found in the translation by Goodspeed, which in verses 34-36 gives this clear wording: 'Who has ever known the Lord's thoughts or advised Him? Or who has advanced anything to Him for which he will have to be repaid? For from Him everything comes, through Him everything exists, and in Him everything ends.'

"Somewhere hidden in the spirit of every man there abides the secret knowledge that we came forth from God, even as this text forcefully declares. This, too, is the thought so beautifully expressed by the poet in the idyll:

Oh my Father, that dwells
In a high and glorious place,
When shall I regain Your presence
And again behold Your face?
In Your holy habitation
Did my spirit once reside?
In my first primeval childhood
Was I nurtured by Your side?

For a wise and glorious purpose
You have made me here on earth
And withheld the recollection
Of my former friends and birth.

But at times the secret something
Whispers, You're a stranger here;
And I feel that I have wandered
From a more exalted sphere.

Oh, my Father, that dwells
In a high and glorious place,
Yet shall I appear before
You And again behold Your face.
Day by day Your Spirit leads
Ever upward unto Thee,
Till at last I'll find contentment
In Your pure reality.

"I shall be surprised indeed in that glory world above should we find that these blessed words of Christ, spoken of Himself, do not in truth apply to us all: 'I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world: again, I leave the world and go to the Father' (Jn. 16:28). Far away in the depths of my ransomed being there is a chord that vibrates in response to the words, 'I came forth from the Father and am come into the world,' and that same chord responds again to the words, 'Again, I leave the world and go to the Father.' We came forth from God, our orbit leading us from the celestial to the terrestrial. There can be no doubt of that; and by faith we know that this same orbit will guide us again from the realm of the terrestrial back to the bosom of the Father, for from Him everything originally comes, through Him everything now exists, and in Him everything will ultimately end. Glory to God for ever! Amen.

"My spirit rejoices today in thankfulness to my Father in heaven that many years ago He let me hear a secret from His own heart, a secret that few in our generation have ever understood. When He breathed it into my listening heart, it well nigh stunned me because of my tradition and unbelief, yet I could not doubt the truth He taught me when He said, 'The creation was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but reason of Him who has subjected the same in hope' (Rom. 8:20). As dew distilling from the mighty ocean falls in snow and ice upon the rugged mountain, there to remain in the grip of glacial death for a thousand years or more until released at last by the warmth of the sun to race down the mountainside in rushing torrents of water and join a thousand babbling brooks to expand into a mighty river and flow into the eternal seas, so as a mist has the spirit of man gone forth from the presence of God. Buffeted by the frigid winds of earth, he learns the lessons before ordained by the wisdom of God, and when the Sun of righteousness shines upon him, freeing his spirit from the icy bondages of the flesh, cleansing him by the power of the blood of Christ, he returns to God whence he came, not empty and alone, but as a mighty river, once again to become one with the ocean of God's self" - end quote.

Who is our family and what is our possession that once we had in the Father, that we are to return to? I declare to you, brothers and sisters, that it is a possession that we had in God BEFORE THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD. How clear and unmistakable the scripture is about this! "Father, I will that they also, whom You have given Me, be with Me where I am; that they may behold My glory, which You have given Me: for You loved Me BEFORE THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD" (Jn. 17:24). "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: according as He has chosen US in Him BEFORE THE

FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love" (Eph. 1:3-4). "Who has saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace, which WAS GIVEN US IN CHRIST JESUS BEFORE THE WORLD BEGAN" (II Tim. 1:9). "In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, PROMISED (US) BEFORE THE WORLD BEGAN" (Tit. 1:2).

Our inheritance is a possession that we once knew in God and that we are being restored to because it was promised and given to us in Christ BEFORE THE WORLD BEGAN. Do you understand, precious friend of mine, what God is saying? "That beginning you had with Me, when you and I knew each other, in that distant age of antiquity, before the foundation of the world, in the bosom of the Father, in union with Christ, when you were foreknown of Me, while the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy - do you not know, dear one, that that state of being in which you existed, that conscious awareness in which you dwelt, that righteousness and peace and joy and glory and wisdom and knowledge and power which was then yours with Me -- T-H-A-T IS YOUR INHERITANCE!"

We have an eternal inheritance in the Lord. "And you shall divide the land by lot for an inheritance among your families: and to the large tribe you shall give a larger inheritance, and to the small tribe you shall give a smaller inheritance; wherever the lot falls to any man, that shall be his; according to the tribes of your fathers you shall inherit" (Num. 33:54). Concealed within that law of Israel's inheritance lie truths of staggering significance. Every man has a place in God's great Kingdom, just as each of the twelve tribes of Israel was given a lot of inheritance in the promised land. Each member of each tribe had their own designated lot of inheritance in the land of Canaan. And that is a figure in the Spirit. Just as we are Abraham's seed after the Spirit, so we have a spiritual promised land which is God's spiritual Kingdom, bespeaking of a glory, or a position or a lot of eternal inheritance in Jesus Christ.

Long millenniums ago the aged prophet Daniel, having faithfully come to the end of his illustrious course, was given a final blessing with a message of personal consolation and hope. The angel of God turned to Daniel and said, "But go your way until the end: for you shall rest, and stand in YOUR LOT at the end of the days" (Dan. 12:13). He was to depart and continue on his road, awaiting the end. His future was not left in uncertainty. Like many other Old Testament saints, he was to pass away, without receiving the promise (Heb. 11:39), but, in faith, awaiting the divine pledge. When the age of abiding bliss came, he would arise to receive his "lot" of inheritance, the heaven bestowed heritage as distinct from the "lot" apportioned in the earthly Canaan.

Not every one of us has the same lot, for each has his own lot of inheritance and each of us will be different. We know that in the natural if you pertained to the tribe of Judah you had a particular lot of inheritance in Canaan. Or if you belonged to the tribe of Ephraim, Manasseh, Gad, Issachar, or any of the other tribes in Israel you possessed a certain geographical location your lot of inheritance had to be staked in. If you were squatting on the inheritance of your brother you were there like a sojourner or a stranger, sometimes as a bondman, but your real lot of inheritance was found in the geographical area God gave to your tribe. It is my conviction that in the spirit all of us belong to a spiritual tribe in God, that is, a spiritual position or calling in the Lord. Beyond the natural there is a spiritual Israel and there are spiritual tribes, and there are spiritual lots of inheritance. Everything that is seen in the earth regarding the plan and purpose of God had its origin

in the heavenlies. The arrangement and structure of the Tabernacle in the wilderness and all its furnishings and ceremonies and priestly ministrations were to be made according to the "pattern" shown Moses in the Mount. Therefore there had to be a heavenly reality from which the earthly was made. The Jerusalem which is above is the mother of us all, and that great City has twelve gates bearing the names of the twelve tribes of Israel. This intimates that there is a heavenly Israel as well as an earthly Israel. Therefore we are down here working out or staking out our position in the Christ for our inheritance.

We mentioned earlier that Peter says that we have an inheritance "reserved in heaven for us." I do not for one second believe, as so many Christians ignorantly assume, that Peter meant that in some far-away land, on some beautiful Isle of Somewhere, we would receive a mansion, a harp and a crown for an inheritance; but we have AN INHERITANCE RESERVED FOR US HERE AND NOW IN A HEAVENLY WAY OF LIFE, IN A SPIRITUAL STATE OF BEING, IN THE SPHERE OF DIVINE REALITY. And no one can take it from us. None of us can have the inheritance of any of our brothers. Each has his calling. Each has his position. Each has his unique place in the great and eternal Kingdom of the Father. Our own is so grand and glorious to us that we care not for a portion of any one else's. God gives the best for each of us.

Let us look a little closer at our inheritance. The first Adam was given an inheritance which was lost, but through the last Adam the inheritance is regained. "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spoke in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken unto us by His Son, whom He has appointed HEIR OF ALL THINGS, by whom also He made the worlds" (Heb. 1:1-2). The great aim and object of God in creation was to provide yet another dimension of inheritance for His Son, in whom He might show forth His glory and find His blessedness. On the sixth day the Lord said, "Let us make man in our image and after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth. So God created man in His own image, in the image of God created He him..." (Gen. 1:26-27). When the Lord said, "Let us make man in our image," He was speaking not only of Adam, the first man. His mighty edict included the entire human race, which included every descendent of Adam from Adam himself to the very last man who shall be born of his family. I am a son of Adam, the extension and projection of his substance, mind, nature and being, and so are those who read these lines.

As we consider this truth, we should especially notice this most significant statement: "Let us make man in our image ... and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth." This statement, which seems so simple, is a shadow of things divine. Man in Christ, man in God's image, is God's government in the Kingdom of God. It is a well concealed prophecy displaying to the spiritual mind the vast scope of man's authority when, perfect in God's image, he is presented faultless, tested, and ready to receive again his inheritance. First, Let us give him dominion over all things under the earth, let us make him ruler of the things beneath, the lowest realms of the bottomless, typified by the fish swarming in the depths of the seas. Second, Let us give him dominion over the things in the realm of the heavens, the things above, the spiritual world of the celestials, typified by the fowl that fly in the heavens. Third, Let us give him dominion over the earthly and physical realms, over all natural things, typified by the cattle and all the earth. The dominion that would be man's after he was perfected and conformed to the image of God through the dreadful sufferings of death was to extend, not merely over

fishes and beasts and birds, but over those things which they foreshadowed, that is, the things beneath the earth, things upon the earth, and things above in the vast universe of angels, principalities, and powers of the celestial realms being made subject to him. Should someone find it difficult to embrace so great a truth from so small and insignificant a type, I would point you to the unequivocal confirmation of these very facts given in plain and easy to understand words by the inspired writer of Hebrews wherein he says, "For unto the angels has He not put in subjection the world to come, whereof we speak. But one in a certain place testified, saying, How poor a creature is man, and yet You remember him, and a son of man, and You come to him! You have made him for a little while lower than the angels; with glory and honor You have crowned him, and have set him over the works of Your hands. You put everything in subjection under his feet. For this subjecting of the universe to man implies the leaving of N-O-T-H-I-N-G not subject to him. But we do not as yet see the universe subject to him. But we do see Him who was made for a little while lower than the angels - even Jesus - because of His suffering of death crowned with glory and honor (the same glory and honor given to man!), that He by God's grace might taste death for every man" (Heb. 2:5-9, Weymouth). You won't quite grasp that at first. It's too overwhelming! To be crowned means to be given KINGLY RULE. To be crowned with glory and honor is to be given such rule as Jesus has NOW - and that is described as being the Administrating, Ruling Executive over the ENTIRE UNIVERSE!

As "the seed" of Abraham, Christ is the inheritor of all the PROMISED INHERITANCE (Gal. 3:16,29). Christ is the designated heir of all things, of all ages, and of all worlds (Heb. 1:12). And in Rom. 8:17 we find, "The Spirit bears witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: and if children, then HEIRS; heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ." God Himself sums up this great truth in Rev. 21:7, declaring, "He that overcomes shall INHERIT ALL THINGS; and I will be his God, and He shall be My SON."

But today unregenerate, carnal man is shooting rockets to the moon and sending space vehicles to the planets of our solar system, boasting that he is going to use the moon as a launching pad to soar to the planets and galaxies beyond. But man is simply getting in too big a hurry! He is striving to take over what indeed can be his - but man has not yet fitted himself to manage it - and it has not yet lawfully been placed in his hands! Man today is not in God's image and likeness, and it is that man to whom God entrusts universal dominion, the man in His likeness! Man today does not bear God's image, and can only spread his sin and death, bringing chaos and destruction wherever he goes. What natural man does not know, does not remember, is that when, through Christ, he first qualifies for the trust - it has been God's intention all along to place not only the moon and Mars, but the WHOLE VAST, LIMITLESS UNIVERSE, PHYSICAL AND SPIRITUAL, UNDER HIS JURISDICTION! What an inheritance!

But there is a deeper and more wonderful truth beyond this. As the ocean includes the seas, the bays, and straits, which, though known by separate names, are parts of its majestic and all-embracing fullness, so is there a dimension of HIS INHERITANCE that encompasses all that is ours in Christ. In the law of the Old Testament priesthood, the Lord spoke to Aaron, "You shall have no inheritance in their land, neither shall You have any part among them. I AM YOUR PART, and YOUR INHERITANCE, among the children of Israel" (Num. 18:20). It was a very satisfactory arrangement for the pious priest. He could well dispense with the olive yards and vineyards, the wheat fields and homesteads of Palestine, if he might HAVE GOD HIMSELF as the strength of his heart, the source of his provision, and his portion forever. And the Psalmist eagerly caught at

the thought, gladly surrendered all portion in this life, if only he might be satisfied with God (Ps. 17:15). "The LORD is the portion of MINE INHERITANCE and of my cup: You maintain my lot. Yea, I have a goodly heritage" (Ps. 17:5-6).

Ah, how blessed the thought! GOD HIMSELF IS OUR INHERITANCE. Not golden harps. Not golden streets. Not walls of jasper or pearly gates. Not a cabin in the corner or a mansion over the hilltop. Not fluttering wings and a white nightgown with which to flit about over the Elysium hills of glory. NO! There is something deeper, more inward and rapturous - the possession of God. HEIRS OF G-O-D! Heirs of all the communicable glories of the divine nature and power. To know Him, to explore His Being, to live on His fullness, to discover new tracts and continents in the terra incognita of Godhead, to see His glory, to put on His mind, to be changed into His image, to wield His scepter - this is "the heritage of the servants of the Lord." Glory to God!

The inheritance is incorruptible as to its substance. It is not liable to decay, as are the things of this gross material realm. The inheritance of the saints is, above all, SPIRITUAL; and it requires spiritual faculties to apprehend and enjoy it. But in such as have not been born again, their spirits quickened by His Spirit, those spiritual faculties are lacking. They cannot remember the inheritance once promised and given to them before the foundation of the world. They do not recognize heavenly things. They are bondmen in an enemy's house. The glory that pertains to their spirit has been lost in the dimness of a distant dimension. A blind man may stand amid the fairest landscape unconcerned, because the one organ by which he could enjoy it is lacking. A lunatic may live in a house stored with rich treasures of art and craft, oblivious to it all because his mind is blank to all its beauty and value. And the natural man might stand in heaven itself, and miss God with all the glories of His inheritance in the saints, for want of those powers of spiritual perception of which he is deficient. Truly, the Kingdom of God comes not by observation; for behold, the Kingdom of God is WITHIN YOU. We are not heirs of the "things" of God, but of GOD HIMSELF. Heirs of all that He is. Name any of the divine attributes - His love, His holiness, His wisdom, His knowledge, His power, His nature, His life, and myriads more - THESE MAKE UP THE INHERITANCE. What an inheritance!

Ephesians 1:10 speaks of "the dispensation of the fullness of times," that is, the period in which the perfect end of God's governmental ways is seen in the dominion of Christ. "That in the dispensation of the fullness of times He might gather together in one all things IN CHRIST, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even IN HIM: IN WHOM ALSO WE HAVE OBTAINED AN INHERITANCE..." All things are to be gathered into the Christ in the heavenly realms and in the earthly realms. ALL - INTO H-I-M! "In whom," continues the apostle, "we have obtained an inheritance." Listen, my brother, my sister, we have obtained an inheritance, not in Palestine, not in Israel, not in America, not in Great Britain, not in the earth, nor even in the heavens alone; but, rather, IN HIM. We are appointed the heirs of God and joint-heirs with the Christ.

When Christ is manifested in all His fullness of glory we shall be manifested with Him in His glory. At this "manifestation of the sons of God" creation is brought "into the liberty of the glory of the children of God." It is thus in "the heirs of God" that He will hold the inheritance. Christ is the heir of God. IN HIM we also obtain the inheritance. In this enChristed body God will possess the inheritance. All that vast inheritance that shall be placed under the hand and rule of the Son of God, God will hold in the saints; just as the land of Canaan was Yahweh's inheritance, and He gave it to, and held it in, Israel.

Let us understand! The inheritance is from God, but in Christ. God holds the inheritance in Christ, that is, in the saints, just as a man who has a million dollars may hold it in the bank. He deposits his wealth in the bank, or invests it in a piece of property. So God deposits His inheritance - all He is and all He has - IN THE SAINTS! He invests all in them so that they are the receptacle and substance of HIS INHERITANCE. So Paul says, "That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation ... that ... you may know ... what are the riches of the glory of HIS INHERITANCE I-N T-H-E S-A-I-N-T-S" (Eph. 1:18).

Mark the two occurrences of the word glory in the above verse and their connection. "The Father of glory," and "The riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints." We can understand the Father being the Father of glory, and that He must be the One who gives His grace and glory; but what are these words which tell us that we are of worth to Him? "His inheritance in the saints?" Yea, more, "The glory of His inheritance in the saints." Yea, yet more, "The riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints." Faith rubs her eyes and wonders if she has read correctly. Love bows in adoring worship and accepts what she cannot understand, and Hope exults with expectant joy and longs for the fullness of the Christ to come. Grace graces the graceless with grace and then admires the graced ones of grace. The worthless are made worthy in the worth of Christ, and then HE appreciates the worth of the made-worthies. The beggars beggar the Son of God by making Him a Beggar, and then HE out of His beggary blesses the beggars and makes them peers of the King of Glory. The inheritance is thus from God, but in the saints. It is our inheritance, but first and foremost it is God's inheritance - invested into us. As under the law of Israel the land was the Lord's, but He gave it to Israel to manage as theirs, for Him. What an awesome responsibility!

INHERITANCE LOST

Nothing in the whole world is more obvious than the fact that the inheritance man once knew in God has been lost. In that dim and distant long ago God set man over all the works of His hands. He appointed man the supreme ruler of the infinite vastness of infinity and the heir of all realms and realities. When sin came, all that changed and man instead of a ruler became a slave, eking out his subsistence by the sweat of his face. He came into bondage to sin, sorrow, satan and death, and, believe me, satan is a hard taskmaster. Man lost his relationship with God, and life became at times unbearable. The mystery that the natural mind can never fathom is the fact that it was by divine planning that circumstances were so arranged that man forfeited and relinquished his title deed to the inheritance given him, and he became a servant of sin, to obey the lusts thereof. "Know ye not, that to whom you yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants you are to whom you obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?" (Rom. 6:16).

How pitiful that the myriads of things which appeal to the flesh can become so important that men will serve them to the satisfaction of the flesh, and immediately place themselves in the servant position, while that thing becomes their master. To whomever, or whatever we yield ourselves as servants to obey, his servants we are. The application of this can take many forms and cover many items, but the principle of it is constant. "In time past you walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now works in the children of disobedience" (Eph. 2:2). Servants of corruption, servants of the negative realm, having lost the inheritance given to man, and rather than being "lord" over the creation, man became the slave of it. Man

has throughout these ages of travail borne but a faint semblance of the glory that once was his. Think of a rancher who owns a large ranch and then becomes disabled so that though he still owns the ranch he is unable in and of himself to manage it or to evict squatters or kill rattlesnakes. The rancher didn't lose ownership, but did lose his ability to manage his ranch. The enemies came in and overpowered him until he became a helpless prisoner in his own domain. Such is the pitiable state of man in relation to his magnificent inheritance!

When the blessed Son of God hung upon the cross God in infinite tenderness wrapped the land in darkness in the hour of His supreme suffering. About those three hours we know little, save the words that escaped the lips of the Sufferer Himself. There came a moment when the voice was heard amid the darkness, and it said, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" The men about the cross were quite familiar with the words. They were not strange words. They were quoted from the Psalter, from the Worship-book of the Hebrew people. They had often chanted the Psalm in solemn monotone and recited it in many an hour of heart anguish. But there are values in it far deeper and more profound than the Psalmist knew when he wrote the song. When he wrote it, it was the expression of sorrow such as he was then passing through. But it has become for evermore full of meaning to us, because Christ uttered these words upon the cross. There is great value in recognizing the fact that it was a human cry, and that Jesus quoted it. And the value is all the greater if we remember that all that follows in that twenty-second Psalm is an exposition of what it is to be God-forsaken. The Psalmist was not looking at the old rugged cross on the craggy crest, he had no vision of it; he was, I am deeply persuaded, writing of his own heart's agony; and here this One, this King upon the cross, stretched back through the centuries and took hold of the most awful wail of agony that ever escaped the human heart, and quoted it as His own experience. He was our humanity, born of a virgin; throughout the whole of His public ministry He had spoken in human terms, and yet with unequivocal divine authority.

"My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me!" It was first of all the cry of a soul at the uttermost of sin, having lost the vision of God. It was the cry of a soul at the uttermost of sorrow, conscious of its lack of God. All sorrow is lack. All grief is the consciousness of lack. When the soul becomes conscious of the lack of God, that is the uttermost sorrow. Moreover, it was the soul in the presence of mystery, in the presence of silence, with no voice, with no answer. In that moment Jesus expressed in human speech the fact that the pains and the penalties of the human sin were His. That is the heart of it, and the center of it, and the soul of it, and the mystery of it!

