

The background of the book cover is a photograph of a serene landscape. In the foreground, there are some dark, silhouetted plants. Behind them is a calm body of water, likely a lake, which reflects the sky and the surrounding mountains. The mountains are dark and rugged, with some snow or light-colored patches visible on their slopes. The sky is filled with large, billowing clouds that are illuminated from below, giving them a warm, golden-yellow glow. The overall color palette is dominated by purples, blues, and yellows, creating a mystical and majestic atmosphere.

# Coming Kingdom Glories

**GAVIN HAMILTON**

# "COMING KINGDOM GLORIES"

*By*

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## FOREWORD

This is unquestionably the midnight hour in world history. Cataclysmic happenings are in the offing. At any moment a holocaust will engulf the human race with unprecedented sufferings. Men and nations are stricken with mortal fear as they face the grim and grave future. Unless there is Divine intervention they will perish.

It is all so different with the Christian, the one who knows Jesus as Savior and Lord. In a world smitten with fear, he enjoys the peace of God in his heart and waits expectantly for his exodus from this world to his heavenly home above. His Lord is coming to take him there. This is not by way of the grave but by way of rapture. The Word says, "The Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord." Then the apostle adds, "Wherefore comfort one another with these words."

There is no more encouraging word in Scripture as we contemplate the days ahead. It enables us to bear the heat and burden of life; it imparts a new and fresh impetus for service; it comforts us when our loved ones depart this scene to be with the Lord, and it brightens up with light divine the otherwise dark and gloomy future. Our Lord is com-



ing as "the Bright and Morning Star" to chase away the darkness of this world's night and to usher us into scenes illuminated with the unquenchable light of His presence. "Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning." This shall be our "morning without clouds."

What lies beyond the trumpet sound of the returning Lord is the theme of this book. It is the product of my own meditations as the glorious future has filled my soul. This accounts for the few references therein to other writings. I want it to be a heart to heart message—something that will promote within us a deeper love for the Lord Jesus, a stronger desire to be like Him into whose image we shall so soon be conformed, and a total abandon to Him for Whom we wait. The glories ahead are so manifold that they leave us with John's prayer in our hearts: "Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly."

I owe a great deal of indebtedness to Mrs. Leo Zerby of Athens, Michigan, for her scholarly criticisms and painstaking efforts to make this book possible, also to Mrs. Everett Parker of Kansas City, Missouri, for her untiring work of typing the manuscripts. I know my Lord will rightly recompense them, for their labor has been "Unto Himself," the Lord they love.

Yours affectionately in Christ,  
GAVIN HAMILTON

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## CHAPTER ONE

# JESUS IS COMING AGAIN

**T**HE MOST ENTHRALLING, soul captivating story ever told concerns Jesus of Nazareth. It surpasses by far anything written in the realm of fiction. Yet Jesus is a fact of history, authentic and undeniable. Of all men born of women He had the unique honor of having His entire life's history written in the Holy Scriptures hundreds of years before His debut.

The first prophetic foregleam of His life which was to begin in the Bethlehem manger and go forward into the Kingdom Glorious was announced by the Lord God to the serpent immediately following his seeming victory over the Edenic couple, Adam and Eve. The Lord God said, "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed, He shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel."<sup>1</sup>\*

### Jesus Is Without Precedent

As far as the Scriptures are concerned there is no controversy at all about Jesus being the "Seed of the woman." It is clearly stated there that every other person born is the seed of the man involved in the fall, therefore born in sin and shapen in iniquity. Jesus is altogether different. In connection with His birth the laws of nature were super-

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\*Footnotes appear beginning on page 162.



ceded by the sovereign God, so that there could come into this world One that was immaculate from a sinful mother. Long ago the question was asked, "Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?", and the answer was given, "Not one."<sup>2</sup> That means it is not in the power of man to perform such a miracle. However, God interposed to accomplish the impossible, and He gives us the record of it in these words spoken by Gabriel to Mary: "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee, therefore, also, that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God."<sup>3</sup>

The virgin birth of Jesus makes Him without human precedent. He has a glory all His own, the glory of absolute sinlessness, holiness, and righteousness. We are not surprised. The Scriptures clearly teach that He did not have His beginning in the virgin's womb or upon His entrance into this world at Bethlehem. He is the beginningless beginner of every beginning. As John so beautifully says, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."<sup>4</sup> These words are positively meaningless unless they teach that Jesus is God. He is the eternal Son in the Holy Trinity.

It is well to understand that the coming of the eternal Son into manhood was in perfect harmony with the counsels of God. He speaks on this wise in the Book of Proverbs: "The Lord possessed Me in the beginning of His way, before His works of old. I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was."<sup>5</sup> The implicate of these words is that the Son was anointed by God the Father and God the Holy Spirit to act as the Creator to bring in creation, to become Man for the purpose of effecting redemption for both creation and the creature, and to be the supreme sovereign over the entire universe of God.

As wisdom personified He continues to speak here, saying, "My delights were with the sons of men."<sup>6</sup> The creatures He created He loves. Nothing would prevent His becoming one of them—a Man amongst men—in accordance with the eternal counsels, but He must abide the fullness of time ere He could appear as the virgin's babe.<sup>7</sup> In the meantime, however, He would foreshadow the event by frequent pre-incarnate manifestations. He appeared to Abraham at his tent door and accepted hospitality from him.<sup>8</sup> He appeared to Jacob at Peniel and there wrestled with him till the break of day.<sup>9</sup> He appeared to Moses, Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and to seventy of the elders of Israel on the slopes of Sinai.<sup>10</sup> He appeared to Joshua as Captain of the Lord's hosts on the plains of Gilgal.<sup>11</sup> He appeared to the three Hebrews as the Son of God in the midst of the burning fiery furnace.<sup>12</sup> He appeared to Ezekiel as the Man upon the Throne of God.<sup>13</sup>

### **Jesus Is In All The Scriptures**

Now that Jesus, the eternal Son, has become Man, divine light is shed upon the many incidents in the Old Testament which would be obscure, otherwise. Those were given to instruct His people about the coming of the Perfect Man, the Messiah, and to teach them something of His personal, moral, and judicial glories.

It is quite apparent to the spiritual mind that the flaming fire in the midst of the bush seen by Moses was a fitting picture of Jesus the God-Man. The fires of Deity burned in the bush of His humanity.<sup>14</sup> As stated elsewhere, "Without controversy great is the mystery of godliness; God was manifest in the flesh. . . ." <sup>15</sup> The Man Jesus is none other than "God over all, blessed for ever."

"Though in the very form of God  
With heavenly glory crowned;  
He did like mortal man become,  
Beset with sorrows round."

We understand, too, that the manna which fed Israel for forty years in the wilderness set forth Jesus Who came down from heaven to enter into the circumstances common to man. You will note how it was given in connection with the appearance of the Shekinah glory to antedate the advent of Jesus Whose coming was accompanied by the presence of the "glory of the Lord."<sup>16</sup> It was white in color to bespeak the absolute purity of Jesus' human nature, for "He knew no sin" in His spirit;<sup>17</sup> "in Him is no sin" in His soul;<sup>18</sup> and "He did no sin" in His body.<sup>19</sup> It was small in size to portray the humility of Him of Whom it is said, "Though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor."<sup>20</sup> Then its "roundness" assuredly speaks of Him assuming manhood for ever.<sup>21</sup> At no time would He discard His humanity.

Then, there is the meal-offering, which clearly defines Jesus as perfect in His human nature. This offering was both mingled and anointed with oil to predicate Jesus as coming into this world born of the Holy Spirit and anointed by Him for the mighty work He did.<sup>22</sup> Peter testified to the household of Cornelius: "How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power; Who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed by the devil; for God was with Him."<sup>23</sup>

It is absolutely apparent to the reader of Scripture that it was imperative that the Son become Man so as to be the Prophet, or the image of the invisible God; <sup>24</sup> the Sacrifice for the putting away of sin and the eventual overthrow of the serpent;<sup>25</sup> the Mediator that would appear

between God and men;<sup>26</sup> the Great High Priest who would represent the entire priestly family;<sup>27</sup> the Advocate who would plead for the Father's erring children;<sup>28</sup> the King who would take over the government of the world and rule over men for God;<sup>29</sup> and the Judge before Whom both angels and men would be judged.<sup>30</sup>

The Old Testament is full of Christ. He Himself said, "Search the Scriptures . . . they are they which testify of Me."<sup>31</sup> Peter also declared to the household of Cornelius, "To Him give all the prophets witness."<sup>32</sup> As the Risen Man, Jesus showed from the Law, the Psalms, and the Prophets—in all the Scriptures—"the things concerning Himself."<sup>33</sup> His entire life from the cradle to the cross, from the tomb to the Throne, and from the Throne above to the Throne of David in Kingdom days ahead is all clearly outlined.

The four Gospels clarify in perfect verification of the prophetic Word that Jesus was born of the virgin Mary;<sup>34</sup> that He was born into this world at Bethlehem;<sup>35</sup> that He lived in humble circumstances both in Bethlehem and Nazareth;<sup>36</sup> that He wrought miracles which corroborated His claims to Messiahship and revealed the powers of the age to come;<sup>37</sup> that He was absolutely beyond the indictment of evil;<sup>38</sup> that He was actually sold for thirty pieces of silver;<sup>39</sup> that His hands and feet were pierced at His crucifixion;<sup>40</sup> that He was buried in a rich man's tomb;<sup>41</sup> that He ascended to the right hand of God,<sup>42</sup> and that He is coming back to earth to reign.<sup>43</sup>

### **Jesus Is Alive**

These things lead us to assert that the God-Man Jesus is alive. He did not have His body dissolved into gasses as some cults would have men believe. At death His spirit went to God in Paradise while His body lay in Joseph of



Arimathea's tomb.<sup>44</sup> He was in the grave three days and three nights to fulfill the Scriptures.<sup>45</sup> On the third day He rose from among the dead and immediately began to appear to His disciples.<sup>46</sup> It was in the body that Jesus rose from the dead. Resurrection never appertains to either spirit or soul of man since neither of them ever dies. Only the body dies, so only the body is raised. In resurrection the entire Man Jesus, spirit, soul, and body, appeared to His own.

When Jesus appeared to His disciples He explicitly said that He was not in spirit form, for "a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see Me have."<sup>47</sup> In proof of this, though the disciples needed none, He ate with them, He talked with them, and He wrought miracles before them.<sup>48</sup> They so believed Him that never once afterwards did they question His aliveness.

Listen to Peter as he drives home this truth to his hearers on the Day of Pentecost: "Ye men of Israel, hear these words, JESUS OF NAZARETH, a man approved of God among you. . . .ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain; whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death; because it was not possible that He should be holden of it. . . .Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted. . . .know assuredly, that God hath made that same JESUS, Whom ye crucified, both Lord and Christ."<sup>49</sup>

After the miraculous healing of the lame man as the people assembled in Solomon's porch in the temple, Peter spoke to them saying: "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. . . .Repent ye there-

fore, 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. . . . Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things. . . . Unto you first God, having raised up His Son JESUS, and sent Him to bless you."<sup>50</sup>

Peter allows no room for doubt about the aliveness of Jesus. He plainly states that God "glorified His Son Jesus," that God "shall send Jesus Christ," and that God had raised up His Son Jesus to give them the first opportunity of receiving Him for blessing. The people were perfectly aware of the implicate of all they heard. It was utterly impossible for them to escape the challenge. They had either to accept or reject Him. We know they chose to reject Him, so the heavens keep Him still and will do so until the nation calls out in desperation as annihilation faces them, "Let Thy hand be upon the Man of Thy right hand, upon the Son of Man whom Thou madest strong for Thyself."<sup>51</sup>

Was it not the good pleasure of Philip the evangelist to instruct the Ethiopian eunuch that Isaiah the prophet wrote concerning Jesus? He explained to this dignitary that Jesus is the "Arm of Jehovah," the "Man of Sorrows," the "Lamb of God," and the "Servant of Jehovah."<sup>52</sup> The eunuch had no difficulty exercising faith in Him for full and free salvation, and then becoming identified with Him in baptism. It is not surprising that we read of his going on his way rejoicing.<sup>53</sup> He had become united in an indissoluble union with Him, the glorified Man in heaven.

Paul the Apostle also makes it clear that the Spirit of God raised up JESUS from the dead;<sup>54</sup> while Peter states that He was "quickened by the Spirit."<sup>55</sup>

The latter chapters of the Gospels, the entire Book

of the Acts, and all the Epistles from Romans to the Book of the Revelation relate the story of Jesus risen from among the dead and seated upon the Throne of God. Think of the Hebrew Epistle which tells in four places of Jesus upon the Throne of God each one presenting Him in a distinct official capacity. He is there as the eternal Son, the Great High Priest, the Sacrifice accepted of God, and the Man of Faith.<sup>56</sup> Peter says that He has gone into heaven, "and is on the right hand of God: angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto Him."<sup>57</sup> James refers to Him as "the Lord of glory," the One Whose coming draweth nigh.<sup>58</sup> John deals with Him as the "Advocate, Jesus Christ the righteous," Who intercedes for the erring children of God. He also assures us that as He is in glorified condition so shall we be when He returns for us. "We know," he says, "that when He shall appear, we shall be like Him."<sup>59</sup>

Need more be said? Scripture is replete with statements and historical accounts which authenticate the glorious, soul-thrilling truth that JESUS was raised from the dead and is now seated at the right hand of God. Only deliberate, wicked unbelief would dare to question it or believe otherwise. What hatred must reside in the human heart to rob our wonderful Savior of His truest deservings after His overwhelming victory at Calvary and at Joseph of Arimathea's tomb!

### **Jesus Is In Heaven**

On Ascension Day the disciples beheld JESUS rise from their midst into the atmospheric heavens until He disappeared from sight. Immediately two denizens of heaven stood by them and said, "Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as

ye have seen Him go into heaven.”<sup>60</sup> Some three years later as Stephen was being martyred he “looked steadfastly into heaven and saw the glory of God, and JESUS standing at the right hand of God.”<sup>61</sup> It was this very same JESUS that stopped Saul of Tarsus on the Damascus road and said, “Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?” Saul said, “Who art Thou, Lord?” The Lord answered, “I am JESUS whom thou persecutest. . . .!”<sup>62</sup> Then, finally, when John, the beloved disciple, the one who lay on Jesus’ bosom, saw Him as the Son of Man glorified, he fell at His feet as a dead man. Then he heard these words: “Fear not, I am the First and the Last. I am He that liveth and was dead, and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death.”<sup>63</sup>

Beloved, beyond all shadow of doubt, the Man JESUS is in heaven. “We see JESUS,” says the inspired penman, “Who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor.”<sup>64</sup> Then, as if to prove conclusively to his Jewish readers that the Man JESUS is alive in glory, he says that JESUS is the Son of God who has passed through the heavens;<sup>65</sup> that JESUS is the Forerunner of His people inside the veil;<sup>66</sup> that JESUS Who was made the surety of the new covenant at Calvary now lives to mediate its blessings to us, the beneficiaries;<sup>67</sup> that JESUS has entered heaven by His own blood to provide us with access to God;<sup>68</sup> and that JESUS is the Author and Finisher of faith.<sup>69</sup>

### **Jesus Is Coming Again**

In the light of all that has been said it is absolutely reasonable to believe that we must expect to see JESUS when He comes again. As Man He rose from the dead; as Man He lives in the glory of God; as Man He will return. He



cannot ever relinquish His Manhood: that is incredible and impossible. It would contradict not only divine revelation but human reasoning. Indeed, He must remain Man to execute His future divinely appointed work.

The Old Testament Scriptures clearly and constantly assert that the Kingdom Glorious shall be governed by the Messiah—the God-Man. Listen to Isaiah's prophecy: "For unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given: and the government shall be upon His shoulder: and His Name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon His Kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even forever."<sup>70</sup> Micah prophesies the birthplace of Him "that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting."<sup>71</sup>

It was Isaiah who foresaw the Messiah coming as the "Man of Sorrows" to live among His own Jewish people; as the "Lamb of God" to die as the sin-offering; and as the "Servant of Jehovah" to assume universal sovereignty.<sup>72</sup> No rational person would ever dare consider that this is not JESUS in His life, and death, and coming Kingdom glory.

The Psalmist constantly proclaimed that Israel's Messiah would come to die and to rise again and then to take His place in the presence of God. Later He would take to Himself His great power and begin His reign. He is seen being shown the path of life which leads into the presence of God.<sup>73</sup> God speaks to Him saying, "Sit Thou at My right hand until I make Thine enemies Thy footstool."<sup>74</sup> Again, "Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec."<sup>75</sup> As Melchisedec, the King-Priest, He must be Man.

Zechariah brings the Manhood of Messiah into prominence when he pictures Him "riding upon an ass, and upon a colt, the foal of an ass,"<sup>76</sup> then as being wounded in the house of His friends.<sup>77</sup> Last of all Zechariah describes His own brethren looking upon the wounds in His hands as He sets His feet upon the Mount of Olives.<sup>78</sup> Who else but JESUS answers to these prophetic utterances?

The New Testament is no less explicit about JESUS returning as Man. To His own disciples He said, "If I go away, I will come again."<sup>79</sup> He did not suggest here, or anywhere else, that He would change His physical form before He made good His promise. Let the two men from heaven speak about the matter: "This same JESUS...shall so come...as ye have seen Him go...."<sup>80</sup> How did they see Him go? Surely as Man! Had He changed into a spirit-being, they could not have seen Him. Thus as Man He shall return.

### **Jesus Is Lord**

This JESUS is LORD. That is what He said to Saul when he was converted.<sup>81</sup> That is what we must confess if we are ever to be saved. "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth, Jesus as Lord, and believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved."<sup>82</sup> So Paul, when writing to the Thessalonians about the Second Advent, says, "The Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout...."<sup>83</sup> The Man JESUS Who is LORD is coming again.

The Thessalonians who, under the preaching of Paul, had "turned to God from idols, to serve the living and true God, and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, even JESUS, which delivered us from the wrath to come" were actually waiting for JESUS to come.<sup>84</sup>

He was their Savior; He was the One they loved and served. Whom else would they wait for to take them to heaven?

At the final unveiling of Christ in the Apocalypse He makes Himself known thus: "I JESUS....surely I come quickly." Neither wonder John cries, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus."<sup>85</sup>

Perfect harmony exists between the Testaments. They declare in clearest language that the Coming One shall have the print of the nails in His hands and feet; that He shall be as the freshly slain lamb; that His side shall show the spear wound given at Calvary. There shall be no mistaking Him for another. Here is the One "Whom having not seen, ye love; in Whom, though now ye see Him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory."<sup>86</sup> Hallelujah! Blessed be His Holy Name for ever and ever!

Our hearts cry out for His coming. We long to see Him, to be like Him, to be with Him, and to praise and serve Him for ever. No one shall ever take His place in our hearts. On earth we have found Him to be our life, our peace, our joy, our hope, our satisfaction. Take Him from us and we are bereft of everything worth while. In heaven, while we shall appreciate the presence and fellowship of all the redeemed, and that of heaven's angelic hierarchy, our hope shall be realized when we are face to face with JESUS our LORD.

Beloved, what shall it be like when first we gaze upon His lovely face? What shall be our feelings when first He opens His mouth and pours out His words of welcome? How shall we act in such majestic scenes and in the presence of Him "Who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords, who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto?"<sup>87</sup>

Oh, the blessedness and glory of it all! It is more than our finite capacity can fathom or our limited ability comprehend, but, blessed be God, that shall be our portion, and infinitely more than tongue can tell or pen describe from the very moment we are face to face with JESUS. The hymn writer puts it beautifully in these words:

“Face to face with Christ my Savior,  
Face to face what will it be?  
When with rapture I behold Him,  
Jesus Christ who died for me.  
What rejoicing in His presence,  
When are banished grief and pain;  
When the crooked ways are straightened,  
And the dark things shall be plain.  
Face to face I shall behold Him,  
Far beyond the starry sky;  
Face to face in all His glory,  
I shall see Him by and by!”



## CHAPTER TWO

# PANORAMA OF GLORY AT CHRIST'S RETURN

**I** *BELIEVE EVERY CHILD OF GOD*, irrespective of color, creed, or church, knows that the Lord Jesus Christ, his Savior and Lord, will come again. It could not be otherwise; for although he may, or may not, understand much of what it entails, he has "Christ, the hope of glory"<sup>1</sup> within his heart. Then, too, the truth of this great and glorious event is so crystal clear in the Bible that it forbids either scepticism or doubt. Here he receives the assurance that sooner or later he shall dwell with Christ above.

Some time ago a friend of mine visited an institution for handicapped people and was introduced to an inmate who was both blind, deaf, and dumb. He communicated with this man by means of writing on the palm of his hand—spelling out his words letter by letter. He asked him this question, "Do you know Jesus?". Without hesitation the answer was written on my friend's palm, "He is my Savior." Another question followed, "What is your hope?"; to which came the reply by gestures first, then by writing later, saying, "My hope is that when Jesus comes I shall be caught up to meet Him in the air and be forever with Him."

This man had been taught the truth of God. I am afraid, however, that with so many conflicting beliefs abroad on

the subject of the Lord's second advent I cannot say that about all Christians. They have been taught differently. The enemy, Satan, has sown his errors and thrown the professing Church into confusion. I met a minister, retired from the ministry, at one of my missionary conferences who confessed to me that he had never taught the truth of God in connection with the second coming of Christ because of his previous teaching received in seminary. There was a sadness and regret in his heart. He realized he had influenced thousands to believe his false teachings.

### **Four Gross Errors**

I want to point out to you four of the gross, unscriptural errors believed in some Christian circles about the Lord's return.

First, death is said to mean the second advent of Christ—that is when they shall go to be with Him. Second, the descent of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost is understood to be the fulfillment of the Lord's promised return. Third, the fall of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 is believed to mark the occasion of Christ's coming. Fourth, the majority in Christendom have been taught that Christ shall return at the "Last Day," when the heavens and the earth shall be disintegrated, and the Shepherd shall divide the sheep from the goats.

It seems perfectly obvious to me that one need not be too keen a reader or student of the Bible to see that these beliefs are wholly unscriptural and untenable. They do not make sense in the light of the plain, easily understood teachings of the Book. Indeed, I can go farther and say that such teachings make the Bible a Book of contradictions which no true believer accepts.

### **Death Is Not The Return Of Christ**

Is death the Lord's second advent? If so, that means He has come millions of times since He ascended on high, for millions of saints have died. That robs the Bible of teaching a literal second coming of Christ. Jesus is not coming millions of times; He is coming the "second time without sin unto salvation."<sup>2</sup> Again, it is self-evident that when a believer dies he goes alone to be with the Lord. He is absent from the body, at home with the Lord.<sup>3</sup> The second coming of Christ is altogether different. Instead of going alone to be with the Lord, he shall be joined by every other believer; for, says Paul, "The Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout. . . the dead in Christ shall rise first, then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up *together* with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall we ever be with the Lord."<sup>4</sup> Evidently when the believer dies he goes directly into the presence of the Lord, since he is said to be at home with Him; but when Jesus comes he goes with all other saints to meet Him in the atmospheric heavens. There is a vast difference of place between the eternal home of our Lord and the atmospheric heavens.

It should not escape our notice that when a believer dies there is no resurrection or translation of all saints involved. His departure from this world is a matter between him and the Lord. This is far from the truth when the Lord returns the second time. Then there shall be the resurrection of all saints, the changing of all living saints, and the translation of all together into the atmospheric heavens to meet Him. None of these ever takes place at death.

### **The Holy Spirit's Coming Is Not Christ's Return**

Is the coming of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pente-

cost<sup>5</sup> the Lord's second advent? This question should be quickly and easily answered. In the first instance it was the Holy Spirit Who came. He is the third Person in the Holy Trinity, and not the second Person, the Lord Jesus Christ.<sup>6</sup> The Holy Spirit came to fulfil the prayer of Jesus, Who said, "I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you for ever, even the Spirit of Truth, Whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him; but ye know Him; for He shall dwell with you, and shall be in you."<sup>7</sup> Jesus continues the conversation about the Spirit's coming thus, "The Comforter, Which is the Holy Ghost, Whom the Father shall send in My Name. . . ."<sup>8</sup> "When the Comforter is come, Whom I will send unto you from the Father. . . ."<sup>9</sup> ". . . It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send Him unto you."<sup>10</sup>

It was on Ascension Day, ten days before Pentecost, that Jesus made His last utterance about the coming of the Holy Spirit. His words were simple and the meaning clear. He said, "Wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith He, ye have heard of Me. For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence. . . . Ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you. . . ."<sup>11</sup> According to the divine record given in Acts 2, the Father sent the Holy Spirit to fulfill His promise and the Son's prayer. Most assuredly this was not the second advent of Christ. As a matter of interest, Jesus was then seated upon the Father's Throne in glorified condition. To Him the Father had said, ". . . Sit on My right hand, until I make Thine enemies Thy footstool."<sup>12</sup>

The main purpose connected with the coming of the Holy Spirit was to bring into being the Church of the Living

God.<sup>13</sup> This Church is looked upon as the Body and the Bride of Christ.<sup>14</sup> He came to indwell this company of believers and to fit them for the return of the Bridegroom, the Head of the Body.<sup>15</sup> When He returns, the Spirit shall rapture the Church to meet Him.

There is no thought, nor the slightest hint, of the believers going to be with Christ on the Day of Pentecost. It was not Christ, but the Holy Spirit, Who came.

### **The Fall Of Jerusalem Is Not Christ's Return**

Is the fall of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 under Titus the second advent of Christ? Those of you that have read Josephus, the Jewish historian, and his account of the siege and fall of Jerusalem will recall his vivid description of the calamity that befell the Jewish people. By the time the city fell, above one million precious souls had perished and hundreds of thousands were taken captive and distributed throughout the Roman Empire as slaves. It was a terrible catastrophe. Jesus mentioned it in His Olivet Discourse as well as in one of His many parables.<sup>16</sup> I do not hesitate to say that the fall of Jerusalem was a direct judgment from God upon the Jewish people for their rejection and crucifixion of His Only Begotten Son, their Messiah.<sup>17</sup>

This tragic calamity, however, in no way describes or approximates the Lord's return for His own beloved, believing people. When He comes for them they shall enter upon an eternity of blessedness. I hope to show you later in this message that when He comes He shall meet us in the air, escort us to the Father's house amidst scenes of indescribable glory, take us to the eternal Throne where we shall be united with Him in the bonds of holy matrimony, and then manifest us to the world in all His grandeur and splendor. You will appreciate that this is far removed from

the thought of calamity, or an avalanche of divine judgment.

