

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

FROM THE CANDLESTICK TO THE THRONE

Part 7

THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST

(continued)

There is an Eastern saying that goes like this: "When the sage points to the moon, all the idiot sees is the finger!" Truly we are learning that as far as the heavens are above the earth, so far does the understanding imparted by the *spirit of the Word* transcend the understanding gleaned from the *letter of the Word*. The *letter* is merely an indication or sign pointing to the reality, not the reality itself. One must go far beyond the *letter* (the finger) and experience the *reality in the spirit* (the moon) if he is to know truth! If we involve ourselves only with the *letter of the Word*, we will soon be quagmired in external applications and surface interpretations devoid of any spiritual significance in our lives. But if we are attuned to the *spirit of the Word*, then God Himself becomes known to us as the inward nature, life, power, wisdom and truth that enables us to walk as the revelation of Christ in the earth! Nowhere is this more true than when we come to the book of Revelation! The book of Revelation is written in code. If we try to *literalize* the book with the understanding of the carnal mind, we will have an incredible *horror show* on our hands! And we will miss the *reality* of what the Spirit is saying altogether.

Early in the book we meet a *lamb*. Even the literalists have enough sense to understand that the lamb is not a four-legged woolly little creature romping through the pasture squealing, "Baa...baa...baa..." It is, in fact, *Mary's Little Lamb*, but not the one in the nursery rhyme! We could preach on the "lamb" of God in any church in America and everyone would agree that this lamb is not a barnyard animal. But what amazes me is that they use an altogether different rule of interpretation on almost everything else in the book of Revelation! They spiritualize what they like and literalize what they don't understand. Preachers have been preaching from the book of Revelation for centuries, identifying the lamb as a *symbol* for the *man* Christ Jesus who came to die for our sins, then proceed to assert that the throne of God is a seat somewhere out beyond the Milky Way that actually has a rainbow around it; the mark of the beast is an actual imprint on people's foreheads; the blood flowing up to the horse's bridles is literally going to happen over in the valley of Megiddo; and the New Jerusalem is a huge monstrosity that will one day come floating down out of the sky and land on the earth like a bump on a little boy's head!

If John was *in the Spirit* when he saw these things, it seems to me that we are going to have to get in the same Spirit John was in to see the same things that John saw! John was not ignorant of Old Testament types and shadows. Once a man is able to identify the symbol he sees in the Spirit, for the first time in his life he will understand what it is that the Lord is saying. He will no longer beat the air like a blind man in a pillow fight, spewing forth spiritual absurdities in the name of the Lord. Make no mistake about it — every *spiritual* thing that a child of God learns, he must learn by a *revelation* from the Spirit of God! Any other understanding is fleshly, carnal, and devilish.

Jesus, in the days of His flesh, spoke often in the language of *symbols*. All of His wonderful parables were given in symbolic and allegorical language. But He also used symbols in His speech on many other occasions. The disciples were showing Jesus the temple and its grandeur. The gifts of the ages were repositied there, and the whole temple was built with the greatest cost and magnificence, so that nothing was more stupendous in all the nations. It was adorned with gold and silver and the whitest of marble, some of the foundation stones were more than sixty feet long, seven and a half feet high and nine feet broad. Jesus stood taking it all in, and gazing at the temple, said, "Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up again!" This totally "blew" the carnal minds of those standing there who heard these words! They were incensed and were ready to kill Him. With countenances distorted by anger the Jews replied, "It took forty-six years to build this temple, and will you raise it up in three days?"

It wasn't what Jesus said that upset them, it was what they *thought* He said! They were good "Fundamentalists," and they believed in taking the word of God *literally* unless God clearly specified that He was speaking figuratively or spiritually! Even the disciples, still concerned with the natural, were understanding with carnal minds, unenlightened by the spirit of wisdom and revelation from God. They failed to *discern* that He spoke of the temple of *His body*! These men in their then unspiritual state, could not be expected to understand what Jesus spoke by the Spirit. They were more concerned about the outward edifice of stones than the living temple not made with hands! They were more concerned about the passing, than the permanent. But the Master had finished with this. The time had come for God to raise up in the earth a glorious temple of *living stones*, of which the temple of the Old Covenant was but a faint type and shadow. So He had little interest now in that which represented a fallen order, devoid of God's presence and power and majesty.