I must assure you, beloved friend, that the anguish endured by Jesus on the cross has been experienced by every son and daughter of Adam's race. We have already suffered it. We have known the terror of being away from the Father's presence. Jesus was only then, in His identification with man's plight, beginning to experience what mankind has experienced for six long millenniums! An absolute forsaking of the Father! And loss, total and unspeakable loss. It was God that lowered man, making him a little lower than the angels, or lacking from Elohim, as the Hebrew expresses it. Most Christians say that Jesus suffered so we wouldn't have to - but the doleful truth is that we've already been partakers of His suffering, for His suffering was naught but our suffering which He took upon Him. There was one difference - we did not have the ability to RETURN! But God so loved us that He gave His beloved Son into the same death so that He could bring us into glory. Since the day I came into this world I have had to suffer the death of a carnal realm of thinking, live in a world that I knew nothing about, with no understanding of

spiritual things, no knowledge of from whence I came, no comprehension of where I was going, shapened in iniquity, enslaved to the passions of the flesh, owned and controlled by the law of sin and death, until Jesus came and awakened me and whispered into my quickened spirit that I am on my way back HOME! Away back at the beginning God gave a promise of restoration, of victory over sin and death. "Her seed shall bruise your head," God told the serpent. And in Romans 16:20 Paul reiterates the promise: "And the God of peace shall bruise satan under your feet shortly." Man shall surely return to his possession. All that was lost shall be restored.

Let me give you now a scripture that shows the hand of God in this and the extensive scope of both the departure from, and the returning unto, God. I quote from Psalm 90:1-3. "Lord, You have been our dwelling place in all generations. Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever You had formed the earth or the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, You are God. YOU TURN MAN TO DESTRUCTION; and then say, RETURN, YOU CHILDREN OF MEN." You could never read this word "return" here if you had not first read that man had been "turned" away to destruction. In this passage the word "destruction" has this meaning in the original: A COMPLETE COLLAPSE, crumbling man to a contrite condition.

After turning men to destruction God then says, "RETURN TO ME, You children of men." Oh, yes, He turned us to destruction, but planted deep within the sub consciousness of every son of Adam is the SECRET COMMAND to RETURN, which is revealed in that inner desire, yearning, craving, seeking, feeling, compulsion which is never satisfied until man does find himself home in God once more. All the religiousness of men, from the witch doctor in the jungle to the modernist in the pulpit in America, is the manifestation of this FEELING AFTER GOD, IF HAPLY THEY MIGHT FIND HIM (Acts 17:26-27). While mankind in general is still lost in the hellish darkness of sin and death, yet there is a firstfruit company whose hearts have been charged by the inward call to return, and with the Shulamite maiden in the Song of Solomon share this blessed experience: "By night on my bed I sought Him whom my soul loves; I sought Him, but I found Him not. I will arise now, and go about the city in the streets, and in the broadways I will seek Him whom my soul loves: I sought Him but I found Him not. The watchmen that go about the city found me: to whom I said, Saw you Him whom my soul loves. It was but a little that I passed from them, but I FOUND HIM WHOM MY SOUL LOVES: I HELD HIM, AND WOULD NOT LET HIM GO" (S. of S. 3:1-4).

Mankind is yet groping about in the dense darkness of the carnal mind, knowing not that HE is standing right there in the shadows, were their eyes opened to see. Yet He has appointed a day - Oh glorious day! - when His light shall shine forth and the plan shall be completed as the apostle said, "For God has allowed us to know the secret of His plan, and it is this: He purposed long ago in His sovereign will that all human history should be consummated in Christ, that everything that exists in Heaven or earth should find its perfection and fulfillment in Him. In Christ WE HAVE BEEN GIVEN AN INHERITANCE, since we were destined for this, by the one who works out all His purposes according to the design of His own will" (Eph. 1:9-11, Phillips).

Praise God, by redemption, we already have something of our inheritance, but at best it is only the earnest - what a day's pay of the laborer is to the year's wage, or the foyer of a mansion to its vast and magnificent rooms. "Now He which established us with you in Christ, and has anointed us, is God; who has also sealed us, and given us the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts" (II Cor. 1:21-23). The word "earnest" is from a Greek word

meaning simply a "down payment" or a "pledge" or "token payment" which is paid to GUARANTEE that the balance will be paid. The Amplified Bible renders this verse thus, "He has appropriated and acknowledged us as His, putting His seal upon us and giving us the Holy Spirit in our hearts as the SECURITY DEPOSIT and GUARANTEE of the FULFILLMENT OF HIS PROMISE." Wuest's translation says that the Holy Spirit is "the TOKEN PAYMENT GUARANTEEING THE PAYMENT IN FULL of our salvation!" Then in Eph. 1:14 we read, "That Spirit is the GUARANTEE of OUR INHERITANCE the firstfruit, the pledge and foretaste, the DOWN PAYMENT of OUR HERITAGE - in anticipation of its FULL REDEMPTION and our acquiring COMPLETE POSSESSION of it, to the praise of His glory" (Amplified Bible). We know not how soon the fullness shall break upon us, but it will come, and not tarry, as our hearts are prepared to receive it, praise His name!

Misunderstanding the nature of our inheritance and the plan by which God shall bring us fully into it has, in the past, led to many ignorant and unscriptural assertions. For instance, speaking of a deceased saint we have said, "He has gone to his reward." Nothing could be farther from the truth! It is not death that qualifies one to receive his inheritance, but the raising of ones whole being up into the sphere of HIS LIFE. "God ... has begotten us again unto a lively (living) hope BY THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST FROM THE DEAD, to an inheritance incorruptible ... reserved in heaven for you." Heaven is not the inheritance. The inheritance is merely "reserved" in heaven (the celestial sphere) for you. And it is not revealed when you go by way of the grave, for it is "ready to be revealed IN THE LAST TIME" (I Pet. 1:5), here and now, praise God! And truly, not only we, but in the beautiful words of J.B. Phillips's translation, "The whole creation is on tiptoe to see the wonderful sight of the sons of God coming into their own" (Rom. 8:19). "Their own" is their lot of inheritance, and this will mean the fullness of our salvation - spirit, soul and body - a company of immortal and incorruptible sons filled with the fullness of His mind, nature, glory and power to bless and restore all creation. Towards this blessed consummation, as yet "reserved," our hope stretches out both hands; meanwhile, it is an inspiration and stimulus for every moment of our life!

Suppose you are sitting in your home some night and the door bell rings. A man is there, and he says, "I'm an attorney with such and such a firm, and we're trying to find a relative of a missing person. Your name is so and so. Did your mother come to this country from Scotland fifty years ago, and did she have a brother who went to Australia?" You say, "We have a family Bible here. It's all written down. There's my mother. She was born in Edinburgh on such a date. She had a brother and he went to Australia, and we never heard from him since." "Well," says the lawyer, "this is wonderful for this is the last link in the evidence. He went to Australia and had a son there to whom he left his fortune; that son died and left no heir. The lawyers in Australia have traced it back to Scotland; the Scottish people traced it over here, and we have come to you for we believe that you are next of kin." You say, "Yes, undoubtedly." "Well, says the lawyer, "I'm very happy to inform you that you have a very large inheritance." You say, "I can get that new Lincoln I've been dreaming about." He says, "It's a very large inheritance." You say, "Mercedes." "In fact, your uncle had coal mines." You say, "Rolls Royce." The lawyer says, "Now, of course, its in the courts and you can't get anything very soon except the down payment. Your uncle also owned hundreds of thousands of acres of sheep ranches; oil and gold have been discovered there. It's going to be three or four years before you can get it all, but they have a little advance payment that's ready for you now." "Well, what is this little down payment?" "This little down payment is only twenty-eight million dollars." "If that's the down payment, what's the whole thing going to be?"

Not all the certified public accountants in the world could ever add up the glories of the inheritance reserved for us. And none of the religionists can even begin to comprehend what the inheritance really is. It would be impossible for a team of bankers, lawyers, preachers, teachers, evangelists and scholars to get together and tell us what the magnitude of the inheritance is. All any of them can do is tell us a little bit about the interest on the interest. That is about as close as anyone can get to understanding our inheritance, because the down payment is THE HOLY SPIRIT OF GOD! This inheritance is nothing short of the fact that we inherit GOD HIMSELF!

REDEMPTION

Incorporated into the law of Jubilee is a second law known as the law of Redemption. Very few Christians are aware of the fact that Redemption is closely associated with Jubilee. Many confuse the two terms, but the truth is that though they are related, Redemption and Jubilee are not the same thing at all. They accomplish the same end, but do not work the same.

The law of Redemption is given in the same chapter we have under consideration, Leviticus 25. "If your brother has become poor and has sold some of his property, if any of his kin comes to redeem it, he shall be allowed to redeem what his brother has sold. And if the man has no one to redeem his property, and he himself has become more prosperous and has enough to redeem it, then let him count the years since he sold it and restore the over-payment to the man to whom he sold it, and return to his ancestral possession. But if he is unable to redeem it, it shall remain in the buyer's possession until the Year of Jubilee, when it shall be set free and he may return to it. And if a sojourner or stranger with you becomes rich, and your Israelite brother becomes poor beside him and sells himself to the stranger or sojourner with you, or to a member of the stranger's family, after he is sold he may be redeemed; one of his brethren may redeem him. And if he is not redeemed during these years and by these means, then he shall go free in the Year of Jubilee, he and his children with him" (Lev. 25:25-28, 47-48, 54, Amplified).

The prefix "re" in "re-deem" means "again" (as in re-copy, re-wash, re-write). The main part of the word is from a root that means "to purchase, to buy." Redeem means to re-purchase or to buy back. Perhaps the best illustration of redemption that we have in modern life is the transaction that takes place in a Pawn Shop. A pawnbroker is a person who lends small sums of money on articles of clothing, watches, jewelry, and other belongings that are left with the pawnbroker as security. The articles that are left are pawned. The pawnbroker has the right to sell these articles, if the loan is not repaid with interest and charges within a certain time after the debt becomes due. When you pawn something you get a piece of paper called a pawn ticket. This ticket has a date on it, usually one year from the day you got it. If you pay the loan or the interest on it within a year, the pawnbroker cannot sell the valuable thing you pawned. The pawnbroker usually limits the loan to the amount that he or she could get by selling the article. The sum is generally less than the article is worth to the borrower. For this reason, pawnshop customers do not usually regard the transaction as a sale of their goods. In most cases, the customers pay back the loan with interest and redeem their property. In effect they have bought back the property from which they were alienated.

It was a long time from one Year of Jubilee to the next. If a man lost his property shortly after a Jubilee, there was the possibility that he would not be alive to enjoy it the next time a Jubilee came around. So God made another provision for the recovery of the land

and of slaves. A person who leased out his land could get it back before Jubilee if he so desired. He could repossess it any time he wanted it by canceling the lease and refunding a fair prorated amount to the person to whom he had leased it. If the land had been seized by creditors, a rich relative was able to redeem the property if he was willing to do so, and then the land could be restored to the original owner. If the owner had been sold into slavery he, too, could be redeemed by a near-kinsman. This is the law of the kinsman-redeemer. In the event that no kinsman had been able to redeem the land, and the former owner was unable to do so, it remained alienated until the Year of Jubilee. At that time it automatically reverted back to its former owner or heirs.

"If your brother be waxen poor, and have sold away some of his possession, and IF ANY OF HIS KIN COME TO REDEEM IT, then shall he redeem that which his brother sold" (Lev. 25:25). The Hebrew says, "The redeemer thereof, he that is near unto him, shall come and redeem it." The Hebrew word for "redeem" is GOEL and is the term applied to the kinsman to whom pertained the right, according to very ancient custom, of redeeming lands, houses or persons. The GOEL was required to be the nearest blood relation. If this person was unable to redeem, then the relative next in line as kin could become the kinsman-redeemer. The story of Ruth and Boaz is the Bible example of this ancient custom. Boaz redeemed the estate of the deceased Elimelech, Naomi's husband, by marrying Ruth, the widow of one of Elimelech's sons. There was a kinsman nearer in relation than Boaz, but he chose not to be redeemer, and this left the way open for Boaz, who was next in line to become the kinsman-redeemer.

The person sustaining the office of kinsman-redeemer was a beautiful figure of our Lord Jesus Christ, who assumed our nature that He might become OUR KINSMAN-REDEEMER. In Israel, if an Israelite fell into poverty, then he had to sell himself. He had to sell his services, his labor, his very life to another. And to whomsoever he sold himself, that one became his master. His own brother, or a stranger, if he sold himself to a stranger, became his master. Now we, through the infirmity of our fleshly nature sold ourselves into sin. And that "stranger" who possessed us was the devil himself. "...and that they may recover themselves from the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will" (II Tim. 2:26). We became the servants, the slaves, the captives of the devil whether we liked it or not, and he owned us, until Jesus came and bought us back, redeemed us.

We know that we came into this world, born in sin and shapened in iniquity, being debtors to the law, we were enslaved by the law of sin and death. Therefore sin owned us and controlled us and we were the servants of sin. Our inheritance was lost and we were in hopeless bondage. Brethren who could not redeem themselves had to be redeemed by a kinsman who had the power of money to buy them when they were slaves or servants of another. We could not redeem ourselves from under the law of sin and death, we could not ransom ourselves from the power of the devil, therefore we have a near kinsman who came and had the wherewithal to purchase us, that we might be released from our slavery to the devil and enter again into the inheritance or lot or position in God which was given us in Christ before ever the worlds were created or the ages framed. We are the brother that dwells by our Lord Jesus Christ. He is the rich brother, we are the poor brother. We waxed poor and had to be sold. But He bought us, He paid the price for our freedom from slavery, for "you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that through His poverty we might be rich" (II Cor. 8:9) Hallelujah!

The expression, "If any of his kin come to redeem it," implies the necessity for willingness on the kinsman's part; and it points at the same time very naturally onward to HIM who is so often spoken of as "coming to redeem" us. "The redeemer shall come to Zion," says Isaiah, using the name GOEL, kinsman-redeemer. Himself said in eternity, "Lo, I come!" "Blessed is He that comes" - the kinsman, the Goel, that comes to restore our possession. And Job's hope becomes fruition, "I know that my redeemer lives, and shall stand on the earth at the latter day." "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly."

Our Saviour needed to be our kinsman in order to possess a right to offer the price of redemption. Hence, He took on our very nature, and was "bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh" (Eph. 5:30). "Forasmuch as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same" (Heb. 2:14). And by becoming thus related to us, He has the right, which He will enforce, of fully redeeming those He so loved. How glorious our prospect - how sure our redemption, spirit, soul and body, as well as our inheritance, when our Redeemer is such an one as would become our kinsman in very love to us! He loved "the children", His younger brothers; and since they had flesh and blood, lo! therefore, He must out of love insist on taking the same. And it is done. He is born of Mary of Nazareth, yet continuing holy, harmless, undefiled. He is feeble, and needs to be swaddled in swaddling clothes, and to lean on a mother's breast; and now so evidently and truly is God manifest in flesh that one could write - "There is no God but He, Who lay upon His mother's knee And suck'd the Virgin's breasts." Truly He is our kinsman! He is the "mighty man of wealth" in Bethlehem and "in Him is strength" to reinstate the impoverished one in possession of an inheritance that has been lost, praise His wonderful name!

You have read what the scripture says of Moses: "This Moses whom they refused, saying, Who made you a ruler and a judge? the same did God send to be a ruler and A DELIVERER by the hand of the angel which appeared to him in the bush" (Acts 7:35). We find that this word "deliverer" is the same Greek word which in its various forms is translated ransom, redemption, redeem, and redeemed. The question follows, How was Moses a deliverer, a redeemer, or a redemption-price for Israel in Egypt? Did Moses pay a price to Pharaoh for Israel's redemption? Did he promise Egypt anything in return for allowing Israel to leave? Absolutely not! Moses paid Egypt exactly NOTHING. And yet, he was a redeemer and redemption for Israel! It was his own life which he poured out for Israel, it was the freely giving of his life to Israel which led them up out of the house of bondage.

When Jesus Christ became our redemption He didn't have to pay redemption money to God. He didn't take His blood and say, "Here, God, is a price for the people." Nor did He go to satan, and say, "Here, satan, is a redemption-price, now you let God's people go." NEVER! He, like Moses, poured His life out and freely gave it to the people. "I am the living bread which came down from heaven; if any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever: and the bread that I will give is My flesh, which I WILL GIVE FOR THE LIFE OF THE WORLD. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except you eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, you have no life in you. Whoever eats My flesh, and drinks My blood, has eternal life. For My flesh is meat indeed, and My blood is drink indeed. As the living Father has sent Me, and I live by the Father: so he that eats Me, even he shall live by Me" (Jn. 6:51, 53-57). We are the ones who are receiving the redemption money, and receiving of His life we are able to get up and leave the filth of the world behind, and walk in the higher realms with Him.

In the natural the redemption price was paid to the slave owner or creditor; and it will clearly be seen that God operates by the same principle once we understand that that which had us bound was in very fact something inherent within ourselves. Ah, the law of sin and death works within, the carnal mind operates within, and the devil himself is but a figure for the bestial spirit of this world which sits enthroned within the very nature and heart of man. People have painted satan as a huge, ugly, impish personage with horns, bedecked with a red suit, having a long pointed tail and carrying a pitchfork. In our minds he belongs in dark pagan jungles where frenzied worshipers hysterically practice devil worship. He belongs in ancient voodoo ceremonies where primitive peoples offer human sacrifices to appease his anger. He belongs to the Garden of Eden, spoiling life for Adam and Eve; to the Judean wilderness, tempting Jesus; to Berlin during the 1930's and early 1940's, possessing and using Adolf Hitler, masterminding history's great atrocities. Certainly satan is present in the above-listed activities. But may I hastily add that he is not present there one whit more than he has been in your life and mine. The pen of inspiration truthfully recorded the fact that "You has He quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins: wherein in time past you walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now works in the children of disobedience" (Eph. 2:1-2).

Ah, yes, this evil spirit is IN MAN! On the very day of Adam's sin the voice of God brought this message to the serpent in Eden: "Because you have done this, you art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon your belly shall you go, and dust shall you eat all the days of your life" (Gen. 3:14). When the serpent was lowered into the dust realm, man became the base of operation for his activity, which activity is limited to the realm of the flesh. "Dust you are, and unto dust shall you return," the Lord told Adam in the same conversation. The dust man is the serpent man. "The first man was from out of the earth, made of dust - earth-minded; the second Man is the Lord from out of heaven. Now those who are made of the dust are like him who was first made of the dust - earth minded; and as is the Man from heaven, so also are those who are of heaven, heaven minded. And just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, so shall we and so let us bear also the image of the Man from heaven" (I Cor, 15:45-49, Amplified). I do not hesitate to declare to you, beloved, that you will find satan operative in NO OTHER REALM except the fleshly nature of man anywhere in the whole vast universe! You do not need to worry about the devil stealing the keys to your car and driving off with it. But you may have to worry about THE DEVIL IN MEN doing so! You need not fear the devil breaking into your home at night and blowing your brains out. But THE DEVIL IN MEN has done so many, many times. The devil as a spirit being will never try to seduce your wife, but THE DEVIL IN SOME MAN may surely attempt it. Betimes it has even been THE DEVIL IN A PREACHER! I must tell you frankly that I have not had any trouble with that terrible devil out there someplace; but I have had a great deal of difficulty with that devil I behold when I look in the mirror! That ancient serpent slithers about in the lowest realms of man's earthiness, in the crooked thoughts, perverted desires, and unbridled emotions of the carnal nature, in all the corrupt motions of the flesh. Within man lies the seat of satan. We have been the captives of a power within us, slaves to our own bestial nature. So Christ did not pay a ransom to God in heaven, nor to the devil in hell, in order to redeem us and gain our release. Rather, He gave His life and poured it into us that the transcendent power of His Spirit within might break asunder the bands that bind us. Victory over the carnal mind is gained only by putting on the precious mind that was in Christ Jesus. Victory over the flesh is wrought alone by the mighty power of the Christ-life within. HE GIVES OF HIS LIFE TO US WHO ARE IN BONDAGE, AND THEN WE HAVE THE VITALITY AND STRENGTH TO ARISE AND RETURN TO FATHERS HOUSE TO

CLAIM OUR INHERITANCE. We cannot do it on our own, we are weak and helpless, fettered by the shackles of sin and shame, but when He gives of His life, and fills us with His strength, then through Him we are able to rise up and return. Praise God, His life is given as redemption TO US, so that, as the apostle says, "Of Him are you in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us ... REDEMPTION" (I Cor. 1:30).

REDEMPTION VS. JUBILEE

Let me interject a foundational truth at this point. It is a truth seldom, if ever, heard among the people of God. The preachers and evangelists are totally ignorant of it, but it is fundamental to all our understanding of the works of God in this present age and in the ages to come. Few truths have come with more soul gripping force and power to my heart than the truth I now present. I will introduce this grand theme in the form of a question. What is the difference between Redemption and Jubilee? The first thought I want to bring is this: Redemption and Jubilee ACCOMPLISH THE SAME PURPOSE. The end of both is the same. God established the Year of Jubilee so that all who lost their inheritance during the previous forty-nine year period, would be able to return to it during that Festival. When the trumpet sounded, on the tenth day of the seventh month of the forty-ninth year, every man received his inheritance. NOBODY WAS ABLE TO STOP IT. Even though another had bought and paid for it, when the trumpet sounded, the first owner could again take his inheritance and have complete possession. No one could prevent him!