I should take time to remark here that when Jesus comes back with us to set up His Kingdom on earth, He shall come to Jerusalem to take issue with the antichristian forces assembled there and deliver His own earthly people, the Jews, who have trusted in Him. Zechariah says that Jehovah "...Will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle... then shall the Lord go forth, and fight against those nations, as when He fought in the day of battle."<sup>18</sup> Again he says, that Jehovah "...will destroy all nations that come against Jerusalem, and pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and supplications: and they shall look upon Me whom they have pierced...."<sup>19</sup> This action is altogether different from that enacted under Titus.

### **Disintegration Of The Universe Is Not Christ's Return**

Is the disintegration of the heavens and the earth and the separation by the Shepherd of the sheep from the goats the time of the second advent of Christ?

This question needs to be answered in piece-meal, or one part at a time. It cannot be denied, in the first place, that the heavens and the earth shall be disintegrated. The Bible makes that absolutely clear. Peter speaks of saints "Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat."<sup>20</sup> The writer to the Hebrews states, "Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of Thine hands; they shall perish; but Thou remainest; and they all shall wax old as doth a garment; and as a vesture shalt Thou fold them up, and they shall be changed...."<sup>21</sup> John, the Apoc-



alyptic Seer says, "I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away . . . ." <sup>22</sup> Jesus Himself declared, "Heaven and earth shall pass away . . . ." <sup>23</sup> This event, however, takes place after the 1,000 years reign of Christ on earth and at the time of man's final rebellion against Him. <sup>24</sup> He shall have come for us and we shall have reigned with Him 1,000 years before this universal dissolution occurs.

The separation by the Shepherd of the sheep from the goats, when He puts the sheep on His right hand and gives them the earthly Kingdom, and puts the goats on the left hand where they are consigned to judgment, takes place at His second advent to earth when He shall begin His millennial reign. <sup>25</sup> At this particular time there is no mention of all the saints being translated to meet Jesus in the air, for that has taken place some time before. I shall deal with this phase of events later on.

Beloved, the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ for us is something altogether different from the things I have mentioned. Let us not be carried away by popular opinion, or even by the words of men we may esteem, but rather let us stay close by the precious Book in all matters relating to the personal return of Jesus our Lord. I believe it will help you, and be a real stimulus to your faith, to follow the chronological order of events set down in the New Testament from the time Jesus comes for us until we return with Him to reign and then on into the eternity ahead.

### **Personal Return Of Christ**

I cannot help but feel that no matter from what angle you look at this subject you are bound to confess that the Man Christ Jesus is coming personally for us. The Scriptures put tremendous emphasis on this truth. Our Lord Jesus in

His upper room discourse said to His disciples, "...If I go away, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also."<sup>26</sup> There is nothing ambiguous here. To misinterpret or misunderstand His Words seems well-nigh impossible. If words mean anything surely these mean that the Person Who speaks is coming again, and the place to which He goes is that to which He will take His people.

Let us take our place by the side of the disciples on Ascension Day as they stood on the slopes of Olivet overlooking Jerusalem. The risen Jesus, with hands uplifted, is bestowing His parting benediction. Suddenly He rises from the earth, ascends into the heavens, and then disappears from sight. Immediately, however, two heavenly beings clothed in garments of white appear, and say, "...Why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This *same Jesus*, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven. . . ."<sup>27</sup> What are we to deduct from this simple statement? Surely, it is that the Man Jesus we have so recently seen ascend into heaven shall come again. No other explanation is feasible.

Now, for a moment, let us turn to the Holy Spirit's inspired revelation about the coming of Christ. He distinctly states, "The *Lord Himself* shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God. . . ."<sup>28</sup> Again, "...The coming of the Lord draweth nigh."<sup>29</sup> Yet again, "When the Chief Shepherd shall appear."<sup>30</sup> And yet again the beloved apostle John hears his precious Lord declare three times over—and a three-fold cord is not easily broken—"...Surely, I come quickly. . . ."<sup>31</sup>

These Scriptures I have quoted, and many more could be produced if necessary, add up to the glorious fact that the God-Man, Jesus Christ our Lord, is coming per-

sonally for us. Yes, it is He Himself, and not another, that will come. John says, "...When we shall see Him, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is"; while Paul cries, "...When Christ, who is our life shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory."<sup>32</sup>

Our interest mounts in the consideration of this theme when we begin to consider the vast range of glory that awaits us at the return of the Lord. Our God has so outlined His program for us that we may anticipate the future with joy unspeakable and full of glory. His program, however, is not found in any one portion of His Word. He has been pleased to reveal it in different places so that we may give ourselves to reading and meditating upon the Word and allow the blessed Holy Spirit to piece it together for us. I can assure you it is a beautiful picture.

I want to bring to your attention eight distinct Scriptures in the New Testament which embrace His program for us from the moment of our glorification right into, and throughout, the coming ages, whether millennial or eternal.

### **The Savior Comes**

The first is found in Philippians 3:20, 21: "For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself."<sup>33</sup>

Jesus is coming as Savior. I understand this to mean that when He comes He will give to us the salvation or redemption of the body. It is quite evident that the salvation of God purchased by the Savior at Calvary is for the entire personality which includes spirit, soul, and body. At conversion's day we were saved from the penalty of sin.

This postulates the salvation of the spirit which links it with God in an indissoluble union. From conversion's day until Jesus comes, we are being saved from the power of sin which is really the salvation of life or the soul. Finally, when Jesus comes we shall be saved from the presence of sin when our bodies shall be changed into the likeness of His body of glory.<sup>34</sup> Then shall we stand before Him perfectly and eternally saved.

As of this present hour we have not experienced salvation for the body. It is still subject to pain, disease, and death. So, in order to save, or, to use the Scriptural word "redeem," the body, it is incumbent upon the Savior to return and effect the change. That He will do then. Glorification embraces our entire personality conforming us into the physical and moral likeness of Christ.

### **The Second Man Comes**

Our second Scripture is I Corinthians 15:47-58. I want you to read it carefully and thoughtfully. "The first man is of the earth, earthy: the Second Man is the Lord from heaven. As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy: and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly. And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly. Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. Behold, I show you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump; for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then

shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, 'Death is swallowed up in victory.' O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Wherefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.'"<sup>35</sup>

What a precious, priceless portion! It tells us that our Lord is coming as "The Second Man, out of heaven." We shall then bear the image of the heavenly. This is necessary for the place to which He will take us. It is another way of saying that we cannot go to heaven in our natural bodies. A change is imperative. Already, in this same chapter, Paul has told us that God gives different kinds of flesh for the different spheres in which they move.<sup>36</sup> He gives one kind of flesh to the fish that they might make the deep their habitat; another kind of flesh to the birds that they might fly in the air; and yet another kind of flesh to man that he may live on earth. So, the logical reasoning is that when God is ready to take men to heaven He shall give them another kind of body—one that is spiritual.

Our scientists and statesmen talk about going to the Moon, to Mars and Venus, and to other spheres out there in space. They may go, but they shall never live as natural beings. That is impossible. Unless they have capsules and all kinds of mechanical gadgets they shall die. They shall never live normal human lives.

How very different it shall be with the people of God. He will fit us to live in the heavens, and everywhere else in the universe, before He ever raptures us from this earthly plane. Here is how He will do it: "We shall not all sleep,"



(or go to the cemetery as 'sleep' denotes, since it comes from the same root word) "...but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed."<sup>37</sup>

Resurrection is first on the divine agenda for the saints at the return of Christ, the Second Man. They shall be raised with bodies incorruptible—never subject to death again. Death's power shall be broken and the saints will share in the triumph of their victorious Lord. Then the living saints shall be changed. Mortality shall be dropped like a filthy garment and immortality, like a robe of glory, shall be taken on. Then together, with bodies conformed into the image of Christ, we shall sing, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?...Thanks be unto God which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."<sup>38</sup>

The Bible teaches that resurrection never takes us beyond the earth. It simply fits us for heaven. This Pauline classic on the resurrection raises dead saints and changes living ones, but leaves them on earth singing their victory song and listening to the exhortation: "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord."<sup>39</sup> They sing and serve in the strength of their anticipated resurrection.

### **The Lord Himself Comes**

Our third Scripture is the one that gives us the order of events at our Lord's return—I Thessalonians 4:16-18. "The Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God:



and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words."<sup>40</sup>

This text tells us that Jesus is coming as Lord which shall occasion our rapture to meet Him in the air, or atmospheric heavens. Evidently, the atmospheric heavens is the trysting place arranged for the meeting of the heavenly Bridegroom and His heavenly Bride, the Church.

Nowhere else in your Bible do you read that you will meet Jesus the Lord in the air. I feel I am quite safe in saying that this is not only the one place in Scripture where the meeting place is revealed but if we only had this one Scripture on the truth of the rapture we should never know we were to be elsewhere than in the atmospheric heavens. I agree that there is an all-inclusive statement made as to our being everywhere with the Lord in the words, "For ever with the Lord," but neither places nor events are specified.

One of the gratifying factors connected with the rapture is that we shall be able, in our spiritual bodies, to ascend the skies as if it were the natural thing for us to do. Just as we move around now, as we walk, run, jump, sit, or lie down, so shall it be with us in glorified condition. God shall not make us spiritual robots, or people for whom He might press a button so that we can go places. Power shall be ours to leave this earth and mount the skies to meet the Lord in the atmospheric heavens. I believe the rapture shall be a perfectly natural event for us as our journey to other worlds shall also be. Distances shall be eliminated completely, obstacles shall be nil, time shall be endless. How I love the text: "...It doth not yet appear what we shall be, but we know

that when He shall appear, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is."<sup>41</sup> That, to me, covers everything in the realm of our glorification.

The movement of billions of saints from earth to air shall be a sight worth witnessing. Better still, it shall be an experience worth enjoying. What shall be our thoughts as our feet leave terra-firma and we move speedily upward together towards our Lord? Here is the first movement in an eternity of indescribable blessedness that awaits us. How stupid and cumbersome are man's devices to catapult people into space! How simple and easy our God's way of conquering space! Our hearts swell up in worship to Him now as we anticipate, and in some measure enter into, the rapture.

### **The Son Of God Comes**

Our fourth Scripture is John 14:1-3. It reads thus: "Let not your heart be troubled; ye believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also."<sup>42</sup>

You will notice that Jesus comes here as the Son of God, the Son of the Father. He came forth from the Father into this world that He might redeem us to God and make us His sons through faith in Himself. He went back to the Father to prepare a place for us and here He promises to return to take us where He is. The Father's house is for the Father's children. That is our home sweet home.

We have seen that we shall meet Him in the atmospheric heavens. Paul makes that abundantly clear. However, we are not to remain there. That is not our eternal home. So Jesus comes as the Son of the Father to take us where we

belong. Where, then, is this home of ours? Is it beyond Alpha Centauri? We know where this star world is and that it will take 140,000 years to reach it traveling at the speed of Sputnik, 18,500 miles per hour. I am glad we are not going home in a man-made Sputnik, or any other human contraption! We might never get to our destination.

The Bible gives us to understand that the time-element involved in our translation from the atmospheric heavens to our eternal home could well be nil. As John in the Isle of Patmos heard the voice say, "Come up hither," and "Immediately" he says, "I was in the spirit: and, behold, a throne was set in heaven. . . .",<sup>43</sup> so shall we be enabled to pass through outer space at such incalculable speed that the only word I know that can adequately describe our translation from the air to the Father's house is "immediately." This is beyond human computation and understanding, but blessed be God, it shall be a glorious reality in our personal experience when the Son of God returns.

### **The Bridegroom Comes**

Our fifth Scripture is Ephesians 5:25-27 where the Bridegroom and the Bride are beautifully set forth in these words: "...Christ also loved the Church, and gave Himself for it; that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that He might present it to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish"<sup>44</sup>

The Edenic scene is here graphically portrayed, but this time it is the heavenly Eden with the Last Adam and His New Testament Eve before us. He has her in His own presence as the object of His love, the vessel of His care, and in His own radiant perfection. She is all fair, like Himself. His image is hers. As He looks upon her He says,

"Bone of My bones, and flesh of My flesh: she shall be called 'Woman,' because she was taken out of Man."<sup>45</sup>

The courtship days are history. He has come for her to have her in His presence to be His eternal joy. It strikes me that in this relationship of Bridegroom and Bride, He will communicate to her ahead of time the truth concerning His return. This will enable her to get ready for the occasion. It will create feelings of tremendous expectation as the grand event comes into view. I hardly imagine the Bride shall be taken by surprise when the Bridegroom comes to lead her to the Throne where they shall be united in the bonds of holy matrimony. The relationship they bear to each other forbids such a thought. Both the Bridegroom and the Bride shall know!

Listen to the announcement that goes forth in those heavenly scenes: "Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to Him; for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife hath made herself ready."<sup>46</sup> This is the event of events in all ages whether past, present, or future. It shall have no eclipse. The Father has given all things into the hands of His Son and He now shares all with His bridal wife. From henceforth the word shall be, "Let them have dominion. . . ." Here begins an eternity of everlasting, unalloyed bliss.

According to the Book of the Revelation, the marriage of the Lamb takes place sometime prior to the Second Advent of Christ with His heavenly Bride. At this very time, the world shall be in the throes of its final blood-bath as it is swept by the judgments of God. All the seals have been broken, the trumpets of judgment have been sounded, and the vials of God's wrath have been poured out. What a blessing to escape all this and to experience the glory of

the heavenly event! This is the purpose of God for His Son and His beloved Bride.

### **The Bright And Morning Star Comes**

Our sixth Scripture is Revelation 22:16, 17. This is the final unveiling of Christ. He says, "I Jesus, have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning Star. And the Spirit and the bride say, 'Come' . . . ."<sup>47</sup>

It is quite evident that after the marriage in heaven comes the Kingdom on earth. Here is the precursor of that glorious day: the coming of Christ as the Bright and Morning Star to chase away all the shadows of earth's dark night for us. Sin and sorrow shall be history; yes, buried in the infinite depths where no resurrection is possible, righteousness and gladness are ahead. This is our entrance upon the eternal day where the shadow of night never falls. Ere long, the "Sun of Righteousness" shall arise with healing in His wings and both Israel and the world's inhabitants shall bask in its warmth and light throughout Kingdom days.<sup>48</sup>

It was the Lord Jesus who taught the disciples to pray "Thy kingdom come."<sup>49</sup> In fact, down through the corridor of time the saints have longingly anticipated this glorious moment in world history when the kingdoms of this world would become the kingdom of our God and His Christ.<sup>50</sup> As already noted, the coming of Jesus as the Bright and Morning Star is the precursor of this blessed event. The prayers and desires of saints are now answered. The Sovereign with His New Testament Queen has ascended the throne and will now wield the sceptre of power. All Israel shall be saved.<sup>51</sup> The nations shall walk in the paths of right-



eousness for His Name's sake. Creation itself shall heave its last sigh, utter its last groan, and experience the liberty of the glory of the sons of God.<sup>52</sup> Heaven and earth shall be reconciled.<sup>53</sup> The angels of God shall ascend and descend upon the Son of Man.<sup>54</sup> He shall turn the water into wine on a universal scale, and gladness shall fill the entire scene.<sup>55</sup>

### **The Captain Of Our Salvation Comes**

Our seventh Scripture is Hebrews 2:10 where we read, "For it became Him, for Whom are all things, and by Whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through suffering."<sup>56</sup>

As the Captain of our salvation, He shall lead us to victory against every foe. I surely love to read the closing chapters in the Book of the Revelation where the final acts in the world drama are so carefully recorded. The whole scene is both dynamic and soul thrilling. You will observe how Jesus banishes every unregenerate human with the Devil and his angels into the ever-burning Lake.<sup>57</sup> Evil is completely purged from the universe. Finally, death itself is overthrown. "The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death."<sup>58</sup> No foe remains. Jesus once crucified in weakness has now risen in power and conquered every one. The Captain has led His armies to victory. Hallelujah! Now we are publicly acclaimed to be "more than conquerors through Him that loved us."<sup>59</sup>

### **The Great High Priest Comes**

Our final Scripture in this message is found in Hebrews 9:28. It says, "So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation."<sup>60</sup>

What more fitting title should adorn the Savior's brow as we enter the new heavens and the new earth than that



of our Great High Priest! That is exactly how we behold Him in our final Scripture. Christ is entered "...into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us... And unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation."<sup>61</sup>

Our Great High Priest Who once presented Himself as the sacrifice to God at Calvary, Who is now presenting His intercessions for us before the face of His God upon the Throne, will some day present Himself in the air to welcome us. He will then escort us through scenes of unspeakable glories to the eternal new heavens and new earth, and with pierced hands uplifted over our heads will pronounce His benediction upon us: "The Lord bless thee, and keep thee; The Lord make His face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee; The Lord lift up His countenance upon thee, and give thee peace."<sup>62</sup>

Still there is more. The Old Testament benediction just quoted is good, but the New Testament one exceeds it by far. Throughout all coming ages of the ages, there shall be the inner consciousness of its preciousness as He makes good to us "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost. . . ." <sup>63</sup> Oh, the blessedness of it all! Forever in the presence of God Triune—the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit!

Jesus is surely coming again. He is coming as the Savior to change our bodies; He is coming as the Second Man to make us like Himself; He is coming as the Lord to translate us into the atmospheric heavens; He is coming as the Son of the Father to take us to the Father's home; He is coming as the Bridegroom to receive His Bride; He is coming as the Bright and Morning Star to usher us into the Kingdom; He is coming as the Captain of our salvation to conquer

every foe; and He is coming as our Great High Priest to give us His priestly blessing as we go into the new heavens and the new earth to enjoy an eternity of ineffable bliss.

What remains to be said? This one word! Seeing all this panorama of glory, which lies ahead, at and after the coming of the Lord, what manner of persons ought we to be in all holy conversation and godliness?<sup>64</sup> The anticipation thrills to the uttermost depths of the soul. Heart and soul cry out, "Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly."<sup>65</sup> Earth's vanities fade and flee. The world is a vast, waste-howling wilderness. This is not our home. We are "strangers and pilgrims"<sup>66</sup> here. Heaven is our fatherland; heaven is our home. Let our watchword ever be "MARANATHA!"<sup>67</sup>

## CHAPTER THREE

### THE RESURRECTION OF THE SAINTS

**T**HE *EVASION OF DEATH* and resurrection in the natural is absolutely impossible. The divine commentary on this is unequivocally stated in these words: "By man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead."<sup>1</sup> Here we have the irrevocable results of Adam's sin and Christ's resurrection. "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin. . ."<sup>2</sup> "If the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised. . . But now is Christ risen."<sup>3</sup>

These two men, Adam and Christ, are set in contrast with each other. The first man is of the earth, earthy, and was made a living soul; the Second Man is out of heaven and is a quickening spirit.<sup>4</sup> Adam did not exist before Eden. He began there when God created him in His own image by using the dust of the ground to form his body and breathing into his nostrils the breath of life so that he became a living creature.<sup>5</sup> This procedure was unnecessary in connection with the Second Man. He came directly from heaven by way of the virgin and is in Himself the Eternal Life, One who does not depend upon another for life but is the communicator of all life seen and known in the universe.<sup>6</sup>

#### Adam And Christ

Paul in a very masterful way advances Adam and Christ as the two federal heads of two races of men. He reveals

that each head imparts to his race that which is his. The First Adam imparts sin, death, and condemnation; the Last Adam imparts righteousness, life, and justification of life.<sup>7</sup> Our transference from the First Adam to the Last Adam is a truth of infinite importance. To apprehend and appreciate it as a God-given revelation shall preserve us from fears and doubts, misgivings, and misunderstandings as to how we stand in relation to God. Actually, the transference is enacted at conversion. It is then we realize our terrible, precarious situation. We know we are doomed to eternal death in the First Adam. Then we see that Christ died *our* death and sundered *our* former relationship; we see that we have been raised into resurrection life with Christ; and that we are now livingly and lastingly linked with Him. Here is a union indissoluble, indestructible. "He that is joined to the Lord is one spirit."<sup>8</sup> The spirit never dies!

Intuitively and immediately we shall consider the contrast between being in Adam and being in Christ. Let the Scripture state it: "As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive."<sup>9</sup> Never do we question that death is the portion of all who are in Adam. The truth is inescapable. Thus far, every member of the human family that has been in Adam has died: this predicates the lot of all who shall be in him. Not one shall escape. It is the result of sin. "The wages of sin is death."<sup>10</sup> "It is appointed unto men once to die"<sup>11</sup>

The contrast now becomes apparent. All believers in Christ shall be made alive—or made to live. While this necessarily includes resurrection it does not mean that **all** believers shall die. The opposite has been proved in the translation of both Enoch and Elijah to Heaven.<sup>12</sup> They never saw death, so they shall not experience resurrection. More than that, the Apostle clearly unveils a heretofore

hidden truth: "Behold, I show you a mystery," he says. "We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed."<sup>13</sup> So, whether we are dead or alive at the sound of the trump, we shall be made alive. This is the portion of all who are in Christ.

How could it be otherwise? To be "in Christ" means that we are a new creation, the old things have passed away, and all things have become new.<sup>14</sup> Everything in the new creation abounds with life, for Christ is its Creator and Head. Indeed, the new creation comes into existence on resurrection ground. What we are in Him now, we shall be personally and practically at His coming.

Another truth emerges here. "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus."<sup>15</sup> God is telling us that we are what Christ is—beyond the reach of judgment. It was with this in mind that Jesus said, "He that heareth My word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life, and *shall never come into condemnation* . . ."<sup>16</sup> John follows up this stupendous truth, saying, "As He is, so are we in this world."<sup>17</sup> Not only are we beyond judgment in Christ, we are beyond it in this world—where we live right now! That is a kind of double security!

It is true that being "in Christ" is a New Testament truth and is revealed in the Church Age—and true of Church saints only—yet it cannot be gainsaid that the Old Testament saints had the hope of resurrection in their hearts. They knew that God would bring life out of death, that the dead would be raised. It is equally true, of course, that much of the intermediate state, as well as that of resurrection, was shrouded in mystery. The full truth of these things awaited

the coming of Christ, the descent of the Holy Spirit, and the completion of the Holy Scriptures. Even then the Lord in His wisdom has withheld many details connected with the intermediate state and the resurrection. He has much in reserve for us to know when we are fitted and capacitated to understand.

### **Truth Of Resurrection**

From earliest antiquity the truth of resurrection was in evidence. God established a principle in the renovation of the earth that has found perfect realization in His Son. On the third day He resurrected the earth out of the waters and planted all vegetation.<sup>18</sup> From then on throughout Old Testament history He demonstrated that He would raise His Son on the third day. That is why He allowed the ark to rest on Mt. Ararat on the resurrection day<sup>19</sup>; that is why He brought back Isaac, in figure from the dead, on the third day<sup>20</sup>; that is why He had the wave-sheaf offered three days after the Passover was sacrificed;<sup>21</sup> and that is why He caused the great fish to vomit Jonah onto the dry ground on the third day.<sup>22</sup> Jesus said, "Destroy this temple and in three days I shall raise it up."<sup>23</sup> That is exactly what happened. The Divine Record is "that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures."<sup>24</sup>

Faith somehow grasped the truth that Christ would come, die, and rise again. Those Old Testament saints believed God. "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God."<sup>25</sup> See how this worked in Adam, Job, Abraham, and David, not to mention a host of others.

In the presence of the Edenic couple, the Lord spoke to the serpent about the coming "Seed of the woman."<sup>26</sup> Seed contains the life principle. Adam, knowing full well



that the sentence of death had been passed upon him and his posterity, believed God about the coming Seed and called his wife's name "EVE," or, the mother of all living.<sup>27</sup> It might be better stated, "The mother of the Living One." He grasped the fact that the Seed to come would be "The Resurrection and the Life."<sup>28</sup> It was this very truth Jesus made known to John in Patmos when He said, "I am He that liveth," or, The Living One, "and was dead, and behold, I am alive for evermore. . ."<sup>29</sup> Immediately God sacrificed the animals, flayed them of their skins, and clothed the naked Edenic pair.<sup>30</sup>

Job, one of the earliest of the patriarchal saints, immortalized his resurrection hopes with these words: "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another."<sup>31</sup> What light he had from GOD in that dark age! He knew about Christ's Kingdom on earth; he knew about his own resurrection; he knew that he would have ability in the resurrected state to see God.

Abraham, by faith, offered Isaac his only begotten son, accounting that God was able to raise him up from the dead.<sup>32</sup> It strengthened him to believe that God would intervene miraculously and raise up his beloved Sarah who had just died. For this reason he chose the cave Machpelah as a burial place. It means "a double door": one door would let him bury his dead out of sight; the other door would let her out on the resurrection day.<sup>33</sup> He laid her down with the sure and certain hope of resurrection.

David, too, spoke prophetically about Christ's dying and rising from the tomb in his precious Messianic Psalm.

He says, "Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt Thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption. Thou wilt show me the path of life. . . ." <sup>34</sup> This led him to understand that when he died he would be raised again; so as he closes the next Psalm, he says, "As for me, I will behold Thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with Thy likeness." <sup>35</sup> He actually expresses here what is elaborated upon throughout the New Testament Epistles that at the return of Christ every believer shall be conformed into the image of God's Son, the Firstborn among many brethren. <sup>36</sup>

### **Christ Is Risen**

Every hope expressed in Christ as the risen One shall assuredly be fulfilled. The simple, glorious truth is that Christ *is* risen from the dead. The four Gospels announce, with varying details according to the viewpoint taken, that Christ rose from Joseph of Arimathea's tomb. Only wilful unbelievers who refuse to bow to absolute, incontrovertible facts deny it. Whether or not men believe, the resurrection of Jesus is the most thoroughly established fact in all history.

The risen Jesus was seen by the disciples. Those were men of the utmost integrity. They would rather die than lie. Most of them suffered imprisonment and martyrdom for proclaiming that Jesus was alive. Their testimony unto Him was sealed in their blood.

What wonderful things resulted from preaching that Christ was risen. Three thousand persons were gloriously saved on the Day of Pentecost, five thousand a little later, and great hosts followed. <sup>37</sup> The representatives of the three branches of the human family, Ham, Shem and Japheth, gladly accepted the message in the persons of the Ethiopian Eunuch, Saul of Tarsus, and Cornelius. <sup>38</sup> Miracles of astound-

ing notoriety were performed in the Name of the risen Savior. The world was turned upside down.