What Jesus was really saying was, "The temple of God is standing in front of you, ladies and gentlemen!" He was saying, "Here's the tabernacle of God, and if you destroy this living temple I will raise it up in three days." He was taking a literal picture from an Old Testament reality, bringing it out of the realm of shadow and enigma, into the realm of *spiritual reality*. By these words and many others Jesus was establishing His own principles of interpretation in the new order of the kingdom of God! If we were to take even half of Jesus' words in the natural by literal, carnal understanding, we would be in deep, deep trouble! So if you feel we are wrong in speaking spiritual truths from literal pictures, you are going to have to deal with Jesus, for He is our Teacher, and that is the style He preached in. Many years later He came to John on the isle of Patmos and He was still proclaiming the power and glory of the kingdom of God in the same metaphoric pattern. But the Fundamentalists just didn't get it! And they still don't, today. That's why they have a literal antichrist coming, sitting in a literal temple in Jerusalem, stamping a literal mark on literal foreheads, and fighting a literal battle in a literal valley over in the literal state of Israel in the literal Middle East. Their spiritual comprehension is no brighter today than that of the Jews who stood with Jesus that day on the temple mount before the buildings of Herod's temple!

The seemingly strange language of the Bible is, in reality, picture language. Such expressions as, "the earth melted" at God's voice, the earth reeling "to and fro as a drunkard," or the idea of those cast into "outer darkness" as "weeping and gnashing" their teeth are misleading to the carnal mind. The Bible is literally *filled* with symbolic language! Symbols or pictures are

intended to clarify what the Lord wants to convey to us — but only to the one who *hears by the Spirit!* All others are confused. Some want to interpret the scriptures literally, and say that the *spiritual interpretation* is to change or "spiritualize away" the plain word of God. How can you spiritualize away that which *is spiritual!* Jesus said, "The words that I speak unto you, they *are spirit* and they *are life*." Little wonder that years later on the isle of Patmos, among the visions He showed to John, He should say again and again, "He that *hath an ear*, let Him *hear* what the Spirit saith unto the churches!"

Some of the most beautiful and well-known promises in the scriptures, by which the Lord assures His people of His care for them, are presented in very colorful, pictorial language. The 23rd Psalm, known and loved so widely by Christian people, is a classic example of this. When David writes, "The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: He leadeth me beside the still waters," none of this passage is literal! David put himself in the position of a sheep, and Yahweh as His shepherd. Certainly no one would argue that David was actually, literally a sheep! We may not care to lie down in green pastures, or be led about by a rod and a staff! But without these thoughts being illustrated for us, God's leading, God's direction, God's discipline, and God's provision of all spiritual things in our lives would not be nearly so impressive and comforting!

Another wonderful word that is deeply meaningful for every son of God is found in the 91st Psalm. "He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the Lord, He is my refuge and my fortress: my God; in Him will I trust. Surely He shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler, and from the noisome pestilence. He shall cover thee with His feathers, and under His wings shalt thou trust: His truth shall be thy shield and buckler..." This is a wonderful promise made more understandable and forceful through the use of symbols. God is likened to a "refuge" and a "fortress." He is also spoken of as having "feathers" and "wings." No one would want to say these words were to be understood literally. We have meaningful illustration in this Psalm! It is a vivid word picture of God's deliverance and protection of His sons who dwell in the secret place of the Most High, in the Most Holy Place of our spirit, where God dwells within as life, beyond the veil of flesh! None of our enemies can penetrate that high and holy realm of His blazing glory! All of the emotions of the flesh, the powers of the carnal realm, the pressures of the world, the snares of the devil, the seducing allurements of the harlot religious systems, and the very powers of sin and death themselves are neutralized here within our "refuge" and "fortress," and beneath the "feathers" and "wings" of our heavenly Father's power and nature! What a dwelling place! And all God's sons are learning to dwell there, to make the Most High within *our habitation!*

I hear about people who have visions on their death bed of mansions and golden streets in that bright glory-world above. Some have died and have come back, imagining that they have walked with Jesus on the golden streets of heaven! I will tell you what they are seeing. They are seeing a *vision*. But you see, beloved, visions require an *interpretation*. When Peter was praying on the roof-top he saw the vision of the sheet let down from heaven full of all manner of unclean beasts, birds, and creeping things. The voice of the Lord spoke to him, saying, "Rise up, Peter, kill and eat!" Peter, as a good Israelite, was repulsed! He could not understand the vision, and objected, saying, "By no means, Lord; for nothing common or unclean has ever entered my mouth!" With his natural mind he supposed the Lord was tempting him to eat meat that was unclean under the

law. But in visions you usually don't see the thing the vision stands for — you see only the *representation*, the *figure*, the *type*, the *symbol* that stands for the reality being conveyed. In Peter's case, the unclean animals stood for the Gentiles who were outside of God's covenant. God was telling Peter that the Gentiles were now *cleansed* by the blood of Jesus, to be received in one body as the people of God through faith. So the vision had to be *interpreted*! Only the spirit of wisdom and revelation from God could unfold the *meaning* of the vision!