So, in the Year of Jubilee EVERYONE AGAIN received their inheritance. There were no restrictions, no conditions, no qualifications, for the trumpet's sound called ALL back to the inheritance they had once known. Now Redemption DOES EXACTLY THE SAME THING, ONLY IT DOES IT BEFORE THE YEAR OF JUBILEE. Let us say that a man loses his inheritance in the tenth year of that forty-nine year cycle. He may either sell it or just lose it. After a short time a redeemer, a near kinsman, comes to him to redeem it, to buy it back for him. Can we not see the relationship we enter into between ourselves and Jesus as redeemed and Redeemer? Thank God! He was not a stranger to us. He was our next of kin, one of our own kind. So it must be in order for Him to become our Redeemer. The law of Redemption demanded such a relationship.

So the near-kinsman comes to the one whose inheritance is lost and inquires the price of redemption. The redeemer says, "I have enough to redeem your inheritance. We will go and pay off the one who has it and you can have it back." The one who has bought the inheritance must receive the price of redemption, and vacate the property. The original inheritor then has the perfect and unhindered freedom to come again into his inheritance. HIS INHERITANCE HAS BEEN REDEEMED AND THUS HE DOES NOT HAVE TO WAIT UNTIL JUBILEE to regain his inheritance - he has it NOW! Let us use this illustration. A man who is forty-five loses his inheritance in the fifth year after Jubilee. By the next Jubilee the man's inheritance will not be of great value to him personally, for he will by that time be ninety years old. For that man to have to wait for his inheritance for forty-five years would give him time to starve to death many times over! BUT the redeemer comes and redeems the inheritance and the original owner immediately re-enters his inheritance, GAINING ALL THE YEARS THAT WOULD HAVE BEEN LOST.

This, my beloved, IS WHAT JESUS HAS DONE FOR US. He has made it possible for us to receive our inheritance and enjoy it immediately. We have an inheritance reserved for us IN A HEAVENLY WAY OF LIFE, ON THE SPIRITUAL PLANE OF GOD'S OWN

DIVINE NATURE AND GLORY AND POWER. Vast multitudes of Christians subscribe to the crude and unscriptural notion that they must die and travel some inestimable distance through the galaxies to receive their inheritance. But Redemption makes it possible to receive it right now, and through God's infinite and unbounded grace we are able to appropriate it this very day. REDEMPTION AND JUBILEE ACCOMPLISH THE SAME PURPOSE, THEY ARRIVE AT THE SAME END. The great and only difference is that Jubilee takes fifty years and REDEMPTION DOES IT N-O-W!

In Israel of old THE POSSESSION OF THE INHERITANCE WAS THE SUPREME ISSUE. God wanted His people to have and enjoy their inheritance. He did not want them to have to wait for twenty-five years, or ten years, or even five. HE WANTED THEM TO HAVE IT NOW. God had ordained this law of Jubilee which would return every man to his inheritance, but He did not want them to wait that long. So immediately upon the death of Jesus, and by that death, God enacted the law of Redemption, SO THAT WE CAN REGAIN OUR INHERITANCE RIGHT NOW IN THIS PRESENT DAY. The only reason we are not in our inheritance now is because we do not appropriate it or walk in it. Possession of the inheritance is the paramount thing. God desires that we get our inheritance. It is no glory to God for us to bemoan the fact that we are just flesh and so weak and cannot experience and manifest the fullness of God's glory and nature and power. How many of the Lord's precious people are struggling along continually defeated by the flesh, the world and the devil, when all the time they have been redeemed by the precious blood of Jesus and may with boldness enter into the inheritance!

Listen! Redemption is one of the most wonderful things God has ever given to humanity. Yet - for those who do not or cannot take advantage of it, there is assuredly coming a YEAR OF JUBILEE when, by the sovereign act of Almighty God, ALL shall be restored to their inheritance. By accepting the Redemption offered we can immediately have all the joys and privileges and responsibilities of our inheritance. If we do not experience redemption we must endure the pain and travail of poverty and slavery until the Year of Jubilee arrives. With all emphasis I must now declare that the grace of Jubilee can be fully known beforehand in the Kinsman-Redeemer, Christ Jesus our Lord. We are "not left ... this day without One that has the right of redemption" (Ruth 4:14). He can reinstate even one who has sold his inheritance, his birthright. Thus, Redemption is to know that You DON'T HAVE TO WAIT FOR JUBILEE TO ENTER INTO YOUR INHERITANCE! I am well aware that some carnally-minded soul will suggest the proposition - if all men will be released and restored to their inheritance in the Year of Jubilee - will not the preaching of this incite men to spurn Redemption and wait for their Year of Jubilee? I will answer such ignorant nonsense with this question: Who among you wishes to remain impoverished and a slave for another fifty years when you can gain your freedom and enjoy your inheritance RIGHT NOW!

"In whom we have REDEMPTION through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace" (Eph. 1:7). All things which God has ordained to be ours now and forevermore are found in that sphere of divine operation known as in Christ Jesus. Here alone is the particular grace and power unto salvation and the eternal purposes of God made available. Thus, in the context of "the Beloved," Paul writes that IN HIM "we have redemption." The verb is in its present tense, and durative in action, and thus would be literally translated, "in whom we are having redemption." The redemption is an abiding fact from the past, through the present, and into the future. In the past we were released from the GUILT of sin and death. In the present we are being released from the POWER of sin and death. When the process of redemption is complete we shall be fully free,

spirit, soul and body, conformed to the image of God's Son, filled with all the fullness of God. Oh, yes, it is true that we have been redeemed, but, like salvation, redemption is no single act or experience, as one has stated, it is "a crisis leading to a process" as we are progressively "loosed away" from one realm to another, from one mind to another, from one nature to another, from one state of being to another. Truly we are being freed from the dominion of the carnal mind, from a world of self-assertive religious activities and from the workings of sin and death, first in spirit, working outward into the emotions and will of the soul life, and finally in body by the mighty working of Him who is even able to change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body (Phil. 3:21).

Redemption means a RETURN to that place, wisdom, knowledge, brightness, life, glory and dominion which we once had in God before this present cosmos, world arrangement began. Thus, we continually and expectantly fasten our gaze upon HIM who is working so great a redemption in us, "Looking for that blessed hope, even the glorious appearing of the great God our Saviour, Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a people of His own, zealous of good works" (Tit. 2:13-14). Praise God, when redemption's work is complete in us WE SHALL BE LIKE HIM!

LIMITED REDEMPTION

It would not be right to finish this chapter without pointing out an additional scriptural distinction between Redemption and Jubilee. We who embrace the precious truth of the reconciliation of all things to God are sometimes guilty of being careless with our terminology. I am certain that you have at some time heard people speak of UNIVERSAL REDEMPTION. But when we speak of the meritorious work of Christ on the cross, do we rightfully say that He died to redeem all men and all things back to God, or do we more accurately state that Christ died to reconcile, justify, save and restore all men? "What is the difference?" you ask. It is just the difference between the law of Redemption and the law of Jubilee! All men were eventually restored to their inheritance in any event, but some were restored under the LAW OF REDEMPTION, whereas the remainder were restored under the LAW OF JUBILEE. I make the following statements reverently, with bowed head and shoes removed from off my feet, but they are true to the Word of God. Not one of those who were set free in Jubilee were redeemed! Conversely, not one of those who were redeemed had to wait until Jubilee to get back his inheritance! Thus, all those who were restored to their inheritance before Jubilee constituted THE REDEEMED - although all the rest came back to their inheritance eventually whether or not they had been able to experience redemption.

While we remain as children, many things are kept from us and many things are not understood or are misunderstood. The childish traditions of the Church have clouded men's minds with darkness and have hung a veil of blindness over their eyes. The things that are really important we cannot see and the things that are not important are magnified to the heavens. How carelessly have we uttered terms like justification, salvation, reconciliation, new birth, atonement, redemption, etc., all the while supposing these are interchangeable terms which all mean more or less, the same thing. Nothing could be farther from the truth! Each of these tremendous words bespeaks a particular facet of God's great plan of salvation, but each denotes a different aspect of the operation of God in His great reconstructive activities.

Jesus Christ reconciles the world, is the Saviour of all men, and justifies all mankind (I Tim 4:10; Jn. 4:42; 1 Jn 4:14; Jn. 12:32; Rom. 5:18; 1 Cor. 15:22 etc.). In reference to Christ's SAVIOURSHIP the scriptures boldly proclaim that HE IS THE SAVIOUR OF A-L-L MEN. But when we come to this term "redemption," there is a difference. With only one exception, redemption is consistently associated throughout the Word of God with the Old Testament LAW OF REDEMPTION. And this redemption, as you should be able to discern by now, has a limited, rather than a universal, application. There is a special sense, alluded to in only one solitary passage of scripture (I Timothy 2:5-6), wherein redemption is applied to the whole race of men. But in its primary sense, as expressed in every other passage in the entire Bible, redemption relates solely to those persons who benefit from Christ's atonement prior to the antitypical Year of Jubilee, that great dispensation of the fullness of times in which all things in heaven and earth are finally gathered together into one in Christ. Thus, only the Lord's special, chosen, elect, separated, peculiar FIRSTFRUIT PEOPLE may properly be termed THE REDEEMED!

Speaking of Pharaoh and his pagan subjects God said, "I will put a DIVISION between My people and your people" (Ex. 8:23). A literal translation would read, "I will put REDEMPTION between My people and your people." The Hebrew word for division here is translated redemption in Psalm 111:9 and 130:7 and redeem in Isa. 50:2. This shows that God's law of Redemption, in operation, SEPARATES between those who are uniquely His and those who are not. It distinguishes between those who come under the law of Redemption throughout the church age (the elect), and the great mass of men who will come under the law of Jubilee in that glorious age yet to come. It clearly discriminates between those who, by the merits of Christ's sacrifice, find a full and complete release and restoration now, and the vast aggregate of men remaining in bondage until a future day of release.

In the Old Testament redemption relates to Israel as God's peculiar people, and in the New Testament to the Church which is His body. Notice the limited scope of redemption in the following passages. "Wherefore You art great, O Lord God ... and what one nation in the earth is like Your people, even Israel, whom God went to REDEEM for a people to Himself, and to make for Him a name..." (II Sam. 7:22-23). "Remember Your congregation ... which You have REDEEMED; this mount Zion, wherein You have dwelt" (Ps. 74:2). "Thus says the Lord that created you, O Jacob, and He that formed you, O Israel, Fear not: for I have REDEEMED you, I have called you by your name; you art Mine" (Isa. 43:1). "Thus says the Lord the King of Israel, and his REDEEMER ... beside Me there is no God" (Isa. 44:6). "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for He has visited and REDEEMED His people, and has raised up an horn of salvation for us in the house of David..." (Lk. 1:68-69). "And there was one Anna, a prophetess ... and she coming ... spoke of Him (Jesus) to all them that looked for REDEMPTION in Jerusalem" (Lk. 2:36-38). "And they sung a new song, saying, You art worthy... for You were slain, and have REDEEMED us to God by Your blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people and nation" (Rev. 5:9). "Forasmuch as you know that you were not REDEEMED by such corruptible things as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers" (I Pet. 1:18). "And they sung as it were a new song ... and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand which were REDEEMED from the earth" (Rev. 14:3). "But of Him are you in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us ... REDEMPTION" (I Cor. 1:30). "...according as He has chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, at we should be holy and without blame before Him in love: having predestinated us unto the adoption of children (sons) by Christ Jesus unto Himself in whom we have REDEMPTION through His blood..." (Eph. 1:3-5,7).

"Giving thanks unto the Father, which made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light ... in whom we have REDEMPTION" (Col. 1:12-14).

A brother in Christ wisely wrote: "I have actually had men tell me that to put emphasis on sonship is selfishness. Instead of emphasizing sonship, they say, we should be up and doing and trying to bring the world to Christ. I really have no argument with any man about such things, but when I read in Romans eight that the whole creation - man, animals, birds, fish, vegetable life, and even the elements - is groaning in travail for the hour when they will be delivered from their dreadful night of bondage by the sons of God, then how can I or any man be so ignorant and short-sighted as to condemn those who see the purpose of God in sonship and who press toward it with all their strength? Not only is creation groaning for this most important of all events, but the Spirit also helps our infirmity and gives to us that spirit by which we are able to say, "Abba, Father." The spirit that cries, "Abba, Father," is indeed the spirit of sonship, for who else can cry "Our Father" but he who is a son of God?" - The Page.

JUBILEE!

Our understanding of God's great plan of Redemption and Jubilee will be greatly helped by a clear idea of how Israel is used as a type in the scriptures. When God brought the children of Israel out of Egypt and formed them into a nation, He ordained three groups: first, Israel, called the Camp, then the Levites, and finally Aaron and his house, the Priests. While Israel in many instances is used to typify God's elect, the body of Christ, yet, in its relationship to the Tabernacle in the wilderness and the Temple in Jerusalem, Israel represents the whole world of mankind, and, indeed, the whole creation. You will notice that from this perspective the whole of Israel lay outside the Tabernacle, outside the place of sacrifice, outside of the ministry of the Priesthood, outside of the presence and glory of God, separated by the white curtain of Christ's righteousness from all that lay within. Thus "the Camp" was separated from all holy things by the curtain of white linen, representing to those within a wall of righteousness by faith, but to those without a wall of unbelief which hindered their view of and access to the holy things within. There was only one gateway to enter the "Court"; the type thus testifying that there is but one way of access to God one "gate" - Jesus. "I am the way ... no man comes unto the Father but by Me." "I am the door, by Me if any man enter in he shall be saved" (Jn. 14:6; 10:9). The sin-offering, sacrifice, atonement, etc., made typical for them, were typical of the "better sacrifices" made on behalf of the whole world; for thus we read, "He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world" (I Jn. 2:2; Heb. 9:23).

In a word, Israel, as well as the Tabernacle, Priests, Levites and sacrifices, was a type. And what was there done in symbol with and for Israel is, since the coming of Christ, being carried out on a higher plane, and on a larger scale, the latter being the reality, of which that was the type and shadow. As Israel typified the world so the tribe of Levites typified the "household of faith," or all believers in Jesus who know Him in the forgiveness of sins. But the Priesthood, the house of Aaron, taken from among the Levites, one body under one chief or High Priest, was typical of the "little flock," the "overcomers," which, with its "Head" or High Priest, is a Royal Priesthood, the members of which, after this present time of preparation and processing, are **KINGS AND PRIESTS** unto God, given authority over all nations and over all of mankind (Rev. 5:10; 2:26-27).

Some who read these lines may not at first grasp the important significance of viewing Israel as a type of the whole world of mankind, but it should become abundantly clear when we point out that in Redemption only those isolated individuals on whose behalf the redemption-price is paid are released from bondage and restored to their inheritance; but in the Year of Jubilee the command goes forth: "Then shall you cause the trumpet of the Jubilee to sound on the tenth day of the seventh month, in the Day of Atonement shall you make the trumpet sound THROUGHOUT A-L-L YOUR LAND. And you shall hallow the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty THROUGHOUT A-L-L THE LAND unto A-L-L THE INHABITANTS THEREOF; it shall be a Jubilee unto you; and you shall return EVERY MAN unto his possession, and shall return EVERY MAN unto his family" (Lev. 25:9-10).

The truth should be self-evident - as in Israel EVERY SINGLE SOUL OF MAN WAS RELEASED in the typical Year of Jubilee, so in the antitypical Jubilee there shall be a release of EVERY MAN OF ADAM'S RACE from the tyranny of sin and sorrow and death. Israel was thus the representative nation, God's model, His prototype, set forth to typically proclaim His redemptive and restorative and reconstructive purposes before the face of all nations. Every man is to return to his possession. EVERY MAN LOST IN THE FALL SHALL BE RESTORED. What a glorious promise! What joy it brings to know that the glory of our full and complete redemption shall be multiplied in the grandest of measures, until the WHOLE EARTH shall enjoy her time of Jubilee, fully loosed from the bondage of change and decay, and restored into the realm of His abundant life. If the shadow brought happiness and joy to the typical people, the substance, the real restitution, will cause boundless joy and will indeed be a grand Jubilee to all people. What a depth of meaning this lends to the biblical law of Jubilee: "And if he be not redeemed in these years, then HE SHALL GO OUT IN THE YEAR OF JUBILEE" (Lev. 25:54). All who argue that there is no hope, no salvation, no deliverance for those persons not redeemed during this present age should commit that law to memory and repeat it many times daily with bowed head and bended knee until its message sinks deeply into mind and heart.

Now we are coming to see that God not only has a plan and a purpose for each of us individually, and for the redeemed of all ages, BUT HE HAS A PLAN AND PURPOSE FOR THE WHOLE OF HUMANITY COLLECTIVELY. Every man and woman has a part in it. Let us see this point. When Adam sinned, he never consulted any of his descendants as to whether they wanted to be in sin with him. By his will, and God's plan, he plunged us all into sin, and put the whole creation into a state of uselessness and vanity. He was the father of us all, so we have followed him. Now, IF THE LAST ADAM CANNOT MAKE RIGHT WHAT THE FIRST ADAM MADE WRONG, THEN THE LAST ADAM DOES NOT HAVE THE SAME MEASURE OF POWER THAT THE FIRST ADAM HAD. Jesus said that all power has been given unto Him, both in heaven and in earth. If God purposes to save the whole world THAT IS HIS BUSINESS AND NOT OURS. Oh, God! deliver us from the narrow mentality in which we have unthinkingly walked, and help us to see something of the unbounded love of God in Christ Jesus. Redemption and Jubilee both lead to the same end; and in Israel, if the enslaved and dispossessed people could not or did not take advantage of Redemption, then Jubilee CAME ANYWAY. Make no mistake about that. The words of the apostle shall surely be fulfilled: "As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order" (I Cor. 15:22-23).

Now here is another fact. THE REASON FOR THE LOSS OF THE INHERITANCE DID NOT ENTER INTO THE QUESTION OF ITS RETURN. Even one who had recklessly squandered his inheritance could not forever lose it. The owner might have gambled

away his inheritance. Perhaps he was as the prodigal son, who wasted his substance in riotous living. But that would make no difference, since the reason for losing the inheritance did not affect its return. A young man might have lost his entire inheritance through sin, but all that was required of him was that he be there in the Year of Jubilee, waiting for the sounding of the trumpet, and THEN GO BACK INTO HIS INHERITANCE. Mattered not what condition he might be in, NO ONE COULD KEEP HIM OUT OF HIS INHERITANCE. IT WAS HIS, FOR IT HAD BEEN GIVEN TO HIM BY GOD. The law of God said nothing and laid down no law respecting the manner in which it was lost affecting its return. Ah - how much more mercy and goodness and grace was there under the old law than most Churches allow their people today!

The man of avarice, who had gone on adding house to house and field to field, gained no permanent advantage over his less fortunate neighbor. The fiftieth year, beyond which no lease could run, was always approaching with silent but sure speed, to relax his tenacious grasp. However alienated, however unworthily or unthrifly sold, however strongly conveyed to the purchaser or the usurper an estate might be, this long-expected day annulled the whole transaction, and placed the debtor in the condition which either he or his ancestor had enjoyed. Therefore, the notion that satan shall eternally possess the souls of men is absurd and ludicrous in the face of such a grand and glorious truth.

Another point. THEIR MANNER OF LIFE IN NO WAY ENTERED INTO THE QUESTION OF THEIR RETURN TO THEIR INHERITANCE. If God's people of that day were like a lot of God's people today, we would have a situation something like this. Many would be waiting for the sounding of the great Jubilee trumpet, and among them could be a man who spent his inheritance with harlots. He could have come home with the marks of sin impressed upon his countenance, in a drunken and broken state. BUT HE HAS COME FOR HIS INHERITANCE. We could well overhear some of the others postulating "I wonder if that drunken old bum thinks he is going to get back into his inheritance? Look at the life he has lived! A whoremonger! God won't let ME do any of those things! The man has not lived up to our standard at all. I wonder if he is going to have the brass to think that, at the sounding of the trumpet, he is going to get his inheritance back after being the kind of man he is!" But the fact is, dear one, that nothing he bad ever done could prevent him from claiming his inheritance!

There is a beautiful story in Luke chapter 15, the parable of the Prodigal Son. While feeding hogs in the "far country," the prodigal came to himself. He had had an inheritance, but he went out and squandered his substance, and wallowed with the pigs for a season. The circumstances had crowded in upon his life which caused him to come to the place where he chose to "arise and go to the father."