The passing of the centuries has not lessened but rather increased the effect of this dynamic truth. The risen Christ has changed the face of the nations. Our present civilization with its humanitarian ministries has invaded regions deemed unconquerable. The whole outlook of nations has been completely changed, and in most ways nations have benefited from the Christian Gospel. That also goes for atheistic nations, too. They reap the benefits, consciously or unconsciously, acknowledged or denied. What the world would have been like without CHRIST does not bear thinking about.

The end is not yet! In large measure the world has rejected Christ, but this is as the Prophetic Word teaches. The world shall get worse and worse till judgment falls. It does seem as if judgment is hanging precariously over the world at this very moment. The clouds are thick and black with forebodings of evil for men generally. Soon these shall burst and inundate the whole human family. However, the saints are safe and secure. No judgment shall fall upon them.

Judgment for the saints shall be averted by the return of Christ to rapture them from the earth to glory.<sup>39</sup> Then the saints that have passed the way of all the earth shall be resurrected. The coming of Christ shall realize the hope of resurrection which was in their bosoms.<sup>40</sup> This is the moment for which they had looked. Now it shall be experienced. In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye they shall be raised and changed into bodies incorruptible and be produced in the perfect likeness of Christ.

### **The Resurrection Body**

Speculation in connection with the resurrection body is altogether unnecessary. This theme has been already dealt with by Paul in these words: "But some men will say, 'How are the dead raised up? and with what body do they come?' Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die: and that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body that shall be, but bare grain, it may chance of wheat, or some other grain: But God giveth it a body as it hath pleased Him, and to every seed its own body."<sup>41</sup> It is quite evident then, that the resurrection body shall be fitted and fashioned according to infinite wisdom to bear the eternal weight of glory and to be perfectly at home in the celestial regions.

Nature itself teaches us that we require a change of body to enter and dwell in the heavens. This truth is clarified thus: "All flesh is not the same flesh; but there is one kind of flesh of men, another flesh of beasts, another of fishes, and another of birds. There are celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial: but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another. . . ."<sup>42</sup>

Herein lies a truth of major magnitude which scientists and statesmen would do well to ponder in this era when they are spending colossal sums of money and expending all their energies endeavoring to invade and inhabit not only the Moon but Mars and Venus, as well as other planets. God makes it clear that men shall never live natural lives outside of the earth. Their bodies are fitted and tempered for this terrestrial scene. They cannot live in the air, that is for the birds; they cannot live under the water, that is for the fish; they must resign themselves to live on earth until God effects a change of body.

This is exactly what God plans to do. He plans to raise the body out of death and fit it for His presence above. Glance for a moment at the beautiful way He records the facts of a changed body. Already He has told us that the body shall rise because Christ is risen;<sup>43</sup> now He advances another guarantee: "It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: It is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power: It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body."<sup>44</sup>

At death the body is sown. In this way it is like a seed which is sown for resurrection harvest. When a dog dies we bury it, for we never expect to see it resurrected. With man it is altogether different, especially with the saints that die. They shall rise when the Heavenly Harvester returns to gather in His harvest.

"Sown in corruption; raised in incorruption." All that pertains to mortality and corruption has become history. It lies buried, never to be raised. The incorruptible body of Christ shall be shared by His people. Sin is forever absent; its very shadow shall never fall upon them again.

"Sown in dishonor; raised in glory." Disreputable, repulsive, and reproachable human characteristics are replaced by those which express the very character of God. Every created intelligence in the heavens shall stand in awe at the majesty and magnificence of those who are adorned with the matchless beauty of the Man Christ Jesus. His image is impressed upon them.

"Sown in weakness; raised in power"—what power shall then reside in the body once characterized by weakness! Oh the weaknesses experienced in the body even in life but expressed fully and finally in death. Now there is power

to rise from the dead, power to ascend the skies to meet the Lord in the air, power to travel incalculable distances at incalculable speed, power to perfectly obey the perfect will of God.

### **The Spiritual Body**

"Sown a natural body; raised a spiritual body!" The natural body has had its limitations imposed in its every area of action; the spiritual body shall have those limitations lifted. Things impossible now shall be gloriously possible then. As Jesus the Perfect Man is, so shall we be. In His resurrected state with His spiritual body, at times He was visible then suddenly He became invisible; infinite distances were traveled in time indivisible; obstacles were absolutely non-existent, yet He remained the very same Jesus as in pre-resurrection days.<sup>45</sup> His personality was unchanged.

The basic idea back of the spiritual body is that instead of its being governed by flesh and blood, as is true of the natural, it shall be completely controlled by the spirit. In many ways this enables us to be like the saints now in disembodied state. Now they are, to a great extent, like the angels of God, though immeasurably higher and infinitely nearer to God than they are. John the Patmos Seer introduces us to, at least, one secret of the future state as he saw heaven opened and heard the Voice call him, saying, "Come up hither." Immediately he was in heaven.<sup>46</sup> Quicker than the mind can travel from earth to heaven, we shall be able to travel in the spiritual body.

The things we shall be able to do in our spiritual bodies surpass our present comprehension. The eye hath not seen, nor hath the ear heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man the things that God hath prepared for those that love Him. Nevertheless their realities await us.



At the sound of the trump of God we shall embark upon an eternity crowded with ineffable blessedness and infinite glory. Without conjecture or wild imagination playing us false, or providing us with wishful thinking, we may well visualize ourselves being conditioned to a state of absolute perfection. Here are seven things that shall assuredly be true of us then:

Deathlessness shall be ours. The sting of death is extracted; its bitterness is drunk; its power is lost. Even the tears that flowed on earth when death removed a loved one have been wiped away. Life in all its fullness with its endless expansion shall be experienced and enjoyed by us for ever.

Sinlessness shall be ours. We shall not only be sinless, but we shall be both holy and righteous. The very nature and character of God shall be in exhibition through us. That which grieved the heart of God and caused the suffering of Jesus at Calvary will be eternally absent from us and from the scene in which we shall dwell eternally.

Endlessness shall be ours. Eternal life, upon which the shadow of death shall never fall, shall be our portion. To live amidst the glories of heaven, to dwell with the Holy Trinity—Father, Son and Holy Spirit—, to fellowship with the saints of all ages whether they occupy the new heaven or the new earth, and to company with angelic beings of every order shall be our joy and rejoicing throughout all ages.

Painlessness shall be ours. "There shall be no more pain."<sup>47</sup> All that is sinful and mortal shall be history. The things that precipitate and perpetuate pain shall be no more. In their place shall be those things that shall provide us with perennial health and strength. Never an ache anywhere in the spiritual body while the days of eternity roll along in their unspent courses.

Tirelessness shall be ours. In that day there shall be no necessity to sit on a well because of being wearied with the journey, to sleep on the hinder part of a boat to give rest to the eyelids and body, to eat and drink to replenish the body with physical strength, to exercise the body to keep it perfectly fit. We shall be, in many respects, like unto God. Then shall we mount up with wings as eagles, then shall we run and not be weary; then shall we walk and not faint.<sup>48</sup> What a prospect!

Fearlessness shall be ours. All fear shall be gone. Indeed, the things that create fear shall be absent, so we shall enjoy the blessedness of perfect peace. It shall be true of us then, as it cannot be true today in its fullest measure, that we shall wholly trust the Lord. All that we are and have shall be committed unto Him, and He shall be in supreme control. His peace, the peace of uncreated Deity, calmer than the greatest calm ever known in the creation, shall be ours.

Christ-likeness shall be ours. Every moral and physical perfection of Christ shall be imparted at the sound of the trumpet. "We shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is."<sup>49</sup> Then shall we stand upon the crystal sea and behold our Christ reflected by us. As the "Firstborn among many brethren,"<sup>50</sup> He is the Pattern Man into whose image God will conform us. Thus shall God fulfill His purposes of grace and glory on our behalf and for His own eternal praise.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### SAINTS THAT NEVER DIE

**T**HE RETURN OF CHRIST to receive His blood-bought people shall be a moment of supreme delight to them, but it shall be a moment of even greater delight to Him. Whatever their joy, His shall exceed. In all things He must have the pre-eminence.

Centuries ago, when the fulness of the time was come,<sup>1</sup> the Christ of God came forth from the ineffable glory to become identified with the human race. From Bethlehem's manger He emerged to eventually surrender His life for the redemption of His people. A few hours before He journeyed back to the eternal Throne, He took His disciples aside and gave them His immortal promise: "In My Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again; and receive you unto Myself, that where I am, there ye may be also."<sup>2</sup>

Now the time has come for Him to make good His promise. Those for whom He died and for whose preservation He had prayed would now join Him as His companions forever. The glory He had received from His Father He would share with them.<sup>3</sup> What an experience for Him! Here He shall see of the travail of His soul and be abundantly satisfied. His joy shall know no bounds.

### Heaven's Denizens Alerted

It is no exaggeration to say that this event shall alert all heaven's denizens. How could it be otherwise? Angels of every order shall be called to attention and be ready to play their part in the grand home-coming of the saints with their Savior. Those angels were present at creation's dawn and shouted their acclamations of praise.<sup>4</sup> They were eye-witnesses of their Creator's humiliation when He vacated His Throne to take His place among cattle and men. Their voices were heard over Bethlehem's plains saying, "Glory to God in the Highest, and on earth peace, good-will toward men."<sup>5</sup> To them was given the charge of this One all through His earthly life. "He shall give His angels charge over Thee," says the Psalmist, "to keep Thee in all Thy ways. . . ."<sup>6</sup> When He returned from Calvary's battle-ground by way of Joseph of Arimathea's tomb, they stood by to carry Him up into heaven as the eternal Victor.<sup>7</sup> They heard the Father speak to His Son, saying, "Sit Thou at My right hand until I make Thine enemies Thy footstool."<sup>8</sup> Finally, they beheld the Father salute His Son with these words, "Thou art a Priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec."<sup>9</sup> How ludicrous, to say the least, to think that they shall be left out on the occasion of the Bridegroom's arrival in heaven with His beloved, beautiful Bride.

Most assuredly the saints, already in His presence in an unclothed state, shall be fully aware of the event. They shall be sharers in the divine secret. Indeed, they are destined to play an important role in this transcendently majestic affair. This is the time for them to experience resurrection. Their corrupt bodies must take on incorruption. This means that their unclothed spirits shall unite with their bodies and come forth as participators in the first resurrection—the resurrection unto life.<sup>10</sup> Now shall they realize their life-long hope

and the pledged redemption of their body. As risen, perfected, glorified ones they shall be in readiness to ascend the skies to meet their precious Lord.

### **Departed Saints Have Priority**

It is blessed to know that God gives His people who die priority in everything. They are given experiences never shared by those saints alive when Jesus comes. It is a great comfort to those who mourn their loss to know that this is the departed saints' gain and the "far better" portion like the tree cast into the bitter waters that makes them sweet.<sup>11</sup>

When saints depart this scene to be with Christ we know that, Lazarus-like, they are carried by the angels into the bosom of eternal glory.<sup>12</sup> Those angels have been ministering to them ever since their birth and, now that their earthly life is ended, they complete their assignment by taking them home.<sup>13</sup> What an experience for those saints! Yet, when you quietly consider the whole matter, how else would they reach home? They know not the way, but angels do! Here is God's omniscient provision for their safe arrival.

The time element involved in this transition from earth to glory must be an experience beyond expression. John, the Apocalyptic Seer, lets us into this secret. He says that the time incurred between his leaving the body in the Patmos prison until he reached the Throne-room of the heavens was "immediately."<sup>14</sup> That is time-indivisible. That is quicker than those saints have ever traveled!

It is not our present purpose to enter into the details of how the New Testament draws aside the curtain that separates the seen from the unseen worlds to show what goes on inside the veil, in that place of infinite grace and glory, but Paul does refer to it as "home." Writing to the Corinthian saints he says, "We are willing rather to be absent from the

body, and to be present with the Lord.”<sup>15</sup> The word “present” is literally the word used for “home.” How wonderful for our brethren and sisters in Christ to be there! They have no sense of feeling strange in those surroundings or of being strangers amongst heaven’s celebrities. God so fits them upon their arrival that they are perfectly at ease and they conduct themselves as if they had known no other realm. No introductions are required as they meet the Savior, or any of the saints, or any of the angels whether an archangel, a seraph, a cherub, or any other being. They have perfect knowledge of everybody there.

They have perfect freedom from bodily encumbrances, hindrances, and limitations. Paul glimpsed this condition, and to his beloved Philippians said, “I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better.”<sup>16</sup> The word “depart” is a maritime word used of a ship anchored in the harbor. The Apostle desires to move out of the body as an anchor is lifted into a ship to let it sail out to sea, so that he shall be free to go into the presence of his Lord to enjoy Him without hindrance. He desires to be out of time into eternity, out of the body with all its hindrances and limitations into an unclothed state, out of a world where he was a stranger, into where he belonged in his home sweet home.

### **Visions And Revelations**

It must be conceded that Paul was specially privileged. He was actually taken to heaven but did not know whether he was in, or out, of the body. If out of the body, it did not hinder him from enjoying the visions and revelations; if in the body, it did not help him any. The fact he stresses is that he was there. These visions and revelations were so wonderful that human language was inadequate to describe



them.<sup>17</sup> What a soul-thrilling experience! Yet that is exactly what the departed saints are experiencing this very moment. They are so conditioned to the scene that they can absorb everything God reveals to them. Their joy is full; for "In Thy presence is fullness of joy, and at Thy right hand are pleasures for evermore."<sup>18</sup>

The purpose of God in translating John to heaven was to show him the things which shall be hereafter, or the pattern of future world-events.<sup>19</sup> He was enabled to visualize the whole program of God for the Church, Israel, the nations, Satan and his satellites, and the creation at large. "The Apocalypse" which gives us these things has been interpreted by the Holy Spirit to each succeeding generation with a timely message. Today, we stand on the threshold of the final fulfillment of these great prophecies and behold the stage being set. What about the saints in heaven? Without question they behold with even greater eagerness, delight, and clarity the unfolding of the divine plans. This must consume their interest and provoke deep thanksgivings to God. As they see through the eyes of their God, they appreciate how all things are working after the counsel of His will.

Now that they have become partakers of the resurrection victory of Christ and shared in the out-resurrection from among the dead, they have had experiences living saints shall never know.<sup>20</sup> As Jesus experienced the intermediate state and a triumphant resurrection, so do they. They surely have an enviable portion with a luster and a cluster of rewards eternity shall never efface.

### **The Mystery Revealed**

The question is now raised as to what happens to the living saints when Jesus returns. The Psalmist long ago had asked, "What man is he that liveth and shall not see death?

Shall he deliver his soul from the hand of the grave?"<sup>21</sup> God has the answer. He lifts the veil of secrecy and reveals the mystery. Here it is: "Behold, I show you a mystery," says Paul, "We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed."<sup>22</sup>

It is crystal clear in the light of this revelation that Jesus had this truth in mind on, at least, two occasions during His earthly ministry. In His memorable conversation with Martha of Bethany He said, "I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die."<sup>23</sup> He was here projecting His mind into the future when at His return the dead saints would be raised to life and the living saints would never die.

The second occasion was when He spoke with Peter vividly portraying his martyrdom. He made clear that Peter would die and that his death would be for the glory of God. "Then Peter, turning about, seeth the disciple whom Jesus loved following...and saith to Jesus, 'Lord, and what shall this man do?' Jesus saith unto him, 'If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee, follow thou Me.'"<sup>24</sup> When the word of Jesus to Peter was heard by the brethren they interpreted it to mean that John would never die, but their interpretation was altogether wrong. Jesus simply meant that if it were His will for John to be alive when He returned then John would never die. Evidently it was not the divine will, so John died. Nevertheless, the inference is present in the statement which suggests that some saints shall be alive when He comes, according to the will of God.

These sayings of Jesus both to Martha and Peter were

recorded many years after Paul wrote to the Corinthians. Their implicate is well understood by us since we are in the full light of all that shall take place at the coming of the Lord. We have a blessed portion that the early Christians did not have in the perfect revelation of God in the Holy Scriptures.

The mystery revealed declares that "We shall not all sleep," or, we shall not all go to the cemetery.<sup>25</sup> There shall be a segment of the Church of God that shall never see death. Their mortal bodies shall be swallowed up of life. How thrillingly grand to be alive when Jesus comes!

### **Saints Initiated Into Secret**

There is a strong suggestion, borrowed from sacred history, that the saints ordained to be alive when Jesus comes shall be initiated into the secret of the time when it shall happen. This, in no way, establishes a time-limit. Indeed, the time-element is quite unimportant, whether short or long. The fact remains, as we shall see, that the evidences in favor of this information being revealed are overwhelming.

The parable of the ten virgins records four points of time. There is, first of all, the time when the Bridegroom went on high and the virgins went forth to meet Him. The universal consensus of belief pin-points the time as in the first century when the early Church eagerly anticipated the Bridegroom's return. This is followed by the statement that the Bridegroom tarried and all the virgins slumbered and slept. There is no question about the time being the dark Middle Ages when the truth of the Bridegroom's return was virtually lost. Midnight is next on the agenda when a cry was made, "Behold, the Bridegroom cometh, go ye out to meet Him," which brings us to the middle of the nineteenth century when the truth of the Lord's return was

recovered and believers began to expect Him at any moment. Finally, the Bridegroom came, according to the parable, which carries us forward to the time when He will come to take the virgins into the Kingdom.<sup>26</sup>

Ever since the twentieth century dawned there has been a keen sense of expectancy for the Lord's return on the part of many Christians. This expectancy has been accentuated by the advent of the Atomic and Space Age. Almost every Christian today is aware that the end of the Church Age is within sight. The belief persists, rightly or wrongly, that the generation lives that shall never die. What a moment in which to live! What if the Holy Spirit should break in upon our consciousness with the soul-thrilling truth that Jesus will come in our life-time!

### **Enoch And Elijah**

In antediluvian times when the sentence of death was being carried out on the entire human family, the Lord spoke plainly to Enoch and told him that he would be the one exception and would never die.<sup>27</sup> Indeed, He made it clear that he would be raptured alive into heaven. The patriarch believed God and for the balance of his life cherished the promise in his heart. Here is what the inspired writer wrote almost two thousand years later: "By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated Him. . . ."<sup>28</sup> We know that "faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."<sup>29</sup> It was the good pleasure of God to inform Enoch well in advance of his rapture to heaven.

Elijah was the second, and last, man in both Old and New Testament times to experience removal from earth to heaven without passing through death. It must be noted that in his case God did something more than he did with

Enoch. He gave him to understand that he would not only be deferred from death but that, on a specific day, he would be translated to heaven. Scripture is silent as to who communicated this information to Elisha and to the sons of the prophets both at Bethel and Jericho, but they all knew. As God had promised, so He performed. On the very day specified, Elijah "went up by a whirlwind into heaven."<sup>30</sup> What wonderful grace and consideration on the part of God! What a remarkably privileged man!

### **Simeon And The Disciples**

As we step forward into the New Testament we hail the first advent of Jesus our Lord. There, too, we meet a godly remnant in Israel waiting for Messiah's manifestation. Among that remnant Simeon is singled out for special blessing. We read of him that "the Holy Ghost was upon him," and that it was "revealed unto him by the Holy Ghost that he should not see death, before he had seen the Lord's Christ." This aged saint led by the Holy Ghost took Jesus in his arms, blessed God, and said, "Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace, according to Thy word, for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation."<sup>31</sup> He was under the complete control of the Holy Ghost, and here was his special reward.

Some thirty years later, when the Lord had grown to manhood and was engaged in His public ministry, He told His disciples that some of them would not taste of death until they had seen the Son of Man coming in His Kingdom. Then we read, "After six days Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart, and was transfigured before them."<sup>32</sup> There they saw His glory and a miniature of the coming Kingdom. Peter testifies to this fact for he says that they saw the power and coming of the Lord Jesus Christ when they were with Him



in the Holy Mount.<sup>33</sup> Divine sovereignty chose those favored three disciples for this unique revelation.

“Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope,”<sup>34</sup> so says the precious Word of God. We take it then that God’s dealings with Enoch, Elijah, Simeon, and the three disciples have a special lesson for us who are to be raptured to heaven. Our God very graciously and considerately revealed what He was about to do in their lives and life-time. “The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him; and He will show them His covenant.”<sup>35</sup> Abraham experienced this confidence. “The Lord said, ‘Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do . . . ?’ ”,<sup>36</sup> then to him was communicated the fate of Sodom. It is written, “Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but He revealeth His secret unto His servants the prophets.”<sup>37</sup> Should it be considered unreasonable to believe, in the light of these things, that the Holy Spirit shall reveal to the saints that are predestined not to die the truth about the immediacy of their Lord’s return?

### **Servant And Bridegroom**

At once a query is raised. What did the Lord mean when He said, “But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels, neither the Son, but the Father?”<sup>38</sup>

In the first place it should be understood that Mark presents Jesus as Jehovah’s perfect Servant. It was Jesus Who said, “Ye are My friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you. Henceforth I call you not servants, for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of My Father I have made known unto you.”<sup>39</sup> As Jehovah’s Servant, therefore, He did not know the day nor the hour of His coming. He



waits upon His God for instructions as to when the hour shall strike for His return.

On the other hand the Lord is not speaking about His coming for His Bride, the Church; but rather His coming as Jehovah's Servant to establish the Kingdom on earth. There is a tremendous difference between Jesus as the Heavenly Bridegroom and as Jehovah's Servant. Indeed, the difference needs no explanation. As the Servant-Son He shall receive the Kingdom from His Father God. At the conclusion of Kingdom days, when all things are subjected 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."<sup>40</sup>

The coming of the Bridegroom for His Bride entails no such implications. Indeed, the portion which details the past, present, and future relationship between the Bridegroom and the Bride places the entire responsibility of everything upon Him. Here is the complete text: "Christ also loved the Church, and gave Himself for it: that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the Word, that He might present it to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing: but that it should be holy and without blemish."<sup>41</sup>

A lucid foreshadowing of Christ and His Bride is given in the experience of Isaac and Rebekah. Abraham, Isaac's father, charged his servant, under oath, with the full responsibility of selecting and securing a bride for his son. After a long journey he found her, gave her the pledge of all she would receive when united with Isaac in matrimony, then accompanied her across the sands of the desert. When they were within easy reach of their destination we read that "Isaac went out to meditate in the field in the eventide: and lifted up his eyes, and saw, and behold, the camels were coming.

And Rebekah lifted up her eyes, and when she saw Isaac, she lighted off her camel. For she had said unto the servant, "What man is this that walketh in the field to meet us? And the servant said, 'It is my master!': therefore she took a veil, and covered herself. . . . And Isaac brought her into his mother Sarah's tent, and he took Rebekah, and she became his wife, and he loved her.' "42

One of the truths peculiar to this dispensation is the presence of the Holy Spirit. He came on the Day of Pentecost to initiate the Church Age and to select a Bride for the Son of the Father, the Lord Jesus.<sup>43</sup> Now Scripture teaches that the Holy Spirit is God, one of the Holy Trinity.<sup>44</sup> This gives Him equality with both the Father and the Son with the prerogatives of Deity; Omnipotence, Omnipresence, and Omniscience. His special work is to select the Bride, to instruct and direct her while she is on earth and at long last to present her to the heavenly Isaac, the Bridegroom. As the servant revealed the secret about Isaac before Rebekah met him, the Bride of Christ may not expect less. The Omniscience of the Holy Spirit predicates His perfect knowledge of all the divine purposes including the exact moment when the Bridegroom shall return for His Bride. It seems improbable, therefore, that He shall withhold this invaluable information from her especially when she is about to see Him face to face.

There is a very definite attachment and affinity between the Holy Spirit and the Bride. This we recognize in the closing chapter of the Bible. There Jesus speaks for the last time and says, "I am the Bright and Morning Star."<sup>45</sup> This is His title in relation to His Bride. He is coming for her, in accord with His title, to introduce her to the realms of the everlasting day—the full light of God. At once there is a response, "The Spirit and the Bride say, 'Come.' "46

The outworking of this presentation and response awaits the time immediately preceding the meeting in the air.

### **Effects Far Reaching**

It is almost inconceivable to realize the change that shall take place in the hearts and lives of the saints when the communication of Christ's immediate return is made, but they shall understand, like Enoch and Elijah, that they shall never die. The effects shall be far-reaching and will touch everybody everywhere.

The first effect shall be a purification of all known sin. "Without holiness no man shall see the Lord."<sup>47</sup> The Holy Spirit shall so reveal Christ that sin shall be obnoxious, abhorrent, exceeding sinful. Saints shall not be able to bear any contact with it, or carry it in their hearts, The precious cleansing blood shall be known in its efficacy and efficiency. Oh, the relief of that burden! Oh, the joy of that freedom!

What else could we expect? The revelation of Christ has always this effect upon the people of God. Moses took his shoes off his feet when he had his encounter with Deity at the burning bush.<sup>48</sup> Isaiah saw his sinfulness and experienced cleansing when he beheld Jehovah Jesus upon the Throne.<sup>49</sup> John, the Seer of Patmos, and Daniel the prophet became as dead men when they gazed upon the Ancient of Days in all of His glory.<sup>50</sup>

The second effect shall be profound heart-affection for the Lord Jesus. He shall be worshipped and adored by the saints in the beauty of holiness. Every unworthy desire and all the ties that bind to this world shall be sundered completely. There shall be such a passionate love for Christ that it shall know no measure. The saints shall experience "joy unspeakable and full of glory."<sup>51</sup> Christ shall be their all and in all.

The third effect shall be an imparted fearlessness that shall make the saints afraid of neither demon, devil, nor man. They shall be possessed by a Holy Ghost boldness never before experienced by them. This boldness shall send them forth into an ungodly world to proclaim the Glad Tidings in a way hitherto unknown by them. The results shall be tremendous, far in advance of anything experienced in early Pentecostal times. Then there were but 120 people filled with the Holy Ghost; now there shall be believers in all parts of the world. What an impact upon the world at large! It could very well be the plan of God to ignite the fires of revival which are prophesied to sweep the nations in post-rapture days under the ministry of the godly remnant.<sup>52</sup>

### **No Surprise**

For saints to know that Jesus is about to come, and that they shall never die, shall assuredly bring them into the fullness of the blessing of the divine anointing. Like the cleansed leper we have the anointed ear to hear the Master's voice, the anointed hand to do the Master's service, and the anointed foot to walk in the Master's footsteps.<sup>53</sup> God, the Holy Spirit, has both sealed and anointed us, so that we may appropriate and appreciate the promises of God.<sup>54</sup> John, too, makes it clear that we have received the anointing of the Holy Spirit.<sup>55</sup> Yet despite all that God in sovereign grace has given us, we have failed miserably to respond to all He has for us.