Many times visions have been given and men accept the visions as the reality (literally) rather than a picture or symbolic representation of the truth God is revealing. Millions of Christians are expecting a mansion over the hilltops of Glory with a gold street out front, with a lawn that never grows and never needs mowing, off on some planet called Heaven. This hope is based on the visions seen by dying men, or the visions received by the apostle John on the isle of Patmos. But all these are merely *visions* and they must be interpreted! What you see is *not* what you get! What is *seen* is not what God is showing! It is merely a symbol of the reality, not the substance! There are no literal streets of gold any more than there are literal beasts rising up out of the sea, or literal horns of the head of the Lamb of God! These are all word-pictures portraying *spiritual realities*. Dying men see pictures of a physical paradise because they are unprepared for the spiritual realities themselves, so as they pass from this gross material realm the Lord presents those realities to them in a way their minds are able to comprehend — the *images* of a *vision*!

If you want to experience the true heaven of God's Spirit then you must awaken to the place where you are seated together with Christ — *now*! No word written or spoken could hold more truth in this regard than the words of Paul when he speaks of the power "which God exerted in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His own right hand in the heavenlies, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named..." (Eph. 1:20-21). These terms used by Paul are figures of speech! God is *omnipresent spirit* — He doesn't physically **sit** on anything, nor does He physically have a **right hand**! It means that Christ is raised up permanently into that *highest spiritual realm* where He has all power and authority! The "throne" spoken of in other scriptures and throughout the book of Revelation refers to His *omnipotent power*. So now we know where Christ ascended! HE ASCENDED INTO THE SPIRITUAL DIMENSION OF ALMIGHTY POWER AND AUTHORITY! And that is where we are raised up and seated *in Christ*! "And He raised us up together with Him and made us sit down together — giving us joint seating with Him — in the heavenly sphere by virtue of our being in Christ Jesus" (Eph. 2:6, Amplified). It is a blessed day for us when God makes it clear to our hearts that all who are *in Christ* have been raised up and given joint seating with Christ in the *very same heavens of God's Spirit* where He sits enthroned with His Father! That is the true heaven — not visionary mansions with gold bath tubs, earth-like flowers that never fade, or a river running out of a throne. Every son of God is receiving a clear and powerful understanding by the Spirit of what it means to live in heaven, walk in heaven, and reign from heaven! Most Christians have no idea of where heaven is, what heaven is, or the realm out of which they should be living. They think they are where their natural mind tells them they are. Heaven seems a far-off place. They have missed the spirit reality altogether and understand not that they are born from above and that their citizenship *is in heaven*. That high and holy realm is not away off beyond the galaxies, but a place in our spirit where we rise up above our earthiness and learn to compare *spiritual things* with *spiritual things*. It is there that we touch *reality*! God is in heaven, and God is *in our spirit*!

In this world we live by symbols. We use either written symbols or sound symbols to express every thought or feeling, to identify every person, place, or object. Words are only symbols. Names are only symbols. Numbers are only symbols. Our alphabet is only a group of 26 small symbols that can be organized into words — then words into sentences — sentences into thoughts — and thoughts into knowledge. You read a book and you take a journey to far away lands with exotic scenes, smells, and noises. But all you have really done is sit and look at thousands of symbols on a couple hundred paper pages! But the symbols have conveyed to your mind the reality! Our Lord Jesus Christ claims the title of the "Alpha and Omega," or "A" and the "Z" of the alphabet which includes all the other letters in between and can contain and express all knowledge. In Christ are hid *all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge*! To be *in Christ* is to dwell in that dimension of life where *all reality lies*!

Symbols only represent the things for which they stand, not the reality itself. Money is considered the most important factor in human life by many because it represents power and security. Of itself, money has no value whatsoever more than the paper or metal it contains, though through it, it is possible to purchase the comforts and luxuries of earth. There is as much difference between the symbol and the reality as there is between the letters of the alphabet and the great thoughts that can be expressed through those tiny little letters. There is as much difference between the symbol and the reality as there is between the money in your pocket and the actual things that money can buy. The man who settles for a mansion in the sky or a stroll down the street of gold with the blue-eyed Jesus is like the man who reads a book about Arabia but never goes there. He misses the *reality*! How much greater is the reality! The reality is those things which God is now showing unto us *by His Spirit*!