He walked along the weary way, no longer with servants attending, no longer in rich robes; but ragged, poor, dirty, with worn out sandals, he came along the road, with the stench of the swineherd and the stains of the flesh pots on him. Creeping along, sick, sore, and weary, he said, "Oh, if I could be but one of my father's hired servants!" Will the father reject him? Will the father not say, "I gave him his portion and he has spent it all in riotous living; let him stay away forever!" No, no. The father saw him afar off, and he ran and fell on his neck, and kissed him, not heeding his filthiness and his rags. The father interrupted the prayer, after the son told him of his sin, that he might become a slave in the father's house; for there are no slaves IN OUR FATHER'S HOUSE. They are all sons and daughters of the Most High God. The father told the servants to bring the best robe and the signet ring that made him controller of the father's estate. He told them to get out

the musical instruments and the dancers, and to make merry and be glad. "Spread the feast, for this my son was dead; dead to me; dead to mother; dead to purity; dead to truth; dead to love; dead to God; and he is alive again!"

This was, without a doubt, the prodigal's YEAR OF JUBILEE! Few have understood the sublime message contained in this magnificent story. Most have assumed that somehow the story illustrates the great truth of redemption. But - there is absolutely nothing in this story about redemption, though the preachers love to preach it that way. Neither the father, nor anyone else, paid any price for the son's return. He just went home. The circumstances of the prodigal son's restoration beautifully and fittingly illustrate the Jubilee truth. There was no price paid, no redemption took place. The prodigal simply arose and returned to his estate and his family. And when he arrived home he discovered, to his utter amazement and surprised delight, that HE STILL HAD HIS INHERITANCE THOUGH HE HAD LOST IT! He was restored not only to his family, but to his inheritance. And just that constitutes the great truth of Jubilee - ONE CAN LOSE HIS INHERITANCE, THEN RETURN, AND STILL HAVE HIS INHERITANCE! "And you shall return every man to his possession, and shall return every man to his inheritance" (Lev. 25:10). Glory to God!

Let us get this straight. I am not advocating any loose living in any sense of the word, but it is time for God's people to get their thinking straight. It is not being good or holy that qualifies one to receive back his inheritance. But getting the inheritance will make you holy. Those who profess to be redeemed of the Lord, receiving of their inheritance here and now, but continue to walk after the flesh and live like the world and the devil, bear no fruit of their professed redemption. Hear it! "For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; looking for our Saviour Jesus Christ ... who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works" (Tit. 1:11-14).

The inheritance is a share in all that God IS. We are not merely heirs of the things of God, but in wondrous reality we are heirs of GOD HIMSELF. Name any of the divine attributes - His wisdom, glory, power, nature, holiness, love, etc. - and you will find that the Word of God promises the same attributes to ALL who enter into union with Christ. Ah, we shall be like Him, conformed to His image. The idea that a man could again appropriate his inheritance while continuing on in the pathway of carnality, fleshliness, self-will, darkness and death is an insult to the integrity of the righteous God who authored the law of Jubilee. Jubilee is freedom! Jubilee is release! Jubilee is restoration! Jubilee means the regaining of the inheritance that was lost! The law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus makes us free from the law of sin and death! The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus IS THE LAW OF JUBILEE! Let me say it again whether you regain your inheritance now via Redemption, or later via Jubilee, your manner of life can neither qualify nor disqualify you for getting the inheritance. But the inheritance, once entered into, WILL TRANSFORM YOUR LIFE. That's what the inheritance is all about! Vast multitudes of "born again" and "Spirit filled" believers fill the pews of the church systems Sunday after Sunday, all the while waiting for the "rapture" while today they have no victory or power in their lives nor can they get anything from God. Yet some old drunk or a prostitute from off the street comes along and asks God for something, believes in God and gloriously receives his request, and the people who are "righteous" wonder what is wrong! The words of Jesus to the Pharisees are thus fulfilled in them: "Verily I say unto you, That the publicans and the harlots go into the Kingdom of God before you" (Mat.

21:31). It was not a question with the Israelites as to whether or not they wanted to receive their inheritance in Jubilee. It was the SOVEREIGN LAW OF GOD that it be so. With us it is the same. It is not our desire, or the desire of humanity, that counts; it is GOD'S WILL that counts and is accomplished. God so ruled that on the fiftieth year ALL should return to their inheritance and occupy it, so that is how it was. What eternal and infinite hope this holds for all men!

THE BLOWING OF TRUMPETS

The glorious Year of Jubilee, with its attending blessings and benefits, was introduced by the blowing of trumpets. The sound of the trumpet was the welcome and soul-stirring signal for the captive to escape, for the slave to cast aside the chains of his bondage, for the man-slayer to return to his home, for the ruined and poverty stricken to rise to the possession of his forfeited inheritance. No sooner had the trumpet's thrice-welcome sound fallen upon the ear than the mighty tide of blessing rose majestically and sent its refreshing billows into the most remote corners of Yahweh's highly favored land.

To understand the spiritual meaning of trumpets we need to establish something of its typical significance - what is a trumpet the symbol of in scripture? What do they typify? We want to make this very clear. A key is found in Isa. 58:1 wherein we read, "Cry aloud, spare not, lift up your voice like a trumpet, and show My people their transgression, and the house of Israel their sin." When the trumpet sounds, symbolically it is speaking of a MESSAGE from God coming forth through one of His anointed servants. In this case the message was to show the Lord's people their transgression and their sin. Another passage that clarifies this is Eze. 33:4-7, "Then whosoever hears the sound of the trumpet, and takes not warning; if the sword come and take him away, his blood shall be upon his own head. He heard the sound of the trumpet, and took not warning; his blood shall be upon him. But if the watchman see the sword come, and blow not the trumpet, and the people be not warned; if the sword come, and take any person from among them, he is taken away in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at the watchman's hand. So you, O son of man, I have set you as a watchman unto the house of Israel; therefore you shall hear the word at My mouth, and warn them from Me." Ezekiel was made a watchman to receive God's Word from His mouth and convey that Word to the people. And God said that it is the same as a trumpet sounding to warn the people. The watchman, the Lord said to Ezekiel, blows the trumpet to warn the people; so when I give you a message to warn the people, that is the fulfillment of the symbol - a message from God through His servant sounded out to the people to warn, to encourage, or otherwise instruct them.

The beloved Seer of Patmos, while in the Spirit on the Lord's day, heard behind him a great voice, as of a trumpet, whereupon he said, "And I turned to see the voice that spoke with me. And being turned, I saw ... one like unto the Son of man... saying unto me..." (Rev. 1:10-18). Is it not plain to be seen that the VOICE was in fact a Person sounding out a message - thus, the Voice was a trumpet. Paul's words in I Cor. 14:8-9 apply the symbolism of a trumpet: "For if the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to battle? So like wise you, except you utter by the tongue words easy to be understood, how shall it be known what is spoken?" The trumpet sounding out clearly, symbolizes a message spoken forth clearly, in words easy to be understood. Paul is exhorting the saints to minister to the body of Christ in such a way that the saints will be edified. Such a ministry is the only trumpet-call that will work a real preparedness in the hearts of the Lord's people. The trumpet must give a CERTAIN SOUND.

The Lord spoke to Moses, saying, "Make two trumpets of silver; of a whole piece shall you make them..." (Num. 10:2). In the verses which follow it is clear that the blowing of the trumpets signified four specific things to Israel:

1. Calling the assembly (vs.2).
2. Journeying of the Camp (vs.3-6).
3. Preparation for war (vs-9).
4. Celebration of the Feasts (vs.10).

The types and symbols here are tremendous. The trumpets were of silver. It is evident that "silver" in the scriptures speaks of redemption. Whenever Israel was numbered, every man was required to give by way of ransom a half-shekel of silver, and the money thus collected was used in the service of the sanctuary (Ex. 30:12-16; Lev. 25:48). Furthermore, when they committed a trespass, and sinned through ignorance, in the holy things of the Lord, shekels of silver were paid along with the offering of their sacrifice. So also when Christ, the Lamb, was offered, there was likewise involved the thirty pieces of silver which the priests gave to Judas for the betrayal of Christ.

There was one Feast in Israel specifically known as the Feast of Trumpets. This Feast was the preparation for the great Day of Atonement. Psalm 81 is thought by some to have been composed especially for the Feast of Trumpets. "Sing aloud unto God our strength: make a joyful noise unto the God of Jacob. Take a psalm, and bring hither the timbrel, the pleasant harp with the psaltery. Blow up the trumpet in the new moon, in the time appointed, on our solemn feast day. For this was a statute for Israel, and a law of the God of Jacob. This He ordained ... for a testimony" (Ps. 81:1-4).

The Day of Atonement bespeaks the fullness of deliverance from sin. That full and complete atonement was made for the Church by Jesus Christ on the cross, there is no doubt whatsoever. But it is only too evident, as we consider our own individual lives, as well as that of the Church historically, that we have never really appropriated any real measure of the redemptive work of our Lord. And it is this experiential appropriation of the fullness of deliverance from sin that the Day of Atonement points to. As there is a historical Passover and Pentecost, as well as a personal and individual Passover and Pentecostal experience for all who will believe it, so it is with Atonement. All through the ages men have by faith reached out and appropriated some measure of deliverance from sin and death; but neither individually nor corporately have we possessed the fullness of it. The sad sequence is: We continue to sin and continue to die! But our deliverance from the power of sin and death is secured, and lies directly before us in the dispensational fulfillment of the great Day of Atonement by way of experience.

The Feast of the Day of Atonement was observed on the tenth day of the seventh month, nine days after the Feast of Trumpets. It was really more a Fast than a Feast, as a distinctive character and purpose of the day was to bring the sin of the whole year to remembrance, so that it might earnestly be dealt with and atoned for. On this day the High Priest made confession of the sins of the people, and entered on their behalf into the Most Holy Place with the blood of reconciliation. It was a solemn occasion, when God's people through godly sorrow and atonement for sin put away sin. The sin and carnality of the Church's long career must be taken away from her midst before she can enter into the full blessing and power of the Feast of Tabernacles, that wonderful Feast of fullness that immediately follows Atonement. Thank God for the Passover, in the first month, in virtue of which God has "passed over" the saints, not imputing their trespasses

unto them. But none can deny that God's people have been groaning with the apostle Paul for two thousand years: "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" (Rom. 7:24). God has certainly heard our cries, and soon He shall bring His people into a glorious liberty in the Spirit, wherein they shall be completely delivered from their sins and their sin and from the death they bring.

Let us stop trying to justify ourselves, insisting on our holiness of conduct, when it is apparent to everyone around us that we do not possess it. "Living epistles" of Christ do not have to tell the world how holy they are. Sons of God, conformed to the image of God, do not need to inform people of who they are. The world will see it and will be amazed to discover something real and genuine in the midst of this crooked and perverse generation. This victory of which we speak is the very victory of Christ Himself. When we attain to this victory there will be no need to formulate weak excuses why the overcoming saint of God can again fall into carnality and sin and suffer defeat - for this place in Christ knows no defeat. He that overcomes according to the Bible enters into the very victory and triumph of Christ - a victory which can never be conquered, lost or forfeited. It is the eternal victory of the risen and ascended Lord Himself, and the overcomer is therefore "more than conqueror" through Christ that loved him.

Redemption is a FULL restoring of that which was sold under bondage to sin, corruption and death. It is the reclaiming of our original inheritance in God before ever sin or death stalked through our land. Consequently, a fully REDEEMED MAN must be just exactly of the same status physically and spiritually as Adam before he disobeyed God's commandment not to eat of the tree. One of my points on finding the status of Adam physically and spiritually is that the value of the redemption-price paid is equal to that which was sold under bondage and redeemed. Now, if we can find the VALUE of the Redeemer's PAYMENT, we have the VALUE of the property that has been redeemed, and it also gives a perfect picture of the physical and spiritual status of what the "redemption of our body" really means, the exact value. Now the value, or physical and spiritual status of the Redeemer, or price of redemption, is clearly given in the life and ministry of Jesus from the Jordan experience to the crucifixion on the cross. First, Jesus must be a perfect lamb without spot or blemish to fulfill the Levitical type, and to be the perfect redemption-price. Second, He had to be sinless, incorruptible and deathless (no man takes my life from Me; I lay it down). Third, He had to be holy, pure and undefiled, separate from sinners. Fourth, to be this, He had to be conceived of the Holy Spirit. If He had been born, as some claim, with a sin nature in Him, He could not have redeemed humanity, for one under the dominion of a sin nature is inherently impure and could not redeem that which was tainted by sin, corruption and death, restoring it to its original status. There were no sin germs in His precious blood, nothing of sin, corruption or death in His genes, therefore He could be spoken of as "that holy thing" (Lk. 1:35). Jesus demanded of the religious leaders who opposed Him, "Which of you convinces Me of sin?" (Jn. 8:46). And try as they might, they could not take Him or kill Him until He voluntarily laid down His life (Jn. 10:18). His sinlessness and incorruptibleness was proved finally by His death and resurrection - the whole man, spirit, soul and body emerged triumphant from the tomb clad in the shimmering garments of immortality!

It is not the message of redemption that has been at fault, but it lies in the one sounding the trumpet, that has caused so much confusion and loss. The Word would be read, a clear blast of the silver trumpets, sounding forth the message, "Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin. But now being made free from

sin, and become servants to God, you have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death. If the Spirit of Him that raised Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwells in you" (Rom. 6:6-7, 22; 8:2, 11). Ah, no sooner has the trumpet blown its message of a FULL AND COMPLETE REDEMPTION FROM SIN AND DEATH here and now, than the trumpeters follow with several little qualifying blasts of their own concepts and ideas and unbelief, until our old man is not dead, we are not free from sin, we must all sin a little every day, there is no such thing as perfection in this life, the fullness of God can only be known in heaven or during the millennium, we were born to die and pass by way of the grave, and finally we are right back where mankind started - before Jesus ever came! All we have is forgiveness, NOT REDEMPTION! That, precious friend of mine, is not a message of redemption from a silver trumpet of a whole piece - it is, rather, the hiss of the serpent's voice!

And so the Lord Almighty commands: "Blow a trumpet in Zion, and shout in My holy hill" (Joel 2:1, Young's Literal Translation). Ray Prinzing wrote: "God is first causing the trumpet to blow in Zion, until the message is PURE IN ZION, so that when, in turn, the law goes forth from Zion, it will be a pure word of the Lord - as He proceeds to reconcile all things to Himself. Truly, 'The Word of the Lord endures for ever.' But the 'blowers' have come and gone. They have tooted all kinds of notes in their message. But as the Spirit purifies His people they will blow the certain sound of His truth - a message of life, hope, and victory. Praise God. Then, 'The Lord also shall roar out of Zion, and utter His voice from Jerusalem, and the heavens and the earth shall shake: but the Lord will be the hope of His people ... so shall you know that I am the Lord Your God dwelling in Zion, My holy mountain' (Joel 3:16-17). Observe: first the shaking has been our heavens and earth, to be made ALL NEW IN HIM. Then, when the Lord appears in His Zion, and ROARS OUT - sounds forth His message to all men, it will bring a shaking to their heavens and earth also, until there has been a complete re-making, and ALL THINGS have become new. And one thing shall be clear to all - that the Lord IS DWELLING IN ZION, thus they become the FORTRESS OF HOPE for groaning creation" - end quote.

A trumpet voice, a ministry, a message has been raised up in these last days and it is my deep conviction that this ministry constitutes the spiritual Feast of Trumpets. In this hour it indicates anointed ministries in the midst of the Church with a message of entering into the Holy of Holies to experientially appropriate the fullness of God. Trumpets was a day of awakening. Most of the Church-world is waiting for Gabriel to toot his horn so they can leave the planet. The Bible says there is to be a blowing of trumpets which will raise a people up into the clouds of His glory and incorruptible life, but I rejoice that the trumpet is a VOICE - words, anointed words, powerful words, awakening words - a message from the Throne that announces a new direction and purpose and reality for the people of God. This great message of full salvation in this end of the age is to be proclaimed in the power of the Spirit by a redeemed people who give forth the trumpet sound. This message will come, and is coming, through that body of anointed messengers who have gone through the fire and been "refined as silver is refined" (Zech. 13:9; Mal. 3:3). So, beloved, draw not back from the fire, but leap joyfully into it, for the Lord has ordained it for your profit. It is time for God's people's hearing to change. Its time for the people to hear something new. They have heard a lot of messages through the years and the centuries, but they are still not redeemed! They have not yet come fully into possession of their inheritance! So God has assembled a people and called them to the Feast of

Trumpets. From there they will enter into the great Day of Atonement and on to the Feast of tabernacles.

THE JUBILEE TRUMPET

You will say this is all incredibly wonderful and I will reply, Amen; but I must remind my reader that there is a reality beyond the Day of Atonement, a glory beyond redemption - there is the YEAR OF JUBILEE! Almost all Christians and most preachers have confused the silver trumpets that announced the seven annual Feasts of Israel with the Jubilee trumpet, but the truth is, they are not the same at all. The Feasts of Israel were uniquely redemptive Feasts, portraying and foreshadowing the great plan of redemption wrought out in God's elect. Redemption includes within its scope only those persons who regain their inheritance here and now - before the Year of Jubilee. The Year of Jubilee has nothing whatever to do with redemption, therefore the silver trumpets were not employed to herald its arrival.

The Hebrew word for Jubilee is YOBEL which means loud, long blast by a ram's horn. In time the word YOBEL came to mean trumpet, but it is never once applied in scripture to the silver trumpets so frequently used by the priests in calling the assembly of Israel to the various Feasts. Each and every Feast was introduced by the priest's blowing of the silver trumpets. But I would draw your reverent attention to the fact that AT THE CLOSE OF THE GREAT DAY OF ATONEMENT the blast of the Jubilee curved trumpets proclaimed throughout the land liberty. Thus, Jubilee began in the end of the Day of Atonement, but it was something different than Atonement. The Day of Atonement came every year, but Jubilee came only once in fifty years.

Every sabbath and festival had its purpose and its spiritual significance. Cleansing, change, development, growth, attainment and restoration are ordained to take effect at different times and seasons. All are processes by which the redemptive activities of God are experienced in our lives. But God's great plan of redemption doesn't end with the Day of Atonement. It is consummated in the Feast of Tabernacles which follows the Day of Atonement. Neither does redemption climax in Jubilee. Jubilee is no part of the plan of redemption. It is something extra, something added, something beyond. Now let me make this very clear. Truly, the blessings and benefits of the Year of Jubilee are made possible by the precious blood of Christ, as if a Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. That is why the Lamb had to be slain from the foundation of the world - He is the Lamb who takes away the sin of THE WORLD and His is the blood by which ALL THINGS are reconciled to God. But the blood, as it affects Jubilee, is the blood that saves, reconciles, and restores ALL - it is not the blood that redeems. There can be no mistake about that. Strange as it may seem, the Year of Jubilee itself has no ritual, no sacrifices, no bleeding lambs or dying rams or burning bullocks. Jubilee had two, and only two, ingredients: blowing of trumpets and RELEASE! Redemption is a precious provision for this age, while Jubilee is that last blessed appointment by which all those who lost their freedom and their inheritance, and could not redeem them, or would not redeem them, as multitudes have, regain what has been lost, finding a full and free deliverance.

What is there in the traditional doctrines and so-called Gospel of this day, which in the least explains or fulfills these various arrangements, in and through which were wrought successive cleansings, atonements, redemptions, and releases, not of persons only, but of their lost inheritances? And if in the Gospel, as now preached, no truth is found

corresponding with these figures of the law, is it not a proof that something is at least overlooked? God knows how much is overlooked by shallow and carnal minds and from neglect of those scriptures, which the apostle Paul tells us are needed, "to make the man of God perfect, fully furnished," but which by some are openly despised, by some are not in the least comprehended, and by others are neglected, as the useless shadows of a by-gone dispensation. But in them is the key, under a veil perhaps, of those "ages" and "ages of ages" during which the great mass of mankind are debtors and bondmen under judgment, without their true inheritance. The distorted and perverted "gospel" of our day would never condone a Year of Jubilee for these! The preachers never touch on the truth of the Jubilee, or, if they do, it is so confused with redemption, so garbled, corrupted, misrepresented and mutilated as to be pathetic. Praise God, it is now given to us to know that there is such a time and season, and in knowing it to gain still wider views of the "manifold wisdom of God," and of the "unsearchable riches of Christ," our Lord and Saviour.

When the Jubilee trumpet begins to blow, mankind will start returning from its fallen state in sin, back to that perfect state of fellowship and life in God. But each one will "return to his family." Each has his own mansion, house, estate, dwelling place, inheritance in God. There is a habitation prepared for each one. What a day it was for Israel when the Jubilee trumpet blew! What rejoicing, what freedom, what hope when homes and lands were restored and people's lives were restored to their families and possessions. My friends, this is the day we are approaching. Creation shall return home to the Elohim family. Mankind shall at last regain their possessions. The Year of Jubilee is upon us! Then shall "the earth be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea" (Hab. 2:14). And "All the earth shall worship You, and shall sing unto You; they shall sing to Your name" (Ps. 66:4). For "THE GOD OF THE WHOLE EARTH SHALL HE BE CALLED" (Isa. 54:5). An array of verses like these (and the scriptures are full of them) can only cause great rejoicing and hope within us even now. And we would cry out with the prophet, "O earth, earth, earth, hear the Word of the Lord!" (Jer. 22:29). There is a message of hope, there is a vision of victory to be fulfilled. The end thereof is secure, it was made certain at Calvary when life was poured out for all mankind.