It could be that God intends to end the Church Age as He began it: not by an outpouring of the Holy Spirit, but by the Holy Spirit simply taking hold of us to make good His purpose. He has come to be with us forever. Whether He shall give us much time to realize all He has for us, or whether He shall perform His gracious work in the quickest

of time is His secret, but the fact remains He must and will work in us supernaturally at the time Jesus comes.

Probably the greatest sin of our hearts is that we do not allow Him this privilege right now. He wants to purify us, He wants to make Christ precious to our hearts, He wants to use us in bringing precious souls to Christ. Surely in view of the Lord's imminent return there should be an absolute surrender of ourselves to Him! This shall allow Him the privilege of fulfilling His good pleasure in and through us.

The Bridegroom's coming for His Bride shall be no surprise. That is unthinkable, untenable, unreasonable, unnatural. An earthly bride is not treated in this manner. Why should we ever think, let alone believe, that the Bride of the Lamb shall be subjected to be taken unawares? The blessed Spirit of God does not purpose to have it so. He plans to tune her ear to hear her Bridegroom's voice. He will have her on the tip-toe of expectancy. So when He says, "Rise up, My love, My fair one, and come away. For lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone," she will move towards Him.<sup>56</sup> His voice will ravish her heart. "In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye," she shall be changed into His image and likeness.<sup>57</sup> The beauty of the Bridegroom shall be hers. In every way, inwardly and outwardly, physically and spiritually, she shall be like Him.

It is the prerogative of the Holy Spirit to open our ears to hear the voice of God. He did it at conversion's day in exactly the same way as He worked with Saul of Tarsus. Saul heard articulate words but "the men that journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing a voice, but seeing no man."<sup>58</sup> Once more, and for the last time on earth, He will open our ears to hear Jesus say, "Come up hither."<sup>59</sup> Salvation from first to last, whether it be our conversion, our moral trans-



formation into the likeness of Christ, or our glorification is all of God. "Salvation is of the Lord."<sup>60</sup> Hallelujah!

On that grand resurrection morning the saints shall stand together and lift up their voices and sing, "O death, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be unto God which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."<sup>61</sup> This is our last song sung on earth. Our hearts are flooded with the joy of heaven whither we are bound. We sing of victory won and we sing the Victor's praise. Now we are ready to mount the skies to meet our adorable Lord.

Yet this Corinthian chapter does not present our rapture. It simply states the truth about the resurrection of Christ and His own and then proceeds to exhort us with these words: "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, for as much as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord."<sup>62</sup>

Surely the implicate is clear! In the light of all we have been told about the coming Lord, and our changed physical condition, we should be inspired to stedfast, sacrificial service for the Lord. The Holy Spirit who is going to effect the change is with us, and in us, to help us give effect to this exhortation. How we should be filled with power divine and go out to proclaim the glad tidings of redeeming love to our fellows everywhere! May we truly press forward to achieve the end for which we were saved.

"Oh, to be like Him, gloriously like Him  
And in His beauty to shine!  
Oh, to be like Him, gloriously like Him  
Jesus, my Savior divine!"



## CHAPTER FIVE

### OUR REDEEMED BODIES

**T**HERE IS NO CONTROVERSY ANYWHERE about man being the master-piece of the Creator. He is altogether different from either angels or beasts. After the reconstruction of the earth, God created man in His own image and likeness. This was done after divine consultation when the Trinity in unity said, "Let Us make man."<sup>1</sup> As God looked upon him, and the works of His hands, He volunteered His good pleasure in all.<sup>2</sup>

It was the divine intention that man should represent God both morally, governmentally and personally. Morally, he was to be a replica of Him as to His nature and character, love and righteousness; governmentally, he was to exercise dominion over all creatures in the lower creation; and personally, he was ever to be like Him, the Triune God, possessing spirit, and soul, and body.

Adam's rebellion against divinely constituted authority in Eden automatically placed him under the control of Satan, the rebel.<sup>3</sup> At once his moral characteristics were adversely affected by the presence of sin while his power and authority in the exercise of dominion were drastically weakened. His composite being, however, was untouched, though in due time the sentence of death would be executed as the wages of sin.<sup>4</sup>

### **A Tripartite Personality**

Man as a tripartite personality is difficult to analyze, but broadly speaking, his spirit gives him a God-consciousness, his soul gives him self-consciousness, and his body gives him world-consciousness. Dr. H. A. Ironside very tersely but ably states that "the body is the outward man. The spirit and the soul together constitute the inward man. The spirit is the seat of the intellectual being, a distinct entity. The soul is the seat of man's emotional nature. These two, spirit and soul, are never separated. Scripture alone distinguishes them: that is, it shows us that they are distinct, but it does not separate them. All men created consist of spirit, and soul, and body."<sup>5</sup>

Obviously, man's sin sundered his communion with God. The moment he sinned he died spiritually so that his race is said to be "dead in trespasses and sins."<sup>6</sup> In the immortal parable of the prodigal son, Jesus says that upon the prodigal's return the father declared, "My son was dead, and is alive again."<sup>7</sup> He also made clear that sinful man is dead and in need of life. His own words are: "The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live."<sup>8</sup> Unless God moves sovereignly, man shall remain spiritually dead eternally. Indeed, the Seer of Patmos testifies that he saw man being cast into the lake of fire, which is the second death, or conscious existence in separation from God.<sup>9</sup>

It is right here, however, that God acts in sovereign grace towards fallen man. As He came down from heaven to Eden's freshly soiled scene in search of Adam, so in the fullness of time, He became incarnate for the express purpose of seeking and saving the lost.<sup>10</sup> When Jesus died at Calvary, He paid the price of man's redemption—a price God

accepted. Of this we are assured, for He raised Him from the dead. The vacant sepulchre is the vindication of a vicarious sacrifice.<sup>11</sup> Now, in virtue of that finished work, lost man can be found,<sup>12</sup> alienated man can be reconciled,<sup>13</sup> man in danger of hell can be saved for heaven,<sup>14</sup> and a dead man can be made alive.<sup>15</sup>

One of the marvels and wonders of God's salvation for man is that He provides adequately for each part of his personality. In other words His salvation is for man's spirit, his soul, and his body. Scripture clearly emphasizes that we are redeemed,<sup>16</sup> that we are forgiven all trespasses,<sup>17</sup> that we are saved,<sup>18</sup> that we are justified,<sup>19</sup> that we are accepted in the Beloved,<sup>20</sup> and that we shall be conformed into the image of His Son.<sup>21</sup> There is total coverage here. Each part of our personality is equally stressed by Him.

### **Salvation Of The Spirit**

Our interest mounts as we consider the plan of salvation in its relation to our entire life from birth to glorification. As we survey the plan broadly, and the word "broadly" is used advisedly here, we glimpse what is being achieved in our experience when we witness the Savior at work. How illuminating is Mark's account of the Saviorship of Jesus as he portrays Him working with three different individuals and as he puts a distinct emphasis on the different parts of the personality.<sup>22</sup> Let us examine Mark's account.

First on the agenda for blessing is the demon-possessed man.<sup>23</sup> One look at him shows that his mind is deranged, he is a raving lunatic under the control of demon power, and beyond human aid. His basic trouble is that his spirit is dethroned; it is no longer in control. When Jesus appears with delivering power which overthrows the demons He

instantly put the man's spirit on the throne of his being so that he sits at His feet in his right mind.

This is, unquestionably, the salvation of the spirit and predicates what happened at conversion's day when we met Jesus. By the dynamic of the Gospel He set our spirits free from the authority of Satan and put them in direct relationship with God. Immediately we became the children of God.<sup>24</sup> "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God."<sup>25</sup> Our relationship with God is both indestructible and eternal. "He that is joined unto the Lord," says Paul, "is one spirit."<sup>26</sup> Since the spirit cannot die, we assume the relationship cannot be dissolved.

### **Salvation Of The Soul**

Next for blessing is the woman with the issue of blood.<sup>27</sup> We do well to note that she went to Jesus and touched the hem of His garment. This voluntary, faith-like act brought her immediate and perfect healing.

"The life of the flesh is in the blood."<sup>28</sup> There is therefore the strong suggestion that this woman's salvation represents the salvation of the soul, or life. It covers the life we now live. Apparently, she tried everything and everyone for betterment but rather grew worse. Finally, she found the solution for her problem in Jesus. How true this is to human experience! We imagine we have to save ourselves, that the salvation of our life is a real self-effort,<sup>29</sup> but this leaves us crying like Paul: "O wretched man that I am. Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"<sup>30</sup> Deliverance came to him, and will come to us, when we touch the Man in glory, the Lord Jesus Christ. Looking up to Him, and in simple faith appropriating Him as our Deliverer, we shall experience deliverance from the power of indwelling sin.

This deliverance from sin's power means neither eradication nor suppression. Eradication is never experienced this side of the Lord's return; suppression is never satisfactory deliverance. Deliverance is couched in these words: "Sin shall not have dominion over you."<sup>31</sup> Again, "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live: yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, Who loved me, and gave Himself for me."<sup>32</sup>

### Salvation Of Body

Last of all, in Mark 5 we meet the daughter of Jairus.<sup>33</sup> She lies dead in her parents' home. Naturally, it was not her spirit nor her soul, but her body, that had come under this dreaded power. On the arrival of Jesus, the Resurrection and the Life,<sup>34</sup> He speaks the Word and out of death she comes up to be greeted by her parents.

The implicate of this miracle is inescapable. The resurrection of the body is an absolute necessity to a perfect, complete salvation. Nothing less than this could or would ever satisfy us. Our bodies must be changed to suit us for the celestial regions and to free us from every trace of sin. Indeed, were this not accomplished, salvation would be imperfect and God would be indicted with defeat. He has purposed that at the return of His Son the "dead in Christ shall rise first,"<sup>35</sup> then we who are alive and remain shall be changed from mortality into immortality;<sup>36</sup> which shall give to all of us a condition of deathlessness.

Here is the occasion when our God shall realize His perfect image and likeness in us. We shall be transformed into the image of His Son and made in every detail like Him. "We shall be like Him," says John, "for we shall see Him as He is."<sup>37</sup> Every moral feature seen in Christ shall be ours.

God shall make us as like His Son as Almighty Power can do.

Governmentally, too, we shall satisfy God. Nevermore shall we usurp authority or sell out to the adversary of God. To be like Christ means that we shall be as in-lawed to God as He has always been. He always did those things which pleased the Father.<sup>38</sup> Because of this, there shall be given to us absolute power and authority to rule in realms both celestial and terrestrial with all created intelligences under our sway.<sup>39</sup>

Personally, we shall be freed from everything that is contrary to the nature and character of God. We shall be in perfect harmony with all the divine attributes and shall respond to every desire of His great heart. Perhaps Paul expresses this best in these soul-rapturing words: "Blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: according as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love: having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will."<sup>40</sup> Here we are truly *in Him* and *with Him* glorified, in the presence of uncreated Deity without blame and before Him in love, and enjoying the place of sons. There is nothing beyond this. Spirit and soul and body are in perfect conformity to the divine purpose and are fashioned by God for His, as well as for our, own eternal pleasure.

### **Christ's Second Advent In Romans Eight**

It must be conceded that Christianity is primarily concerned with our present life. Its revelation is to enable us to answer to the mind of God here and now. Yet, when we have said that, we are perfectly aware that we would be left



bereft of hope did it not visualize a blessed, soul-thrilling future. For this very reason the Second Advent of Christ is made the focal point, or the ultimate, of practically every truth revealed in Scripture. It is then that God shall fit us physically, as well as morally, for the realization of His vast purposes of grace and glory.

This truth comes to light in a very conspicuous way in the concluding chapter of the great doctrinal section of the Roman Epistle.<sup>41</sup> God, in his summation of man, says: "All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God."<sup>42</sup> Then He brings His provision into focus thus: "Jesus our Lord . . . was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification."<sup>43</sup> As a result of this work we are shown to be at peace with God, to have access to God, to rejoice in the hope of the glory of God, to have the love of God shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit, to be saved by God, to be reconciled to God, and to joy in God.<sup>44</sup> This galaxy of blessings is followed by the revelation that we are united with Christ, the Last Adam, as our New Head instead of with the First Adam;<sup>45</sup> that we are under Christ, our New Master instead of under sin;<sup>46</sup> that we are married to Christ, our New Husband, instead of bound by the law.<sup>47</sup>

Now comes the climax when God makes four distinct statements in Romans 8 about the return of Christ to consummate His purpose in relation to our glorification. The chapter divides itself into five parts.

### **Quickening Of The Body**

The first part unfolds two complimentary truths: our being "in Christ" which exempts us from all condemnation,<sup>48</sup> and our being "in the Spirit" which renders the body "dead because of sin," and puts us in readiness for the Spirit's final quickening."<sup>49</sup>

This quickening must not be taken to mean any present divine action to help our physical infirmities. Such help is ministered from time to time as occasion serves. The quickening here refers to that act of God, the Holy Spirit, which shall never need repetition. It is eternal life imparted to the body—something that is permanent. Paul elsewhere reveals that it is "mortality swallowed up of life."<sup>50</sup> The power of the Holy Spirit that raised up Jesus from the dead is that which shall be utilized to quicken our mortal bodies.

Eternal life was bestowed upon us when we received Christ. "The gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."<sup>51</sup> John puts it thus: "God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He that hath the Son hath life."<sup>52</sup> In his Gospel John quotes Jesus Himself saying, "He that heareth My Word, and believeth in Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life."<sup>53</sup> That was for our possession in the inner man; but now the Holy Spirit will impart this same life to the outer, or physical, man. Thus shall we become vehicles of life.

What a distinct change from "the body of this death!"<sup>54</sup> Ever and always we carry with us that sinful nature which constantly threatens us with its wages.<sup>55</sup> Oftentimes it cuts down its victim with terrifying suddenness, with others it imparts physical burdens almost too heavy to bear. Sooner or later death claims the body but not so after Jesus comes. The Spirit, Who is life because of righteousness, shall then impart that principle of life to us which shall eternally garrison us from everything sinful or destructive.<sup>56</sup> Here we shall be fitted to dwell in the presence of Him Who is Life and from Whose Throne flows the water of life. Then shall we sing, "How excellent is Thy loving-kindness, O God! therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of Thy

wings. They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of Thy house; and thou shalt make them drink of the river of Thy pleasure. For with Thee is the fountain of life: in Thy light we shall see light."<sup>57</sup>

### **Glorified With Christ**

Part two, which embraces verses twelve through seventeen of Romans 8, details our relationship with God as children and our adoption as sons. As sons we cry "Abba, Father;" as children, the Holy Spirit witnesses to our relationship. This involves heirship, for "if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ."<sup>58</sup> Another involvement is immediately noted because of our divine union and identity of nature with Christ: "If so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together."<sup>59</sup>

All genuinely born-again ones suffer "with" Christ. It could not be otherwise. We possess His nature which is holy and righteous and which stands forth in eternal contrast with the old nature still within us which is unholy and unrighteous. The two are in conflict all the time. There is never a truce or armistice. The divine nature also puts us at variance with the world system which is controlled by "the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience."<sup>60</sup> Indeed, by reason of our union with Christ we are "strangers and pilgrims" in this scene.<sup>61</sup> How quickly we resent evil of every kind! In its very presence we immediately feel its defiling influence and naturally take recourse into the presence of Him who keeps on cleansing us with the washing of the water by the Word.<sup>62</sup> We are quite aware that "the world knoweth us not, because it knew Him not."<sup>63</sup>

To suffer "for" Christ is altogether different. This is

something many born-again ones do not. They are not prepared to take their stand for Christ in the midst of an evil and perverse generation. They permit golden opportunities to escape them when they could be used in testimony for Him; the cost is too great. Their prestige or worldly position may be jeopardized, or business transactions might suffer. They simply will not suffer loss for Christ's sake.

God reserves the right to state His plans. He makes it plain that since all saints suffer with Christ, they shall all be glorified together. That is heartening news. Were it not as God says, then there would be a partial rapture; but "we shall all be changed."<sup>64</sup> That goes for every child of God whether faithful or unfaithful; whether or not he suffers "for" Christ.

Glorification is an expression which includes the entire man. It is not only the body that is inferred but the man himself. He shall come under the transforming power of the Holy Spirit; spirit, soul, and body shall be made like unto the Man Christ Jesus.

Our brethren that have departed this life and are at home with the Lord are never said to be glorified. They are in an unclothed state and awaiting the moment of Christ's return when their bodies shall be resurrected, and thus they will experience glorification.<sup>65</sup> This applies to Paul and as well as to all the Apostles.

It is quite improper, therefore, to speak of glorified bodies before the rapture of the saints. The saints who have died are only part of those who shall be transformed into the image of Christ. Only when the trumpet sounds and the Spirit of God releases His power shall all saints enter into the blessedness of glorification.<sup>66</sup> All the moral glory of God as revealed in the lovely, lowly life of Christ shall be dis-

played by all saints then. Something of what awaits us may be seen in the transfiguration scene. There the fashion of Christ's countenance was altered, and His raiment was white and glistening, or as Mark so beautifully puts it, "His raiment became shining, exceeding white as snow; so as no fuller on earth can white them."<sup>67</sup> The beauty of the Lord our God shall be upon us and we shall be the exponents of His glory forever.

### **Redemption Of The Body**

Part three, which introduces the sublime truth of redemption, occupies verses eighteen through twenty three of Romans 8.

Redemption is best understood to mean a purchase price paid for the release of a slave in the market of men. Our God, in the riches of His grace, has purchased us by the blood of His Son out of the slave-market of sin which is controlled by Satan.<sup>68</sup> We had been held captive by him and were so incarcerated that a way of escape was impossible. Indeed, the Psalmist cries: "None of them can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him; for the redemption of the soul is precious . . ."<sup>69</sup> What was and is impossible with men is possible with God. He alone is greater than Satan. At Calvary He bound the strong man so that He might spoil his goods.<sup>70</sup>

This tremendous truth incorporated in our redemption predicates that Jesus is God. For this very reason Peter speaks of the blood He shed as "precious," or priceless.<sup>71</sup> God can and does evaluate our blood, but He cannot place a price tag upon His own. It takes character from Himself. Here Paul helps us, for he says to the elders, "Feed the Church of God, which He hath purchased with His own blood."<sup>72</sup>

So the blood of Christ, the blood of the New Covenant,<sup>73</sup>



the blood that speaketh better things than that of Abel,<sup>74</sup> the blood that cleanses from all sin,<sup>75</sup> the blood that redeems us to God,<sup>76</sup> the blood that gives us full and free forgiveness,<sup>77</sup> the blood that brings us nigh to God,<sup>78</sup> the blood that gives us access into the holiest of all,<sup>79</sup> the blood that gives us everlasting peace,<sup>80</sup> the blood that has secured our spiritual blessings for ever is nothing more or less than the very blood of God. That it why it is priceless.

The redemption of our bodies is assured us in three ways. First, our redemption is "in Christ," as clearly stated, "In Whom we have redemption through His blood."<sup>81</sup> It is well to note the preposition "in" here. Every spiritual blessing is secured in Christ—not one can ever fail—and the redemption of the body is one of them. We can be assured that God shall make bodily resurrection good in accordance with His purpose.

Second, we have the "earnest of the Spirit." Paul uses this expression three times with three distinct truths before him. He uses it in connection with the promises of God,<sup>82</sup> the universal inheritance,<sup>83</sup> and here with the change of body which he calls "our house from heaven."<sup>84</sup> The indwelling Holy Spirit is therefore the divine guarantee of resurrection or the change from mortality to immortality at the Lord's return. Our bodies shall be His habitation for ever.

Thirdly, we have the "first-fruits of the Spirit" in relation to the redemption of all creation,<sup>85</sup> so after our physical redemption is effected, the entire creation shall share in the blessing. We come first on the divine agenda. Here is the exact wording in our portion. "The earnest expectation of the creature (creation) waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. For the creature (creation) was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of Him who hath



subjected the same in hope, because the creature (creation) itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty (or the liberty of the glory) of the children of God."<sup>86</sup>

Our redemption shall leave no trace of imperfection, no further trouble with infirmities, no occasion to experience pain of any description, and no possibility of tears because of either sin or sorrow. The new eternal day shall have dawned for us. At least one thousand years before the new creation is introduced, where righteousness shall dwell and God shall be all in all, it shall be true of us that "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."<sup>87</sup>

### **Image Of His Son**

Part four, ranging from verses twenty-four through thirty of Romans 8, predicates that we are "saved by hope." In the meantime, as we await the final blessing of salvation, we have the Holy Spirit as our indwelling Intercessor who helps us appreciate that "all things work together for good," and for God's glory. This present life is under divine management and control. Every circumstance becomes part of the perfect pattern towards which our God is working.<sup>88</sup>

This truth touched upon immediately brings the purpose of God into view. "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. Moreover whom He did predestinate, them He also called, and whom He called, them He also justified: and whom He justified,

them He also glorified.”<sup>89</sup> Here we are face to face with God’s foreknowledge and predestinating grace in the eternal past, His calling us out of darkness into marvelous light and justifying us freely by His grace in our own life-time, and His plan to glorify us into the image of His Son for the coming ages of the ages.

Observe how the Son is spoken of as “the Firstborn among many brethren.”<sup>90</sup> Nowhere else in Scripture is He given this title. It means that God has set Him apart as the Pattern Man into whose image He will conform all His people. We are going to be like Jesus our Lord. Since He is the vessel of the divine pleasure, the purpose is to people the new Heaven and the new earth with men exactly like Him.

### **God For Us**

Now that we have been quickened into eternal life, and made to share the glory of God with Christ; now that we have experienced redemption and the transformation of the body into the image of God’s Son, we are brought to the last section of chapter 8 of Romans which incorporates verses thirty-one through thirty-nine.

This part presents a series of challenges. As we stand before the universe in perfected condition, it is now apparent to all that God is for us. He gave His Son for us and with Him He has freely given us all things. What more can He do? Are we vulnerable, indictable, condemnable? Is there the slightest possibility of flaw or failure in us as we begin the great eternal future in glorified condition?

“Who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect?”<sup>91</sup> The appeal is directed not so much to created intelligences but to the uncreated Creator, “shall God who justifies?” That is impossible, otherwise it would deprecate the work of

His hands. "We are His workmanship created in Christ Jesus." He is the One who justified us after the sin question was satisfactorily settled at Calvary and evidenced in the resurrection and glorification of Christ. We pass God's all-searching-eye inspection and with His absolute approbation.

"Who shall condemn us?"<sup>92</sup> Is there anyone in the universe that can take up this challenge and find something wherewith we could be condemned? "Shall Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, Who is even at the right hand of God, Who also maketh intercession for us?" How can He condemn us? It is beyond His ability to do so. His work at the Cross and upon the Throne of God forbids it. He lives as the measure of our acceptance. The opening verse of this chapter says, "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus." That settles the matter once for all..

"Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?"<sup>93</sup> Here the Apostle brings in every conceivable person and thing as possible challengers, but all bow out in silence. He declares that "we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us"; He presents his persuasion that nobody and nothing "shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

All this is beautiful and delightful in the extreme. Words fail to express what lies ahead for us after the Lord's return. In our glorified condition the body shall never be subject to dissolution or disintegration. No trace of age shall ever be upon it and no forces either in celestial or terrestrial realms shall adversely affect it. This is looked upon as the "building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."<sup>94</sup> Another passage speaks of it as the "body of glory,"<sup>95</sup> or that which shall be the vehicle for the reflection and radiation of the moral character of Christ.

As the Lord Jesus is in Heaven now, so shall we be. However, one distinction shall be observed by denizens in the universe of bliss. He shall bear the marks of Calvary upon His precious body as the public manifestation of His undying, unquenchable, unchangable love for us. The Lamb freshly slain shall occupy the central place both in the new creation scene and in the affections of His own. With one heart and voice all beings shall ascribe to Him, the worthy One, all "power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing."<sup>96</sup>

What tremendous unfoldings of glories lie beyond the sound of the trumpet! Heaven with its vast, unexplored, infinite inheritance awaits our enjoyment. In that scene of ineffable delight "His servants shall serve Him."<sup>97</sup> There we shall carry out the mandates of His will to the praise of His Name. Never shall He require to reprove us; never shall we misrepresent or fail Him; never shall we cease to find Him our everlasting satisfactory portion. "It doth not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when He shall appear, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is."<sup>98</sup>

## CHAPTER SIX

### HOME IN THE FATHER'S HOUSE ABOVE

**T**HE *RAPTURE OF THE SAINTS* from earth to heaven is an exclusive New Testament revelation. It is never revealed in the Old Testament nor within the confines of the synoptic Gospels. Its very first mention is made by the Gospeller John.<sup>1</sup> Wherever the second advent of Christ is mentioned between Genesis and John it is always with the Kingdom Glorious in mind but never the rapture.

Old Testament prophets and psalmists, even Jesus our Lord with His apostles and prophets, spoke glowingly and exultantly about the Kingdom. They anticipated the hour when world administration would be under the benign and beneficent sway of Israel's Messiah, the King of kings and Lord of lords. Then creation's groans would be silenced, earth's nations, both Jewish and Gentile, would bask in the sunlight of the divine favor, and the rights of God would be acknowledged universally. The Lord Jesus had this hour in mind when He taught His disciples to pray, "Thy Kingdom come."<sup>2</sup>

#### **Rapture—A New Revelation**

At long last the occasion arose, when Jesus was with His disciples in the upper room, that He could disclose the truth about the rapture. This was a secret, hidden in the bosom of God since times eternal, now to be made manifest to them.

He was on the eve of His betrayal, trial, and crucifixion. The hour had struck when He must leave His own and He told them so in no uncertain language. They understood little of what His leaving them would mean and, to put it mildly, they were very much disturbed and confused. It was at this point Jesus tried to put their minds at ease by saying, "Let not your heart be troubled, ye believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself, that where I am, there ye may be also."<sup>3</sup>

I hardly think it fair of us to criticize or question the disciples' mixed emotions. For the moment they seemed stunned and unable to take in the full import of either the Master leaving them or His promised return to escort them to the Father's home above. After all, a totally new revelation was laid before them. So completely were they taken aback by it that the question was asked, "Lord, we know not whither Thou goest; and how can we know the way?"<sup>4</sup> They knew about the Father's house on earth—the Jerusalem Temple<sup>5</sup>—; but the Father's house in heaven was a new concept to them. They understood a little about the Kingdom on earth and looked forward to its inauguration and establishment;<sup>6</sup> but for Jesus to tell them that He was coming back to take them to heaven above had never been whispered before. They heard from Jesus that in the Kingdom they would occupy distinguished places, for, said He, "Ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel."<sup>7</sup> Now, they learn that they must go to the Father's home beforehand. How could they escape being plunged into deep, serious thought as they tried to unravel the future?