When our Lord said, "Ye are the salt of the earth," He was speaking quite obviously in figurative language. He did not mean that believers were to be put into a gigantic salt shaker and shaken over the globe! Nobody would be so ridiculous as to believe that. The sons of God today are indeed the salt of the earth! God's elect is that spiritual power which gives flavor and preservation to all things. We are the guarantee of the world's glorious future! The whole race of mankind and all nations are being lifted, raised up into a new state and condition by the life that flows out of the Lord's people! And when Christ said, "Ye are the light of the world," He didn't mean we had to be lit like a candle and put up someplace where we could shine! God has chosen to speak to us through the scriptures by the use of symbols. Consider the implications if Jesus had meant it *literally* when He said, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you" (Jn. 6:53). If this statement had been intended literally Jesus would have become the founder of the world's most bizarre religious cult — cannibalism! But beyond these physical figures lies the glorious **reality** of which He spoke, the reality that His *flesh* means His *Word* and His *blood* means His *Spirit-life*! And yet — people have the audacity to accuse us of *spiritualizing away* the word of God! The Bible is a *spiritual book*! The words that Christ speaks into our hearts are *spirit*, and they are *life*! There is only one sure way to distort and destroy the meaning and message and power of God's eternal truth, and that is by *carnalizing it away*! To carnalize the word of God is simply to interpret it by the superficial reasoning of the carnal mind. The whole church world today has created its entire system — rituals, ceremonies, ordinances, creeds, doctrines, methods, programs and promotions — by the *carnalization* of the word of the Lord!

SIGN-I-FIED

Late into the night a schoolboy struggled over a mathematical problem given to him by his teacher. He checked and rechecked his figures. He could find nothing wrong, yet the proper answer to the problem was not forthcoming. At last, his brain weary with the effort, he decided to retire for the night. The next morning, rested, and ready to try again, the schoolboy took another look at his figures, and to his surprise discovered that he had completely overlooked a very vital factor, not taking it into consideration at all. When this factor was restored to its proper place in the solving of the problem, the correct answer at once appeared. Naturally the boy wondered why he had been so dull as not to make this discovery the night before!

This is a simple story, but it illustrates a great truth. It shows why the book of Revelation is so often misinterpreted, and why in all the ages there has been so much confusion and controversy, the reason being that an important feature of the Revelation has been overlooked by the tired, carnal mind; and without this all the efforts of man to discover its truths have failed. The one simple factor is this: REVELATION IS A SPIRITUAL BOOK COMMUNICATED IN SIGNS AND SYMBOLS!

The apostle John begins the Revelation with these words: "The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto Him, to show unto His servants things which must shortly come to pass; and He sent and *signified* it by His angel unto His servant John" (Rev. 1:1). The word "signified" is the Greek word *semaino* which is a derivative of the word *semo* meaning a mark or sign, or to indicate by signs or symbols. The English word could be written SIGN-I-FIED — demonstrating that it means to communicate by means of signs and symbols. We understand, of course, that is exactly how the Revelation was communicated to John and the whole book is a book of pictures and symbols!

You will understand a great truth when you see that a *sign* is never the reality — it merely points to the reality! The fact that the revelation of Jesus Christ was communicated to John in the form of signs and symbols shows clearly that there is no "literalness" in the book. When you read of mountains, earthquakes, beasts, horns, rivers, seas, stars, sun, moon, heads, marks, horses, wars, floods, angels, books, etc., NONE OF THESE WILL EVER BE SEEN OR FULFILLED LITERALLY OR PHYSICALLY UPON THE EARTH OR IN HEAVEN ABOVE. These, with all the other signs in the book, are communications of *spiritual realities* expressed in the form of symbols. We have entertained such carnal notions about the book of Revelation! The book of Revelation is a book of *revealing* — and we are in an hour of revealing! The Holy Spirit must teach us the first principles of this wonderful book. The first key to understanding the book is the fact that the book is, *in its entirety*, a book of symbols. Any other approach will leave you hopelessly lost in a sea of confusion, or muttering like a mad man about things utterly ridiculous. I may be mistaken, but it is my opinion that there is not one single *literal* reference in the whole book!