The command concerning the Jubilee trumpet was simply this: "Then shall you cause the trumpet of the Jubilee to sound on the tenth day of the seventh month, in the day of atonement shall you make the trumpet sound throughout all your land" (Lev. 25:9). After Israel was settled in the land, it is difficult to see how one blast of the trumpet could be heard from Dan to Beersheba. The trumpet was to be sounded all over the land, from one end to the other, that the most general proclamation might be made. The same principle is mentioned in Ezra 1:1 where we read, "The Lord stirred up the spirit of Cyrus, the king of Persia, that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom." The Hebrew literally reads, "He made a voice to pass through all his kingdom." It is held by all the Jewish writers that ram's horns were sounded extensively all over the land, in the mountains, in the streets, and at nearly every door. Not a corner was to remain unvisited by "the joyful sound." It was intended as a universal waking up of all the population to the occurrence of this Festival. In every populated area there was a simultaneous blowing of the trumpet. It would begin at the Tabernacle or Temple. There would be a person stationed far enough away to be able to hear it, and then the trumpet note would be passed on and on out to the very extremities of the land.

Under the Old Covenant the outward Israelites blew the outward trumpets to proclaim liberty throughout all the land. But in the New Covenant the Year of Jubilee is proclaimed,

blown and sounded with spiritual trumpets, the trumpets are spiritual and heavenly, which are sounded with the power of the Spirit of God through an anointed company of deliverers. The divine and heavenly message of liberation will be sounded throughout all the world, and unto every creature under heaven, unto bond and free, to set all the prisoners and captives at liberty, and to make the blind to see, by opening their eyes; and heals the leper, cripple, and the sick, and looses the tongue of the dumb. Here is the year of Jubilee, the everlasting holy year, or day of Christ, who brings all into His glorious liberty as children of God, and to an eternal inheritance; yea, he takes off and destroys that which has brought the oppression upon the creation.

The Jubilee trumpet spiritually and anti-typically bespeaks the sounding forth of a MESSAGE. What kind of message? Why, a delivering, liberating, releasing message! Unto whom? "And you shall hallow the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout ALL THE LAND UNTO A-L-L THE INHABITANTS THEREOF" (Lev. 25:10). The Jubilee trumpet represents a people who sound forth to creation the decree of their release from the shackles of sin and darkness and death. It is not the responsibility of the Church to heap condemnation, damnation and judgment upon the world, while the Church goes free. God is preparing a JUBILEE TRUMPET MINISTRY with such a totality of coverage that it is His peace and goodwill brought to ALL men, for, as the scripture says, "He is the propitiation (mercy-seat) for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world" (1 Jn. 2:2).

Some time ago the following question was presented to me. "Why preach and teach the Gospel if all are to be saved ultimately? There is no need to witness for they will be saved someday, someday, somewhere - right?" W-R-O-N-G! First, the Christian life is so rich and beautiful and worthwhile that it would be the only life to live, even if there were no hereafter. Ask those who have truly known and experienced Christ over a period of years. Was it not Dr. A.J. Gordon who met an old crippled man on the street, and asked him why, with all his handicap, his face was nevertheless so bright and shining? And the old man answered, "The devil has no happy old men!"

Furthermore, God will never save any person who has ever lived or ever shall live apart from a MEANS, an INSTRUMENT THROUGH WHICH TO REACH THEM. And we are that instrument! God declares to His elect in Isa. 49:6, "I will also GIVE YOU for a light to the nations, that YOU may BE MY SALVATION unto the end of the earth." During this age of redemption the method by which God causes men to believe is revealed in Rom. 10: 14-15. "How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? and how shall they preach except they be sent?" Not preach and teach the Gospel because all men will be saved ultimately? The very idea is ludicrous and merely reflects the depth of ignorance and the incredible lack of understanding of God's economy on the part of the asker. The simple truth is that God purposes to save all men, some now by redemption, the remainder later by Jubilee. But whether now or then, whether here or there, the means by which He saves men is the proclamation of the Good News! Those who should really give up preaching and witnessing to the lost are those who believe most of them will burn for ever in hell anyway! What on earth could be a greater waste, and more unprofitable and disappointing than preaching to men when we actually believe that the vast majority of them will be eternally damned anyhow! Now comes the word: "And all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself by Jesus Christ, and has given UNTO US THE MINISTRY OF RECONCILIATION; to wit, that God was in Christ reconciling T-H-E W-O-R-L-D unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses

unto them; and has COMMITTED UNTO US THE WORD OF RECONCILIATION. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: WE PRAY YOU IN CHRIST'S STEAD, BE YE RECONCILED UNTO GOD" (II Cor. 5:18-20).

Those blessed saints unto whom is committed the word and ministry of universal reconciliation ARE THE JUBILEE TRUMPET. This is God's JUBILEE TRUMPET COMPANY. None can deny that those who embrace the truth of the deliverance and restoration of all men and all things to God are the only Christians in the world who bear the JUBILEE MESSAGE. I must confess that betimes I am deeply grieved in my spirit when I meet these would-be sons of God who loudly profess in one breath to be creation's long-awaited deliverers, while with their next breath they ridicule and condemn as heretics those who are actually believing for the salvation and restoration of ALL MEN to God. These poor souls may be children of God on some level, but they most assuredly are not part of God's JUBILEE TRUMPET COMPANY. They bear no sound of release for the creation, but only a fearful looking for of eternal damnation and judgment. You cannot damn the larger part of God's precious creation to endless burning hell and be their deliverer at the same time. The simple truth is, my beloved brethren, that until we are able to embrace God's immutable intention of reconciling all unto Himself, we will never be able to clearly see God's great plan of Redemption and Jubilee. And most certainly God will not entrust into our hands the Jubilee trumpet message as long as we remain hostile toward God's gracious purpose and vindictive toward men for whom Christ died and the creation we are sent to rescue and restore.

In the Year of Jubilee the Lord will roar out of Zion through a many-membered High Priestly ministry to bring deliverance and liberty to the earth. In the Jubilee Year there is rest, reversal, release, remission, refreshing, reunion and restoration! There is return to family and property, pillows of rest, peace, protection, provision and plenty! The anointing will bring this deliverance, and not the devices of men. God will anoint His three hundred to deliver the thirty-two thousand. God will anoint this One New Man like unto the Son of God to deliver Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego and bring the whole Realm under the rule of the one true and living God. He will anoint His Samson to tear off the city gates of modern Babylon and expose the Church's enemy. He will anoint His Elijah to destroy the prophets of Baal. He will anoint His Joshua to bring His people into their inheritance. He will anoint His David to rule with a rod of iron. Ah, the sons of God will be revealed in company with the Firstborn, and the creation will be freed from bondage, and brought into the liberty of the glory of the children of God. What a Jubilee that will be! What a triumphant last word on God's part after all the foolishness of men! And all of this brought about purely by divine mercy and grace and by a power that gives effect to all the purposes of God.

The Jubilee Years in Israelitish history are chronicled in the writings of the first century Jewish historian, Josephus. He dates the Jubilees from the first cycle when the children of Israel entered the promised land to the Jubilee that was celebrated in A.D. 27. Note the significance of the A.D. 27 date. That is the same year Jesus launched His ministry in His home town of Nazareth by reading from Isaiah 61:1-2, "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon Me; because the Lord has anointed Me to preach good tidings unto the meek; He has sent Me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; to proclaim the acceptable Year of the Lord." In short, God blessed that Year of Jubilee - that year of liberation - by sending His Son to proclaim a Gospel of liberation from the bondage of sin, sickness, sorrow and death. The "acceptable Year of the Lord" is called by Ezekiel the "Year of LIBERTY"

(Eze. 46:17; compare Isa. 61:1) which is the Year of Jubilee. The Lord Jesus came to reveal this ministry of deliverance. Jesus the forerunner was in that long ago Year of Jubilee the trumpet - He was the clear-sounding living Word of God who came to deliver the beggar, the brokenhearted, the bound, the blind and the bruised (Lk. 4:18). All these things He demonstrated daily during the three and one-half years of his earthly ministry as He delivered men from devils, healed their diseases, opened their eyes and their ears, touched the maimed so that their limbs grew back on, raised the dead to life again and brought pardon and peace to men's hearts. These things He did were merely demonstrations and samples of the fullness that shall bless mankind, yea, all creation, too, in the acceptable Year of the Lord, Jubilee.

When Jesus read the scripture from Isaiah 61:1-2 He cut that prophecy in half and said, "This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears." He cut the prophecy in half, and what He did is beautiful. He closed the book and gave it to the minister and sat down. And that is exactly what Jesus did in His coming in the flesh. He fulfilled that three-and-a-half-year ministry, He closed that book, that part of it, gave the message and the responsibility of it to His body, and sat down at the right hand of God. And if you will go back to Isaiah sixty-one you will see where He cut the prophecy in half, and it is plain to see that the rest of the prophecy is to be fulfilled in us - the sons of God - in a Jubilee ministry. Two thousand years ago our Lord did His part, fulfilled it, closed the book and gave the rest of the responsibility to us. We are, in due time, to continue that Jubilee ministry for we are His seed and we prolong His days (Isa. 53:10). So our Lord Jesus proclaimed, heralded, trumpeted, announced, and demonstrated the acceptable Year of the Lord, the Year of Jubilee, the Year of Release, the Year of Liberty.

The annunciation of the Jubilee was very wisely fixed to the Day of Atonement, as it might be considered that the people would be better disposed to forgive and release their brethren their debts when they had so recently been receiving the full and free pardon of their own trespasses. A people whose many transgressions have been forgiven, and their sins blotted out and remembered no more, should not find it difficult to "make a release" even of what might be a just claim. We are to be "compassionate, forgiving one another, so as God also in Christ has forgiven you" (Eph. 4:32). People say sometimes, "But I want justice! I want righteousness!" Well, righteousness is to act toward others on the same principle as God has acted toward us. You and I are living in the greatest time any people has been privileged to live in. You are called forth and being prepared and anointed to set free the creation. GOD WILL DELIVER HIS CREATION BY FORGIVING IT. "To wit, that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them" (II Cor. 5:19). In Luke 4:18 Jesus read the passage from Isaiah 61:1-2, and again I call your attention to a portion of what He said. "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to ... preach deliverance to the captives." The word "deliverance" is in the Greek APHESIS. It is translated forgiveness or remission elsewhere. It means to be let out of the prison house. And if you are going to set creation free, only a free man can set a man free!

So let me tell you what you must do if you want to partake of this in reality. You've got to forgive God, because if you love God and you're called according to His purpose, then everything that has worked in your life has worked for your good! There have been no accidents. So you've got to forgive God. I know people who are mad at God. They think that somehow God isn't fair because of all the negative things that have come into their lives. Secondly, you must forgive yourself. "Forgetting those things which are behind..." Thirdly, you've got to forgive everybody in your family and everyone in the Church. You

want to get radical? Then you've got to forgive all the ministries, even the ones that hurt and offended and hindered you. You must forgive your enemies. Forgive them! And once you're delivered - forgiven - and you have ministered that reality to all who touch you, then you can turn to this planet as an ambassador of Christ and in His stead say, "Be reconciled to God!" How we have ranted and raved and stormed at men about their sins and judgment! But it has been well said that "There is no difficulty that enough love will not conquer; no disease that enough love will not heal; no door that enough love will not open; no gulf that enough love will not bridge; no wall that enough love will not throw down; no sin that enough love will not redeem. It makes no difference how deeply seated may be the problem, how hopeless the outlook, how muddled the tangles, how great the mistake - a sufficient realization of love will dissolve it all - if only you could love enough you would be the happiest and most powerful being in the world." Ah, perhaps now we can understand something of the divine wisdom that, when it purposes to save a world gone awry, says "FOR GOD S-O L-O-V-E-D THE WORLD, that He gave His only begotten Son..." And God in Christ has enough love to go around!

Demonstrations of mercy, such as the world has never known, are now upon our horizon, ready to be manifested at our Father's appointed time. God has prepared a divine show for all the earth. It is a light arising in the darkness and over the darkness. It is a theatrical of MERCY in a world of darkness and bondage. I do not hesitate to tell you that the hour is approaching when God's JUBILEE TRUMPET shall be heard upon the mountains of earth, in the streets, at the door of every dwelling, and before the gates of hell itself. Then, in reality, the captives shall cast off the ignominious chains which for ages have bound them; then shall the teeming billions of exiles, banished in father Adam from the portals of Eden, return to that happy home from which they have so long been banished; then shall every debt be cancelled, every burden removed, every yoke be broken, and every tear wiped away. "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, 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 shall 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, 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" (Rev. 21:1-6).

It is vitally significant that the Hebrew word for "Jubilee" is YOBEL meaning a loud, long blast of the ram's horn throughout all the land. But on one occasion, in Lev. 25:9, we read, "Then you shall cause the trumpet of the Jubilee to sound." "Jubilee" in that particular passage is from a different word, TERUWAH, which means a clamoring, an acclamation of joy, a battle cry, and the clanging of trumpets as an alarm. It has a root word, RUWA, meaning "to split the ears." How humanity needs to have their ears split! The world has for long millenniums been listening to the voice of the stranger, the delusions of the carnal mind. Praise God, the message of the Jubilee trumpet will be a message which will split men's ears, sanctify their hearing, alter their perceptions, transform their understanding, drown out the stranger's voice, and GET THEIR ATTENTION for God. It is time for the whole earth to HEAR THE WORD OF THE LORD! God will give the power to His Jubilee trumpet company, in the positive realm, to get mankind's attention, to subdue them to Christ. The blast of the Jubilee trumpet is a L-O-

N-G blast. Multitudes who love to wallow in the muck and mire of the flesh, the world and the devil will not want to hear this message of release right away, so the trumpet will continue to blow. And it will blow and blow and blow until it has blown throughout the whole land and split every ear and flown like arrows directly to their mark and pierced every heart with the message of God's infinite love and grace and brought every man home to his inheritance in God. Hallelujah!

While in the typical Jubilee Year many restored liberties and blessings were at once entered upon, yet most of the year was required to straighten out affairs and get each one fully installed again to all his former liberties, rights and possessions. So, too, with the antitype, the glorious dispensation of the fullness of times in which all things in heaven and in earth are gathered together into one in Christ. It will open with mighty manifestations of God's power and glory, with grace poured out upon the inhabitants of the world, with abundant overflowing streams of mercy and goodness to all who thirst after righteousness, with deliverance and restoration to life and light and liberties and possessions long lost sight of; but the work of completely restoring ALL THAT WAS ORIGINALLY LOST will require all of that wonderful age of the ages.

May God hasten the day! Amen.

Chapter 14

The Unpardonable Sin

The evangelist stood with both arms raised, giving emphasis to his impassioned plea. With eyes riveted upon his hearers he urged the question with utmost solemnity, "Did you know there is a sin so great, so devastating in its awfulness, that even the great mercy of God cannot overlook it, and the shed blood of Jesus Christ cannot wash it away? A sin that can never be forgiven - an unpardonable sin! Jesus warned that it could happen. 'Verily I say unto you, All sins shall be forgiven unto the sons of men, and blasphemies wherewith so ever they shall blaspheme: but he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost has never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation' (Mk. 3:28-29). Who would commit such a dreadful sin, subject themselves to such an appalling fate - to lose all hope of forgiveness and salvation, to suffer for ever the damnation of hellfire? This, my friends, is the fate that is worse than death itself. Oh, when you reject the love of Jesus and resist the wooing of the Holy Spirit you move ever closer to the possibility that you may commit such a horrendous sin. The scriptures are there, the sin does exist, and it could just conceivably strike you!" I was just a boy at the time I heard these frightening words, and it made a profound impression on me. In fact, at one time I was seized with the terrifying fear that I had committed the unpardonable sin!

What is the unpardonable sin? Is there anyone reading these lines who has committed it, or might be in danger of committing it? The confusion on this subject is due largely to a failure to harmonize all scriptures. Men are so prone to blindly accept any error in either translation or interpretation, even though many other plain statements of the Word of God affirm the exact opposite. We need to search the scriptures prayerfully and reverently, on bended knee beseeching the blessed Holy Spirit of truth for illumination and understanding. With the aid of the anointing we need to weed out the errors and empty imaginings of men. Men are so irresponsible, especially preachers. Altogether too few know how to study. Of the few who do know how, not one in a thousand ever takes the trouble to dig down to rock bottom and consider all the facts. That is hard work. It takes effort. And it also requires a complete sell-out to God to come to the place where the Lord will open one's mind to grasp the real truth. The cost is too great for all but a very small and inconspicuous remnant. Therefore the masses flit hither, thither, and yon, never taking the trouble to scratch below the surface, knowing neither what they say nor whereof they affirm. The Word, to them, is a sealed book.

Anyone who attempts to explain that which he does not understand can accomplish but one result: the complete and glaring display of his own ignorance. I know very little concerning electricity. The extent of my knowledge of it is just about comprehended in three statements: namely, it bites, to press a button turns on a light, and if the lights go off, one can usually remedy the situation by inserting a new fuse in the proper receptacle, or switching the circuit breaker. Briefly, I am grossly ignorant concerning electrical science. But now, just suppose I took it into my head to write a book on electrical engineering. That book, if ever completed, would be a fanciful tale indeed. If I were possessed of sufficient natural ability, I might be able to make the book interesting from

the very fact that it would be ludicrous enough to be entertaining. But woe to the man who would attempt to construct electrical apparatus according to my specifications!

Today men and women who are in greater ignorance of God's truth than I am of electricity are writing books, and preaching sermons, and teaching scholars, and editing papers on religious topics, that are more misleading and dangerous and undependable than would be my book on electrical engineering. But the horrible feature is, that while no one would think of listening to my electrical delusions, yet the whole Christian church has gone wild and is glorying in, in varying degrees, delusions and misrepresentations and lies which have a direct bearing on their eternal welfare. Only fools are supposed to have license to indulge in foolishness. All reasonable men are supposed to subscribe only to sound and sane and sensible beliefs. Therefore when we can show reasonable men that they have been tricked and led into ignorance and foolish beliefs, even though it may be a hard blow to their vanity, the only reasonable course is for them to forthwith forsake their folly and come on up to higher ground. And we all, every one of us, have been victimized. We might as well admit it. A few have been awakened, at least to a degree, and have left the defiled and downward way. What are you doing!

Nowhere has there been more ignorance manifested than on this subject of the "unpardonable sin." Too often evangelists and preachers use that term to intimidate people and create a FEAR while they are preaching. Many torture themselves with doubt and anxiety over whether they may have committed this sin. Open your Bible to Mat. 12:22-32. Here we find that Jesus was teaching the people one day. In the crowd about Him were many of the leading theologians and teachers of the Pharisee denomination. Just then there was brought unto Him a poor man possessed with a demon, a man in whose physical life the demon had wrought sad havoc - he was both blind and dumb. And with a word of power, with no incantations, with no repeating a hundred times the command, with none of the methods of the exorcists of that time, the man was instantly and perfectly healed there before them all, "insomuch that the blind and dumb both spoke and saw." When the multitudes saw this miracle they were amazed and exclaimed, "Is not this the son of David?" That is, is not this the promised seed of David, the Messiah? They had been watching Him, and listening to Him, and beholding the wonders that He wrought, and at last in the presence of this wonderful miracle, wrought with absolute authority, simply by the uttering of a word, they cried out with comprehension and joy, "Is not this the son of David - the Messiah!"

When the Pharisees heard this, they were filled with jealousy and rage. Here was a manifest miracle of undeniable wonder and power, and the common people were fast drawing the proper inferences from it, and coming to the conclusion that Jesus was indeed the Christ, the Son of David, the Son of the living God. They were acquainted with the messianic prophecy of Isaiah, "Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped" (Isa. 35:5). It was a perpetual fear among the Pharisees and rulers that they might lose their hold on the people and they were willing to do almost anything to keep the people from following Jesus. They were proud of the reputation they had among the people; that fed their pride, supported their power, and filled their purses. Not unlike the religious systems of today! They saw very clearly that if the popularity and power of Jesus continued to rise, their power would be absolutely gone. Upon occasion they said, "What can we do?" for "the world is gone after Him." It was necessary for the Pharisees to account for the wonder that had been wrought in some way. Whatever way they chose, it was necessary that they should acknowledge that there was super-human power; the people were fully persuaded of this and no man

could deny it. So the Pharisees proclaimed to the people, "This man casts out demons only by and with the help of Beelzebub, the prince of demons."

So terrible was the thing that the rulers had said that Jesus, first of all, refuted by argument what they said. The record states, "And knowing their thoughts, He said to them, Any kingdom that is divided against itself is being brought to desolation and laid waste, and no city or house divided against itself will last or continue to stand. And if Satan drives out Satan, he has become divided against himself and disunited; how then will his kingdom last or continue to stand? And if I drive out the demons by the help of Beelzebub, by whose help do your sons (the exorcists of the Jews) drive them out? For this reason they shall be your judges. But if it is by the Spirit of God that I drive out the demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you before you expected it" (Mat. 12:25-28, Amplified). We now reach those awe-inspiring words with which the paragraph closes. Jesus addresses these stern words to the self-righteous religious leaders of the Jewish nation. For searching solemnity they are unsurpassed in the records of the things Jesus said. We tremble as we read them. Such solemn words as these demand our careful attention for two reasons: first, in order that we may place no untrue emphasis on them; and, secondly, that we may by no means minimize their terrible meaning. We are in danger of making both these mistakes. We may read into them meanings which He never intended; or we may explain away the most solemn words Jesus Christ ever uttered. The only way in which we can hope to understand, is by taking them in the simplest way possible. Our Lord declared, in the words of the King James Bible, "All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men; but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men. And whosoever speaks a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaks against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come" (Mat. 12:31-32).

WHAT IS THE SIN?

What is the sin against the Holy Spirit? In the third chapter of Mark, we have the parallel passage to the text we just read in Matthew, the same record of these men coming around Jesus when they saw Him perform His mighty miracle for the poor man who could neither see nor speak. In order to keep the people from believing Jesus, they said the miracle was performed by the power of Satan. Notice the words of Jesus in verses 28-30: "Verily I say unto you, All sins shall be forgiven unto the sons of men, and blasphemies wherewith so ever they shall blaspheme. But he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost has never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation: BECAUSE THEY SAID, HE HAS AN UNCLEAN SPIRIT." Ah - now there's a clue - the Pharisees' opposition to Jesus was not a spur of the moment, hotheaded fit of pique. These men knew what they were doing. Their schemes against Jesus were deliberate, calculated. A leading Pharisee, Nicodemus, once confided to Jesus, "Rabbi, we know that You are a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that you do unless God is with him" (Jn. 3:2). Many of them knew better, but unlike Nicodemus they still plotted to destroy Him. They had developed an implacable contempt for Jesus because He presented a threat to their prestige and power over the people. Jesus warned them of the dire consequences of their attitude and actions. They were not just sinning against God in heaven above, or against the Son of God on earth - they were resisting, opposing, withstanding, impugning, confronting, assailing, attacking and repulsing the Holy Spirit - THE VERY ACTIVITY AND MINISTRATION OF GOD TOWARDS THEM! They were in danger of blaspheming the Holy Ghost!

Let me put it this way. The Father in heaven is the unseen, invisible God. The Son is the visible manifestation of God in human flesh - the historic Jesus of two millennia ago. "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. No man has seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him" (Jn. 1:14, 18). The Father is unseen. The Son is the visible, fleshly manifestation of the invisible God. The Holy Spirit, on the other hand, is the activity, the action, the motion, the operation, the force, the energy, the influence of God toward men. The English word "spirit" is from the Latin SPIRARE, meaning "to breathe," the words "respiration," "expiration," and "inspiration" all being derived from the same source. Similarly the Greek word PNEUMA comes from PNEO, meaning "to breathe or blow," and the Hebrew RUAHH is believed to come from a root having the same meaning. The Holy Spirit is God's breath, God's out-breathing, God's ENERGY FORCE by which He accomplishes His purpose and executes His will. Many times we have thought of the Holy Spirit as "power," and certainly He has power, but power is basically the ability or capacity to act or do things and it can be latent, dormant, inactively resident in someone or something. "Force," on the other hand, more specifically describes energy projected and exerted on persons or things, and may be defined as "an influence which produces or tends to produce motion, or change of motion." "Power" might be likened to the stored energy in a battery, while "force" could be compared to the current flowing from such battery. "Force," then, more accurately represents the sense of the Hebrew and Greek terms as relating to God's Spirit, and this is borne out by a consideration of the scriptures.

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

Let's look at that for just a moment. The religious rulers were not in danger of committing the unpardonable sin because they said that Jesus performed miracles by the power of the devil. That is not the condemnation. He says that ALL BLASPHEMIES shall be forgiven men. There is not a sin that you committed yesterday but what if you come to Christ today He would forgive you and accept you. His mercies are higher than the heavens. What then was their problem? They were expressing an attitude of unbelief which was persistent and calculated rejection of the activity of God toward them. They were resisting the Holy Spirit, striving against the influence of God acting upon their minds and hearts. Notice that later on Stephen was brought before this same group, and he said to them the same thing the Lord Jesus had said: "You stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, you do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do you" (Acts 7:51). They were doing the same thing their fathers had done. In

Christ's day they were resisting the Holy Spirit, and the same condition exists today - they are still resisting the Holy Spirit!

Repentance is always the Lord's way of preparing His people for the next move of His Spirit. It is significant to note that the Pharisees refused to repent at the preaching of John the Baptist, and consequently were the very ones who rejected the Christ when He came. Prophet after prophet had announced to them the coming of the Messiah. In due time He came. God was manifest in the flesh. He came unto His own - to this people whom for over two thousand years He had been preparing to receive Him; but "His own received Him not." They "despised and rejected Him;" they hated Him because He testified of them that their deeds were evil; they blasphemed the Spirit of God, accusing God's Son of deriving His power from the prince of devils; they took counsel together to slay the Holy and the Just; they bore false witness against Him to put Him to death; they became His betrayers and murderers; they cried, "Crucify Him, crucify Him," and by their wicked hands He was crucified and slain. And when the still lingering longsuffering of God sent them one more chance of repentance, and the risen Savior told His apostles that remission of sins through His name was to be preached among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem, when the Holy Ghost in Peter and in Stephen pleaded still with Judah to repent and be converted, they filled up the measure of their iniquities by rejecting this final offer of mercy. They slew Stephen and persecuted the church. "The Jews both killed the Lord Jesus, and their own prophets, and have persecuted us; they please not God, and are contrary to all men, forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles that they might be saved, to fill up their sins always, for WRATH IS COME UPON THEM to the uttermost" (I Thes. 2:15-16). Because they repulsed the operation of God by His Spirit on their behalf, Jesus said to the unrepentant chief priests, elders and Pharisees, "Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof" (Mat. 21:43).

In the great and eternal order of God there is an allotted time for the preparation of an individual, a city, a people or a nation to hear the word of the Lord and to respond to the activity of the Holy Spirit to illuminate mind and heart and draw them into relationship with Himself. In the time of Christ, Jerusalem was the headquarters of God's most favored nation, the house of Judah; it was the hub of religious government and leadership of that day, and the center of religious instruction. Every Sabbath day Moses and the prophets were read to the people, including the promise of the coming of Messiah and the establishment of the Kingdom of God. However, with all that reading and teaching, there were apparently few in the city who believed the prophetic word of the Lord and trusted for its fulfillment. There came a decisive day when Jesus approached the city, and as He beheld the careless, unheeding multitudes thronging its noisy streets, He wept audibly over it, saying, "If you had known, even you, at least in this your day, the things which belong unto your peace! but now they are hid from your eyes. For the days shall come upon you, that your enemies shall cast a trench about you, and compass you round, and keep you in on every side, and shall lay you even with the ground, and your children within you; and they shall not leave in you one stone upon another; BECAUSE YOU KNEW NOT THE TIME OF YOUR VISITATION! (Lk. 19:41-44).

The horrible blindness of not recognizing the time of God's visitation, when God is visiting you, showing Himself gracious toward you, moving in your midst by His Spirit, must be a blindness of the worst form. But to have the deep, inner revelation of the Spirit to His people is a wisdom of the highest kind. But because the people of Jerusalem disregarded God's word and rejected the move of the Holy Spirit and refused the power of His

Kingdom, the Lord had no alternative but to weep over the city and pronounce corrective judgment upon it. The Lord said of Jerusalem, "For the days shall come upon you, that your enemies shall cast a trench about you ... because you knew not the time of your visitation." They shall "compass you round, and keep you in on every side ... because you knew not the time of your visitation." Your enemies "shall lay you even with the ground, and your children within you ... because you knew not the time of your visitation." "They shall not leave in you one stone upon another; because you knew not the time of your visitation."

The mighty works which Jesus, the first Son, began will be completed by the other sons who are coming into His image. This is not presumption on the part of man. This is the revealed plan and purpose of God for this generation at the end of the age. Today, by revelation of the Word, by the prophetic voice of His prophets, by the inner illumination of the anointing the promise is before us: "For... the sufferings of this present time are not worth being compared with the glory that is about to be revealed to us and in us and for us, and conferred on us! For the concentrated and undivided expectation of the creation is assiduously and patiently awaiting the revelation of the sons of God" (Rom. 8:18-19, Amplified & Wuest). Let us never read or listen to these truths and lightly cast them aside, but earnestly pray that the eyes of our understanding may be enlightened; that we may know what is the hope of His calling, and what the riches of the glory of His inheritance IN THE SAINTS, and what is the exceeding greatness of His power to usward who believe, according to the working of His mighty power which He wrought in Christ Jesus when He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places. Those who read these lines with the revelation and understanding of the Almighty upon their minds know that the spiritual realm is alive with much activity in preparation for the long awaited manifestation of the sons of God. The heavens are astir! The sphere Of Spirit power and spirit life is teeming with divine activity! God is moving now among His chosen ones, searching for a people who will follow on to know Him in all His glorious and eternal reality. All who will receive His visitation will discover a new experience taking place in their lives - as definite and spiritual an experience as they have ever had, yea, as definite as their conversion and the joy and peace that flooded their hearts when their sins were forgiven, washed away by faith in the precious blood of God's redeeming Lamb, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost. Ah, my beloved, THIS IS THE TIME OF O-U-R VISITATION. Christ will soon appear in His sons in the full glory and majesty and power of His divine life! My earnest prayer for all who read these words is that each may truly and fully know that this is YOUR DAY, the time of YOUR VISITATION!

The sin that has been called the "unpardonable sin" is the sin of blaspheming against the Holy Spirit - AGAINST THE DIVINE ACTIVITY AND ENERGY FORCE OF GOD TOWARD ONE IN HIS DAY OF VISITATION. It is something infinitely greater than merely speaking a word against the Father in heaven, or against His Son on earth. Vast multitudes today blaspheme the God of Heaven and the earth is filled with men and women who hate and reject the Son of God and swear profanely against Him. The very Pharisees who Jesus warned about blaspheming the Holy Spirit finally trumped up charges against Him and occasioned His crucifixion by the Romans. But was this the unpardonable sin? No way! As Jesus tasted the awful bitterness of His anguish upon the cross, as sorrows like sea billows rolled over the Son of man, He was heard to pray, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." They scourged Him and mocked Him and cursed Him and nailed Him to the tree. But the message is clear - "Whosoever speaks a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him." And He forgave them! His Father forgave them! Heinous as their crime was - I do not hesitate to tell you that

those men will never stand in the judgment for the sin of crucifying the Lord of Glory, for THEY H-A-V-E B-E-E-N FORGIVEN! Whom the Son sets free is free indeed. Their sin of blaspheming the Holy Spirit ran deeper than this. It was not their attitude toward an unseen and invisible God in heaven. It was not their treatment of God manifested outwardly in the flesh before their eyes. It was, rather, their reviling of God's SPIRITUAL ENERGY FORCE, their utter and complete contempt for His illuminating and transforming ACTIVITY TOWARD THEM BY SPIRIT, their impious response to the GRACIOUS ACTION AND INFLUENCE of God in mighty spirit power as He touched the deepest chords within their hearts by the moving and wooing and brooding of the Holy Ghost.

THERE IS NO UNPARDONABLE SIN!

"Wherefore I say unto you, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men. And whosoever speaks a word against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come" (Mat. 12:31-32).

I am glad that Jesus said that all manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven men. I believe that is true. ALL manner. There is no kind of sin, which because of its kind, or manner, is unpardonable. The enemies of the truth of the ultimate salvation of all men have relied on this dissertation about the unpardonable sin given by our Lord, as their outstanding bulwark of defense against those who affirm that Christ is indeed the Saviour of all men, the Saviour of the world. Invariably, when the certainty of eternal torment is discussed and doubted, the sin against the Holy Ghost is brought forward as an impregnable defense against forgiveness hereafter for at least one sin. Few know how to reply. Here is what the Lord said: "But whosoever speaks against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come." On the surface it seems conclusive to the unthinking; and it has equally seemed so to learned theologians who have been trained in the channels of orthodox thinking. Yet, as a matter of fact, these words of our Lord are among the strongest collateral evidence that can be produced in support of the truth of the reconciliation of all men to God. Hearken! A sin against the Holy Spirit will never be forgiven in this "world," nor in the "world" to come.

While the King James version states that the sin against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven in this world nor in the world to come, that is not quite the meaning of the Greek. The Greek word here translated "world" is AION. This word AION has been translated into fifteen different English words and phrases, many of which convey the wrong meaning entirely. The simple meaning of AION is "age." An AION is "an age." Two AION(S) are two "ages." A thousand AION(S) are a thousand "ages." Some of the passages where AION is found will give us added information concerning it. In Eph. 2:7 we find, "in the ages (aions) to come." In Col. 1:26 we find, "the mystery which has been hid from ages (aions)." In Eph. 2:2 we find, "you walked according to the course (aion) of this world." In Heb. 1:2 we find, "by whom also He made the worlds (aions)." In Hebrews 11:3 we find, "the worlds (aions) were formed by the word of God." In about fifteen instances, such as Mat. 12:32, I Cor. 1:20, etc., we find it rendered "this world (aion)." Twice we find "this present world (aion)." In Gal. 1:4 we find, "deliver us from this present evil world (aion)." In Eph. 6:12 we find, "the rulers of the darkness of this world (aion)." In II Cor. 4:4 we find, "the god of this world (aion)." In I Cor. 2:6 we find, "the wisdom of this world (aion)." In Mk. 4:19 we find, "the cares of this world (aion)." How much clearer and understandable it would be if the translators had used the correct wordage instead of

world! In Mk. 10:30 we find that there is not only this present aion, which is evil, but also "the world (aion) to come." Certainly this present age is an evil age, and the rulers of the darkness of this age are evil. Clearly God framed the ages, and there are not only "this age" and "the age to come," but there are also "the ages to come" (Eph. 2:7). Any thinking person should plainly see that if you translate a word which means an age by the word world, you immediately get the wrong idea. It is incorrect and brings nothing but confusion. There is a great deal of difference between the expression, "It shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come," and the expression, "It shall not be forgiven him in this age, nor in the age to come." The translation in Mat. 12:32 of "world" instead of "age," has been the source of an altogether erroneous concept. This "world" and the "world to come" has become so indelibly impressed on the Christian mind as meaning "this life and eternity," that it is next to impossible quickly to reverse the trend of belief and direct it into sound thinking. It makes all the difference in the world when one understands that our Lord was not contrasting "this world" with that "great eternity out there somewhere," but merely pointing to two ages: this age and the age to come.

Now let me quote this passage from several well-known, highly respected and widely-accepted Bible translations. The Amplified Bible compromises the Greek AION, using both world and age to translate. "And whoever speaks a word against the Son of man will be forgiven, but who ever speaks against the Spirit, the Holy One, will not be forgiven, either in this world and age or in the world and age to come." Young's Literal translation says, "Whoever may speak against the Holy Spirit, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this age, nor in that which is coming." Wuest translates, "Whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this age nor in the one about to come." The Weymouth New Testament reads, "Whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit shall obtain forgiveness neither in this age nor in the coming age." The New International Version renders, "Anyone who speaks against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven, either in this age or in the age to come." The Emphasized Bible (Rotherham) says, "Whosoever shall speak against the Holy Spirit, it shall not be forgiven him either in this age, or the coming." The Concordant New Testament reads, "Whoever may be saying aught against the Holy Spirit, it shall not be pardoned him, neither in this eon nor in that which is impending."

These words of our Lord, so far from proving that the sin against the Holy Spirit is "unpardonable," distinctly assert, - first, that ALL MANNER of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men, - secondly, that some sins, those, namely, against the Son of man, can be forgiven in the present age, - and, thirdly, that other sins, against the Holy Ghost, cannot be forgiven either in the age when Jesus came to earth, nor in the age that would immediately follow; which last words clearly indicate that some sins not here forgiven may be forgiven in the next age. That is what the text plainly says. It says absolutely nothing about a sin that is "unpardonable" throughout endless ages to come!

We should not fail to note the wording of our Lord's pronouncement as given in Mk. 3:28-30. To overlook this would invite a charge that it was unanswerable. "Verily I say unto you, All sins shall be forgiven unto the sons of men, and blasphemies wherewith so ever they shall blaspheme: but he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost has never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation." The correct original is "has not for the eon (age) forgiveness, but is in danger of eonian (age-during) judgment," - thereby giving it quite a different meaning from the translation in the "Authorized." My Greek-English Interlinear reads, "But whoever may speak evil to the spirit the holy, not has forgiveness

to the age, but liable is of age-lasting judgment." A free translation would be, "HE that shall blaspheme against the Holy Spirit has not forgiveness to the age, but is held in and liable to the age-lasting process of judgment: because they said, He has an unclean spirit." Amid the crowd of sins there stands out one in sad pre-eminence because it has not forgiveness "eis ton aiona," - for the age. Its forgiveness demands ages - two ages, to be exact - after which, obviously, there is forgiveness!

NO FORGIVENESS TO THE AGE

"But whoever may blaspheme against the Holy Spirit, has no forgiveness to the age, but is exposed to Aionian Judgment" (Mk. 3:29, Emphatic Diaglott).

When our Lord Jesus ministered here on earth, He addressed a great many of His sayings and sermons and parables to the Pharisees and scribes and rulers of the Jewish nation. The Pharisees were by far the most numerous and influential of the religious sects of Jesus' day. They were strict legalists. They stood for the rigid observance of the letter, and forms of the Law, and also for the Traditions. They pledged themselves to obey all facets of the Traditions to the minutest detail and were sticklers for ceremonial purity. They would not touch the carcass of a dead animal or those who had come into contact with such things. They had no association with people who had been defiled through sickness. In truth, they made life difficult for themselves and bitter for others. They despised those whom they did not consider their equals and were haughty and arrogant because they believed they were the only interpreters of God and His Word. They were devoid of the graces of forgiveness, mercy, charitableness and love.

When the Pharisee went to meet God he had his appointment at the corner of the street. Passers-by saw his bold, erect figure. His attitude betokened pride, self-esteem, a superiority of life that gave him unbounded satisfaction. He was no suppliant for mercy, nor recipient of grace returned to give thanks to God, but a self-sufficient soul airing his merit before angels and men. "God, I thank You, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers; I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess" (Lk. 18:11-12). The Pharisee was presumptuous enough to assume that his self-satisfied, meritorious life placed him on good terms with God. His soul was guilty of a most irreverent conceit. It is only natural that ultimately such a religion became only a matter of externals and not of the heart, and that God's grace was thought to come only from doing the Law. Jesus constantly clashed with them over their covetousness, self-righteousness and hypocrisy. He denounced them as irreligious professional religionists, parading themselves in holy garments, pompous fellows, self-important, strutting around like lords, preaching religion, yet having none. How His pure soul loathed their wretched pretense!

The words of Jesus to the Pharisees constitute the most bitter denunciations that ever fell from His holy lips. Jesus never talked that way to sinners, publicans or the common people. Mercy flowed like a river to the poor and needy, but rebuke and scathing condemnation were heaped upon the haughty and unrepentant. The Pharisees, like their ancestors, were not merely sinners, but deliberate and persistent rebels against God. Contemning every word of God sent to them, abusing every privilege granted to them, and despising every blessing bestowed. From the day of their beginning as a nation, before they had time to receive, in its written form, the law which had been orally delivered to them, the children of Israel had violated the first and fundamental command, "You shall have no other gods before Me," and all their subsequent career was in harmony with this beginning.

They sinned, and committed iniquity, they understood not God's wonders nor remembered His mercies, they provoked Him and forgot His works, they waited not for His counsel but lusted exceedingly in the wilderness, and tempted God in the desert; they envied Moses and Aaron; they changed their glory into the similitude of an ox that eats grass; they forgot God their Saviour and despised the pleasant land; they murmured in their tents and hearkened not to the voice of the Lord; they joined themselves to Baal Peor, and ate the sacrifices of the dead; they provoked God to anger with their inventions; they did not destroy, as commanded, the idolatrous nations of Canaan, but were mingled among the heathen and learned their works; they served their idols and sacrificed their sons and daughters unto devils; they shed innocent blood, even the blood of their sons and daughters whom they sacrificed to the idols of Canaan; they were defiled with their own works, and went a whoring with their own inventions, till the wrath of the Lord was kindled against His people, and He abhorred His inheritance. Many times did He deliver them, but they provoked Him with their counsel and were brought low for their iniquity. They persecuted every prophet that was sent to them, and after every deliverance, fell lower than before, into all manner of sin and evil.

Prophet after prophet had announced to them the advent of Messiah the Prince. In due time HE came. God was manifest in the flesh. He came unto His own, to this people who for over two thousand years He had been preparing to receive Him; but "His own received Him not." They despised and rejected Him, they hated Him because He testified of them that their deeds were evil; they blasphemed the Holy Spirit of God, accusing the Son of God of deriving His power from the prince of devils; they took counsel together to slay the Holy and the Just; they bore false witness against Him to put Him to death; they became His betrayers and murderers; they cried, "Crucify Him, crucify Him," and by their wicked hands He was crucified and slain.

It should be clear to every thinking mind that when Jesus warned the Pharisees and scribes about the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit the primary thrust of His words was directed like an arrow straight into their hearts. On no occasion did Jesus warn the sinners about blaspheming the Holy Spirit. Jesus never cautioned the publicans about a sin against the Holy Spirit. Never once did He utter a word to the poor and oppressed about a sin that they might commit which would not be forgiven. Jesus never admonished His disciples and followers about such a sin! But to the religious leaders and rulers of the house of Judah the Lord said, "Verily I say to YOU, all the sins shall be forgiven to the sons of men, and evil speaking with which they might speak evil, but whoever may speak evil in regard to the Holy Spirit has not forgiveness - to the age, but is in danger of age-during judgment; BECAUSE THEY SAID, HE HAS AN UNCLEAN SPIRIT" (Mk. 3:28-30, Young's Literal). The one and only warning given in the pages of God's blessed Book respecting the sin against the Holy Spirit was delivered to the scribes and Pharisees! That it was meant for them, and for them alone, is evident from the time frame of the judgment imposed - "shall not be forgiven in this age, nor in the age to come." "This age" plainly indicates the age of Law. Jesus came under the age of the Law. "But when the fullness of time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, MADE UNDER THE LAW, to redeem them that were under the law..." (Gal. 4:4-5). The age that was to come, the age then imminent and impending was this present age of the church. The two ages of unforgiveness are thus clearly defined as the law age and the grace age. These words could not in any manner apply to any except people then living prior to Calvary and the birth of the church age on the day of Pentecost. You will never in a million years understand the deep mystery and meaning of Jesus' teaching on this subject until you grasp the significant fact that He was not talking to New Testament saints - He was not

talking to YOU, precious friend of mine - His words were sent directly to those first-century rulers of the kingdom of Judah!

There is recorded in the twenty-third chapter of Matthew what is evidently the last public address given by Jesus to the Jewish nation. Here are those striking denunciations of the scribes and Pharisees for their hypocrisy. At the close of this address, Christ, as He was turning to leave the temple for the last time, said: "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! You will be witnesses unto yourselves, that you are the children of them which killed the prophets. Fill up then the measure of your fathers. You serpents, generation of vipers, how can you escape the damnation of hell? Wherefore, behold, I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes: and some of them you shall kill and crucify; and some of them shall you scourge in your synagogues, and persecute them from city to city: that upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias son of Barachias, whom you slew between the temple and the altar. Verily I say unto you, All these things shall come upon this generation. O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, that kills the prophets, and stones them which are sent unto you, how often would I have gathered your children together, even as a hen gathers her chickens under her wings, and you would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, You shall not see me henceforth, till you shall say, Blessed is HE that comes in the name of the Lord."

And again, "When you shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh. Then let them which are in Judea flee to the mountains; and let them which are in the midst of it depart out; and let not them that are in the countries enter there into. For these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled. But woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck, in those days! for there shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people. And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled. Verily I say unto you, THIS GENERATION SHALL NOT PASS AWAY, TILL ALL BE FULFILLED" (Lk. 21:20-24, 32).

Some thirty-five years elapsed, after those words were spoken, and then the wrath was poured out. Jerusalem fell, and great was the fall thereof! Signal, terrible and unparalleled was the Jewish war, ending with the siege and capture of Jerusalem by the Roman general Titus. It needs a pen dipped in fire and in blood to write the story in its true colors! The sufferings and miseries that overtook the Jewish nation in that age, are all but indescribable, the very record of them is appalling. We are indebted to the Jewish historian, Josephus, for many of the details. One million one hundred thousand Jewish lives were sacrificed in the siege and capture of Jerusalem alone; streams of human blood extinguished the blazing fires that destroyed the houses of the city, and heaps of the unburied corpses of those who had died of starvation during the siege, hid from the Roman soldiers the immense treasures of the temple. From April 14th, when the siege began, to July 1st, 115,880 bodies were buried at the public expense, or thrown from the walls, not including those interred by their friends. Some said that 600,000 of the poorer people had perished of want; women cooked and ate their own children, the maimed and defenseless people were slain in thousands; when the temple at last fell, they lay heaped like sacrifices around the altar, and the steps of the temple ran with streams of blood, which washed down the bodies that lay about. The slaughter within was even more dreadful than the spectacle from without, it was indiscriminate carnage. The number of the slain exceeded that of the slayers. The treasuries, with their wealth of

money, jewels, and costly robes, were totally destroyed. The value of the plunder obtained was so great, that gold fell in Syria to half its former value.

After the fall, the markets of the Roman Empire were glutted with Jewish slaves; the amphitheatres were crowded with these miserable people, who were forced to slay each other, not singly but in troops, or else fall in rapid succession, glad to escape the tyranny of their masters by the expeditious cruelty of the wild beasts. And in the unwholesome mines hundreds were doomed to toil for wealth not to be their own. The political existence of the Jewish nation was annihilated; it was not again for nineteen centuries to be recognized as one of the States or kingdoms of the world. Judea was sentenced to be portioned out to strangers, the capital was destroyed, the temple demolished, the high priesthood buried in its ruins, and the royal tribe almost extinct.

Terrible as these judgments were, this was not to be the end. Jesus had affirmed that the Jewish nation would not be forgiven in "this age" nor in the "age to come." As we have pointed out, "this age" was the age of Law, and the "age to come" is the age that followed the age of Law, this present age, the age of grace. I would direct your reverent attention to two expressions found in both of the judgments proclaimed by Jesus against the Jews, which we have quoted earlier, namely, "these things" and "this generation." In Mat. 23:35-36 we find, "That upon YOU may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth ... all these things shall come upon this generation." In Lk. 21:24 & 32 we read, "and they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled ... this generation shall not pass away, till all (these things) be fulfilled."

If the word "generation" be understood to mean the people then alive upon the earth, plainly all these things were not fulfilled. "All these things" stretch from the desolation of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 to the scattering of the Jews throughout the nations, to the fulfilling of the "times of the Gentiles," onward to the restoration of Jerusalem at the end of this age. "This generation" cannot mean the men then alive merely, for if so the Jewish people would long ago have owned Jesus of Nazareth. "As the lightning that lightens out of the one part under heaven shines unto the other part under heaven, so shall also the Son of man be in His day; but first must He suffer many things, and be rejected of this generation" (Lk. 17:24-25). Unconverted Jews have said from this passage that, if Jesus had been a true prophet, the next generation of Jews would have believed on Him, for it was by that generation He was to be rejected. The argument is legitimate; the only fallacy is that of imagining that "generation" means the men then living, and that the next generation would receive Him.

The Greek word for "generation" is GENE. GENE is derived from the root GENOS meaning race, kin, family, countryman, generation, kindred, nation, offspring, stock, breed. According to Strong's Exhaustive Concordance GENE may mean either the time period in which a people live or the persons (race) themselves. In Ps. 14:5 generation is used of moral character or nature. "God is in the generation of the righteous," and in Ps. 24:6, with the same meaning, "This is the generation of them that seek after God." In Prov. 30:11-14, the generation of the righteous and the generation of the wicked, are clearly distinguished. In Phil. 2:15, Paul speaks of "a crooked and perverse generation." One distinguished Greek scholar says, "There is high authority for making the term "this generation" refer to the Jews as a people or race; in this case the meaning would be that the Jews would not cease to be a distinct people until all the predictions of Jesus were fulfilled." This meaning suits the words of Jesus very well and is amply confirmed by the

history of the past two thousand years. When the words read, "This race shall not pass away, till all these things be fulfilled," the allusion is clearly to the Jewish people, and is seen to be a prophecy of the remarkable preservation of the Jew, distinct from all nationalities during these long centuries, upon whom the prophecies would continue to have fulfillment.

This is without doubt one of the most remarkable truths in the whole New Testament, for it clearly shows the sovereignty, power and faithfulness of an immutable and almighty God throughout the past two millenniums in a way that is completely unique and apart from all divine evidence. It means just two things - first, that the Jew would be preserved throughout the church age and, secondly, that the judgment for blaspheming the Holy Spirit would abide continually and constantly upon him right down to the end of this age. It cannot be changed. Its purpose is sure, and the Lord has and will perform it exactly as He said. Whether our traditions receive it or whether they refuse it, the incontrovertible fact is that God has preserved the Jewish race; furthermore, He HAS N-O-T FORGIVEN the Jewish people their sin, neither in that age, nor in this age, and the wrath of God to this day abides upon them.

It is an interesting fact that the Jewish people are indestructible. They have been a people without a country. They have wandered through the earth. They have been driven from one place to another. They have been robbed and taxed beyond all reason, and again and again they have been slain by thousands, yea, millions. But they have not and shall not be destroyed. They have preserved their identity, their culture, their religion. They are a separate and distinct people. There are approximately seven billion people on this earth, of whom about fourteen million - only about two percent - are classified as Jews. Statistically, they should hardly be heard of, like the Ainu tucked away in a corner of Asia, bystanders of history. But the Jews are heard of totally out of proportion to their small numbers. The Jewish contribution to the world's list of great names in religion, science, literature, music, finance, and philosophy is staggering. And they capture the headlines of the worlds newspapers and newscasts more frequently than any but the super-powers. Great nations of the pagan era have totally disappeared. The Babylonians, the Persians, the Phoenicians, the Hittites, the Philistines, even the mighty Romans of Jesus' day - all have vanished from the face of the earth, after once having been great and mighty powers.

Of all the physical proofs of the inspiration and infallible accuracy of the prophecies of the Bible there is positively no proof that can compare to that great sign of signs which is the NATION OF ISRAEL, and especially that segment of Israel universally known as THE JEW, consisting primarily of the tribes of Judah, Benjamin and Levi. It is not my purpose to try and identify the other ten tribes which mistakenly for centuries have been called the lost tribes, but that part of Israel, the Jew, has never been lost but scattered among the nations of the earth. Clearly identified and definitely separated, despised and hated he has been a proverb and a by word among the nations of earth exactly as Yahweh declared, "And it shall come to pass, that as the Lord rejoiced over you to do you good, and to multiply you; so the Lord will rejoice over you to destroy you, and to bring you to naught; and you shall be plucked from off the land whither you go to possess it. And the Lord shall scatter you among all people, from the one end of the earth even unto the other... and among these nations shall you find no ease, neither shall the sole of your foot have rest: but the Lord shall give you there a trembling heart, and failing of eyes, and sorrow of mind: and your life shall hang in doubt before you; and you shall fear day and night, and shall have none assurance of your life: in the morning you shall say, Would

God it were even! and at even you shall say, Would God it were morning! for the fear of your heart wherewith you shall fear, and for the sight of your eyes which you shall see" (Deut. 28:63-67). How terribly has all this come to pass! In all the history of mankind, there is no nation which has been the object of such unremitting, general and relentless persecutions as the Jews. Surely there is not a man in all the world who would be so foolhardy that he would deny that all the things written above and far more have come to pass upon the Jew. Yet for all that the Jew has been preserved by God unto this day and is, indeed, the eighth wonder of the world!

Have you ever heard a Jew called a "sheeny"? Did you realize that, whenever you hear this expression of contempt, it is a startling and literal fulfillment of the prophecy in Jer. 24:9? For the word translated "a taunt" is the Hebrew SHENINAH, and there is reason to believe that the vulgar slang "sheeny" is a corruption of the Hebrew word for "taunt" as applied to the Jew. Every time a joke is made against the Jew, prophecy is being fulfilled as the Jew is made "a reproach and a proverb, a taunt and a curse, in all places." Unfortunate Jews! They have sinned grievously. They have been punished fearfully. They have suffered greatly. When Pilate sought to release Jesus and declared Him innocent of any crime, and himself innocent of any desire to have Him crucified, they cried out, "Let His blood be on us and on our children." In other words, "If it is a sin to crucify this Christ we are willing to bear the responsibility of the sin. If there is any guilt, we invite the punishment for that guilt." And while the Lord forgave them their sin, yet the sin of blaspheming the Holy Ghost was the cause for this sin, and their prayer has been answered, and while through the centuries they have continued to reject Jesus they have suffered beyond human language to describe the agonies through which they have passed. How else can you explain Russia's extermination of some six million Jews, and Hitler's heinous annihilation of at least a like number in his gas chambers, while the rest were driven from nearly every country on earth?

As we have pointed out earlier, it is impossible to correctly understand the implications of the so-called "unpardonable sin" until one sees clear that its pronouncement was attached only to the Jewish nation, and to the Pharisees specifically. A strong familiarity with the Jewish scene in Palestine during the first century after Christ is essential to any real understanding of how the words of Jesus began to and continued to be fulfilled. Four major sects or denominations predominated at the time of Jesus, including the Sadducees and Pharisees (the two largest) as well as the Essenes and the Zealots. The Sadducees constituted the dominant Jewish group, and derived their authority from their control of the temple, the principal institution of Jewish life during the first century. This group comprised the vast majority of the priests who administered the temple sacrificial worship, the primary source of religious devotion and expression at that time. The Sadducees also served as the political liaisons with Rome and tended to be wealthier and socially more elitist and aristocratic than the other groups.

The Pharisees were the second major sect in first-century Palestine. The Pharisees were the "fundamentalists" or strict legalists, contending for and enforcing upon the people the letter of the Word. One prominent feature of Pharisaic life was the development of the synagogue which, in contrast to the temple, could be erected anywhere and was accessible even to those Jews living far away from Jerusalem. The Pharisees were also the ones who created the concept of the rabbi, who emerges as the central authority figure in Jewish life. They insisted that unlike the priesthood that could be entered only by biological lineage, the rabbinate could be entered by any male who assumed the position of leadership by virtue of his piety and scholarship in the scriptures and oral traditions.

The third Jewish group, the Zealots, were more a political than a religious sect. They called for the violent overthrow of Rome and, in A.D. 73, committed mass suicide at Masada rather than surrender to the Roman forces. The fourth group, the Essenes, were an ascetic and apocalyptically oriented group that believed that the end of the world was imminent and that God would soon establish His kingdom on earth. The Essenes lived in the Qumran desert area and were the authors of the now famous Dead Sea Scrolls.

The destruction of the Jerusalem temple and exile in A.D. 70 brought extreme havoc to Jewish life in Palestine. The Zealots, who had called for a military rebellion against Rome died at Masada. Also, the Essenes apparently died out and were no longer heard from after the first century. The Sadducees, who had derived so much of their authority from their links with Rome, nevertheless, suffered the same fate as everyone else. Moreover, the temple, which had served as their principal power base, now lay in ruins. And the Sadducean priests, whose main responsibility was to administer the sacrificial worship that also came to an end at this time, were left without any religious function or authority. In short, the destruction of the temple made the entire system of Sadducean religious exercise obsolete. The group did not survive the first century.

The PHARISEES, on the other hand, were able to survive the cataclysmic events of the exile and the destruction of the temple, because their religious ideas and institutions were able to be carried with the people wherever they went, adapted to every new condition of the dispersion and to the loss of the temple and its sacrificial worship. Of the various Jewish groups in existence at the time of Jesus, only the Pharisees collectively survived. It is an interesting fact of history that PHARISAIC JUDAISM became the normative Judaism with its principal features - the synagogue, the rabbi, prayer, Torah study and the oral traditions. Thus, modern Judaism is the direct and sole successor to THE PHARISEES! When Jesus warned the Pharisees that their sin against the Holy Spirit would not be forgiven in the age of law nor during the long course of the church age, He spoke not only to the sect of the Pharisees of His day but to the whole of Judaism through its extended history since that time. Only by the spirit of wisdom and revelation from God could He have seen and correctly predicted this exceptional development!

Throughout their long exile, Jews have suffered inquisitions, ghettos, pogroms, blood libels, and wholesale slaughter. They were expelled at one time or another from virtually every country in "Christian Europe." During the Dark Ages Mystery Babylon the Great not only persecuted and killed the faithful followers of Jesus, but the harlot church system also became the persecutors and murderers of the Jews. Their very presence was a source of discomfort to the organized church which considered itself the representative of God on earth. Jews suffered terrible persecution from the Crusades, the Inquisitions (in which they were forced to either convert to Christianity or be killed), expulsions, and blood libels (the charge that Jews killed Christian children and used their blood for the Passover Seder). When the water was contaminated, it was the Jews who were blamed for poisoning the well. When there was an epidemic of typhoid or black plague, it was the Jews' fault. Jews seemed to be the scapegoats for all the ills of society.

Even the great Martin Luther was not exempt from becoming a vessel of wrath against the Jews. In his earlier years Luther was kind and loving to Jews, believing the reason they had not accepted Christianity was that it was presented to them through the eyes of the Catholic tradition. Toward the end of his life, when he realized that despite his kind and loving approach the Jews nevertheless refused to convert, he asked, "What then shall we Christians do with this damned, rejected race of Jews? Since they live among us

and we know about their lying and blasphemy and cursing," he wrote, "we cannot tolerate them... Let me give you my honest advice. First, their synagogues should be set on fire; secondly, their homes should likewise be broken down and destroyed; thirdly, they should be deprived of their prayer books and Talmuds; fourthly, their rabbis must be forbidden under threat of death to teach anymore; fifthly, you ought not, you cannot, protect them, unless in the eyes of God you want to share all their abomination; sixthly, they ought to be stopped from usury; seventhly, we ought to drive the rascally lazybones out of our system. To sum up, dear princes and nobles who have Jews in your domains, if this advice of mine does not suit you, then find a better one so that you and we may all be free of this insufferable devilish burden – "the Jew." Indeed, just a few centuries later in Luther's birthplace, Germany, another solution to "the Jewish problem" was found.

During the long history of this evil age nation after nation has arisen on the world horizon announcing their sordid intention to destroy these people to whom God has made promise, but as Haman was hanged upon the high gallows he had prepared for Mordecai, so has God disposed of each of these hateful nations in their turn and brought them into the dust of desolation. We could do well to believe that the Jew is as indestructible as the purpose of God itself, for the God who has brought them into judgment is the same God that defends them from their enemies. Has there ever been a period in Judah's history when her condition was more precarious than today? Instead of one Pharaoh in the land of Egypt there are forty million Arabs in every nation surrounding Palestine fanatically committed to their total destruction. And it is distressing to see the revival of the same old anti-Semitic madness which motivated Hitler, even among some who profess to be "end time sons of God"! They blame all the evils and misfortunes of the world on the Jews and propagate the hellish doctrine that the salvation of the world must come as a result of the annihilation of the Jews. It is the same old story with a new satanic vengeance.

One fact remains. Jesus warned the Pharisees that their sin against the Holy Spirit would not be forgiven under the age of law or during the entirety of the church age. Paul wrote of them, "According as it is written, God has given them the spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear, unto this day. And David said, Let their table be made a snare, and a trap, and a stumbling block, and a recompense unto them: let their eyes be darkened, that they may not see, and bow down their back always. For ... blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in" (Rom. 11:8-10, 25). Certainly this explains the mystery of why the Jew is the hardest and most discouraging mission field in the world. Has it never amazed you that many heathen can hear the gospel once, see it clearly, accept it, and be born again by faith in Him?! Prostitutes, drug addicts, the poor, and the illiterate - all have gladly received the message of Christ and have been wondrously transformed thereby. They have been awakened! Their eyes see it - their ears hear it - their hearts understand and respond! Yet the Jew is under the grip of the spirit of slumber! A deep sleep from the Lord has fallen upon them, and they simply cannot understand anything that is said or preached about the Lord Jesus Christ. There are thousands of Jews dying right now in total spiritual darkness about the Christ going into the spirit world under the spell of a deep sleep. It is not that they will not hear, rather, it is that they CANNOT! What a tragedy - millions of spiritually hungry, searching, seeking Jews; and they cannot find what they are looking for. The Messiah came - He lives today - and they can't see Him! They can't hear Him! They are in the dark about Him! They are in a spiritual coma!

They see not, hear not, understand not. No people ever yet committed the sin against the Holy Spirit who is wanting to repent - for repentance is by the Holy Spirit. Until the judgment is complete the power to see, hear, understand, and repent is despised, refused, condemned, withheld. Individual Jews, of course, find the mercy of God, but the nation staggers on in unbelief. Numerous missionaries have labored among the Jews in many parts of the world, but the results have been most disheartening. Only a meager handful have been saved anywhere throughout the ages and generations. Out of the millions of Jews living in the United States of America, the greatest land of religious freedom in the world, estimates suggest that there are probably fewer than 10,000 Jewish Christians in the entire country. In recent times various groups have located in Jerusalem motivated by the sincerest intentions to reach Jews for Jesus, but all to no avail. The unvarnished fact is that of the several millions of Jews in the State of Israel the vast majority are either agnostics or atheists, and there are LESS THAN 500 CHRISTIAN JEWS IN THE WHOLE NATION! There is no doubt in my mind whatever that any and all efforts to turn the Jewish people to Christ are, during the remainder of the closing days of this dispensation, an effort in futility and doomed to utter failure. Hear it! "Whosoever speaks against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this age, nor in the age to come." All who have throughout the centuries burdened themselves with the attempt to convert the Jew have found themselves defeated by the words of the great God: "...shall not be forgiven, neither in this age, neither in the age to come." Those who today zealously devote themselves to witnessing to the Jew come face to face with the words of our immutable God: "...shall not be forgiven, neither in this age, nor in the coming age." All who have established their base in Israel to work for the salvation of the Jew have found their efforts doomed to failure by the fateful words of our never-failing God: "...shall not be forgiven, neither in this eon, nor in that which is impending."