The truth about the rapture to heaven put the future



into a new perspective for them. Subsequent revelations on this truth would enable them to reappraise the program of God as it related to them in connection with the days ahead. Until now they had looked upon themselves as part of the godly remnant in Israel whose outlook was towards the Kingdom on earth. They knew, for instance, that Jacob's trouble, or the Great Tribulation, would immediately precede the Kingdom. Jesus Himself had verified this fact in His Olivet Discourse, saying, "Immediately *after* the tribulation of those days, when the sun shall be darkened. . . . then shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven, and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory."<sup>8</sup>

### **Dual Relationship Of Disciples**

Apparently, as far as the disciples were concerned, the program had been changed. Jesus was no longer thinking of them in terms of their being part of the godly Jewish remnant. His language makes this crystal clear. For instance, He tells them in this upper room discourse that during His absence from them they would have the Holy Spirit as their Comforter, Teacher, and Guide.<sup>9</sup> More-over, He Himself would officiate as their Great High Priest in heaven making intercession on their behalf.<sup>10</sup> Then, too, He gave His promise to come again and receive them unto Himself so that He could take them to His Father's home above.<sup>11</sup>

In due time all these truths would be confirmed as the New Testament was completed. Then it would be apparent that in the upper room the disciples had been looked upon as the sons of the Father, members of the Body of Christ, and heirs of the universe. Jesus was revealing to them that while they would retain their distinguished places in the

Kingdom, they would also experience rapture to the Father's Home before hand.

We do well to note this dual relationship which the disciples had with their Lord. For the most part in the synoptic Gospels they are seen as part of the Jewish godly remnant; in the Gospel of John they are treated mainly as Christians, sons of God, and men that form an integral part of the Church of God. As Jews with Jewish aspirations they anticipated the earthly Kingdom; as sons of the Father they looked forward to being with Him in His heavenly home.

It goes without saying that to understand the Gospels aright, as well as God's prophetic program for both Israel and the Church, we must recognize this dual relationship of the disciples, otherwise we shall be utterly confused and fail to differentiate various truths. I believe the distorted ideas propagated by post-tribulation rapturists and post-millennialists, as well as the erroneous doctrines preached by the cults, stem from this failure. They have no conception of the role the Church plays in the divine program, so they consider the Church the same as Israel with the distinguishing difference of Gentiles also being included in the blessing of Abraham.

These people miss the truth about the Church. They have no light beyond that which was shown in the Dark Ages. The major denominations in Christendom are still groping in the dark and moving quickly towards the blackness of darkness. There is no doubt in my mind about their being given over to the great delusion, so soon to envelop Christendom, that they might believe the lie and perish in the avalanche of coming judgment.<sup>12</sup> However, born-again believers in these denominational circles need not be blind to the truth of God. They have been given the Holy Spirit, the Divine Anointing, that they might know the things of God.<sup>13</sup>

### **Israel And The Church**

Before I proceed further, it will be profitable if we stop a moment to consider the nation of Israel and then the Church, so that we might have a clear-cut understanding of their differences in calling, functions, hope, and destiny.

Israel was called by Jehovah that she might know Him and make Him known to the nations as the One and Only True God.<sup>14</sup> To this end there was given her "the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises."<sup>15</sup> All her hopes were bound up in the advent of the Messiah. He came as a "minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers,"<sup>16</sup> but "He was despised and rejected of men."<sup>17</sup> The nation ruthlessly crucified Him, saying, "We will not have this Man to reign over us."<sup>18</sup> Daniel prophesied of this event saying, "He was cut off and had nothing," that is, His crown and Kingdom were not given Him.<sup>19</sup> Instead of occupying the Throne of David, God raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His own right hand in heaven. Now Israel's hopes, still bound up in her Messiah, await His second advent for their fulfillment. At the divinely appointed time He shall return to the Mount of Olives,<sup>20</sup> and then to Mt. Zion to occupy the Throne of David.<sup>21</sup> Then Israel shall enter into her promised Palestinian possession<sup>22</sup> and take her place as the head of the world of nations.<sup>23</sup>

The Church is nowhere seen in this program. She comes upon the scene after Israel is "cut off," or set aside temporarily, that she might fulfill her destiny. She is composed of believing Jews and Gentiles and is livingly and lastingly linked with the glorified Man in heaven.<sup>24</sup> Her birthday is the day of Pentecost,<sup>25</sup> and her glorification day is the day of the rapture.<sup>26</sup>

During the Church's sojourn on earth she is looked upon as the "Temple of God,"<sup>27</sup> and is never associated with the temple in Jerusalem; she is seen as the "Bride of Christ,"<sup>28</sup> and not like Israel who is regarded as the divorced wife of Jehovah; all her members are anointed priests that officiate in the Holiest of All<sup>29</sup> and have no connection with the Levitical priesthood, or any other man-made priesthood, such as the Roman Catholic hierarchy; she is under grace and unlike Israel who was under the law;<sup>30</sup> she has the Lord's Day as her distinguishing day, called the Lordly day by the Apocalyptic Seer,<sup>31</sup> and not the Sabbath which is peculiarly Jewish; she is destined to meet Christ in the atmospheric heavens<sup>32</sup> and be taken to the Throne Room of God where she shall be united in holy matrimony to the heavenly Bridegroom<sup>33</sup> before she is manifested with Him in all His grace and glory.<sup>34</sup> Israel however shall meet her Messiah at His return to Palestine when she shall be recognized again as Jehovah's wife; the Church shall reign with Christ over the earth from the heavenly Jerusalem<sup>35</sup> while Israel shall reign on the earth from the earthly Jerusalem.

I think it is abundantly clear that the Church must first be raptured to heaven before she returns with Christ to set up His world-wide Kingdom. The rapture then automatically precedes the Kingdom.

### **The Home Going**

Tremendous soul-thrilling events are vitally linked with the rapture. This is where "truth is stranger than fiction." Neither sanctified imagination nor the language of heaven spoken by a golden-tongued archangel could begin to express the ineffable delight we shall experience. The home-going thrills us with unspeakable joy. To have our ears attuned to the blast of the musical trump of God; to

witness the bursting of the graves that saints might have incorruptibility; to experience the blessedness of immortality in the place of mortal flesh; to step out into space and to behold the face of Jesus our Lord and to listen to His words of welcome as we meet Him there; to journey through boundless space, passing worlds upon worlds that sing out the melody and music of their Creator; and to find ourselves entering the Father's home amidst scenes of inexpressible glory—these things beggar description.

Almost 2000 years ago Jesus gave His unconditional promise to take us home. His return and our rapture will make the promise good. "He is not a man, that He should lie; neither the son of man, that He should repent: hath He said, and shall He not do it? or hath He spoken, and shall He not make it good?"<sup>36</sup> Once again, as on hundreds of occasions whilst on earth we shall say, "Not one word of His good promise hath failed." He is the faithful, covenant-keeping Lord.

Now that He will have brought us home it is but natural to wonder what things have been prepared for us. The casual reader and the deep student of Scripture must be painfully aware of how elusive, and, in the main, how silent it is on this theme. It might well be that God desires us to focus attention upon His Son, our lovely Lord, so that He might fill our vision in this life as well as the life to come. On the other hand we are given glimpses here and there, either by direct revelation or by definite implication, as to what we may expect to enjoy there. I propose, therefore, to call your attention to some of the more obvious, indisputable experiences we shall appreciate in our eternal home.

### **Relationship With The Father**

Our relationship with the Father gives us the right to enter the portals of the Father's home. Here, as never



before, the truth of what we are as children of God shall break upon our consciousness like some flood-tide that sweeps over a tiny island in the midst of the ocean. It is John who tells us that it is the Father's love that brought us into His family,<sup>37</sup> also that we were "born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God."<sup>38</sup> It is God that has made us what we are—His children;<sup>39</sup> He it is that gave us what we possess—the divine nature;<sup>40</sup> and assuredly He is the One that has brought us where we are—in His home eternal.

Unquestionably, this is the work of divine sovereignty, the work of pure, free, unadulterated grace. This is God Triune working out His own pre-time counsels and purposes. As Father, He selected us in the eternal past; as Son, He entered the world to effect redemption so that we might be saved; as the Holy Spirit, He convicted us of sin and then He quickened and sealed us for this sublime destiny.<sup>41</sup> We are God's workmanship created in Christ Jesus that "in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus."<sup>42</sup> God begat us especially for His own peculiar pleasure, not merely to deliver us from eternal perdition, or for us to live unto Him, or to enjoy ourselves in His home above.

I cannot conceive of us in heaven without being introduced to the unfathomable wealth of inscrutable Deity. This predicates a continuous unveiling of our God in His different relationships, His divine purposes of grace and glory, and His limitless resources of wisdom, power, and love. How wonderful to eternally ponder His infinite love, His incomprehensible mercy, and His ineffable grace!

Relationship indicates that all of us in the Father's Home shall share alike in His love, grace, consideration, and



acceptance. Our Father has no favorites and He shows no favoritism. There is no respect of persons with Him, at least it not evident in His home. The repentant thief and the Apostle Paul shall share equally all the Father has for them. We must bear in mind that here we have the family circle gathered home.

### **Different Levels Of Appreciation**

Let me not be misunderstood on this point. I am dealing primarily with what is essentially the Father's side or responsibility. It accredits Him with the ability to bless us in view of what we are to Him. I do not infer that all saints have the same appreciation of the Father—that is far removed from the truth. While the Father shall love the thief and Paul equally, their love for Him shall differ considerably, the difference being occasioned by their varied life experiences which increase one's capacity for love. Thus shall it be with us. Our capacity to love God is being fashioned in this world as we commune with Him. Every spiritual truth gained in this way shall remain inviolate, though perfected, at our home-going.

Scripture teaches that in the family of God, as in an earthly family, there are different levels of spiritual intelligence. John divides the family into three circles: babes, young men, and fathers.<sup>43</sup> It is perfectly true that we all come into the family in exactly the same way: by receiving Christ as Savior with the impartation of new covenant blessings and the resultant knowledge of God, the forgiveness of sins, and the law being written in our hearts.<sup>44</sup> This is simply the foundation upon which we might build a superstructure of divine appreciation. Our God-given opportunities and privileges for experiences with Him are to qualify us to pass from the kindergarten to the university level. Peter

exhorts us to "grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ,"<sup>45</sup> He then says, "Add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; and to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity."<sup>46</sup> Another inspired writer admonishes us to leave the principles of the doctrine of Christ and to go on to perfection.<sup>47</sup> Paul-like we should "press towards the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."<sup>48</sup>

### **Father's Home And The Kingdom**

It might be good at this juncture to draw attention to the difference between the Father's home and the Kingdom. As I have remarked before the Father's home shows nothing of distinction of persons. No one occupies a higher place than his fellow. Rewards are not known in this sphere. It is the common denominator of membership in the family that counts. There sovereign grace reigns supreme without regard for service.

It is altogether different in connection with the Kingdom. Although the impartation of the divine nature has fitted us to be subjects in the Kingdom here and now, we are particularly concerned about the Kingdom in public display. This shall be initiated when Jesus returns to earth, puts down all His foes, and inaugurates His 1000 years' reign.<sup>49</sup> As every earthly kingdom is ruled by people, so shall the Kingdom of God be ruled by the people of God. Paul tells us that "we shall judge the world," and again, "We shall judge angels."<sup>50</sup> In the Glory-land, as we contemplate the Kingdom Glorious on earth, we shall sing, "We shall reign on (or over) the earth."<sup>51</sup> At the Judgment Seat of Christ places of distinction shall be given all saints who have affec-

tionately and sacrificially served the Lord. Such service is compared to gold, silver, and precious stones. On the other hand all service rendered with self dominant shall be compared to wood, hay, and stubble and shall be burned up.<sup>52</sup>

I have mentioned that in the Father's home the repentant thief and the Apostle Paul shall share alike in the Father's love, but it shall be altogether different in the Kingdom. There is the strongest probability that Paul will occupy the highest place in the Kingdom, whereas the thief shall have little in the way of rewards. Let us never forget that we live for eternity; we carry into the presence of God, and throughout the ages ahead, what we have done or not done for Christ in this world. May we be found worthy to receive the "well-done," and to obtain a place of distinction in coming Kingdom times.<sup>53</sup>

### **Relationship With All Saints**

Relationship is not only with the Father but with the entire heavenly family. This indicates that we are joined together in an indissoluble union which no power of earth, heaven, or hell can sunder. The bond is such that it exceeds anything experienced on a human level. On earth death severs relationships, but our union is forged on the resurrection side of Calvary where the shadow of death never falls. How precious, then, we should be one to another! Says the Psalmist, "How good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity—there the Lord commanded the blessing, even life for evermore."<sup>54</sup>

The rapture shall be our introduction to all the saints. Here is our first occasion to experience real fellowship with them. On earth this was physically and spiritually impossible. The providence of God has scattered us across the face of the earth and separated us by long distances, language

barriers, denominational differences, and social conditions. These things are behind us forever. All that divided us is wiped out. In Glory-land the divine nature predominates, so oneness is ours. We shall all speak the same language—the language of heaven; we shall all express the same love—the perfect love of God; and we shall all experience the same joy which provides perfect harmony. This is without controversy the happiest and largest family gathering in the history of the ages.

Heaven will bring out all the blessedness of the family tie. Here are gathered all the celebrities of Old and New Testament times, people from every walk in life, yet all one. Eternity lies before us—not only to become personally acquainted but to rehearse to one another the gracious experiences of divine providence and grace to us while on earth. What a wealth of information shall be imparted! Every spiritual experience known here shall be held in everlasting remembrance there. Of all that God has given us nothing shall be lost.

### **Recognition In Heaven**

One of the interesting features connected with relationship is that of recognition. The question is often asked, "Shall we know one another in heaven?" Some one ably answered by saying, "I do not expect to be less intelligent in heaven than I have been on earth. I expect to know those there I have known here."

Recognition, however, goes farther than just knowing those in heaven we have known on earth. It postulates our knowing every member of the heavenly family. We shall be conditioned mentally, when we are changed into the image of Christ, for this very purpose.<sup>55</sup> There shall be no necessity for introductions. "It doeth not yet appear what we shall be, but

we know that when He shall appear, we shall be like Him."<sup>56</sup>

Glorification does not eliminate personality, it shall enhance it. The physical shall be perfected with all blemishes, infirmities, imperfections removed. As the Man Christ Jesus is, so shall we be. Once we accept this truth any difficulty we may have about recognizing one another shall be overcome. "Then shall I know even as also I am known."<sup>57</sup>

I feel a very precious truth is embodied in the words uttered by Paul: "The Lord knoweth them that are His."<sup>58</sup> The moment we touched Him by faith, like the woman who touched the hem of His garment, the virtue of salvation flowed from Him to give us eternal blessing.<sup>59</sup> Since then He has not been ashamed to call us brethren—His own brothers and sisters.<sup>60</sup> This carries with it the assurance that He knows us. "He calleth His own sheep by name," says John. Again Jesus says, "I am the Good Shepherd, and know My sheep, and am known of mine" . . . "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me."<sup>61</sup>

On the other hand, we know Him. "We know," writes John, "that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know Him that is true, and we are in Him that is true, even in His Son, Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life."<sup>62</sup> Peter, too, asserts that we love Him, the One we have never seen.<sup>63</sup> At His return for us, I am perfectly certain we shall know Him (though we have never seen Him in the flesh) not only by the nail marks in His hands and feet, the sword-riven side, or the thorn-marked brow, but by His personal appearance. Jesus is His own identification disc. There is no change in His personality.

Once our physical imperfections and idiosyncracies are effaced we shall stand forth in the perfect likeness of our

Lord. He shall present us to Himself without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, so that we shall be holy and without blame before Him in love.<sup>64</sup> As elsewhere stated, He shall "present us holy and unblameable and unreprouable in His sight."<sup>65</sup> This will enable every one of us to recognize one another!

### **Retention Of Names In Heaven**

There has been an age-long problem in some Christian circles as to the name by which we shall be known in heaven. Some believe that with the change of body shall come a change of name. Others feel that while many shall retain their earthly name, the overcomers of the Apocalypse shall be given a new name. They quote the promises given to the churches in Pergamos and Philadelphia. Let me give you these promises. First to the Church in Pergamos Christ says: "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it";<sup>66</sup> then to the Church in Philadelphia, "Him that overcometh . . . I will write upon him the name of My God, and the name of the city of My God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from My God; and I will write upon him My New Name."<sup>67</sup>

Now, in all deference to those who differentiate between the overcomers and those overcome, there exists the strong probability that no such difference exists among saints. Is it possible that all saints are overcomers? The language, at least, suggests it. For instance, every saint shall eat of the tree of life; every saint shall never be hurt of the second death; every saint shall eat of the hidden manna; every saint shall rule with Christ over the nations; every saint shall be clothed in white raiment, no saint shall have his name blotted out of the Book of Life; every saint shall be a pillar in the temple



of God, out of which he shall never go; and every saint shall share a place with Christ upon His Throne.<sup>68</sup> With all this in mind, it may not be too much to expect that every saint shall receive a white stone with a new name written in it.

There are degrees of overcoming which shall be considered at the Judgment Seat of Christ. There rewards shall be given commensurate with the degree of overcoming. Here again we are faced with the different levels of intelligent apprehension among saints.

I have not the slightest doubt but that the names given on earth, and those by which we have been known here, shall be retained in heaven. Every name has personality stamped indelibly upon it. It is our public identification mark. Though tens of thousands have the same name, yet each individual is unique. As another remarks, "When God makes a man, He breaks the mold." He is the God of infinite variety.

The truth of our earthly names being recognized in heaven is both certified and amplified in Scripture. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are specifically mentioned by name centuries after their departure from the world.<sup>69</sup> Both Moses and Elijah bore their names when they appeared in the Shekinah Glory with Jesus on the Holy Mount.<sup>70</sup> Lazarus, the beggar, was seen in Abraham's bosom after his decease.<sup>71</sup> The witch of Endor with King Saul recognized Samuel the prophet while in the intermediate state.<sup>72</sup>

Over and above these case history examples, we know that our Lord still bears and is known by His human name, Jesus. No saint would ever dream of changing it. Here is the Name of names to those who know Him. "His Name is as ointment poured forth."<sup>73</sup> All the blessings we have now, and all we hope to possess in the eternities ahead, are ours by virtue of His Name's intrinsic, infinite value.

Through His Name we have the forgiveness of all sins;<sup>74</sup> in His Name we meet together for our holy convocations;<sup>75</sup> for His Name's sake we walk in the paths of righteousness;<sup>76</sup> in His Name we present our praises and petitions to God;<sup>77</sup> and at His coming "His Name shall be on our foreheads."<sup>78</sup>

The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews insists upon calling the Jehovah of the Old Testament the JESUS of the New. In Him those Hebrews had put their trust. He remarks, "We see Jesus, crowned with glory and honor"—Jesus the Son of God; Jesus the Surety at Calvary; Jesus the Fore-runner inside the veil; Jesus the Author and Finisher of faith; and Jesus the Sanctifier of His people.<sup>79</sup>

Listen to the testimony of the two heavenly witnesses who said, "Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same JESUS, who is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven."<sup>80</sup> Nothing more need be added to these words. The least intelligent person can only understand them to mean that the Man Jesus, who went up to heaven will return as the Man—Jesus.

Did not Jesus say to Saul of Tarsus whom He intercepted on the Damascus road when Saul asked, "Who art Thou, Lord?", "I am Jesus whom thou persecutest?"<sup>81</sup> The Man, JESUS, was still alive in glory. There was no change in His Name since His earthly days.

Finally, it is absolutely obvious that as the curtain of revelation drops for the last time, the Man JESUS is supreme. He says, "I JESUS have sent Mine angel to testify these things unto the churches."<sup>82</sup>

It goes without question that Jesus will retain His human Name for ever. Why should it be otherwise with every one who enters the pearly gates? So we anticipate that at

the moment Jesus comes He will read out our names from the Book of Life.

### **Dissolution Of Earthly Relationships**

Sentimentalism plays a major role in our thinking as we contemplate and anticipate heaven. However, we must not allow sentiment to predominate, but rather we must give place to the Word of God. This is our guide.

We live so much on the earth-level that we hesitate to accept the fact that the rapture shall cancel out all earthly relationships, but it is then that we enter the spiritual realm with spiritual bodies where spiritual relationships exist.

The Lord had this very thought in mind when He deliberately set aside His own mother and brethren in preference for those who do the will of God. The flesh, or relationships in the flesh, profit nothing in the spiritual realm. Here are His exact words, "Who is My mother? and who are My brethren? And He stretched forth His hand toward His disciples, and said, 'Behold My mother and My brethren. For whosoever shall do the will of My Father which is in heaven the same is My brother, and sister, and mother.'"<sup>83</sup>

Paul the Apostle endorses this truth. He says, "Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh; yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we Him no more. 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. . . ."<sup>84</sup>

Marriage ties, such as we have on earth, are unknown in heaven. Jesus Himself declared that "in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven. . . ."<sup>85</sup>

It is our belief (however imperfectly we understand it so as to present it more perfectly) that spiritual relationships

count with God in His eternal home. We are there as members of His family, as brethren and sisters in Christ.

### **Rejoicing With Joy Unspeakable**

What could be more fitting in the Father's home, where we shall celebrate the reunion with all loved ones and the saints of all ages, where we shall realize in full the blessedness of our salvation amidst the glory of our Lord and the place to which we have come, than for us to rejoice with joy unspeakable. The music and melody of archangels and angelic choirs shall fade into insignificance when we take up our paeon of praise. Throughout all her past history, heaven shall never have heard anything like this kind of singing. Here is something different, for with one heart and voice we shall sing unto Him that loveth us and loosed us from our sins in His own precious blood.<sup>86</sup> It is probable that every world in space shall be attuned to listen to the strains of our loud and long hallelujahs.

Such expectation does not surprise us. Even in this world, where sin abounds and Satan dominates, ever since we were lifted out of the horrible pit and miry clay of sin and had our feet placed on the Rock Christ Jesus, we have sung the new song unto our God.<sup>87</sup> This has filled our hearts with praise and provided us with perfect satisfaction in Jesus our Lord. Sometimes we sing, and how true it is:—

“If this glimpse of love,  
Is so divinely sweet:  
What will it be O Lord above,  
Thy gladdening smile to meet?  
To see Thee face to face,  
Thy perfect likeness wear;  
And all Thy ways of wondrous grace,  
Through endless years declare.”

Here, beloved, is our home sweet home for ever. As the ages of eternity roll along we shall rest from our labors, rejoice in our great and glorious Triune God, Father and Son and Holy Spirit, and revel in the fellowship of one another. From this blest place with everything hallowed and heavenly we shall never depart. There shall always be the feeling of home even though we rule with Jesus our Lord throughout the vast domain of the universe.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### EVENTS IN HEAVEN AND EARTH

**I** AM COMPLETELY FASCINATED with the Book of Revelation. To me it brings into focus the most illuminating, awe-inspiring, soul-thrilling events in heaven and on earth. The prophetic element prevails throughout its unfolding dramas. This becomes crystal clear when you take into account that after it sets forth the historic march of the Church's chequered career from century one to the second advent of Christ, it immediately details the Throne Room of heaven where all matters relative to the future are finalized.<sup>1</sup>

The door of heaven opens to John upon his hearing the trumpet-like voice saying to him, "Come up hither." Instantly, he is ushered into the august presence of infinite majesty where he beholds God, seated upon His Throne, surrounded by the hierarchy of heaven.<sup>2</sup> From this heavenly viewpoint he is given visions of "the things that are quickly to come to pass."<sup>3</sup> This sudden and surprising change must have been one of surpassing delight to his heart. One moment in the squalor and abject loneliness of the Patmos prison cell, the next amidst scenes of unutterable glory.

It seems almost impossible for me not to see in John's translation a beautiful and perfect example of our own rapture from earth to heaven. When Jesus comes with trumpet sound and triumphant shout we shall "be caught up...to



meet the Lord in the air" and then we shall be escorted to the Throne Room of God.<sup>4</sup> I cannot but feel that this entire experience, so thoroughly enjoyed by us, shall be unforgettable and its blessedness incommunicable. This should not surprise us for the Word says, "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him."<sup>5</sup>

### **Participation In All Events**

Let me say that it is the arrival of the Church in heaven that gives the green light for the prophetic pendulum to swing once more. This pendulum stopped on the Day of Pentecost, the birthday of the Church, and has not moved since.<sup>6</sup> It is waiting for the Church to be taken out of the way. The rapture will effect that. Now the purposes of God for men and nations shall materialize speedily. Evidently our God will do nothing towards bringing to fruition His purposes on earth until He has the Church glorified. He has given her the high calling of being co-partner with Him in all matters connected with events in the celestial, terrestrial, and infernal realms.<sup>7</sup> This truth Paul has in mind when he asks the Corinthians two questions: "Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world?", and "Know ye not that we shall judge angels?"<sup>8</sup> In the final analysis it could not be otherwise, for we are "heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ."<sup>9</sup> We are livingly and lastingly linked with the Man of God's purpose which gives us a vital interest in all that concerns Him. He "hath put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be the head over all things to the Church, which is His Body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all."<sup>10</sup>

Our participation in all events, whether in heaven or on earth, is fully developed in the Apocalypse. It is my thought to bring to your attention some of the major events

which shall occupy our interest between our rapture to glory and our appearing with Christ for the inauguration and establishment of His world-wide Kingdom. It is during this interim that the seventieth week of Daniel's prophecy shall be fulfilled on earth.<sup>11</sup> Since we shall be in the heavens then, we shall observe the acknowledgement of the Lamb as the Heir of the inheritance, the Angel-Priest officiate before the Throne on behalf of His earthly people, the final conflict between Michael and the Dragon to decide who shall rule the nations, the home-coming of the martyred tribulation saints, and the marriage of the Lamb to His New Testament Bride, the Church.

### **The Throne Room Of God**

It is well for us to remember that ever since the collapse of man in Eden, the Usurper, Satan, has contended with God about the rightful heir of the vast universal inheritance. We know that Adam was given undisputed authority over all God's lower creation. The Psalmist confirms the Genesis account by saying, "Thou hast made him (Adam) a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honor. Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of Thy hands; Thou hast put all things under his feet . . ."<sup>12</sup>

This divine arrangement was thrown into utter confusion, however, when the Serpent successfully seduced Adam to surrender to him. At once the crown of headship was removed from his head and the Seducer became, as Jesus thrice called him, "the prince of this world,"<sup>13</sup> and he laid claim to "all of the kingdoms of this world, and the glory of them."<sup>14</sup>

The Serpent's assumption of world leadership was in total opposition to God's purpose for man. His pre-time councils had ordained the Man Christ Jesus as "the appointed heir of all things."<sup>15</sup> God therefore created all things in Him,

by Him, and for Him.<sup>16</sup> The Usurper was well aware of these things but he defiantly waged an age-long warfare against God about the matter. He has always sought to gain the ascendancy over God. Though utterly defeated in the wilderness temptation,<sup>17</sup> and later at Calvary, he still insists that the inheritance is his.<sup>18</sup>

When we come to the scene in the Throne Room of God we realize that the hour has struck for God to make public, and to vindicate once for all the rightful heir of the inheritance. Here He calls the entire universe of created intelligences to court that He may take final action on the case.

### **Heaven's Court Sits**

Solemnity and serenity fill the scene as God occupies His Throne, as the saints from both Old and New Testament times seat themselves on the twenty-four thrones to act as the jury; as the four living creatures, a distinct order of angelic beings, assume their positions as attendants in the court; as the Holy Spirit of God, seen as the seven lamps of fire burning before the Throne, acts as the prosecuting attorney; and as every creature in heaven, earth, and hell is called upon to listen to and to witness the proceedings. Everything transacted here shall be in full view of every person present and the ultimate decision reached shall receive the full acclaim of all. No creature shall hereafter gainsay the court's decision.

The court opens with the worship of God. Both angels and men join saying, "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power: for Thou hast created all things, and for Thy pleasure they are and were created."

It is now our privilege to see the seven-sealed book in the right hand of uncreated Deity. This book is the title deeds of the inheritance, a legal document in the form of a

scroll, written in Oriental style, and secured by seven seals. It also has a legal owner and its seals can be broken only by Him. So, with the entire universe hushed to silence and every eye fixed upon the Throne, the challenge is issued, "Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof."<sup>19</sup>

Every person in the universe is thus challenged. There is no escape for any one. The Usurper and all his co-horts must act in one way or another. This is their last opportunity to claim the inheritance legally and have universal acknowledgement, or from henceforth, even for evermore, hold their peace. What tenseness pervades the scene! I imagine that every eye shall be turned towards the Usurper for a response, but he never makes a move. Stillness and silence hold him fast. He knows better than to speak now. He is in the presence of a thrice-holy and righteous God and is cognizant of his total unworthiness to put in his claim. Every evidence submitted is against him. Suddenly, however, for the relief of all and in vindication of His rights, the freshly-slain Lamb, the peerless Christ of God, steps forward and takes the book from the right hand of God.

There is no question raised as to the Lamb's worthiness. The seven horns indicate that all power and authority are His; His seven eyes insist that He possesses perfect wisdom and knowledge; and the fact that He is as a freshly slain Lamb gives Him the inalienable right to the inheritance. Here is the One Who not only created all things but Who, in deepest humiliation and with infinite sufferings at Calvary, purchased them by His own most precious blood.<sup>20</sup> In purchasing the inheritance He prevailed against every foe—even the Usurper. "He spoiled principalities and powers, He made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it."<sup>21</sup> Here, then, is the acknowledged Heir, and every created intelligence pays Him homage. At long last righteousness has

prevailed, God has been justified, His purposes have been vindicated, and His Christ has secured the worship of all as Lord of all. This is the God-appointed day when every knee bows and every tongue confesses that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.<sup>22</sup>

### **The Twenty-four Elders**

I mentioned a moment ago that we shall participate in this momentous decision as the jury. We, and the Old Testament saints, are represented in the twenty-four elders. This becomes apparent when you consider that the elders are not angels of any order, for these never sit on thrones nor wear crowns. Angels never rise above the position of servants. Again, they cannot be the saints that have departed this life since their number is always on the increase; whereas the number of elders remains twenty-four throughout the Book. Since they are neither angels of any order, nor unclothed saints, we are positive that they represent all raptured saints.

It is good to know that there are some spiritual blessings which are the common heritage of all God's children regardless of dispensational differences. This can be seen in the twenty-four elders: for all are redeemed by precious blood; all are clothed in white raiment, or the righteousness of God; all sit serenely upon thrones demonstrating that they have perfect peace with God, and all are crowned indicating their royalty.

I believe that these court proceedings, in which we take a prominent part, shall afford us ineffable pleasure. There shall have been imparted to us at our glorification the capability to visualize every participant in the case, to understand and perfectly evaluate all that is said and done, to



pass judgment on the issue in question, and to appreciate fully the creative and redemptive rights of Jesus as the Lamb. I am sure, too, that we shall have the mental ability to comprehend the grandeur of the Throne Room—a grandeur beyond human appraisal—the great variety of vestments worn by archangels and angels of different rank, and the perfect order and harmony of the whole occasion.

The Queen of Sheba, on her memorable visit to King Solomon, when she heard his words of wisdom and saw the house that he had built, "the meat of his table, and the sitting of his servants, and the attendance of his ministers, and their apparel, and his cupbearers, and his ascent by which he went up unto the house of the Lord "had no more spirit left in her." Indeed she confessed, "It was a true report that I heard in mine own land of thy acts and of thy wisdom, howbeit I believed not the words until I came, and mine eyes had seen it: and, behold, the half was not told me: thy wisdom and prosperity exceedeth the fame which I heard. Happy are thy men, happy are these thy servants, which stand continually before thee, and hear thy wisdom. Blessed be the Lord thy God which delighteth in thee, to set thee on the throne of Israel."<sup>23</sup>

Beloved, our portion shall exceed anything experienced by the Queen. What comparison is there between the house and wisdom of Solomon and the house and wisdom of the Lord! What comparison is there between her joy and ours! Unless God fitted us for the occasion we should not be able to bear the weight of glory. Praise His Holy Name we shall be there in the perfect image and likeness of His Son! I surely like the words of the hymn-writer who said,

"And is it so! I shall be like Thy Son,  
Is this the grace which He for me has won?



Father of glory, thought beyond all thought,  
In glory, to His own blest likeness brought.  
Yet it must be, Thy love had not its rest  
Were Thy redeemed not with Thee fully blest;  
That love that gives not as the world, but shares  
All it possesses with its loved co-heirs."

### **The Intercessor Before The Throne**

The next scene to which I will call your attention is that of the Lord Jesus as the Angel-Priest acting as the intercessor before the Throne.

It has been our own special delight to experience the ministry of Christ as the Great High Priest. While here below in a world of hostility and full of discouragements we have been upheld on the shoulders of His omnipotence and sustained on the bosom of His everlasting affections.<sup>24</sup> Then, too, He has had our names written on the palms of His hands to guarantee us perfect security.<sup>25</sup> It has been His joy to interpose His succour in times of trial, to sympathize with us in our many infirmities, and to provide saving grace when we were strongly tempted by the enemy of our souls. Moment by moment He has faithfully presented our prayers and praises to God in the full value of His Person and in the perfect virtue of His precious blood.<sup>26</sup> His hands ever uplifted in blessing upon us have now safely borne us to be with Himself evermore.

Here we see Him face to face. Here we shall have the privilege of observing Him officiate as the Great High Priest, though now on behalf of others. His earthly people, composed of saved Jews and Gentiles, shall be looking to Him for support and blessing as they seek to represent Him in a godless scene.<sup>27</sup> How wonderful for us to note how He acts in their interests. This observation, no doubt, shall deepen

our appreciation of all He did for us while we journeyed over the waste-howling wilderness below.

It is imperative to know, if we would understand this work before the Throne, that when the Church is raptured to heaven Israel shall occupy the Divine interest once more. She has been set aside until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in."<sup>28</sup> Then shall she occupy the spotlight in world affairs to fulfill her role in prophecy. The Apocalypse presents her under the figure of the 144,000.<sup>29</sup> These godly Jews shall be entrusted with the preaching of the Gospel of the Kingdom<sup>30</sup> for which they shall suffer vile and vicious opposition from the two Beasts, or world-leaders, mentioned in prophecy.<sup>31</sup> Many shall pay the supreme sacrifice for their faithfulness to Christ.<sup>32</sup> The language of those tribulation saints is given in these words: "How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost Thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?"<sup>33</sup>

Prayers like these shall ascend before the Throne. What actually takes place in heaven when the prayers reach there is given graphically thus; "Another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer: and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the Throne. And the smoke of the incense, which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel's hand. And the angel took the censer, and filled it with fire of the altar, and cast it into the earth: and there were voices, and thunderings, and lightnings, and an earthquake."<sup>34</sup>

I have mentioned already how that we are eye-witnesses of the Lamb taking the seven-sealed book out of the hand of Deity. It goes without question that we shall see Him break

the seals and observe the devastating judgments that shall be administered to mankind. Those post-rapture unfortunates shall experience dreadful and terrifying judgments but they shall not, under any consideration, repent of their sins. Their open hostility to Christ is demonstrated by their antagonism against His people. It is their diabolical hatred of them that brings the cries from their hearts to God for deliverance. Their Great High Priest, seen as the Angel-Priest, undertakes for them. He presents their petitions with the incense of His own acceptance before God and at once the answer is given in terrible judgment. The ungodly shall smart for their treatment of those dear ones whom Jehovah calls "the apple of His eye."<sup>35</sup>

Scripture plainly declares that we have "the mind of Christ," and at no time in our history shall we be in the good of wisdom, or exercise the mind of Christ, more so than at this moment. We shall stand with God whether He acts in judgment or grace and shall understand the background as well as the actual happenings whether in heaven or on earth. This is a real partnership.

When you refer for a moment to the elder who knows the solution of the world's problem in the Throne Room of God and advises John not to weep, for "the Lion of the Tribe of Juda hath prevailed to open the book," it predicates His knowledge of the divine purposes.<sup>36</sup> When John beholds the innumerable company of Gentiles before the Throne waving their palms of victory he is altogether unaware of their identity or from whence they come until the elder tells him, "These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."<sup>37</sup> The elder represents us and bespeaks our understanding of back-of-the-scene happenings in heaven and earth. Such knowledge is too high for us in mortal bodies

with such limited capacities. I take it for granted, therefore, that we shall be verily conscious of the prayers offered by the saints in the coming day and their presentation to God by the Angel-Priest, Jesus our Lord.

### **Conflict In The Heavenlies**

The third point I have in mind to set before you is our appropriation and appreciation of the conflict in the heavenlies between Michael and his angels and the Great Red Dragon and his angels.

The long, sordid history of mankind can be summed up in the dynamic, descriptive words of the late Sir Winston Churchill who spoke of "blood, sweat, and tears." Historians have taken great pains to unfold the ever-changing fortunes of nations as they have struggled for existence or world notoriety. I feel safe in saying that not one of them has been an eyewitness of much of which he wrote. All have been dependent upon others for their information. It seems certain, too, that the Eternal God, the Governor of the universe, never gave them a peep behind the scenes to observe world events being fashioned in the heavenlies. Most of them would ridicule the idea of such a thing being possible. They are so earth-bound they cannot see beyond, or behind, the actual happenings here.

It is altogether different with us. We have been initiated into many secrets of which this world, even its intelligensia, is totally ignorant. One of these secrets is that all the affairs of men and nations are worked out in detail by spiritual forces in the heavenly places. They shape the course of world-history, so that nothing is left to chance.

The Bible alone explains this mysterious truth. It clearly intimates that all persons are represented by those

spiritual powers. They bear our names and hold our offices. Daniel, it seems to me, gives us this information. This prophet of God, after fasting and praying for twenty-one days was visited by the Archangel Gabriel who said to him, "Fear not, Daniel, for from the first day that thou didst set thine heart to understand, and to chasten thyself before God, thy words were heard, and I am come for thy words. But the prince of the Kingdom of Persia withstood me one and twenty days; but, lo, Michael, one of the chief princes came to help me; and I remained there with the kings of Persia. . . ." Then his parting word was "Now will I return to fight with the prince of Persia, and when I am gone forth, lo, the prince of Grecia shall come. . . ."<sup>38</sup>

This communication simply means that angelic beings in the heavenlies represented both the princes of Persia and Grecia. Evidently a real fight took place between those spiritual forces which brought about the change of world-powers. Greece followed Persia after defeating her unmercifully, but everything was determined above.

The memorable utterance of Micaiah, Jehovah's prophet, to Jehoshaphat, king of Judah and Ahab, king of Israel, corroborates what I have just said. Both these kings had decided to war against the Syrians, but before going forth the prophets of Baal were consulted who predicted success to the venture. King Jehoshaphat, however, was not altogether satisfied so he asked that a prophet of Jehovah be called in to give his mind. When Micaiah arrived he spoke of the disaster that would befall the two kings if they attempted to carry through their program. Micaiah let them into a secret as to what he had witnessed behind the scenes. He said, "I saw the Lord sitting upon His Throne, and all the host of heaven standing by Him on His right hand and



on the left. And the Lord said, 'Who shall persuade Ahab, that he may go up and fall at Ramoth-gilead?' And one said on this manner, and another said on that manner. And the Lord said unto him, 'Wherewith?' And he said, 'I will go forth, and I will be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets.' And He said, 'Thou shalt persuade him, and prevail also: go forth, and do so.' ''<sup>39</sup>

Micaiah was returned to the prison for his faithfulness to Jehovah and to the kings, but the history book makes clear that his vision was fulfilled to the letter. Ahab's destiny was determined beforehand.

### **Close-up View**

Speaking about spiritual forces in the heavenlies reminds me of our own warfare which is not against "flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places."<sup>40</sup> I think of that other word which says, "Though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: for the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds."<sup>41</sup> Oftentimes the enemy uses "flesh and blood" to oppose, persecute, intimidate, and deceive us, but we must distinguish men from those evil powers that use them. This calls for prayer, persistence, and patience that we might be victors in this desperate warfare.

Our present meditation assures that we shall have a close-up view of the final conflict in the heavenlies between Michael and the Dragon. The Usurper is seen in full regalia as he is set forth in all his titles, the great Dragon, that old Serpent, the Devil, and Satan. It is another way of telling us that all he has he will exert to try to gain the victory over



the forces of God, but he goes down in defeat, nevertheless, and then he is cast down to the earth. Never again shall he occupy a place in the heavenlies.<sup>42</sup> After three and one-half years on earth, when he shall throw the nations into the greatest tribulation<sup>43</sup> ever, he shall be put into the bottomless pit for one thousand years<sup>44</sup> then consigned ultimately and eternally to the Lake of Fire.<sup>45</sup>

As soon as we visualize the victory gained over these infernal forces of evil we shall take up the theme saying, "Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down which accused them before our God day and night."<sup>46</sup> What ascriptions of praise shall rise from our hearts to God! This exodus of Satanic beings from the heavenlies shall make way for the Lord to apply His cleansing blood to the heavenlies, for they have been defiled by such occupants' presence, and He will make them suitable to be reconciled with the earth<sup>47</sup> after its cleansing from all offenders and offences.<sup>48</sup> In that coming day of Kingdom glory the heavens and earth shall be in perfect unison and harmony, and the angels of God shall ascend and descend upon the Son of Man.<sup>49</sup>

### **Home Coming Of The Martyrs**

The fourth notable event we shall be called upon to witness is the home-coming of the martyrs. This is fully described in these words: "I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire; and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God. And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, 'Great and marvelous are Thy works, Lord God almighty; just and

true are Thy ways, Thou King of saints (or nations). Who shall not fear Thee, O Lord, and glorify Thy Name? for Thou art holy: for all nations shall come and worship before Thee: for Thy judgments are made manifest.”<sup>50</sup>

This event shall take place shortly before we are revealed with Christ. These dear ones shall have suffered terribly under the iron rule of the Antichrist and shall have paid the supreme price for their devotion to their Messiah, the Lord Jesus. Now they are to be raised from among the dead and translated to the Holy City in readiness for the Kingdom reign of Christ.

We must remember that after the martyrdom of these saints while their bodies lie in the dust they themselves are with the Lord above. I am aware that nothing is mentioned in Scripture about this matter, but they share with other saints of earlier days the great blessing of being “absent from the body, present (or at home) with the Lord.”<sup>51</sup> Although we are in glorified condition, and these saints are in spirit form, this shall not hinder perfect fellowship together. This, to me, is one of the mysteries associated with the unseen spiritual world, but one that we shall experience fully in that day.

It shall be a moment of intense interest for them, and for us, when they are advised about their forthcoming resurrection and translation. This glorious transaction shall consummate their redemption and realize their hope. Somehow, I cannot conceive of their arrival in the Holy City in all the triumph of their Lord without receiving a tremendous welcome by all in those heavenly scenes. Surely, all heaven’s hierarchy shall be present for such an auspicious occasion!

I might make this passing remark about the 144,000. This company is mentioned for the last time in Scripture in the previous chapter.<sup>52</sup> They are seen on Mount Zion with

their Messiah, the Lamb. He has returned to begin His earthly reign and they are there with Him to share in His Kingdom triumphs. These saints shall never taste death. Their night of weeping is history, the day of eternal joy has dawned for them.<sup>52</sup> It is spiritual Israel that shall become the head of all nations.<sup>54</sup>

So, we have those that comprise the living Israel on earth, and those that were put to death for Messiah's sake now raised and glorified in the Holy City, entering the Kingdom to reign with their Messiah. Both shall rejoice together as they bask in the sunlight of His favor. Our joy, too, shall be full as we behold the King and His redeemed Israel exercise universal sway.

### **The Marriage Of The Lamb**

The last event to which I will refer is probably the greatest in the history of Christ and His New Testament Church, the Bride. It is the day of their marriage. To celebrate the occasion I am absolutely certain all heaven shall be alerted, archangels and angels of every order shall be in attendance, and all the Old Testament saints who were raised and raptured to heaven with the New Testament saints, shall be the invited guests. Joyous expectancy shall permeate the scene as the cry goes forth, "Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to Him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife hath made herself ready"<sup>55</sup>

You will observe that this is "the marriage of the Lamb." The spot-light is on Him, for "in all things He must have the pre-eminence." But, may I ask, why not? Here is the incomparable, infinite, inscrutable, irreproachable, ineffable One, the One who saw His Bride as the "pearl of great price," and Who in His matchless, deathless love for her paid

redemption's price.<sup>56</sup> Here is the One who had waited patiently for her and given her His care as she trod the wilderness scene. Now His joy is realized. She is with Him and like Him and about to be united to Him in bonds eternal.

He will remember there, in the hour of His deepest joy, that as Eve came from Adam's side;<sup>57</sup> as Rebekah came to Isaac from a far country;<sup>58</sup> as Rachel was given Jacob after he had worked for her;<sup>58</sup> as Zipporah became the wife of Moses after their memorable meeting at a well;<sup>60</sup> as Ruth had her redemption price paid by Boaz ere she became his wife;<sup>61</sup> and as the daughter of the king of Egypt, one of royal blood and name, became Solomon's wife<sup>62</sup> so these things were true of His Bride and Himself.

I feel convinced as we stand beside the Bridegroom as His Bride that we shall gaze upon Him and exclaim, "My Beloved is white and ruddy, the chiefest among ten thousand. . . . This is my Beloved. . . . I am my Beloved's. . . ." <sup>63</sup> All language shall fail to give expression to our appreciation of Him.

### **The Wedding Trousseau**

Never a Bridegroom and Bride like these! Their dignity and bearing are breath-taking. They are perfectly matched. They have everything in common with each other. Every moral feature in Him is hers. For her clothing she has both the righteousness of God and the "righteous acts of the saints." We are told that "to her was granted that she should be clothed in fine linen, clean and white, for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints."<sup>64</sup> Our wedding trousseau, according to this account, shall be woven by the Holy Spirit from all the righteous acts we did in this world. I take it that this trousseau shall be presented to us at the Judgment Seat of Christ.

The moment has now come for the Eternal God seated in majesty upon His Throne to announce in the ears of all heaven's hierarchy that the Man, Christ Jesus, and His New Testament Bride are from henceforth "Husband and Wife." I believe every eye shall be focused upon the heavenly couple. As the announcement is made amidst reverential silence, the entire scene shall change into one of deepest spiritual hilarity. The occasion shall call for outbursts of singing, for public demonstrations of perfect satisfaction, and for loud and long "Hallelujah's" till the heavens take up the anthem of praise to God. The Bridegroom and Bride, now Husband and Wife, shall wend their way through assembled hosts to receive from them their blessing. Then shall follow their public manifestation to the world when they shall assume world sovereignty. What a day for Him and for us! Neither wonder the hymn writer said,

"The Bride eyes not her garment,  
But her dear Bridegroom's face;  
She will not gaze at glory,  
But on the King of Grace.  
Not at the crown He giveth,  
But on His pierced hand;  
The Lamb is all the glory,  
In Immanuel's land."

One final remark before I close. The millennial reign shall end disastrously. Men shall rise up in revolt against our God and His Christ. They have always showed antagonism to that which is Divine and have always failed under every Divine test. This final revolt, however, shall be crushed by the total dissolution of all things. Then shall follow the Great White Throne judgment when the wicked dead shall be tried and consigned to their destiny in the Lake of Fire

for ever.<sup>65</sup> Immediately, a new heaven and a new earth shall be ushered in, blessed beyond description, which shall become the habitation of redeemed humanity. Here the Bride shall rejoice in the Bridegroom, and the Bridegroom's friends, the Old Testament saints and others, shall rejoice in His own glorious presence. Here the Bride, as the Holy City, descends from God and becomes His tabernacle. She is described as a "Bride adorned for her Husband" meaning that as a Bride in eternity she retains bridal affections for her Husband while as His Wife there is an established relationship.<sup>66</sup> How wonderful to contemplate the coming eternal ages when we shall love our Lord with the same love with which He has loved us!



## CHAPTER EIGHT

### COMING KINGDOM GLORIES

**F**OUR WOMEN OCCUPY a prominent place in the Book of the Revelation. First, there is Jezebel, an unmistakably clear type of the Roman Catholic system which teaches her devotees the deep things of Satan instead of the deep things of God<sup>1</sup>. Second, there is Israel set forth in the woman that brings forth the Man-Child, the Messiah, who shall rule all nations with a rod of iron.<sup>2</sup> Third, there is Babylon, the unchaste woman, who commits fornication with the nations. She lucidly speaks of the "one world church" which is in process of formation now in a union between apostate Protestantism and Romanism and which shall be headed up by the Vatican.<sup>3</sup> Fourth, there is the bridal-wife of the Lamb, or the New Testament Church of Jesus our Lord.<sup>4</sup>

In my previous message I dealt with the Bridegroom and the Bride as they appear before the eternal Throne of God to consummate their love by becoming Husband and Wife for ever.<sup>5</sup> It is from this scene of ineffable grandeur that the Apocalyptic Seer is hastened to witness the public manifestation of Christ, the "Man of War," who comes to earth to inaugurate His world-wide Kingdom in the company of the angelic hierarchy and all His glorified saints.<sup>6</sup>

### **Collapse Of Gentile Colossus**

The hour has struck for God to take issue with the Gentile nations assembled in Palestine and to grind them to powder. Here is the collapse of the Gentile colossus envisioned by King Nebuchadnezzar in his memorable dream. Upon the remains of those utterly routed nations our God shall build a Kingdom which shall envelop the whole earth.'

This is the moment we have long anticipated. During our earthly sojourn the Holy Spirit taught us from the Word that the "times of the Gentiles"<sup>8</sup> would come to an end in a full fledged rebellion against God and His Christ.<sup>9</sup> The nations that had dominated the world throughout this period of Gentile rule—Babylon, Media-Persia, Greece, and Rome—had been anything but favorable to Jewish saints, or to the saints in the Church-Age. Rome, in particular, had treated them with diabolic indignities. Millions were murdered by her and millions more suffered at her hands. It must be said in all deference to the martyrs that they suffered and died with the utmost confidence in their hearts that one day the tables would turn and they would emerge on the side of their victorious Lord. That day has come. The faith and patience of the saints shall now be openly rewarded.<sup>10</sup>

Paul alludes to this very day when he writes to the persecuted saints at Thessalonica in these words, "It is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you, and to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ; who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power, when He shall come to be glorified in His saints,

and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day.”<sup>11</sup>

What a moment for us when we visualize the nations brought down into the dust of humiliation and made to bow the proud, stubborn knee before our glorious Lord! What a sight to see the devil-possessed Roman Empire totally destroyed by the One it nailed to the tree! Never did it dawn upon it that Jesus would rise from the tomb to vindicate His righteousness and here pronounce the dread death sentence over its ugly, blasphemous, diabolical head.<sup>12</sup> But this is the day of both righteous retribution and recompence: retribution for sinners, recompence for saints. What an incentive to patience as we wait for the “hope of righteousness.”<sup>13</sup>

### **Judgment Of The Living Nations**

Another sight to enthrall us at the appearing in glory of Jesus our Lord is that of the nations hastening their representatives to Jerusalem in obedience to the summons of the King. As soon as He sets foot on earthly soil, so soon shall these men be commanded to appear before Him. The rendezvous is the valley of Jehoshaphat, near Jerusalem.<sup>14</sup> They shall take the speediest means of travel and not for a moment shall they stall for time or seek to excuse themselves. This is a “must.” The omnipotent Christ shall guarantee safe traveling mercies for all. No accidents, no suicides, no sickness shall hinder their coming. Man’s day with all its lawlessness is at an end. The Lord Himself is in supreme command. He controls every situation for this is the “day of the Lord,” the day when the living nations shall be judged.<sup>15</sup>

I am sure the impression shall be given these men that they are not being summoned together for a “round-table conference.” They are not coming to discuss the world situation pro and con or to be enquired of about anything.

They are coming to hear the verdict of the King and His glorified saints as to their eternal future. You can imagine that such a scene and proceedings shall be convened in the atmosphere of dignity and the utmost reverence. Eternal issues are to be decided here.