A stranger in a town many years ago was looking about as he walked down Main Street. Soon a gentleman accosted him and asked what he was looking for. "A Barber's Pole," came the reply. "Do you need something to lean on?" "No — I want the Barber Shop — I was merely looking *for the sign*." It was not the Barber's Pole he sought — the Pole was but the symbol

pointing to the reality — the Barber Shop! Never forget as you read the book of Revelation — the sign is *never* the reality! When it says an angel flew through heaven, you will never see the angel for he never flew and never will. He is a sign! Angels are messengers, they represent *a message*! When God sends forth a message out of a heavenly realm it is portrayed as an angel flying through heaven. The literalization of the book of Revelation has given rise to all the popular myths promulgated by the preachers and teachers of the church systems. "End of the world" stories have been circulating ever since there have been human beings on earth. Tribulation, Antichrist, Armageddon, and mark of the beast theories have been spawned in practically every generation for the past two thousand years. *None has ever come to pass*! And none *will* ever come to pass! People like to be scared, and some like to scare others. Movie producers make horror pictures to scare people who love to be scared, and preachers preach their terror sermons from the book of Revelation for the very same reason! Fear is one of the most powerful tools known to humanity, and has often been as misused by religious leaders as by politicians and movie makers. Notwithstanding its mysterious nature, the book was not written to frighten or bewilder its readers, for, not *scared*, but "*Blessed*(happy) is he that readeth, and they that *hear* (with the spiritual ear) the words of this prophecy...for the time is at hand" (Rev. 1:3).

The book of Revelation is not a book of fantasy or science fiction, but of spiritual realities in the kingdom of God. The symbols are but the outer covering under which exalted mysteries are concealed. These symbols were familiar to the people to whom John was writing, for they are all rooted in the history, language, and prophecies of the Old Testament! The truth is that the book of Revelation is a gathering up, or summarizing, of the whole core message of the Bible in both the Old Testament and the New Testament. Sometimes a very crude illustration helps. This book of Revelation is like nothing so much as a big knot tied in the end of a long skein of yarn, or bundle of threads; every thread in the long skein of yarn is in the knot. And every thread in the knot is in the bundle of threads! Every principle thread in the whole Bible fabric comes into this Revelation knot, and every thread in this Revelation knot can be traced back into the rest of the Bible.

This serves as a key to the symbolism of the book. Its symbolic language has seemed like a foreign language to which we had no dictionary or grammar book, and so we have spent our time guessing and speculating about what it means. But this symbolic language, instead of being a hindrance and a puzzle, is really meant to make it an open book, able to be understood! It is a *revelation*, an *unveiling* — not a *concealing*, an *obscuring* or a *confounding*! For every bit of symbolism, and every strange allusion or phrase, can be found somewhere back in the pages of the Old Testament or in the New, in such a way as to indicate just what it means! The language of symbolism is meant to make the book more easily understood, but — there's a "but" here — *but* understood by one who is familiar with the images of the scriptures *and* anointed by the spirit of wisdom and revelation from God!

What are the symbols? Numbers like three and seven always mean completeness or perfection. In the scriptures the word mountain often symbolizes a kingdom. By the *letter* of the word it can mean an external kingdom, and by the *spirit* of the word it indicates an internal stronghold or kingdom in our life. When John spoke about a mountain in the Revelation, those who knew the scriptures and were spiritual understood what he meant! "Speak to this mountain (kingdom, stronghold in our life) and it shall be removed." The disciples of Christ were familiar with the

use of the trumpet to herald important proclamations and events, so when they read, "I, John, was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and I heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet," they knew that God was going to speak and reveal an important message to His people, or announce a new and significant move of His purpose in the earth. We, too, have heard that trumpet in our day! Beginning with the glorious coming of Christ as Latter Rain in 1948, the life-changing message of sonship, reconciliation and the kingdom of God began to sound in our land! A mighty change came in the earth as the Spirit of the Lord moved in the presence and power of God among His people to direct God's called out and chosen people into new paths of His leading. We began to be drawn out of the religious systems of man; the refining fires of God began to do their purifying work in our lives, transforming us into the image of Christ; we were quickened in spirit and caught up into new and unspeakable heavenly places in Christ Jesus; divine mysteries which had been lost and hidden from the Lord's people for long centuries were opened up within our raptured spirits; and we started on our march into our promised land of the fullness of Christ and onward to the heavenly mount Zion where the sons of God shall rule and reign over all things! That mighty message from the Lord that has sounded in our spiritual ears and brought great change and new direction to the elect of God, *is a voice as of a trumpet* — just as John heard in the long ago!