THE DAY DAWNS

The Jewish nation has passed through a time of great darkness. They have had deep sorrow. But if we are sure that God's Word has been fulfilled in scattering them among the nations, and blinding their hearts to the glory of Christ, the Messiah, we should have no hesitation in believing that at the conclusion of this age God will gather them, and lift the dark veil from off their minds, for the promise of God unto them is sure: "And it shall come to pass, when all these things are come upon you, the blessing and the curse, which I have set before you, and you shall call them to mind among all the nations, whither the Lord your God has driven you, and you shall return unto the Lord your God, and shall obey His voice ... you and your children, with all your heart, and with all your soul; then the Lord your God will turn your captivity, and have compassion upon you, and will return and gather you from all the nations, whither the Lord your God has scattered you. And the Lord your God will bring you into the land which your father's possessed, and you shall possess it; and He will do you good, and He will multiply you above your fathers. And the Lord your God will CIRCUMCISE YOUR HEART, AND THE HEART OF YOUR SEED, to love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, that you may live" (Deut. 30:1-6).

George Hawtin has written: "In God's holy word the house of Judah is likened unto a fig tree. See Jer. 24:1-8 where they are likened unto a basket of EVIL FIGS when they were first carried away into Babylon. The Jews understood this symbol in their day as clearly as though the Lord had called them by name. The account of the cursing of the fig tree (Mat. 21:19) is vivid in the mind of every student of scripture. The story records that Jesus, being hungry and ready to eat, saw a fig tree afar off having leaves upon it, but,

upon coming to the tree, He found to His surprise that there was no fruit upon it. Though the time of figs was not yet, this strange instance is explained by the simple fact that, unlike other trees, it is the nature of the fig tree to bear her fruit first and the leaves afterward. Therefore, since there were leaves, the Lord was right to expect fruit also. What a picture this is of the house of Judah! Plenty of leaves! All manner of outward show! But no fruit. The children of Abraham on the outside, but the children of the devil within! So Jesus pronounced a curse upon the fig tree, which is symbolic of the house of Judah, commonly known as the Jews, saying, 'May no fruit grow on you to the age' (Mat. 21:19, Diaglott). And when they returned and saw the tree the next day, it was dried up. In cursing the fig tree, He was symbolically cursing the house of Judah to the age, that is to say, unto the kingdom age. It is not correct to use the word forever here as in the common version, for Judah will be restored in the kingdom. True to God's word the entire age of grace has come and gone, but nationally the Jews are as blind and fruitless as they were in that very day when the Lord pronounced the curse upon them. They rejected God's Christ and God has rejected them for this entire age of grace. As a result they have wandered homeless throughout the whole earth as foretold by Jeremiah (Jer. 24:9-10). Only now are they being gathered in darkness, blindness and unbelief according to the word of the Lord, for He can never break His covenant with them. Even the apostle Paul, who upon several occasions, clearly stated that he was a Jew, for the tribe of Benjamin belonged to the house of Judah, made the significant statement that he was as one 'born out of due time' (I Cor. 15:8). In other words it was not yet time for Judah to be reborn nationally, but because the Lord elected him to salvation, his eyes had been opened by Christ in spite of the curse that had been pronounced on the nation as a whole. This is the clearest possible evidence of election" -end quote.

Let me recall to you a passage quoted earlier from the gospel of Luke, which forms a key to understanding the significant time we are now living in - the end of the age. "And Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled." There is, then, a limit to the desolation of Jerusalem. It was not to be "trodden down of the Gentiles" forever. It was only "until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled." To the inhabitants of that same guilty but beloved city, the Lord Jesus said, "Behold, your house is left unto you desolate" (Mat. 23:38). Terrible words were these from such lips! Words of solemn import, but words through which shines the hope of a brighter day, for our Lord continued, "YOU shall not SEE ME henceforth, till you say, Blessed is He that comes in the name of the Lord" (Mat. 23:39). "Until" recalls the words of divinest grace. He will not hide His face forever. He left their house unto them desolate, and hid His face - His presence, His favor, His glory-from them, "till" - not for ever, but "till you say, Blessed is He that comes in the name of the Lord!"

The dark covering that has been cast over the minds and hearts of the people of Judah for lo! two thousand years will be completely destroyed when the sons of God reign in the Kingdom of their Father. We have not yet witnessed the magnitude of ministry that shall be revealed through the manifested sons of God. God is preparing His perfected and mature body, anointed with the fullness of the seven-fold Spirit of God, and this enChristed company shall appear on the cosmic stage of history in these last days with ten thousand times more power than a Moses, a Joshua, a Samuel, a David, an Elijah, a Peter, a Paul, a St. Patrick, a Luther, a Wesley, a Whitefield, a Finney, or any of the mighty ministries of this century. God has moved deeply upon my heart in these days to prophesy to God's elect that there is coming a great and glorious MANIFESTATION OF CHRIST before the face of all nations and the whole earth. There will be a fresh and universal revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ. It's going to come in the midst of a people

who truly "love His appearing," and I see and hear signs that already He is beginning to come. We are standing on the threshold of a new and fresh and transcendental manifestation of the Lord. These things are burning like a furnace inside of me. I am being quickened by these things. I know God is on the move, and my deepest desire is to be a part of this manifestation that will usher in a new day for this sin-cursed planet. The Lord wants to reveal Himself in our midst in a new way, and through us to creation. I am asking God to unveil and manifest Himself to me in these days in a fuller way. Oh God! do a new thing.

The whole earth and all creation is waiting for the glory of the Lord to be manifested. The dealings of God in your life and mine are fraught with divine purpose. There is something far greater ahead of us than walking on streets of gold or flitting about in white night gowns strumming harps. This was the mentality instilled into me as a young man. Thank God there is a heaven, but I want to tell you something. All the dealings of God toward us - the cross, the suffering, the processings, the blessings, the glory - all are intended to put something of His nature and character into US. This working will enable Him to be made manifest in this old dark world in which we live. God has purposed that righteousness and glory shine forth before all nations. This is going to be done through those who are being transformed into the likeness of His Son. Then the glory of the Lord shall be revealed from the living, completed temple of His body. His glory shall fill the earth. His power will shake the nations and all nations shall come and worship before HIM. The harvest of this age shall be gathered.

There is coming a day when all the glories of the Son of God will be revealed and manifested in the sons of God. With a heart of understanding and a spirit bright with the hope of God's eonian purpose the apostle penned these meaningful words, "...it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by His grace, to REVEAL HIS SON I-N ME" (Gal. 1:15-16). As one has written, "Let us open our hearts that God may speak to us and show us what a son of God really is, for the greater works (Jn. 14:12) of which Jesus spoke are not to be performed by ordinary believers, but by THAT VAST FAMILY OF SONS who are now nearing the hour of manifestation. They are that chosen company, selected from many ages, who through fires and furnaces of affliction have been brought into that same glorious IMAGE OF JESUS CHRIST. These sons of God are LIKE HIM. They are EXACTLY like Him. They are IN HIS IMAGE (Rom. 8:29). They are IN HIS IMAGE AND AFTER HIS LIKENESS. They are so completely SONS OF GOD, and so completely LIKE HIM, so completely BORN OF HIM, so completely OF HIS MIND and WILL and PURPOSE their one difference is that He (the blessed Jesus) IS THE ELDEST IN THAT VAST FAMILY OF SONS and they with Him are the LAST ADAM IN ALL HIS COMPLETENESS" - The Page.

When our Lord Jesus Christ told the Jews that they would not "see Him" anymore until they should say, "Blessed is He that comes in the name of the Lord," He spoke not of His coming again as the man of Galilee, descending ceremoniously through the clouds, to take up residence in some imposing edifice in the ancient city of Jerusalem. Seeing with the natural eye and hearing with the natural ear are not all there is of seeing and hearing. "No man has seen God at any time" thus, yet all God's children have seen Him, and known Him, and held communion with Him. We HEAR God's call, our "high calling," we HEAR the voice of our Shepherd, and are constantly LOOKING unto Jesus, and while we see not yet all things put under Him, we do SEE JESUS crowned with glory and honor and with unveiled face we BEHOLD the glory of the Lord and are changed into the same

image, for God has shined in our hearts giving the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the FACE of Jesus Christ.

"And they shall SEE the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory" (Mat. 24:30). "Behold, He comes with clouds; and every eye shall SEE Him" (Rev. 1:7). Every one who is a scholar knows that the words "see" and "know" are identical in their spiritual meaning. When I tell a brother something he did not see before, and I am trying to get him to see it, all at once there passes over his face the illumination which indicates intelligence. He says, "Brother Preston, I see it!" What does he mean? He does not mean that he sees anything with the eye of flesh. He means that he "knows" it. I talk to a blind man who has no eyes to see at all. I explain something to him and presently he says, "Brother, I SEE it." Does he see anything? No! But he KNOWS it. How many times in the day do you say, "I see it." Jesus said, "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall SEE GOD, "yet no man has seen God at any time. Suppose I give you the meaning of this passage: "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall KNOW God." It is better to know God than even to see Him by the eyes of sense. There are many who saw Jesus who did not know Him. They saw the Christ, but they knew not that He was the Christ. They saw His miracles, but they did not know Him. They even rejected Him and hated Him, many of them. It took the illumination that comes only by the effectual influence of the Holy Spirit to say with the Roman centurion, "Truly this was the Son of God." You could see Jesus Himself in bodily form today, but unless you had purity of heart you could not know Him to be the Christ. It is only purity of heart which gives purity of sight.

We see God Himself if our eyes are opened to see things which are heavenly. We see in the apocalyptic vision how John the apostle saw Jesus; how he describes the wonderful revelation of Christ; how he fell at His feet as dead when he saw Him. His spiritual eyes saw Him, for he was IN THE SPIRIT on the Lord's day. The following words by George Hawtin bear eloquent testimony to the truth I now proclaim. "I have often thought of the wonderful words 'no man can SEE GOD AND LIVE.' Oh how often we have quoted that wonderful passage as proof that we may not hope to see His face. Will you allow me reverently to say something else? Though it is true that no man can see God and live, it is equally true that no man can see God and die. Men do not die in God's presence, neither do they live AS THEY USED TO LIVE, but they are TRANSFORMED. Hallelujah! They are changed; they are transfigured; they come into THAT SAME IMAGE of Him who created them. In whatever measure God reveals Himself to man, to that same measure you are changed and nothing can avoid that conclusion. There is no possibility of any man's ever being the same again or living as he used to live once he has personally met the Lord and his eyes have beheld Him, the King in His beauty. 'As for me,' said David, 'I will behold Your face in righteousness. I shall be satisfied, when I awake with Your likeness.' My own heart answers Amen. That is when I, too, shall be fully satisfied" - end quote.

Yes, the hour is wonderfully near at hand when the words of Christ shall be finally fulfilled, "You shall not see Me henceforth, till you shall say, Blessed is HE that comes in the name of the Lord." The time is nigh when the Jewish nation shall behold with astonishment the matchless wonder of the Christ coming again to be "glorified IN HIS SAINTS, and to be admired IN all them that believe in that day" (II Thes. 1:10). Few of the Lord's people understand that the rejection and disbursement of the Jews, and the reign of Mystery Babylon the Great (apostate Christianity) have been parallel and connected events. God dispersed the Jews among the nations, and then raised up that

monstrous harlot religious system which falsely calls itself "the church" to become the prime dispenser of His judgments upon the Jewish people. Anti-Semitism is the direct creature of the Babylon Church System and those who call themselves sons of God, who yet rail against the Jews, perceive not that their contempt for the Jew is but another vestige of Babylon that must be purged from their spirit by the reconciling love of God. While Christians are often not aware of the history of contempt for Jews, Jews are generally aware only of that dimension of Christian history. The pages of Christian history that have been torn out of Christian textbooks and forgotten are often the only ones Jews tend to know. The history of Jewish persecution at the hands of so-called Christians forms a significant part of the backdrop against which Jews have tended to perceive Christians. The Christians they have known have, for the most part, been citizens of Mystery Babylon. They have not seen THE CHRIST. They have not beheld the love, wisdom or glory of God in His saints. Can we not see by this that when Jesus said, "You shall not see Me henceforth, till you shall say, Blessed is He that COMES IN THE NAME OF THE LORD," He spoke of the arising of a people into the name or nature of the Lord to so become the revelation of HIMSELF to the Jewish people that they shall cry, "BLESSED IS HE THAT COMES IN THE NAME OF THE LORD!" In scripture "name" means "nature." Ah, methinks that the Jew has not for two thousand years SEEN THE NATURE OF THE LORD in His people! All creation, including the Jew, stands on tiptoe to see the wonderful sight of God's sons coming into their own, a people fashioned into His image and likeness, showing forth the virtues and excellencies of our God. When at last they behold this their hearts shall be ravished with the revelation of HIS LOVE, God shall anoint their eyes with heavenly eye salve, the divine harmony of truth shall sound upon their hearts until their spirits are caught away to the mount of the Lord, and in that vision of the sons of God standing upon mount Zion they shall say, "Blessed is HE that COMES IN THE NAME OF THE LORD!"

Few Jews have believed in millenniums past because there has been a veil over their understanding. Even to this day, when Moses is read, the veil is upon their hearts; nevertheless when it (the heart) shall turn to the Lord, the veil shall be taken away (II Cor. 3:15). The dispensation of the Kingdom of God is to be a dispensation of restoration. The things lost through the fall are all to be restored from the least to the greatest. All the callings and blessings and benefits of God lost through apostasy and shame are to be restored. It is my deep conviction that this glorious restoration, beyond man's ability to comprehend, includes the restoration of the house of Judah. Meditate deeply, beloved, upon these meaningful words of the apostle Paul. "Now if the fall of them (the Jews) be the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles (nations); how much more their fullness? For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office: if by any means I may provoke to emulation them which are my flesh, and might save some of them. For if the casting away of them be the RECONCILING OF THE WORLD, what shall the receiving of them be, but LIFE FROM THE DEAD? For I would not, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part (the Jewish part) is happened to Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in. And so ALL ISRAEL SHALL BE SAVED: as it is written, There shall come out of Zion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob ... for as you in times past have not believed God, yet have now obtained mercy through their unbelief: even so have these also now not believed, that THROUGH Y-O-U-R MERCY THEY ALSO MAY OBTAIN MERCY. For God has concluded them ALL in unbelief, that He might have mercy upon A-L-L. O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out!" (Rom. 11:12-15, 25-26, 30-33).

Judah is being re-gathered in unbelief. They know not the Christ. No fruit has grown on the fig tree of their nation for a whole age. But now the hour is at hand for the curse to be lifted and Judah will accept Christ and the whole nation and people will be born again in this day by the power of the Holy Spirit. The next great event of earth-shaking importance, following the manifestation of the sons of God, will be the national conversion of the Jews. Jesus Christ will soon reveal Himself to Israel in and through the sons of God. The veil shall be lifted from their eyes and they shall SEE HIM IN HIS BODY and shall cry, "Blessed is HE that comes in the name (nature) of the Lord!" The hour is at hand when the word of the Lord by the prophet Zechariah is about to be fulfilled, "And I will pour upon the house of David (Judah), and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and supplications: and they shall look upon Me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for Him, as one mourns for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for Him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn. In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and uncleanness" (Zech. 12:10; 13:1).

The first step in this wondrous process here described is the descent of the Spirit upon them nationally, and first He comes upon them as a "spirit of grace," to which they are "twice dead" - devoid of it by nature, but over and above this judicially graceless because of the curse of their awful sin against the Holy Spirit. But along with this He shall come as a "spirit of supplications," leading them out of the depths to cry mightily unto God for mercy and light.

Thank God! the long night is almost over. The age of curse and judgment is even now drawing swiftly to a close. The sin against the Holy Spirit was grievous and the judgment severe and long.

But - thank God! - there is N-O U-N-P-A-R-D-O-N-A-B-L-E S-I-N!

Chapter 15

Reconciliation In The Heavens

The highest glories of the Son of God, our Lord Jesus Christ, are revealed to us in Paul's epistle to the Colossians. In 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 forcibly expressed? In every case the word ALL is used WITHOUT ANY LIMITATION whatever. The heavens and the earth with all that is in them, visible and invisible, include ALL creation.

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 and for Him. He is before ALL. ALL is bound together by Him. In ALL He is becoming first, having preeminence. ALL fullness, or the fullness of ALL, dwells 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 HEAVENS and ALL that is ON THE EARTH. It is said to include both visible and invisible. What more could be said to impress us with the universal scope of the Son's activities?

Oh, what a vast and all-inclusive statement that is! All the Principalities and Powers in 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 has been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ: to the intent that NOW UNTO PRINCIPALITIES AND POWERS IN HEAVENLY PLACES 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, though it is plainly written across the pages of God's Word, and completely sealed us to the knowledge that everything, and we 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 Pharaoh, 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, 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 or devils or 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!

But 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 His love extends to fallen man 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? Dare we really believe the words the beloved apostle John penned while banished on the isle called Patmos, "You art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power: for You have created all things, and FOR YOUR 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? Why should we think 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 to deliver the WHOLE CREATION and RECONCILE 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 implies that the heavens needed reconciling. But just what are these "things in heaven" that are reconciled? 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 what God had created in the beginning according to Col. 1:16. 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 on earth
11. Dominions in heaven
12. Dominions on earth
13. Principalities in heaven
14. Principalities on earth
15. Powers in heaven
16. Powers on earth

"By Him to reconcile PRINCIPALITIES AND POWERS IN HEAVEN and on earth" (Col. 1:16, 20). These were 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 states that among the things to be reconciled are PRINCIPALITIES AND POWERS. Principalities in heaven! Principalities in heaven that are hostile to God! Principalities in heaven that MUST BE RECONCILED! Powers in heaven! Powers in heaven that are hostile to God! Powers in heaven that MUST BE RECONCILED!"

If Col. 1:16-20 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 heaven which are enemies of God, alienated from God, haters of God, and hostile to the nature and ways of God, thus needing to be conciliated to Him? Indeed! "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 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, "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 version 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 reconciliation, when all the purposes of God have been consummated, brought to their expected end, what then? The testimony of God stands 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 those awesome words. All your letters of protestation addressed to me will be thrown in the trash, for I possess no power to change even one jot or title of Holy Writ. When God declares that the blood of the cross of Jesus Christ avails to reconcile principalities and powers IN HEAVEN AND IN 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 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 A-L-L C-R-E-A-T-I-O-N FREE! If there is some portion of the creation that was created "by Him and for Him" which you don't want to be "for Him," then God will have to bypass you in His great and glorious work of redeeming ALL unto Himself.

You say that the devil is too utterly wicked, to 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 wicked spirits in the invisible realm? Shall the Jews be saved, whom our Lord called "serpents" and "vipers" and of whom He said, "You 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 though "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"? (Isa. 24:21-22; Ps. 148:7).

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 system teach that since sin and death have entered upon the scene in God's universe, they have come never to go out again, unconquerable, ineradicable, endless. Charles Schmitt 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 (1 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 (Phil. 2:10-11)! 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 love and mercy of God? No, we have rather upheld it in its infinite scope!" -end quote.

Another has written that according to the false doctrines of the Churches, "The 'eternal state' is a universe endlessly finding room for myriads of beings rolling and writhing in the burning agonies of ceaseless flame, eternally sinful, vile, and morally hideous. It pictures the final perfection (!) yet to be attained as having room for a vast cesspool of immoral and degraded creatures, continually existing in opposition to God. This system of doctrine, though as old as man, and venerable as the tradition, as hoary as the pyramids, as orthodox as anything in ancient or modern theology, is a misconception, a travesty of God's character, a caricature of His wisdom, and must be relegated to the scrap heap of ancestral errors. GLADLY DO WE TURN FROM THIS FIGMENT OF NATURAL REASON to the grand, simple statements of the bare unadorned Word of God. It looks forward to a time when God shall be all in all, when HEAVEN AND EARTH shall be purged from every stain of sin's pollution. It anticipates that glad occasion when every heart shall beat in unison with the heart of God; every mind and will shall coalesce and harmonize with the Divine Wisdom and Purpose" - end quote.

Ah, I long intently for that 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 the Christ has finally RECONCILED ALL THINGS IN HEAVEN AND IN EARTH, including all the PRINCIPALITIES AND POWERS OF THE HEAVENLY SPHERE!

And now I must close this brief treatise, and do it reluctantly. I do it with a certain painful consciousness of the feebleness and poverty of my handling of this lofty and comprehensive theme. But all this I must leave in the Master's hand. He knows all about

the majesty of His great and eternal purposes, and in the end it shall surpass even what I have indicated by these few words! Hallelujah to the Lamb!

About The Author

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

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

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

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