It stands to reason, as well as revelation, that we shall figure largely in this international drama. Since the hour of our glorification and arrival in heaven we shall have followed and scrutinized every development upon earth. The wisdom of God imparted to us shall enable us to enter into and fully appreciate the details of the case before us. We shall meet all those men face to face that were responsible for the persecution and death of the children of God in post-rapture days as well as those that befriended them in their unprecedented trial. To the former we shall hear the King say, "Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire"; while to the latter He shall speak these soul-thrilling words, "Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."<sup>16</sup>

The earthly Kingdom of God shall be under the exclusive jurisdiction of the Sovereign and His saints. Both Old and New Testament saints shall share this unspeakably glorious privilege. This surely is the implicate of the parable spoken by the Lord when He mentioned about His going to heaven to receive a Kingdom and then to return. As He took His departure He delivered unto His servants a pound each with the accompanying command, "Occupy till I come." At His return, He tells us, that one man's pound had gained ten pounds for which he was given authority over ten cities.<sup>17</sup>

Faithfulness is thus rewarded. The rewards given in this instance are evidenced in the rulership over cities. I assume these are cities in this world. It seems pretty certain then that faithful ones shall have administrative authority

in various cities throughout Kingdom days. To me this is a very precious, though extremely solemn truth. It means that our lives lived amongst men shall be out in the open in that day as we take our place in the world administration. May we never forget that we live not so much for time as for eternity, and that our "labor is not in vain in the Lord."<sup>18</sup>

### **The Golden Age**

We are indebted to the Scriptures for any light we have on the coming golden age. Isaiah definitely states that every year the nations shall send their representatives to Jerusalem to receive instructions as to how their people shall be governed. Elsewhere we learn that the Church shall instruct Israel, and Israel shall instruct the nations. No injustices shall be tolerated, for righteousness and peace shall reign supreme. "It shall come to pass in the last days," says Isaiah, "that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountain, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say 'Come ye and let us go up to the mount of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and He will teach us of His ways, and we will walk in His paths;' for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. And He shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people; and they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more."<sup>19</sup>

Yes, we shall behold the purposes of God materialize for Israel and the nations. Jesus shall reign not only as King of Israel but also as King of kings and Lord of lords.<sup>20</sup> Israel, despised of all nations, shall then take the lead in

international affairs and govern the nations. Listen to these tremendous statements in this regard: "The Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising" . . . "The sons of strangers shall build up thy walls, and their kings shall minister unto thee" . . . "The nation and kingdom that shall not serve thee shall perish, yea, these nations shall be utterly destroyed" . . . "The sons also of them that afflicted thee shall come bending unto thee, and all they that despised thee shall bow themselves down at the soles of thy feet; and they shall call thee, 'The city of the Lord, The Zion of the Holy One of Israel' " . . . "In that day Jehovah shall say, 'Blessed be Egypt My people, and Assyria the work of My hands, and Israel Mine inheritance.'" <sup>21</sup> No amount of spiritualizing could ever make these conditions fit into history. They belong to Kingdom days, to Israel, and to the nations.

The day of the Lord shall bring together the heavens and the earth.<sup>22</sup> At the present hour they are divorced by reason of sin, but when the Sin-Atoner returns to make good His Calvary sacrifice then everything that smacks of sin, even to the minutest defilement, shall be eliminated. He shall cleanse the heavens of Satan and his satellites and all the defilement they have brought in by their presence,<sup>23</sup> and He shall lift the curse from Mother Earth to give her the liberty of the glory of the sons of God.<sup>24</sup> In that day there shall be "peace on earth," and "peace in heaven." The Head of creation shall gather together the things in the heavens and on earth and bring them under His sublime and benign sway.<sup>25</sup> Then shall be brought to pass His own prophetic utterance that "the angels of God shall ascend and descend upon the Son of man." <sup>26</sup>



### Millennial Times

How wonderful for us to behold the earth delivered from its groans and travail! The redemption of our bodies, realized at our glorification and rapture, shall signal the eventual and eternal "redemption of the purchased possession."<sup>27</sup> Then, with the curse removed, "the wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; and 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 weened child shall put down his hand on the cockatrice's den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea."<sup>28</sup>

Weather-wise, climatic conditions shall be perfect everywhere. No more Alaskan snows, freezing temperatures, and ice; no more the Sahara's scorching heat. The climate shall be tempered to every human need and for everybody's enjoyment. The earth, too, shall yield her increase under its beneficent Creator, the Lord Jesus. For the most part hunger shall be unknown, sickness shall be eliminated, death shall be a prisoner, tears shall be wiped away, wars shall be history, and even night-time shall pass away in the light of the moon which shall be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun shall be sevenfold, as the light of seven days.<sup>29</sup>

Longevity shall be experienced, for men shall attain the 1000 year mark. They shall outstrip the years of Methuselah who lived 969 years.<sup>80</sup> More than that, there shall be many that shall never die. When the earthly Kingdom of Christ ends disastrously with the final, absolute dissolution of

the heavens and the earth, these shall be miraculously preserved. They shall be carried safely over into the eternal state. By this time, if not during Kingdom days, they shall acquire glorified condition which shall render them immune to fire. I admit, however, that there is nothing mentioned as to how God will preserve His own in the coming conflagration, but preserve them He will.

Prosperity, too, shall be one outstanding feature of millennial times. "For brass I will bring gold and for iron I will bring silver, and for wood brass, and for stones iron," saith the Lord.<sup>31</sup> Every person shall sit under his own fig tree, eat heartily from earth's bountiful supplies, dwell in his own home, live peaceably with his neighbor, daily sing praises to Jesus the King, and serve Him with fear and gladness.

All this, and infinitely more, shall be observed and enjoyed by us. It shall delight our hearts to behold the Lord Jesus acclaimed, acknowledged, adored universally. For the 1000 years of His reign, Satan and his minions shall be imprisoned in the bottomless pit;<sup>32</sup> sin shall be held in check while righteousness and peace shall kiss each other.<sup>33</sup> Earth's rightful Ruler, because of His creatorial and redemptive rights, shall be in absolute control. This is indeed the golden age, the Kingdom of our Lord and His Christ."<sup>34</sup> It was in contemplation of this scene that the hymn writer wrote:

"Throughout the universe of bliss,  
The center Thou and Sun,  
The eternal theme of praise is this  
To heaven's Beloved One:  
Worthy, O Lamb of God, art Thou,  
That every knee to Thee should'st bow."

### **Dissolution Of Heavens And Earth**

I cannot but believe that the casual observer of Christ's earthly Kingdom would automatically consider that the unprecedented conditions experienced by men would cause it to continue indefinitely without disloyalty on the part of any person, but the Bible teaches otherwise. It makes clear that the millennial reign of Christ shall conclude on a note of rebellion against Him and His people.<sup>35</sup> This can be better understood when we realize that throughout this period, or age, men are still under trial by God. Just as failure has dogged their footsteps in the past so shall it be on this final occasion. Man is truly a sinner—a rebel, an enemy of God—regardless as to the conditions under which he lives, or the providential blessings lavished upon him. It is here, however, that his rebellious ways abruptly terminate as God causes the heavens to pass away with a great noise and melts the elements with fervent heat.<sup>36</sup> Then shall He usher men into space to stand before the bar of inflexible justice, even the Great White Throne. Here time ends and eternity begins.

As these things pass in panorama before us we shall be intelligently acquainted with every intricate and delicate development. Even now, in this crisis hour of world history, we have no fear about men making some miscalculation and enveloping the world in a universal inferno. That shall never happen until God has fulfilled His purpose for men and creation, and above all, for His precious Son. Always remember, beloved, that the right to dissolve the heavens and earth belongs to God. It shall assuredly happen, but not now. We shall be with Him and take part in the entire proceedings as co-heirs with Christ.

### **All Humanity Together**

The next momentous event which shall be witnessed is the resurrection of the unconverted dead.<sup>37</sup> What a throng of humans from every tribe, people, and nation!

It is my firm conviction that the saints shall meet every person that has ever lived on earth in this great day. Surely we shall meet all the saved, for they shall stand with us behind the judgment bar in association with the Judge Himself. Before us shall stand this innumerable host to await judgment. At no time in history has there been such a gathering. This is the first time that men have been segregated into their distinct classes. Their destinies shall be obvious. Those with us shall dwell in bliss eternally; those before us shall be sent to the Lake of Fire. As I muse upon that scene and think of you, I wonder in what class you shall be: with the saints or with the sinners?

I feel impelled to quote you the words of a servant of God who wrote on this very theme. He says, "The people and nations that have walked on earth as we do, laughed and wept and thought the world belonged to them, are not fleeting shadows on the wall, now vanished for ever. No, the Bible says humanity is a whole; the dead are immortal, creatures of the same God, children in the same family. And as brothers and sisters, who left home young and before they had learned to know one another meet later on, so we shall meet one another. Man laments and hopes that everything is corruptible. 'No, everything is eternal,' answers the eternal Word; your words and deeds, your unpardoned sin and its punishment, and also pardon and grace and life."

Every saved person standing with us shall be an eloquent testimony to the effectual saving grace of God. What happened to us, through simple faith in the Lord Jesus Christ,

could and would have happened to the unconverted, but they would not. Our presence shall bespeak their condemnation, stop their mouths, and elicit from them a confession of guilt. For us to follow through all the proceedings of this vast company's judgment and then to hear the Judge pronounce His sentence shall be solemn beyond expression. Then, what a sight to behold this mass of unregenerates move away from the Great White Throne out into the blackness of darkness, the Lake of Fire, for ever! The curtain now drops as far as anything further is revealed about these unfortunates. One thing is certain; they shall be in conscious pain throughout the eternal ages ahead. So we leave them with this one grand thought that from henceforth the universe shall be cleared of every offence and offender.

### **Eternal Home Of The Redeemed**

John now introduces to our waiting, wondering, and worshipping hearts the new heaven and the new earth, the eternal home of the redeemed. The sight is breath-taking, awe-inspiring, ineffably glorious in the extreme. The description is both lucid and short. Let me quote it in full for your exceeding pleasure. "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 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.' "38



This unveiling of the eternal state, as you will heartily confess, is blessed beyond compare. It tells us that all that uncreated Deity can create in love, righteousness, and holiness shall be present for His and our eternal enjoyment. Beyond the material things He shall have for us, there shall be the companionship of the Holy Trinity, also that of all saints and the heavenly angelic hierarchy. Everything pleasurable shall be ours to enjoy to the full. What a blessed prospect!

As I mention these things my mind is directed to the words of F. C. Jennings given in his book entitled "Studies in Isaiah" where he says, as he writes about Israel: "Why should not the service of Israel be also a type of the service of the heavenly redeemed for eternity? . . . The earthly people are sent to outlying lands to whom the 'report' had not come, to proclaim the glory of which they had not heard. That would be a type of the ministry of us, His servants, who shall even in eternity serve Him (Rev. 22:3) by proclaiming His glory, in the atoning work that He has accomplished. But where could that be, save to those star-worlds that have as far as we know no limitation in number, and each having its spirit-ruler; the literal material host of heaven thus having its counterpart in the heavenly host of spirit-principalities and powers, both being termed in Scripture the Host of Heaven, and in their infinity providing a field for unending ministry.

"How different the stirring picture this gives of eternal occupation, from the imaginations that endeavor to fill eternity with nothing at all but singing! 'At Thy right hand are pleasures for evermore.' Note the plural, for there is not one kind of pleasure only, but such changes of unselfish occupation that forbid our thinking of heaven as a scene of unvarying repetition, precisely as made Solomon utter his groan, 'Vanity of vanities,' as he saw generations and con-



stellations, winds and waters, all going in endless unvarying circles: is that to be our heaven? No. A thousand times, no. Solomon found no new thing under the sun; we are to find all things new, for ever and constantly new, 'above the sun.' New scintillations of divine beauty, new visions of divine love in Jesus our Lord, new worlds to which to announce that glory."

These things, beloved, are intriguing. They engage our minds with things much too high for us to understand in our present limited mortal state, but they are revealed for faith to grasp. I feel there are points of interest stated in regards to the new creation that we can appreciate though we may not fully apprehend.

### **No More Sea**

We have just read that there shall be "no more sea." Since the sea divides people here, it is quite feasible to believe that God shall remove it in the new eternal scene. He shall not permit any trace of confusion, separation, distance, or difference there. Babel is completely gone with the passing of unregenerate man and the creation to which he belonged. Here the saints dwell in the sweetness and blessedness of divine unity. "How good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity" is ours now.<sup>39</sup> Here we shall experience the answer to the heart of Jesus when He prayed His Father that we "may be one, even as we are one; I in them, and Thou in Me, that they may be made perfect in one."<sup>40</sup>

I know it is difficult to appreciate such a condition while in the flesh. There is so much that divides us meantime. We have been afflicted with personality problems. Men with leadership ability who vie for top place in ecclesiastical circles speak eloquently about humility but are the chief evi-

dences of pride. Simple-minded, easily-led, undiscerning believers are magnetized by them and drawn into the vortex of sectarianism. Denominationalism is the order of the day, and for the most part, the larger denominations have turned their feet into paths of apostasy. That is the end of the road for those who follow men, not the Man Christ Jesus. Indeed, such is the confusion in Christendom at this moment that the fear of Communism is driving the major denominations together and that shall eventuate in "Babylon the great, the mother of harlots."<sup>41</sup> The last state shall be worse than the first.

To stand outside all of this divisive, confused, mass of religious peoples or to anticipate the eternal state where there shall be no more sea is extremely difficult though gloriously divine. Just as it is incongruous for us to contemplate division then, so it should be now. "All one in Christ Jesus" is not a slogan for a convention but a statement for practice. Sadly enough, those who practice it are catechised as "misfits," "religious heretics." Yet they prefer to be known only as "children of God," "sons of the Father," "saints," and "brethren." They gladly but humbly acknowledge that "the bread which we break is it not the communion of the body of Christ? For we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread."<sup>42</sup> They bring eternity into time and exchange time for eternity.

### **No More Tears**

The One who says, "Behold, I make all things new," also says that in the eternal state, "He shall wipe away all tears from their eyes and there shall be no more death, sorrow, crying, or pain." He shall completely remove all traces of the ruin of sin or the ravages of Satan.

While our God makes this statement in connection with

the new heaven and the new earth, or the new creation, we should understand that these things become true of us at glorification. Some saints fail to realize this and accept fanciful teaching which is contradictory of the otherwise plain statements of Scripture. They will say, for instance, that all tears shall not be wiped away before the eternal state dawns. This they deduct from the passage before us. Lying back of this belief is the thought that at the Judgment Seat of Christ our shortcomings shall be so manifested that it will take the 1000 years to be sorrowful for our misdoings! I look upon this as a modified purgatory. But such teaching is both untenable and unscriptural. It virtually denies our divine perfection at glorification when we shall be transformed into the image of our Lord Jesus Christ so that we shall be like Him.<sup>43</sup> It offsets the truth of being presented to God holy, unblameable, and unproveable.<sup>44</sup> It contradicts the revelation which declares that "He shall present it to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing."<sup>45</sup> It indirectly belies the truth of God presenting us "faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy."<sup>46</sup>

Basically, the erroneous belief springs from misunderstanding the truth about the Judgment Seat of Christ. This is not the place where sins are made manifest. These are gone, forgiven and forgotten by God Himself.<sup>47</sup> It is not likely He will resurrect them then! This is the place of rewards. It is prize-giving time. Here we shall learn what our lives have been worth to God, and their appraisal shall be seen in the place He shall give us in His everlasting Kingdom. Tears are nowhere seen in the proceedings. Those who suffer loss shall bow to the judgment of Jesus the Judge.<sup>48</sup>

All who believe that tears are not wiped away until we

reach the eternal state—all because this verse speaks on this wise—must also believe that death, sorrow, crying, and pain shall be ours. These things are definitely included here. They cannot and must not be overlooked. Whoever would say that there shall be death, for instance, in heaven throughout millennial times? Even the earthly saints do not die! Such thinking is irrational.

How then can we bring this revelation into the present? Beloved, in this vale of tears where death is rampant, where sorrow, crying, and pain are universal, we must Moses-like, see the tree cast into the bitter waters.<sup>49</sup> This sweetens them. “We sorrow not even as others which have no hope,” says Paul, “for if we believe that Jesus died and rose again (this is the tree) even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him.”<sup>50</sup> In every trial of life we have the blessed assurance that His grace is sufficient for us.<sup>51</sup> Moreover, “We know that all things work together for good to them that love God.”<sup>52</sup>

The only place that tears are shed in heaven is when John sees no response to the challenge to come and take the book out of the right hand of God.<sup>53</sup> He knows that the purposes of God must collapse. This caused the tears to flow, but the Seer had his tears wiped away when he saw the Lion-Lamb Like-One take the book. We shall never be called to experience anything like this. Even here and now we rejoice in the truth that the Man of God’s choosing shall negotiate all His purposes and bring into being a Kingdom that shall never pass away.

### **The Holy City, New Jerusalem**

The holy city, new Jerusalem, now comes into focus. It is as a “bride adorned for her husband.” What a sight

for eyes to see! It is probably a picture of the New Testament Church in all her eternal glory. I shall give a full consideration of her in the message to follow. Suffice it to say here that she is holy in her character, new in her creation. She is a city because she takes over the administration of the universe, and she is seen as Jerusalem, the city of abiding, eternal peace.

The new heaven and the new earth shall be peopled by holy ones—that goes for both angels and men—but that which is outstanding, the most distinguished, among all is the Church of God. How delightful to read that after she has been with her Husband 1000 years she still is fresh and fragrant in her love. The passage of time never affects her. If change is noticeable, it is her increased affection for her Beloved. To know Him is to love Him. Never shall the indictment be leveled against her that “thou hast left thy first love.”<sup>54</sup> I believe that Jesus will unveil His infinite, matchless glories to her as the eternities move onward in their unending movements to the everlasting satisfaction of her heart. So should it be here and now. The Holy Spirit has come to make Him known to us. “He shall glorify Me,” said Jesus, “for He shall receive of Mine, and show it unto you.”<sup>55</sup> The great secret of growing in grace and in love for our Lord is to be shown the glory of His Person, the grace of His Passion, the greatness of His resurrection and exaltation, the grandeur of His coming Kingdom. This begets deeper longings to know Him better, to serve Him more acceptably, and to worship Him more profoundly in the beauty of holiness.

### **Metropolis Of The Universe**

I cannot pass on without making reference to the literal city of our God, the habitation of God, the angelic hosts, the Church of the firstborn ones, and the Old Testa-



ment saints, or the "spirits of just men made perfect."<sup>56</sup> This is the city for which Abraham looked, "a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God." It was this heavenly hope that made him, and others with him, pilgrims and strangers on the earth. "And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned. But now they desire a better country, that is an heavenly; wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God; for He hath prepared for them a city."<sup>57</sup>

This is the city into which all saints shall be taken at glorification. It shall descend from heaven into the atmospheric heavens at the beginning of millennial days and be suspended there as a covering for the earthly people.<sup>58</sup> From the city the Lord Jesus and His saints with the holy angels shall come to earth to set up the Kingdom. The city is the metropolis of the universe. All rule and authority shall emanate from it. It is probable too that throughout Kingdom days there shall be intercourse and communication between the city and earth. We shall thus be able to travel to and from the city at will.

Since so little is revealed about the eternal state, it is wise to say as little about it. It does seem fairly certain that when it is entered upon, the Old Testament saints with those in post-tribulation and millennial times, shall have the earth as their home while the city above shall be the dwelling place of the Church of Christ. She occupies it with Him as the center of the universal administration.

### **The Tabernacle Of God**

With the dawn of eternity and a scene in which God shall have infinite pleasure we read that "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."<sup>59</sup> Here we reach the ultimate in the purpose of God. Here is where the heart of uncreated Deity is abundantly satisfied. Here is where perennial peace and perfect pleasure are God's, and all the redeemed of all ages.

In the beginning of God's way we read that "His delights were with the sons of men."<sup>60</sup> His becoming flesh to tabernacle among men and reveal His glory was but an earnest, so to speak, of all that eternity holds for Him.<sup>61</sup> It is out here, away from the limitations imposed upon Him in humiliation, that He shall truly "tabernacle with men." He shall explain how He is the substance of every shadow seen in the tabernacle in the wilderness. At this present hour we appreciate how He answers to the Altar of burnt offering as the accepted Sacrifice; the laver as the Sanctifier; the table of shewbread as the Sustainer and Satisfier; the golden lampstand as the Shining One, the Light of the world; the altar of incense as the Supplicater; the mercy-seat, ark, and cherubim as the Sovereign; and finally as the Shekinah Glory; but when we see Him face to face all these things shall be revealed in their infinite fulness.

When He walked with the two disciples on the Emmaus road and unfolded to them Himself in the Law, the Psalms, and the Prophets, their heart burned within them. They were thrilled and filled to overflowing with such joy that they gladly travelled back the road they came to communicate the good things to their brethren.<sup>62</sup> Our walk with Him through the eternities shall be one unfolding of Himself, one experience after another of exhilarating joy for us.

You will agree that He was circumscribed as to travel while here below. He passed outside Israel's boundary but once in His lifetime when as a babe He was carried down

into Egypt to escape the fury of Herod the king.<sup>63</sup> It is all so different now. As eternity breaks He shall begin His journeys, and we with Him, to the uttermost parts of His universe. In every world the inhabitants shall greet Him and us with songs of rejoicing and a heaven-born enthusiasm. Wonder of wonders since He Himself is infinite, it could very well be that His universe is the same. We are told by scientists, even men that have little time for God, that there is no end to the creation. So forever and ever we shall travel with Him and always hear Him say "All things are yours."<sup>64</sup>

Beloved, despite all our limitations, imperfections, and inconsistencies, our Lord Jesus is not ashamed to call us brethren and to gladly acknowledge us as the sons of His Father.<sup>65</sup> He is pleased to walk with us and to talk to us as we travel over this waste-howling wilderness world. How ashamed we should be, in the light of His pleasure in us now and in that coming eternal state, to fail to confess Him before men. Too often, Peter-like, we say in life, if not in words, "I know not the Man."<sup>66</sup> Somehow we do not relish the "reproach of the Cross." I trust, however, that all this state of things shall vanish and that we shall arise in the power of the indwelling Spirit of God to valiantly make Him known. May we take up the language of that well-known hymn and say

"I'm not ashamed to own my Lord,  
Or to defend His cause:  
Maintain the honor of His Word,  
The glory of His Cross."

## CHAPTER NINE

### THE HOLY CITY

**T**HE MOST ENTHRALLING, soul-captivating vision ever beheld by mortal man was that given to John, the Apocalyptic Seer. He is the only person in divine or secular history that ever viewed the eternal state, the new heaven and new earth, and the holy city, new Jerusalem, which came from God out of Heaven.<sup>1</sup> He was perfectly conditioned for this vision by being "in the Spirit on the Lord's day."<sup>2</sup> In this way he was enabled to take it in.

That is what will happen in our own experience. The moment the trumpet sounds we shall be transformed into the physical and moral likeness of Christ and then translated into His immediate thrice-holy presence.<sup>3</sup> Divine perfection shall be ours. We shall be made so like Christ that no improvement shall ever be possible. All that He is, we shall be. As John puts it so beautifully, "It doth not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when He shall appear we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is."<sup>4</sup>

We know that John traveled over every avenue of revelation from the time he entered heaven until he saw the new creation dawn. Everything in the heavens and in the earth from the opening of the seals until the eternal state was revealed to him. That, too, shall be our happy portion. Nothing shall escape our sight, interest, and attention from

the moment of our glorification until we behold the new creation where righteousness shall dwell,<sup>5</sup> and God will be all in all.<sup>6</sup>

Upon our entrance into the vestibule of eternity it shall thrill us to see our Lord Jesus take the entire universe of bliss and deliver up the "kingdom to God." He shall hand it back to Him in absolute, radiant perfection. The scene is graphically and grandly described by Paul in these momentous words: "Then cometh the end, when He shall have delivered up the Kingdom to God, even the Father; when He shall have put down all rule and authority and power. For He must reign, till He hath put all enemies under His feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death."<sup>7</sup> What a difference from the First Adam who received the lower creation from God in perfect condition but brought it into ruin by his disobedience! This Last Adam found the creation in total ruin but brought it to a state of absolute perfection by His redeeming blood and the power of the blessed Spirit. He gives it back to His God where He and all His redeemed creatures with Him may rest.

### **The City—The Church**

Scripture does not take us beyond this ceremony and celebration. There are some suggestions as to what we may do throughout the eternal ages as we take Israel's service in Kingdom days as a type, otherwise we are shut up to the all-inclusive statement, "His servants shall serve Him."<sup>8</sup> That is sufficient for faith meantime while we wait patiently for the realization of our hope. It does seem clear to me, however, that the portion before us for consideration focuses upon the grandeur of the Church as a City in millennial times when she comes down from God out of heaven to assume administrative responsibilities.

We stand to lose much if we fail to apprehend the different presentations of the Church. Paul and John differ widely though they deal with the same people. Paul, for instance, brings out the truth of the Church as the Body of Christ, the Temple and the House of God, and the Bride of Christ.<sup>9</sup> John, on the other hand, sets forth the Church as the Lampstands, the Bridal-Wife of the Lamb, and the Holy City.<sup>10</sup> Each figure of speech employed has its own peculiar teaching, and must be interpreted accordingly. We recognize representation in the Body; worship and revelation in the Temple; rule and authority in the House; illumination in the Lampstands; established relationship in the Bridal-Wife; and administration in the Holy City.

Some Christians have thought that the "City-Four-square" refers to the heavenly dwelling of the saints. This is not so. I have dealt with this truth in a previous message, but suffice it to say that the dwelling place of the saints is revealed particularly in the Hebrew Epistle. It is the habitation of saints and angels.<sup>11</sup> Here, however, the vision concerns the Church, the Bride of Christ. This is established beyond controversy when the passage is read carefully for it says: "And there came unto me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, 'Come hither, I will show thee the bride, the Lamb's wife.' And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God God . . ." <sup>12</sup> Nothing could be clearer. The Bride, the Lamb's Wife, is the City. She comes in heavenly splendour to rule with Christ over all mankind.

### **Greatness Of The Church**

I want you to observe first and foremost that the Church is seen as "that great city, the holy Jerusalem." Her greatness

and holiness combined arrest us, for this is the antithesis of any earthly city. Babylon, mentioned by the Seer in an earlier portion of the Book, is described as great but most unholy. She is Satan's masterpiece, his product, with his imprimatur upon her. For her great wickedness she is totally destroyed by the judgment of God.<sup>13</sup> The true Church is entirely different, for she takes character from her Lover, the Lord Jesus, who is elsewhere described as being both "great" and "holy."<sup>14</sup> She is His counterpart, the "fullness of Him who filleth all in all,"<sup>15</sup> and eternally bears the imprimatur of God.

It appears to me that the greatness of the City stems from three important factors. First, she has an invaluable composition, for she is made of "pure gold." Second, she has titantic dimensions being 1500 miles long, broad, and high—the city foursquare. Third, she has to play the principal role as the chief executor of all God's purposes for the entire universe.

I doubt if anyone would question the greatness of this woman, the Bride, the Lamb's Wife. She is, in every sense of the expression, "pure gold" for her purchase price was the precious, or priceless, blood of Christ.<sup>16</sup> His blood is beyond human computation, as also is the one purchased by it. The value of any article is determined by the price paid for it. I fear that we are all too prone to under-estimate our value to God. Maybe we consider this is humility, whereas it is failure to appreciate the cost of our redemption. To give more consideration to the greatness of the Person of Christ and the infinite value of His blood shall help correct this inadequate evaluation of ourselves to God. There shall be given us at the same time a corresponding appreciation of Him "whose we are and whom we serve."<sup>17</sup>



The titanic dimension of the city 1500 miles long, broad, and high outstrips anything in the universe. Josephus says that Jerusalem was 33 stadia in circuit, while Nineveh was 400, and Babylon, 480; but this City is 48,000. Neither wonder Paul prays that we may be able to comprehend what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height of the Church itself.<sup>18</sup> She shall tower high over Israel in Kingdom days; even the angelic hosts shall be under her command. Indeed, if at this moment the principalities and powers see in her "the all various wisdom of God," the day is approaching when God shall display through her "the exceeding riches of His grace."<sup>19</sup> The Lord Jesus, her exalted, glorified Head, is "far above all," and she shares His glory.<sup>20</sup>

God plans to reveal the greatness of the Church in Kingdom days. He has linked us livingly and lastingly with His Son, the Head of all creation, with this idea in mind. It predicates that with Him we shall communicate to Israel the instructions for her national life, and through her give instructions for the governing of all nations. It shall be necessary for the nations to come to Jerusalem every year to receive their instructions which shall be obeyed lest they suffer retributive judgment.<sup>21</sup> Both Israel and the nations shall bring their honor and glory unto the City.<sup>22</sup> She shall be held in highest esteem by them. Then, when nations, as such, cease to function in the eternal state, we shall detail to men, and angels likewise, the laws by which they shall live for the glory of God. This is a great honor indeed. It is this truth, and more besides, that is embedded in the Savior's words, "the glory which Thou gavest Me I have given them."<sup>23</sup>

All the spiritual greatness and holiness evidenced in the City spring from humility. These spiritual qualities are being developed in us meantime. They are inherent in the new

nature and cultivated as we behold the glory of the Lord in the Word.<sup>24</sup> Here we see His moral perfection and, by contrast, our own imperfections. Surely we can see how prone we are to exercise guile; to engage in unprofitable conversation; to indulge in words and thoughts that are selfish; to lend our tongues for Satan to use; to press beyond reason our own convictions on others; to give injudiciously of our substance; to spend lavishly upon ourselves without divine sanction; to exhaust our physical energies foolishly; to disregard the plain teaching of Scripture as to our responsibilities in the local Church, in the home, and in the business world; to imbibe jealousy which is as cruel as the grave; and to give occasion at times for Satan to become the "accuser of the brethren."<sup>25</sup> It is the presence of these things that heralds the necessity of "perfecting holiness in the fear of God."<sup>26</sup>

### **The Church—Divine And Heavenly**

The second thing to note about the City is that it descends out of heaven from God. It is the Church coming from Him Who formed her and from the place to which she belongs—heaven.

The Church is certainly divine for she is God's property. He is her Owner, Creator, Redeemer, Bridegroom, and Husband. He chose her in the eternal past; His own blood purchased her for His own pleasure; and He purposes to have her with Himself eternally.<sup>27</sup>

If the Church is divine, she also is heavenly—the heavenly Bride of the Bridegroom. She is the vessel of His choice, the object of His love, the darling of His bosom. There is no one so near, or so dear, to His heart. However much He loves Israel, His love for the Church exceeds it. In His reckoning as the heavens are higher than the earth, so the heavenly people are higher than the earthly. "This is the

Lord's doings, and it is marvelous in our eyes."<sup>28</sup> In sovereign grace He has called us with a heavenly calling;<sup>29</sup> He has determined that our conversation is in heaven;<sup>30</sup> He assures us that our hope is in heaven;<sup>31</sup> and best of all, He reveals that our destiny is the heavenly side of the Kingdom of God which He expressly calls "the Kingdom of the Father."<sup>32</sup>

These things, beloved, certainly indicate that we should wear the garment with the heavenly, or blue, border.<sup>33</sup> In this way when men touch us they touch heaven. We manifest what heaven is like. I cannot but be persuaded that there is something very refreshing and elevating about this knowledge, especially in our materialistic age. To adopt heavenly principles in business, in the home, and in the mundane affairs of life is altogether different from the generally accepted formula in human relations. It is highly probable that we might communicate healing of soul to those that touch us in the same maner that Jesus communicated healing of body to the poor woman that touched the hem of His garment.<sup>34</sup> Christians have never had a better opportunity of demonstrating the blessedness of saving grace than at this present hour. There is so much graft, political string-pulling, and under-hand dealings in business, that a good, consecrated Christian is rarely to be found. There is so much social drinking of whisky and wines to further business that a person who stands aloof is marked. I believe, however, that such a person has the full favor of God resting upon him and his honorable business.

### **The Fullness Of Christ**

Will you kindly observe, in the third place, that the City has the "glory of God." This, I take, to be the effulgent manifestation of God's moral character. All that we have ever done for God down here comes out in the City.

This line of truth is especially noted by Paul in his letter to the Ephesian saints when he writes about the gifts given to the Church. He says that apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers are "For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ; till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ."<sup>35</sup> It is the divine provision for us while in this world so that we may arrive at the status of the perfect man—the Man Christ Jesus. God would work in us every moral feature of His Son before He sends Him for us. He is simply stating that we are to be in heaven, morally, what He had made us through ministry on earth.

I present this to you, beloved, for your serious consideration. Most Christians assume that the Lord cannot return until the last person that shall complete the Church is saved. That is true, but this section of Scripture goes farther. It advances the thought that He cannot come until the body of Christ has come to the "fullness of Christ." It is necessary, therefore, not only to evangelize the unconverted but to minister Christ to the saints. Both ministries are essential in the work of God. They are linked together, like husband and wife, in a union indissoluble. To be well-balanced we must give both evangelism and ministry an equal place in our service.

You will agree that it is only those who have a God-given ministry who do the work of evangelism. Otherwise they are incapacitated and ineffective. Peter was full of the Scriptures that related to the life, death, resurrection, and ascension of the Messiah when he stood before the crowd on the day of Pentecost and secured 3000 converts.<sup>36</sup> The Holy Spirit brought these things to his remembrance. Philip, too,

knew the meaning of Isaiah's prophecy about Jesus, the Lamb of God, therefore he could lead the Ethiopian eunuch to the Savior.<sup>37</sup> Did not the Holy Spirit take Paul into the desert to reveal Christ in him so that he could carry the Gospel to the Gentile world?<sup>38</sup> Evangelism is always the outflow, yea the overflow, of a Christ-centered ministry. It pays big dividends to be alone with God and His Word before we reach out to sinful men.

The glory of God seen in the Church is the total contribution of every member. Our eating and drinking, our thoughts, and words and deeds, have been brought together in this composite way for the pleasure of God. He brings to light the glorious truth that "all things work together for good to them that love God."<sup>39</sup> Often we have chafed under His disciplinary hand and wondered where the "good" is, but at the end of life's journey we shall fully understand the whys and wherefores of His dealings. It is well to remember that He always gives us His best. He works all things after the council of His own will, and for His own glory. Once His purpose is realized, and His pattern in us is perfected, then shall He adorn us with the full blaze of His glory. He shall be fully glorified in and through us.<sup>40</sup>

### Knowledge Of God

The fourth feature about the City to which I call your attention is that her light is "like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal."

There is something unique about the light of heaven, and shall I add, about those that are heavenly. The light is not natural like the sun, nor is it artificial like the candle; rather it is both spiritual and divine. There is no need for the natural or artificial in a scene where God is Light and becomes our light. That which is natural or manufactured by



man is useless in the spiritual realm. This is a hard lesson to learn, for the most difficult thing in the world is to live according to the light of the Word of God.

I believe that if we had no other statement in the Bible to conclusively prove the absolute Deity of Jesus it is given in His own word, "I AM THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD."<sup>41</sup> He is the essence and expression of all that God is. He is specifically called the "Image of the invisible God,"<sup>42</sup> and again He is said to be "the Only Begotten Son in the bosom of the Father," the revelation of God.<sup>43</sup> Only God can reveal God.

Now, light speaks of knowledge or intelligence. As saints of God we are no longer in darkness, or in ignorance of God, but are "light in the Lord."<sup>44</sup> John states this truth in the absolute when he says that we "walk in the Light."<sup>45</sup> He is not speaking about our walking before God with a clear conscience, something, of course, that is highly desirable and necessary, but of our walking in the perfect revelation of God in Christ. God is no longer dwelling in the thick darkness, as in Old Testament times, but "in the light." We see not His backparts, like Moses, but His face.<sup>46</sup>

Does this help you to understand the statement about the light being "like unto a stone most precious, clear as crystal"? Tell me, what is more precious to your heart than the knowledge of God? There is absolutely nothing to begin to compare with it. "This is life eternal," says Jesus as He speaks to His Father, "that they might know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent."<sup>47</sup> It is the knowledge of Divine Persons, Father and Son in the power of the Holy Spirit, that brings eternal life. Elsewhere we read that "God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the



knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.”<sup>48</sup>

How wonderful, then, to know God! This knowledge, obtained by faith in the Word, shall come out in the City by and by. There we shall be furnished with all the knowledge necessary to undertake the complete control of both heavenly and earthly spheres. I know this is far above our present ability to understand, nevertheless it is what God plans to do through us. In that day no problem shall go unsolved, no question shall be too difficult to answer, and no difficulty shall exist for which we shall not have a satisfactory solution.

It may surprise you to know that such knowledge is given us now. We are not called upon to rule the universe meantime, but we are called upon to rule in the Church. The Corinthians seemingly did not realize they were graced with such knowledge so took their own brethren to the public courts and exposed them to shame. This gave occasion for God to tell them that He would grace them with knowledge to judge both the world and the angels in the world to come and that He had supplied all knowledge meantime to take care of their local affairs.<sup>49</sup> There is absolutely no need for us to turn to the world for help. The “wisdom” we have in Christ still stands: “I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go; I will guide thee with Mine eye.”<sup>50</sup> However, remember the word of caution: “Trust in the Lord with all thine heart, and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He will direct thy paths.”<sup>51</sup> Those that wait at wisdom’s gate are provided the grace to negotiate every contingency in life.

### **Salvation Of God**

I would like to direct you, in the fifth place, to behold the wall of the City which is “great and high.” The wall has some interesting features with profound spiritual meaning.

For instance, it is built of jasper stone, clear as crystal; it has twelve foundations in which are the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb; it has twelve gates that remain open all the time, and these gates are made of twelve pearls, and at the gates are twelve angels, and on them are written the names of the twelve tribes of Israel.

The wall is said to be "clear as crystal" like the jasper stone. Isaiah testifies that the wall speaks of salvation, for, says he, "Salvation will God appoint for walls."<sup>52</sup> Since the walls speak of salvation you would expect it to be as clear as crystal. There ought to be no doubt in our minds about the salvation God has given us. This is a "know-so" salvation, "We know that we have passed from death into life," and "we know whom we have believed."<sup>53</sup> As recorded in Ephesians, we have been quickened and raised with Christ and are seen seated in the heavenlies in Christ.<sup>54</sup> That insures, and assures, our eternal safety. Thank God we are not saved because we have assurance, but because Jesus purchased salvation at Calvary. His work secures salvation; His Word assures us of salvation. The day is coming when we shall be publicly manifested as God's own.

The local, visible Church should be a replica of the true, universal, invisible Church. Since every person in the true Church is saved, so every person should be saved that forms part of the local Church. That insists upon a saved membership. "All that believed were together," says the Word of the early Pentecostal Christians.<sup>55</sup> Things are quite different now. Within the confines of the professing Church we have a mixture of the true and false, the saved and unsaved. Like Israel we are plagued with a "mixed multitude."<sup>56</sup> In the early Church no unconverted person "durst join himself to them."<sup>57</sup> The power and presence of the glorified

Christ was keenly felt then. He was in their midst. Our present set-up is a lucid, but sad, commentary on our spirituality. Yet, in some instances the situation can be remedied if the New Testament teaching is followed. I admit that a price has to be paid, discipline exercised, and divine love expressed. If we cherish the presence of the Lord Jesus in our midst, we must return to a saved membership, or forego His gracious presence.

### **Stability Of Saints**

The twelve foundations, not "foundation" in the singular, garnished with all manner of precious stones indicate preciousness, beauty, and stability. What, beloved, is more precious, or beautiful, in the eyes of our Lord than the stability of His people? To stand against all odds, the world, the flesh, and the devil and share in the triumph of Christ is His delight. Paul's great lament was that the saints in Asia forsook him when on trial for his life; among them was Demas who loved this present evil world.<sup>58</sup> His heart thrilled with delight as he thought about young Timothy and faithful, steadfast Epaphroditus.<sup>59</sup> They followed closely in the trail of Him who said, "I have set the Lord always before me; because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved."<sup>60</sup> His face was always like a flint, His spirit was never daunted, as He pursued the accomplishment of the will of God.

One of the main reasons for saints being side-tracked, and lacking stability in the things of God is their deliberate carelessness to avail themselves of a Christ-centered ministry. They will not heed the admonition to "forsake not the assembling of yourselves together" for the ministry of the Word.<sup>61</sup> This leaves them easy victims of Satan. They become targets for every wind of doctrine, whether fanciful or spectacular, and come under their magnetism.<sup>62</sup> Good, sound,

healthy, spiritual ministry, however, shall keep us "steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord."<sup>63</sup>

The world shall soon discover something of the stability of saints when we assume universal governmental responsibility. It shall know that we shall have nothing to do with anything that is shady, questionable, or in the least improper. Our lives and ministrations shall be absolutely righteous. I wish we would act similarly today. How men would respect us! They would realize that we have been with Jesus.

### **Israel And Angels Subservient**

The twelve gates of pearl that face north, south, east and west, with twelve angels on duty, and the names of the twelve tribes inscribed on them suggest the Church in her universal outlook governing the nations with both Israel and angelic beings subservient to her.

We are told that the angels are ministering spirits sent forth to minister for them who shall be the heirs of salvation.<sup>64</sup> They superintend all the providences of God on our behalf. I am sure we shall have quite a revelation when the book of our life is opened in heaven to learn how they looked after us from birth to glorification. Never once did they fail us. They fulfilled their service perfectly. Yet, we have never seen them, nor spoken to them, nor had one single communication with them. They do their work silently and unobserved by human eye. In the Kingdom, however, we shall both see them and give them instructions for service which shall be executed instantly.

The gate in Scripture is regarded as the place where the judge sits to try cases. We read that "Lot sat in the gate of Sodom," that is, he acted as a judge.<sup>65</sup> It becomes obvious that the idea back of the gates of the City is similar. We shall judge the world; we shall judge angels. This is a tre-

mendous responsibility but one we shall exercise with divine wisdom. Evidently, our God has designated Israel to occupy the leading place among the nations of earth to give them peace and prosperity. It is her final role in the divine purpose. She herself, however, shall be dependent upon the Church to inform her what must be done by the Gentile nations.

You appreciate how closely the Church and Israel work together in Kingdom days. There is no jealousy anywhere. The heavenly and earthly peoples are in perfect harmony under the benign sway of Jesus the Lord. Somehow, I feel, we should have a real, deep interest in the salvation of the Lord's brethren according to the flesh. Israel or the Jews still despise and disown Him. Their attitude towards Him is heart-breaking, and they deliberately manifest this hatred of Him in the way they treat us. Nevertheless, let us love them and seek to give them the Glad Tidings of redeeming grace for His dear Name's sake. Once Jesus removes His Church to heaven He shall bring Israel back into the prophetic picture again to take up the testimony where we lay it down. Then shall her blindness be lifted, and the light of salvation in Jesus the Savior be seen. Wonderful days are ahead for Israel.<sup>66</sup>

### **Accessibility And Preciousness Of The Church**

The gates of the City being open all the time brings out the truth of accessibility. This grace was exercised by Jesus. Someone has said that He was the most accessible of men. How true! Nicodemus could come by night, or the woman of Samaria by day; it mattered not to Him. He was ready and willing to give them an audience. How we should emulate Him! One of our faults lies in our inconsistencies. We are so changeable. At times we are so dispositionally pleasant anybody can speak with us; then, like the changing weather, we become so awkward that we are not fit to speak with



anyone. Remember, in the day fast approaching, the gates of the City shall be open always so that we shall converse with people for their help. Every time we make ourselves available to others we are bringing nearer the Kingdom day. Keep the gates open!

One of the beautiful things about the gates is that each one is a pearl. The eye of Christ shall gaze upon those twelve pearly gates with ineffable delight. How they will remind Him of the "pearl of great price" for which He sold all that He had, and bought it!<sup>67</sup> She is to Him the fairest of the fair. Now she has what He prayed for, "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 loved them, as Thou hast loved Me."<sup>68</sup> A glorified Church shall be the perfect, final manifestation of Christ's love for her. The world shall know it then, but not until then. Meantime, we must "keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" so that men may believe that the Father sent the Son to be the Savior of the world.<sup>69</sup>

### **Omissions In The Holy City**

The sixth thing about the City is its omissions. He tells us explicitly that there shall be no temple, no night, no evil, and no curse in the holy City. These four omissions, however, are pregnant with spiritual meaning. Let us casually look at each one.

Already we have learned that the Temple speaks of both revelation and worship. It was in the Temple that God revealed Himself; it was here He was worshipped; but the City has no revelation to give, nor has it power to receive worship. "The Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of



it.”<sup>70</sup> Here we have the source of all revelation and the object of all worship. Our God will everlastingly reveal Himself to us and we shall everlastingly worship Him. Whenever God reveals Himself, we worship both now and in eternity. This is a powerful incentive to read the Word where God is made known so that we may worship and adore Him in the beauty of holiness.

*“There shall be no night there.”*<sup>71</sup> Night-time is when we rest from our labors and recuperate to take up our fresh responsibilities. In this blessed estate we shall be tireless and everlastingly fresh. “In Thy presence is fullness of joy, and at Thy right hand are pleasures for evermore.”<sup>72</sup>

*“No evil there”* is envisioned in the statement: “And there shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie; but they which are written in the Lamb’s book of Life.”<sup>73</sup> How could there be any evil in a City which is both immaculate and impeccable! The people here do not sin, and more, they cannot sin. Defilement is impossible, for sin is gone; abomination or idolatry is unknown in a people that worship God; a lie which emanates from Satan has no place, for he is shut out. Oh, the blessedness of living absolutely for God throughout the ages of the ages! May we be yielded, in total abandon, to Him until we are with Him.

*“No more curse.”* What heartening words! Its entrance to this once fair creation came by man’s disobedience, but by the obedient act of One, His expiatory sacrifice, it shall be removed. He bore the ‘crown of thorns,’ emblem of the curse, and cancelled it out. Now He wears the “crown of glory” and shall share it with creation in the day to come. Already the curse has been lifted from us who have believed in Him and the City exhibits this truth. Everlasting blessing

is upon our heads. Indeed, we are blessed with every spiritual blessing in Christ our Lord..<sup>74</sup>

### **Adornment Of The City**

May I interest you with a seventh point in connection with the Bridal-City. I might call this the adornment of the City, or the things that shall characterize it. God omits certain things, but He includes others.

(1) "The throne of God and the Lamb shall be in it." Perfect authority and power to rule predominate here. The Church is absolutely inlawed to God and the Lamb. What a Savior we have! He is God with might; He is the Lamb with meekness. Who would not be subject unto Him? This is the One we shall represent, the One whose authority and power we shall demonstrate to the universe.

(2) "A pure river of water of life, clear as crystal" is seen proceeding out of the throne..<sup>76</sup> Perfect refreshment from its life-giving waters are before us. It is the blessed Holy Spirit of God through us bringing His refreshment to men and nations. We are the first participants of the blessing. Refreshed ourselves we refresh others. This is a standing principle in God's ways with men.

(3) There is the "Tree of Life" by the river with its twelve manner of fruits monthly, and its leaves for the healing of the nations..<sup>77</sup> Perfect satisfaction is thus set forth. It is quite apparent that this is a millennial scene, for nations and their healing are in view. There shall be nothing like this in the eternal state. It is Christ through us providing the nations with perfect governmental satisfaction, for the numeral twelve speaks of government as we feed them with heaven's variegated blessings and heal their national wounds. Never shall the nations be so happily blessed as when under

the Church's administration. It shall be heaven come down to earth.

(4) "His servants shall serve Him."<sup>78</sup> Perfect service is surely advanced in this statement. What form our service shall take is God's secret, but it shall be glorious beyond words to express. Maybe we shall govern some towns or cities on earth; maybe we shall be called to minister in the City itself; maybe we shall be commissioned to travel to the uttermost parts of the universe to tell others the glad tidings of our Savior's love. It matters not where we go to serve, we shall gladly do it with a single eye for His praise. He surely desires that kind of service from us in this needy world where men are dying in sin from the lack of the knowledge we possess. May we hasten the Gospel message to them.

(5) "They shall see His face."<sup>79</sup> Perfect communion is seen here. Seeing His face bespeaks an intimate communion with Himself, indeed so intimate that every expression on His face shall be seen, and fully understood, by us. We always link character with the face. What a study lies before us as we gaze upon that face that was marred more than any man's at Calvary but is now radiant with glory!

(6) "His Name shall be in their foreheads."<sup>80</sup> Perfect representation of Him shall be ours. In Old Testament times God made Himself known by the Name "Jehovah," and the "I AM THAT I AM."<sup>81</sup> It signified infinite sufficiency. In New Testament days He makes Himself known as "JESUS," the Name that speaks of salvation.<sup>82</sup> His Name inscribed on our foreheads shall be a testimony to the infinite sufficiency of the salvation we have in the Lord Jesus Christ.

(7) "The Lord God giveth them light" surely tells of perfect delight.<sup>83</sup> Then shall "we walk in the light as He is in the light." All that God is shall come out into the open

to cause our hearts to revel in the delights of His love. Eternity is before Him and us for this unveiling. Beloved, there is no end to our God, no moment when He shall have told us all; thus shall we increase in the knowledge of Him.

(8) "They shall reign for ever and ever" bespeaks a perfect reign.<sup>84</sup> What a climax! It involves our co-heirship with Christ our Lord. Now shall He show to wondering and worshipping worlds why He stooped so low and for what purpose He raised us so high. Our reign with Him shall be over every part of the created universe and over every creature of His hand. There is nothing more that God can give us save that we may nestle upon His bosom and listen to the beatings of His heart of love and draw upon it throughout endless ages.

What more can I say? I am not surprised at John's falling down at the angel's feet to give him worship. These visions of our God are staggering and breath-taking. Mortal man with sin in his nature still is weak and liable to do the wrong thing. The angel knew better and so instructed him to "Worship God."<sup>85</sup>

This is surely fitting and becomes us: to worship God in the beauty of holiness. Very soon we shall see our Lord face to face and in that bright glory pour out our worshipping hearts before Him. Until then may we find time and pleasure in giving Him all He deserves, for most assuredly He is worthy.

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17. Luke 19:12-27
18. 1 Corinthians 15:58
19. Isaiah 2:1-4
20. Revelation 19:16
21. Isa. 60:3-14; 19:25
22. Colossians 1:20

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23. Revelation 12:7-12

24. Romans 8:20-23

25. Ephesians 1:9-11

26. John 1:51

27. Ephesians 1:14

28. Isaiah 11:6-9

29. Isaiah 30:26 and  
60:19-20

30. Genesis 5:27

31. Isaiah 60:17

32. Revelation 20:1-3

33. Psalm 85:10

34. Revelation 11:15

35. Revelation 20:7-10

36. 2 Peter 3:10

37. Revelation 20:11-15

38. Revelation 21:1-4

39. Psalm 133:1

40. John 17:22

41. Revelation 17:5

42. 1 Cor. 10:16, 17

43. 1 John 3:2

44. Colossians 1:21-22

45. Ephesians 5:27

46. Jude 24

47. Hebrews 10:17

48. 1 Cor. 3:10-15

49. Exodus 15:23-26

50. 1 Thess. 4:13-14

51. 2 Cor. 12:9

52. Romans 8:28

53. Revelation 5:1-7

54. Revelation 2:5

55. John 16:14

56. Hebrews 12:22-24

57. Hebrews 11:10,  
15-16

58. Isaiah 4:5-6

59. Revelation 21:3

60. Proverbs 8:22-31

61. John 1:14

62. Luke 24:13-35

63. Matthew 2

64. 1 Corinthians 3:21

65. Hebrews 2:10-11

66. Matthew 26:74

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1. Revelation 21:1-4

2. Revelation 1:9

3. 1 Thess. 4:16-18

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13. Revelation 17 & 18

14. Luke 1:32 &  
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17. Acts 27:23

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19. Ephesians 3:10; 2:7

20. Ephesians 4:10

21. Isaiah 2:1-5

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23. John 17:22

24. 2 Corinthians 3:18

25. Revelation 12:10

26. 2 Corinthians 7:1

27. Acts 20:28

28. Psalms 118:23

29. Hebrews 3:1

30. Philippians 3:20

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32. Matthew 13:43

33. Numbers 15:37-41

34. Luke 8:43-48

35. Ephesians 4:10-13

36. Acts 2

37. Acts 8:26-40

38. Galatians 1:15-16

39. Romans 8:28

40. Romans 8:29-30

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42. Colossians 1:15

43. John 1:18

44. Ephesians 5:8

45. 1 John 1:7

46. Exodus 33:18-23

47. John 17:3

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49. 1 Corinthians 6

50. Psalms 32:8

51. Proverbs 3:5-6

52. Isaiah 26:1

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54. Ephesians 2:5-6

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56. Exodus 12:38

57. Acts 5:13

58. 2 Timothy 4:10-18

59. Philippians 2:19-30

60. Psalms 16:8

61. Hebrews 10:25

62. Ephesians 4:14

63. 1 Corinthians 15:58

64. Hebrews 1:14

65. Genesis 19:1

66. Romans 11:25-27

67. Matthew 13:45-46

68. John 17:22-23

69. Ephesians 4:3

70. Revelation 21:22

71. Revelation 22:5

72. Psalms 16:11

73. Revelation 21:27

74. Ephesians 1:3

75. Revelation 22:3

76. Revelation 22:1

77. Revelation 22:2

78. Revelation 22:3

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80. Revelation 22:4

81. Exodus 3:1-14

82. Matthew 1:21

83. Revelation 22:5

84. Revelation 22:5

85. Revelation 22:8-9

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