We must pass beyond the signs in order to get to the message of the Spirit! The Lamb has seven horns — not literal horns, of course — for the horns are mere figures representing the seven-fold spirit of power and life which emanates from the mind and nature of the Lamb. May I reverently inject another thought? The "dead" who "stand" before God and are "judged" out of the "books" are not the physically dead in the outward cemeteries, nor are the books such as you have in your library. If the "Lamb" who opens the "book" in chapter five is not a four-legged lamb, it should not be difficult for anyone to understand that the "book" is not a two-covered book! People do such sloppy thinking about such divine and exalted things! If that "book" is one of the Revelation's wonderful symbols, does it not follow that the "books" in chapter twenty are likewise word-pictures in the form of symbols? The religious commentaries that have been written on this book will avail you nothing, for they have been written as an attempt of the natural mind to decipher the meanings of the symbols rather than discovering the language of the Spirit and understanding out of the realm of the Spirit.

"I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened," John declared. When Jesus came this world was spiritually a cemetery. ALL were *dead*! NONE were *living*! "To be carnally minded *is death*," is the Spirit's own graphic and accurate definition of what it means to be dead (Rom. 7:6). "And you hath He quickened who *were dead* in trespasses and sins" (Eph. 2:1). To the spiritually dead the apostle commands, "Awake thou that sleepest and arise from *the dead*, and Christ shall give thee light" (Eph. 5:14). Let us with pure minds and an understanding quickened by the spirit of revelation consider these meaningful words: "And I saw the *dead*...stand before God." I saw the DEAD — S-T-A-N-D! And immediately the "books" were opened.

Heaven keeps a record of the deeds of men, and all the thoughts and emotions under which they act. Myriads of human beings have lived and died of whom the world knows nothing; but the lives they lived, the deeds they wrought, the thoughts and passions they indulged, still stand written where the memory of them cannot perish. Not a human being has ever breathed earth's

sweet atmosphere whose career is not traced at full length in the books God has ordained. Yes, O man! O woman! Whoever you may be, your biography is written. An unerring hand has recorded every item, with every secret thing. There is not an ill thought, a mean act, a dirty transaction, a filthiness of speech, or a base feeling that ever found entertainment in your heart, but is there described in bold letters, by its true name. Thank God, all the good, and all the spiritual is recorded there too!

Where is the record? And what are these "books" where the secrets of your heart are meticulously inscribed? My words may come as a shock to some, but I do not hesitate to assert that they are nought but the **BOOK OF YOUR OWN NATURE — THE GENETIC PATTERN OF YOUR VERY OWN BEING!** In the sight of God you, and each and every man and woman on this planet, are a book; and indelibly inscribed within your mind and character is everything that **you are**. "Out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaketh" (Mat. 12:34). When your mouth speaks, the message inscribed in your inner nature is exposed and read by all who hear. Every outer action is a word, a sentence, a paragraph, a page of your book — the book which you are — known and read by all men.

And think not, O man, that should your earthly body be laid in a silent and motionless tomb, that the Almighty must then resort to some celestial scrolls wherein heavenly angels have faithfully recorded your every thought and deed. NO! All is accurately recorded in *the law of your life*, deep within the recesses of your own nature, in your spiritual condition and soulful state of being. We do not awaken on the other side a different person or in a different condition than we were in the flesh, for the record is in our very *nature*. In order to deal with you in judgment, in the flesh or out of the flesh, God has but to "stand you up" and prompt you to speak or act — and immediately you will manifest exactly what is inscribed in the constitution of your inner life. At once your "book" will "open," each line being made clear, and you will be judged by the things written in that book *which you are*. When God, either now or in ages yet unborn, lays His mighty hand upon you, my friend, and summons you to **stand** before Him, your book will open, and you will not then manifest anything other than what is written in the book of your own nature. How truly it is written, "For the word of God is living, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Neither is there any creature (dead or alive, visible or invisible) that is not manifest in His sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do" (Heb. 4:12-13).

Does this trouble you, my brother? Ah, but I have good news for you! The grand purpose for this "opening of our book" is so that all that is written therein may be exposed, revealed, uncovered, displayed, and brought to judgment, dealt with by a concentration of divine discipline and instruction, as the Father processes each individual. Someone says, "I don't believe in *processing* — I believe in the *finished work*!" Let me tell you something. Your *spirit* doesn't need any processing! Your spirit is the offspring of God. Your spirit has been quickened by His Spirit, you have been regenerated, born again of the incorruptible seed of the word of God which liveth and abideth forever. Your spirit is pure, holy, undefiled, the dwelling of the Most High God! But your *soul* does need some processing! If there were no processing, if the so-called *finished work* took care of everything, there would be no work of *sanctification*, no *cleansing* by the washing of the water of the word, no *discipline* or *chastening* of the Father,

no *putting off* of the works of the flesh, no *mortifying* of our members which are upon the earth, no *purging* of the old leaven, no *refining fire* by which the sons of Levi are purified that they might offer and an offering in righteousness unto the Lord, no *washing of our robes* to make them white in the blood of the Lamb, no *pruning* of the branches that they may bear more fruit — and we could go on and on! The soul-bride must *make herself ready* for her marriage union with Christ, the spirit-bridegroom. We need to think *spiritual sense* about these things, beloved! I do not believe in eternal processing — there should come a time in our lives where *we have been conformed to the image of the Son*! Yes, God is finishing His work, a people is coming forth in the likeness and fullness of Christ in this very hour! But to maintain that there is no processing, that the "finished work of Calvary" takes care of everything, is to deny the testimony of scripture and the experience of every saint that I know. We might as well tear our Bible to pieces and send it out with the trash.

The procedure whereby God brings His judgment into our lives is simple, but very effective. The person abiding in some realm of soulish or fleshly death is caused to "stand" before God — brought directly into relation to the countenance of God who is the Judge of all! God arranges the circumstances, places him in a situation or circumstance, and his "book" is opened — the inner condition uncovered, the secrets and intents of the heart manifest in such a measure and expressed to such a degree that there need be no other record or evidence of his state appealed to. As it is written, "God shall bring *every work* into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil" (Eccl. 12:14), for, "God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ" (Rom. 2:16). That doesn't mean that this will happen some fearful day out in the future before a great white throne out in space somewhere! Oh, no! These are *spiritual realities*, my beloved. They speak of the dealings of God in judgment right now, today, in the life of every son of God who shall be conformed to the image of God's Son, brought unto a *perfect man*, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ! The throne of God *is a white throne*. White bespeaks of righteousness, and the throne of God is a righteous throne of love, grace, salvation and power unto mankind. But you will never *see* this throne, for it is established in the lives of those who rule and reign with Christ!

Ah, you will despair and shrink before God's judgments until you clearly understand that God does not open your book to either embarrass or destroy you — but to *deliver you*! God brings no man to judgment apart from the opening of his book. That is the true *spiritual message* conveyed by these beautiful *symbols* in the book of Revelation! It is a divine law — God can never deliver you, or any man, until the carnality and corruption in your heart has been drawn into outward manifestation, exposed, to be dealt with by God's stern and tender hand. When the inner nature erupts in some outward uncleanness, do not despair! Thank God for exposing the deceitfulness and wickedness, cast yourself upon the tender mercies of the Lord who judges you in unconditional love and infinite goodness, and yield yourself under His mighty hand that He may bring forth victory in *your earth*. We must never be discouraged nor feel condemned when God *reveals* the man of sin who sits in the temple of God which we are, but neither should we become complacent about it! God will send forth judgment unto victory however long it takes and however severe the dealings. He will never abdicate His throne, He will never terminate His judgments until *every man* is conformed into the image of God's glorious Son!

"And another book was opened, which is the BOOK OF LIFE" (Rev. 20:12). This must needs be opened too, for the book of life is the nature of the Lamb inscribed by the Spirit in the life of the New Creature. The book of life is called "the book of the life of the Lamb" (Rev. 13:8). If I were to give you a book entitled THE BOOK OF THE LIFE OF GEORGE WASHINGTON, you would understand at once that it a biography of the life of the first president of the United States, George Washington. That book should contain everything you always wanted to know about George Washington! Every detail of his life would be there. The portrait of his character and accomplishments would be drawn there. In the same way, THE BOOK OF THE LIFE OF THE LAMB is the autobiography of God's Lamb, the expose of who He is, what He is like, what He does. Everything you ever wanted to know about the Son of God is contained in this wonderful book of the life of the Lamb! It is not a literal book, of course, for the sons and daughters of the Most High are the LIVING RECORD AND REVELATION of the life of the indwelling Lamb! It was to the apostle Paul that the revelation was given that the book of life, the book of the life of the Lamb, the book which draws the portrait of the life, nature, character and accomplishment of the Son of God — IS A PEOPLE! "Foreasmuch as Y-E are manifestly declared to *be* THE EPISTLE OF CHRIST ministered by us, written *not with ink*, but with the *Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone*, but in *fleshy tables of the heart*" (II Cor. 3:3).

How tragic that the people of earth for the most part have never read this beautiful *epistle of Christ*, this glorious *book of the life of the Lamb*. They have poured over the books of religion, the commentaries of learned scholars who write out of carnal minds with the words of man's wisdom, the books of hypocrisy, the books of forms of godliness that deny the power thereof, the books of dead doctrines, empty rituals, lifeless ceremonies, and man-made rules and regulations of self righteousness. But precious few have ever seen the BOOK OF THE LIFE OF THE LAMB! Oh! What a wonderful gospel shall fill the earth beneath and the celestial realms above when God fully opens His holy book of Life! The book of Life is that blessed company of the sons of God in whom the life of the Lamb is fully and eternally formed! This book is being carefully written word by word, sentence by sentence, paragraph by paragraph, page by page, and chapter by chapter in the nitty-gritty of our daily experience with God until the full revelation of the Christ shall be written therein. Time's clock is striking the hour for the *manifestation* of the sons of God, the opening of God's book of life people, and what a manifestation it shall be! That book is being opened *within us* even now, for it is the *spirit* that giveth life. As Christ in our spirit is opened within ourselves, the life of the Lamb is released to swallow up all sin and death.

God has a *message* for the world — the revelation of Jesus Christ! The message is being written in flaming words of glory upon the pages of the lives and hearts and minds of men and women who are dying to that impudent and death-dealing devil of self, in order to walk and live by the spirit of HIS LIFE. I am terribly at a loss of words to express the glory of God's BOOK OF LIFE COMPANY, but I can assure you that once it is fully ready, prepared, and finished, it shall become the world's "best seller" throughout the ages to come! As the pen is mightier than the sword, so this book, above any that has ever been written by the finger of man, shall alter the course of history, and the dark covering that has been cast over the minds and hearts of the people for ages and dispensations will be completely destroyed by the flood of transforming light and wisdom and knowledge and glory and power shining forth from the living pages of God's eternal and incorruptible BOOK OF LIFE!

The idea behind each and every word of holy writ is to convey a higher meaning than the literal words contain, the truth of which **must be seen and experienced by man spiritually, internally**. This higher, concealed, inner, spiritual meaning, cast in the words and sense-images of ordinary events, can only be grasped by the *quickened spirit* and the *renewed mind*, and it is exactly here that the difficulty lies in conveying the deep spiritual things of God to the natural man. A person's human level of understanding, regardless how educated or intellectual he may be, is clearly not equal to grasping *spiritual truth*. This is why Jesus, after speaking a parable, so often said, "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear" (Mat. 11:15). Let us be absolutely certain of this one momentous principle of the kingdom of God: It is not the surface meaning that has any importance, but the golden nugget of spiritual truth which lies in the mine beneath the surface is that alone which is able to enrich the inner man of the spirit.

It is written of our Lord Jesus Christ before He ascended to the Father: "Beginning from Moses and from all the prophets, He interpreted to them in all the scripture the things concerning Himself." "Then *opened He their mind*, that they might *understand* the scriptures" (Lk. 24:27,45). One blessed moment spent in the dazzling light of the spirit of wisdom and revelation from God will teach us this eternal truth: "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him; and he cannot know them, because they are *spiritually discerned*" (I Cor. 2:14). As nuts cannot be eaten in the shell, neither do they show the sweetness of the meat within until the shells are broken, so it is with the precious truths and realities of the word of God! Unless the Lord opens up our understanding, it is impossible to know those things that pertain to the kingdom of God.

It is from man's carnal-minded interpretation of the word of God, that so many strange and hurtful doctrines have been brought forth in all ages. When man brings his human reason and wisdom to bear upon the Word, and the Word is not spiritually discerned, it can be made to prove almost anything! All the gross foolishness of the religious systems with their candles, crucifixes, incense, altars, images, robes, programs, ordinances, missals, ceremonies, and creeds are but products of carnal minds applied to the word of God. And all the stupidity of everlasting damnation, mansions over the hilltop, the rapture of the church, the removal of the Holy Spirit from the earth, the restored Roman empire, the antichrist sitting in a temple in Jerusalem, and all the supposed horrors that the great God of love, mercy, redemption and salvation is to pour out in vengeful fury upon the inhabitants of the world — all that, too, is hatched out of the perverseness of the carnal mind of religious spirits! When the blessed spirit of truth, however, who is the Teacher and the one who *leads into all truth*, reveals God's thought and purpose to the man or woman who humbly waits in God's holy presence, such treasures are uncovered as "Eye hath not seen nor ear heard, *neither have entered into the heart of man*." And the heart rejoices with joy unspeakable and full of glory at the unfolding of divine wisdom and the Father's magnificent purpose of the ages! God reveals to those who love and fear Him, the deep and wonderful REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST!