

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

FROM THE CANDLESTICK TO THE THRONE

Part 8

BLESSED IS HE THAT READS

The beloved 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." 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 or 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. The idea behind each and every word 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 *quickenened 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!

When John stood that day on the lonely Patmos and received the revelation of Jesus Christ, He wrote that it was given to him in signs and symbols by the angel of Jesus Christ. "And He sent and signified it **by His angel** unto His servant John" (Rev. 1:1). Who is this "angel" of Jesus Christ? You will find this angel appearing all the way through in almost every chapter of the book of Revelation. "I Jesus have sent **mine angel** to testify unto you these things in the churches" (Rev. 22:16). But you will not recognize him yet, so I will tell you where you will recognize him. If we are to understand the deep mystery here, we shall have to open our hearts to a completely new understanding of God's revelation of Himself. We shall have to see that the word "angel" is itself a *symbol* of something spiritual, just as are all the other figures in the book! We are inclined to lightly pass over the fact that the book of Revelation is written in symbolic language, using elaborate figures of speech to convey spiritual truths and realities. I think this should be obvious to every spiritual mind, but some of our brothers and sisters in Christ try to

use the "literal method" of interpretation (the *letter* rather than the *spirit*) — even within this book of symbols! A statement like, "The Bible means just what it says and says just what it means!" *sounds* good, perhaps even spiritual, and often brings some hearty "amens," but this cannot apply when the Holy Spirit speaks and conveys truth through symbols. The very nature of a symbol is that it means *something else*! Otherwise it would not *be* a symbol!

Can we not see by this that the *spiritual meaning* of "His angel" or "Mine Angel" is something higher and grander by far than a bright creature with wings from outer space! There is no value whatever in the *letter of the Word*. It is when a man begins to see the *spirit of the Word* that truth and reality are quickened as life within. My spirit rejoices today in thankfulness to my Father in heaven for that divine, eternal, life-giving wisdom which is the secret of His own heart! Therefore, the angel of Jesus Christ cannot be an angel as we think of angels! All the heavenly angels in the book of Revelation are representations of *messages* sent to us from God. In the Greek language the word angel means *messenger* and in the book of Revelation the angel stands for a *message*!

"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*: who bear record of the *word of God*..." (Rev. 1:1-2). Notice the steps of revelation — It originated with God! It was given to Jesus Christ! He gave it to His angel! His angel gave it to John! And from John it goes to His bondslaves! It comes to the servants of God that they might know what is coming to pass — their destiny in God. And that is the way it has come to you and me today!

Now let's use a little bit of *spiritual sense* in understanding who this symbolical "angel" is. The most obvious clue is found in Revelation 22:16 where we read, "I Jesus have sent **mine angel** to testify unto you these things **in the churches**." This should help us see that the angel is one "sent" by Jesus, and his mission is "to testify unto you these things *in the churches*." The question follows — Who is the One Jesus has sent to testify unto us the things that concern Himself — the revelation of Jesus Christ? The Bible interprets itself, and the answer is in the clearest of language where there is no symbol! Hear it! "Nevertheless, I tell you the truth; 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. When He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will *guide you into all truth*: for He shall not speak of Himself; but whatsoever He shall hear (from me), that shall He speak: and He will *show you things to come*. He shall *glorify me*: for He shall receive of Mine, and shall *show it unto you*. All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that He shall take of *mine*, and shall *show it unto you*" (Jn. 16:7,13-15). The identity of the "angel of Jesus" should be evident to all who compare the words of this wonderful passage with the words of John in Revelation 1:1-2 and 22:16. The same John was the scribe who set down both in writing.

To these things the word of the Lord bears faithful witness again, "But when the Comforter is come, whom *I will send unto you*, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, *He shall testify of me*" (Jn. 15:26). Then Peter adds this testimony: "Unto whom...was revealed...the things...reported unto you by them which have preached the gospel unto you with the *Holy Ghost sent down from heaven*..." (I Pet. 1:12). And finally Paul confirms this same blessed truth: "As it

is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him. But God hath *revealed them unto us by His Spirit*. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might *know the things that are freely given to us of God*" (I Cor. 2:9-12). And again, "How that by *revelation* He made known unto me the mystery...whereby...ye may understand my *knowledge in the mystery of Christ* which in other ages was not made known...as it is now *revealed* unto His holy apostles and prophets *by the Spirit*" (Eph. 3:3-5).

The **angel of Jesus Christ** who is sent to show us the things of Christ, to bring the revelation of Jesus Christ, to show us things to come, and to testify of Christ and these things in the churches is none other than the Holy Spirit! Oh, the mystery of it! The world cannot receive the Spirit because it *seeth* Him not, neither *knoweth* Him. Because the world is carnal and lives in the realm of the flesh, it can accept only those things that can be analyzed by the outer senses. The world receives not the Spirit because it *sees* Him not; but he who believes God sees and knows in a realm unfamiliar to the natural man. Once you believe but the simplest things of truth, then the Holy Spirit is able to begin to open to your heart the vast storehouses of God's unsearchable riches. That is what the book of Revelation is all about!

Some may wonder, If God revealed Himself and His eternal purpose in Jesus Christ, why then is *another light, another teacher, another revealer*, after Him, needed? Why did the Holy Spirit have to be sent to teach, lead, and *reveal Christ*? If Christ within us is our life, why then does Jesus *send His angel* to testify of the things that pertain to Himself? This is a deep mystery! Look for a moment at the disciples of our Lord. They were drawn to Jesus by the Father. Their knowledge that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of God, came not by human nature, but came from above. They loved Jesus with all of their hearts, cleaving unto Him with all the powers of their affections. And yet, while He was here in the flesh, they understood not the scriptures, nor did they understand His mission, His death, resurrection, ascension, nor yet the nature of the kingdom He should bring into existence. Even the personal teaching and instructions of the Lord, received with their most intense interest and admiration, were not sufficient to open their understanding to the glorious and eternal realities set before them. Only their subsequent infilling with the mighty life and power of the Holy Spirit could finally cause them to comprehend this one eternal fact: THE HOLY SPIRIT ALONE CAN LEAD US INTO ALL TRUTH! God is *in* Christ; Christ *is* the truth; but the Holy Spirit alone *reveals Him* who is God manifest.

God in His great love has purposed to reveal Himself fully and perfectly to His creation. It is His gracious will that we should *know Him*! In Christ Jesus He manifests Himself perfectly. Jesus is Light, full of brightness and glory. And yet we require another Light to see the True Light! How is this? How can this be? It is simply because there is no other God but the One — who has revealed Himself as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. These are not *three Gods* in one; these are three progressive manifestations of the ONE ETERNAL GOD by which He reveals Himself to man. **Father** speaks of God in heaven, in the invisible, unseen realm of spirit. "When you pray, say, **Our Father** which **art in heaven**, hallowed be Thy name." **Son** speaks of **God manifested**. "No man has ever **seen God** at any time; the only **unique Son**, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him — He has revealed Him, **brought Him out where He can be seen**" (Jn. 1:18, Amplified Bible). **Holy Spirit** speaks of the **energizing, quickening power of God moving and working** throughout the universe and *in the hearts and lives of His people*,

revealing the invisible God who has been manifest in Jesus Christ. "For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in Him? Even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the **Spirit of God**. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God; that *we might know* the things that are freely given to us of God" (I Cor. 2:11-12).

The Spirit has brought into the life of every son of God a *living knowledge*, the knowing and experiencing of God in Christ. It is not information, not an insight into doctrines and creeds and ideas of religion, or an appreciation of their beauty and grandeur. Men have such knowledge vast and deep, and yet are destitute of the grace of God, ignorant of the purposes of God, and untransformed by the Spirit of God. To *know God* is *life eternal*. The great truth is this: There is One that Christ has sent into the world to fully, powerfully, and profoundly *reveal the Christ* to the elect members of His body on earth! The One whom Christ has *sent* into our hearts to reveal the Son of God within ourselves is His "angel," His "messenger," the One who teaches us all things and guides us into all truth!

Before we leave this thought, I would like to point you to another significant internal evidence within the book of Revelation which indicates with divine clarity just who the "angel" of Jesus is. Jesus sent His angel to *testify in the churches* of the things that are written in this book. Notice now exactly *who spoke* and *who testified* to the churches! "He that hath an ear, let him hear what *the Spirit* saith *unto the churches*!" This admonition is repeated *seven times* in chapters two and three, once to each of the seven churches! Then we read, "And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, *saith the Spirit*, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them" (Rev. 14:13). And again, "And *the Spirit* and the Bride say, Come...for *I testify* unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book..." (Rev. 22:17-18). It seems to me that to further emphasize these passages would be to do an injustice, for the plainness of their meaning transcends the argument of man. The book of Revelation interprets itself when we have *eyes to see* and *ears to hear*.

The angel that Jesus sent to John was the Holy Spirit as the **prophetic spirit**. All spirits, or all operations and manifestations of the Spirit, are not prophetic. There is the spirit of wisdom, the spirit of understanding, the spirit of counsel, the spirit of burning, the spirit of judgment, the spirit of grace, the spirit of glory, the spirit of sonship, and scores of other spirits mentioned throughout scripture. But here we read, "The Lord God of the *holy prophets* sent His *angel* to show unto His servants things shortly to be done" (Rev. 22:6). These words signify the **prophetic spirit**! Every prophet that has been sent into this world has had upon him an anointing of the spirit of prophecy or the prophetic spirit, which led him and revealed matters to him. Other men were anointed by the Holy Spirit as kings, priests, warriors, artisans, and various other callings. Each had his particular and unique area of anointing, or the moving and enablement of the Holy Spirit. But only the prophets receive the prophetic spirit and to John was sent a special dispensation of the prophetic spirit symbolically characterized by Jesus as "my angel." I truly believe that the sons of God are today receiving the *fullness of that prophetic spirit* by which the Lord is making known to us the great and mighty things that pertain to this glorious Day of the Lord! I speak not of the "gift of prophecy" of the in-part realm of the passing church order. There has been a prophetic voice in every generation and that prophetic voice

proclaimed the Present Truth for that day. What the prophetic voice is saying today *is not the same* as what the prophetic voice was saying in the days of Noah, Moses, Samuel, David, Isaiah, the early church, the reformation, the Pentecostal outpouring of the 20th century, or the coming of Christ as Latter Rain in 1948. Can we not see that there was a different word from the Lord in each generation and at each stage of God's dealings with His people? We don't need to hear the same message Noah heard! The Lord is not sending a flood today! The instructions God gave David are not for us today! We don't need to drive out the Philistines or capture Jerusalem from the Jebusites! What the Lord was saying to His people a hundred years ago is not what He is doing today! To hear what the Spirit *saith (is saying)* unto the churches is a *flowing, living reality*, not a doctrinal statement set in concrete! Every church denomination has its written "Articles of Faith," but those are merely the record of what the Spirit *was saying* to the church, not what the Spirit *is saying*!

To John was revealed the magnificent glory of seeing the *fullness of Christ* as He would stand in completeness on the Lord's day. In the midst of this surpassing revelation John declares, "And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth..." (Rev. 19:6). John is standing there in the desolation of Patmos, caught up into the high realm of the Spirit, and he hears the voice of a *great multitude*, and as the voice of *many waters*, and as the voice of *mighty thunderings*. Can we not see that this is a **corporate voice**! It is this same corporate voice that John is hearing when he declares, "And HE saith unto me, Write..." (Rev. 19:9). All this multitude, all these voices as many waters, all these mighty thunderings are called "HE." The multitude of voices is HE! The Christ that we being many are, is but *one Christ*. The mystery of the many-membered Christ! What could be more solemn or sacred than that?

This Voice of the Corporate Christ is the *testimony of Jesus* which is the *spirit of prophecy*! The *spirit* of this prophecy is the *testimony of Jesus*! The Spirit testifies of HIM! Yet — does not the Spirit speak and testify *through men*? Truly *we* are the temple of the Holy Ghost! This Spirit, this Spirit which testifies of Jesus, is the voice as of many waters, and is also the "angel" of Jesus Christ! How wonderful that these tremendous and almost incredible statements concerning the body of Christ reveal that God's elect are the voice of the Christ, for we bear the prophetic anointing!

The prophetic voice speaking out of God's sons today is not speaking the same things nor in the same way as the prophetic ministry we have known in the past. The prophets of this new Day are not prophesying about the mundane things of our lives, whether we should live here, or move there; hold this job, or that job; marry this man or woman, or remain single; go to this church, or the other church; be a Sunday School teacher, deacon, pastor or apostle; fulfill this or that ministry. That is how we have known the prophetic ministry in the past and we have all been blessed out of that realm as our ministries have been confirmed and the will of the Lord made known to us. I do not say that the Spirit cannot or will not still speak in that way! But it should be evident that the voice of the Lord in the midst of His elect is concerned with *higher things* in this Day! God is doing a *deeper work* in the lives of His called out and chosen ones in this hour!

All across this great land of ours, and around the world among every tongue, people, tribe and nation, the Spirit is bearing witness to God's *ultimate purpose* as He prepares for His *master*

stroke as the curtain rises on creation's greatest drama — **THE MANIFESTATION OF THE SONS OF GOD!** Those prepared for sonship in this Day are past all the little baby steps of the church systems and are now growing up into the fullness of Christ! Praise His name, once the *finishing touch* is put on the last stone of His living temple of Kings and Priests, the firstfruits of His redemption, we shall step over into our full redemption in spirit, soul and body! In this new age and in the glorious ages yet to come, God shall put His grace and kindness and wisdom and righteousness and power on display through His sons so that the entire creation may walk across the stage of His cosmic theater and behold and see and come to *understand* and *appreciate* **what God has provided for all men in Christ!** That is what the Spirit *is saying* to the called out in this great Day of the Lord! Our ears have heard the sound of the trumpet and we cannot, dare not, settle for anything less, we must follow on to know the Lord in all His glorious fullness, to put on the mind of Christ, to be transformed into His image, to drink deeply of His incorruptible life, to overcome all things, so that we may in turn *be* the manifestation of Himself unto all mankind. Let us not sell creation short in these days! All creation is travailing and groaning together in pain to be delivered from the bondage of corruption. Let us not deny the Lord who has purchased us to be kings and priests to reign over the earth by settling for something less, a comfortable position in the church realm, or a mansion over the hilltop. While we seek no glory of our own, there is, nevertheless, great wealth and heavenly glory for all who fulfill the will of God in His kingdom! You never lose with God!

When I say that the "angel" of Jesus Christ is the Holy Spirit as the *prophetic spirit of this Day of the Lord*, I can hear someone say, "Now wait just a minute, brother Eby! Doesn't Revelation 22:8-9 tell us that this angel is a *man*, a *prophet*, even one who *keeps the sayings of this book*? Did not John fall down to worship this man-angel? And didn't the angel forbid him, saying, "See thou do it not: for I am thy fellow servant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book: worship God." Ah, yes, but there is a *deep mystery here*! How does the Holy Spirit speak? We cannot deny that He speaks in the depths of our being — out of the most holy place of our spirit. But have you not heard the Spirit speak *through* man? Peter said that we proclaim the good news *with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven*! Not only do spiritual men read by the Spirit, hear by the Spirit, see by the Spirit, and know by the Spirit — they also *speak* by the Spirit! "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God" (I Pet. 4:11).

When the voice of that *one like the Son of man* rang out in the midst of the churches, it was not the voice of the lonely Galilean, not the voice of one son of God speaking by the Spirit, not the voice of a singular man-angel from heaven, but the voice as the *sound of many waters*. Many waters means many peoples, and the peoples here are the sons of God. The vision is recorded for our knowledge and inspiration that we might know that the One testifying of these things *in the midst of the churches* is *the Son in the sons*! The "angel" was sent to testify of these things in the churches, and it is the "one like unto the Son of man" who speaks in the midst of the churches! It is the voice as the sound of a *great multitude*, as the sound of *many waters*, and as the voice of *mighty thunderings* that speaks to the churches throughout chapters two and three, and to John on through the book of Revelation. Can we not see by this that the "angel" and the "one like unto the Son of man" are one and the same? Yet — it is *the Spirit*! It is the Spirit speaking through the sons of God!

The great lesson here is that God *speaks through man*. I have heard the voice of the Spirit through a great many men and women during my lifetime. The word of the Lord and the revelation of God has come to me through many chosen vessels. Almost daily I hear the voice of the Spirit through precious letters we receive from members of God's elect all across the land and around the world. I have both seen and heard great and mighty things from the Spirit of God in His people! But we are never to pay homage to the vessel, we can never fall down to *worship the person* through whom God expresses Himself! We have to watch the esteem we give to the man God uses — for many have become followers of *men* rather than *followers of God*. John fell down to worship the *man* — and that is an object lesson for us out of this book of pictures and symbols! He was straightway commanded, "See thou do it not." And I command you today — never get your eyes on me, beloved, nor on any other of the voices of God in the land today! I am but a vessel, a voice. The voice is that of the Spirit, the testimony is of Jesus Christ, it not my voice nor the testimony of myself. The sincere love and steadfast faithfulness of all those precious ones who esteem and value the ministry the Lord has been pleased to bring through us is truly appreciated on our part. But do not esteem us *too highly*, beloved! Be not followers of men, but be a follower of Christ Jesus the Lord! Do not worship at the shrine of any man, whether he calls himself an apostle, a bishop, a king-priest, or any other title. All — if indeed they are the messengers of Jesus Christ — are but your fellow servants, of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the saying of this book. Worship God! That is what the Spirit is teaching us in these things.

JOHN— THE APOSTLE OF LOVE

"The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto Him...and He sent and signified it by His angel *unto His servant John*" (Rev. 1:1).

The apostle John was one of the "three mighties" who walked with the Lord in the days of His flesh. In his boisterous youth he was called "the son of thunder," but his experience with Jesus transformed his life. He saw Jesus raise Jairus' daughter. He saw Jesus calm the raging sea and feed the multitudes. He was with Him in the holy mount and was an eye witness of His majesty. He heard the Father's voice declaring Jesus' sonship. He lay in the Lord's bosom and heard the inmost beating of His heart. He received the distinctive title as "that disciple whom the Lord loved." He it was who penned the immortal words, "In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God, and the Word was God...all things were made by Him; and without Him was not anything made that was made" (Jn. 1:1-4). John beheld in spirit the deep mystery of creation. He saw Jesus in His creative power, where galaxies were formed and worlds were made. In Jesus John saw the mighty God and the everlasting Father in a form He could understand, touch and love. He was in the garden agony with Him. He and Peter prepared the last Passover. He was the *only* apostle at the crucifixion. He was the first apostle at the tomb the morn of the resurrection. He escaped martyrdom in Rome, being cast into a caldron of boiling oil and escaping untouched, so Tertullian writes. He was banished to the isle of Patmos for the word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ. John returned to Ephesus at the death of Domitian in A.D. 96 where he wrote three epistles centered in the love of God. Was it not fitting that the man who had leaned upon the breast of God's Son and heard the inmost beating of His heart, should become the depository of His most intimate thought in respect to His divine purposes to be

wrought out in His many-membered body in this age? And such is the case! This picture is found in the book of Revelation!

Christ's peculiar love for John was a *prophetic love* which had to do with John's special relation to the overcomers throughout the age. Next to love, *overcoming* was the theme of all of John's writings! John was peculiarly designated "our brother and companion in tribulation and in the patience and kingdom of Jesus Christ" because of the special message he was raised up to give the elect in the five writings which came from his pen. His was the last voice to echo across the abyss of the two millennia between the manifestation of the firstborn Son and the manifestation of the many sons brought to His glory. There is a special sense in which the beloved apostle is with us still! He never dies! "If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?" (Jn. 21:22). A saying arose in consequence of these mysterious words that John would not die. But John teaches us that the meaning of Jesus' words is otherwise. "Jesus said not, He shall not die, but....

History elucidates the meaning. John is with the overcomers in a prophetic sense in all their tribulations and in the patience and power of the kingdom! On our behalf he was a prisoner in the isle of Patmos. On our behalf he received the Revelation which is the chart of the overcomer's journey through the processings of the Father to the fullness of God. On our behalf he weeps in chapter five of the Revelation till the answer to all that is sealed up in *Christ in us* is made clear. On our behalf he "ate the little book" of divine testimony, sweet in the mouth but bitter in the bowels, denoting that the experience of all that God reveals to us in our walk into sonship is sweet in our mouth as we eat the word and revelation of Christ, but leads through the bitterness of testings, purgings, strippings, chasenings, sorrows, and tribulations as it is digested, wrought out, and made flesh within us. It was the overcomer, as represented in John, whose head lay in the comfort and love of that bosom where beats the heart of the Eternal, filled with compassion, mercy and truth. We can think of John as representing *love*! This is the revelation that comes through the activity of *love*! We are blessed and happy as we *receive* the prophecy, and we are prepared at this time to *experience* in our lives the full message of the revelation. Because it is truly a revelation of love, it can begin to happen only in the very special environment of love! *God is Love*! And we are the *sons of Love*!

THE SPIRIT OF THIS PROPHECY

The book of Revelation is without doubt one of the most important and wonderful books ever written. It is, in my opinion, *the* most important book for all who are called and chosen as God's government of kings and priests! It is difficult for many people to understand because it is written in highly symbolic language, understandable only to the spiritual mind. Long millenniums ago Joseph spoke a wonderful truth when he asked the burning question, "Do not interpretations belong to God?" (Gen. 40:8). Moses said, "The secret things belong unto the Lord our God; but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children forever, that we may *do* all the words of this teaching" (Deut. 29:29). Many preachers spend far too much time delving into future speculations about world events. Time invariably repudiates their futile predictions. God did not give us a heavenly version of NEWSWEEK magazine, but the Book of Life!

When the book of Revelation was written, John was **in the Spirit!** This is a fact of extreme importance. The realm of the Spirit is a realm beyond the reach of the natural. Spiritual things are all about us to such an extent that we live and move and have our being in them, yet the natural man can never see them until the Spirit draws aside the dusky curtains of our carnality and opens our eyes to the realities of the spiritual world. Thus it was with John, in exile on barren Patmos, a place of few inhabitants and always swarming with pirates and banished criminals of various sorts, but the record says of him, "Who bare record of the word of God, and the *testimony of Jesus Christ*, and of all things that he saw...for the *testimony of Jesus* IS THE SPIRIT OF PROPHECY" (Rev. 1:2; 19:10). Preachers and teachers ought to heed this wise counsel and concentrate on the **testimony of Jesus** which is the spirit of prophecy, rather than futuristic forecasts of earthquakes, plane crashes, riots, nuclear disasters, political coups, invasions, wars, terrorist attacks, foreign policies, world government, etc. When God gave us the Holy Spirit, it was not to take soundings of uncharted depths into the future of America, Russia, China, Europe, or the Jews, but to develop a SPIRITUAL CHARACTER, to put on the mind of Christ, and follow the Lamb whithersoever HE goeth!

The ministers of God were not meant to be soothsayers but truth-sayers. We were not called to predict all the changing events in the kingdoms of *this world*, not to herald a future antichrist, but to proclaim the ETERNAL PRESENT CHRIST! The book of Revelation is not primarily intended to teach *world events*. It is intended to teach *the purposes of God* and *spiritual realities*! Men have put so much stress on outward things, so much *carnalizing* of the word of God which is *spirit and life*, that when we read the scriptures we oft times overlook the real truth the Spirit is speaking.

The world is full of people today who are prophesying about a great many things. I never cease to be amazed at those who prophesy world events that are to come to pass. So many of them have prophesied and they were not right; their prophecies failed! Some of them have never prophesied anything that has come to pass, yet they keep right on prophesying, and their followers quickly forget the things that didn't happen and continue to cling tenaciously to each new prediction. Some have called me a prophet. I don't claim to be a prophet, though I have prophesied through the years, and do believe that my voice is a very small part of the *many waters* of God's *corporate prophet* who speaks in this new kingdom Day. I know what prophecy is. I know Jesus who is the author of all *true prophecy*, and IS HIMSELF THE TRUE PROPHECY. "The *testimony of Jesus* is the *spirit of prophecy*!" (Rev. 1:2-3; 19:10).

In the spirit of Jesus is the real truth and it cannot be found in any other place! Jesus is alive in you, my brother, my sister, and He is alive in me. God has given us the spirit of His Son! The testimony of Jesus within ourselves is the spirit of prophecy! The spirit of prophecy most often speaks of Christ — of that of Christ which is becoming reality *within us*. Yes, the Spirit of God can reveal things to come in the outer world of politics, economics, warfare, the rise and fall of nations, disasters, etc. God has on occasion revealed such things to me. But those things are only incidental to the great spiritual realities of the kingdom that God is raising up within His elect! THE TESTIMONY OF JESUS IS THE SPIRIT OF PROPHECY! The Spirit bears witness to *God's Christ* — that is where *true prophecy* will be found! A true prophecy contains the testimony of Jesus — the word which energizes and causes the life of the Son of God to be raised up in us! It is a spiritual testimony, therefore its fulfillment does not come literally — it

comes spiritually and is realized in Jesus Christ! Jesus Christ has come within us to reveal in us the unseen things of the kingdom of God!

Some people contend that the book of Revelation *cannot* be a spiritual book because the spiritual interpretation takes away from the true prophetic nature of this book. I ask, however — How in the world can spiritual understanding take away from the prophetic nature of the book when the book itself declares that "the *testimony of Jesus* IS the *spirit of prophecy*." The testimony of the antichrist is not the spirit of prophecy! The testimony of the beast is not the spirit of prophecy! The testimony of the false prophet is not the spirit of prophecy! The testimony of the dragon is not the spirit of prophecy! The testimony of Daniel's 70th Week is not the spirit of prophecy! The testimony of the rapture is not the spirit of prophecy! The testimony of what is going to happen in Israel during the tribulation is not the spirit of prophecy! The testimony of the Third World War is not the spirit of prophecy! It is the testimony of JESUS CHRIST which is the spirit of prophecy! And Jesus Christ is the glorious, risen, ascended, exalted, spiritualized, omnipresent, omnipotent, eternal GOD-MAN! We are the body of Christ, and the testimony of Jesus Christ is *within us*!

It is also important to note that John is seen to have the *testimony of Jesus* in addition to the *word of God*. "Who bare record of the *word of God*, and of the *testimony of Jesus Christ*..." (Rev. 1:2). Then in Revelation 19:10 the application of this expression is given a more specific meaning by both Rotherham and the Emphatic Diaglott when they translate the Greek as saying, "The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of *this prophecy*." The fact that it reads "this prophecy" instead of merely "prophecy" indicates that there is a special relationship between the *spirit* of Christ and the words of *this prophecy*. The definite article is found in all the oldest manuscripts discovered, even though it is not expressed in the King James Version. In other words, a special work would be performed in relation to *this prophecy*. The prophecy itself is the *word of God*. But the testimony of Jesus is *the spirit* of this prophecy! The *letter* of this word is a lamb with horns, beasts, elders, locusts, women, angels, cities, wars, etc. But the *spirit* of this word is JESUS! The spirit of Christ within us is that which bears witness within ourselves to the true message of this book! And the spirit of Christ within us is that which accomplishes within us all the truth and reality of this book! The end of everything you will learn or experience out of this book *is Christ*! It can only be understood, known, and experienced by the spirit of Jesus Christ within us!

Understanding the book of Revelation *spiritually* is the only view by which you can interpret the book *by the Bible*. Every other view requires one to understand history, geography, politics or world events; and to have access to Newsweek, Time, USA Today or CNN in order to compare contemporary happenings with the symbolisms of the book. I have made the necessary discovery that the book explains itself, and I do not hesitate to tell you that this is the only view that makes the book relative to our spiritual life today as well as to the spiritual life of the saints of every generation. It is the only view that makes the book relative to *anyone, anywhere, at anytime* who reads or hears the prophecy of this book and keeps the things that are written therein (Rev. 1:3).

"The time is at hand" for all who come into an experiential revelation of Jesus Christ! When the unveiling of Jesus Christ within us becomes the power of our life, the book of Revelation becomes a NOW book! Every other view makes the Revelation either a *past* book, or a *future* book. Let every child of God know for a certainty that it is *now*, in our *today*, that we are

experiencing the unveiling of Jesus Christ! We will not be helped spiritually one iota by an understanding of what Titus did to Jerusalem in A.D. 70, or what the Moslems did in the eighth century, or by what the Pope did during the middle ages, or by what some future antichrist will do after the church has gone to heaven. Those are, one and all, exercises in carnal minded foolishness that have absolutely nothing to do with THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST!

BLESSED IS HE THAT READETH

"Blessed is he that *readeth*, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand" (Rev. 1:3).

There are seven "beatitudes" in the book of Revelation. There are also seven great "songs" and seven "overcomeths," and I often think that the seven *blesseds* of the Lord are to start us into the seven *songs* — the perfect *becoming of praise* in our lives — and that will bring us out as a perfect *overcomer*! Let us now meditate upon this thought, "Blessed is he that *readeth*." Until I heard the story in which a self-educated man told of what his life was like before he learned to read, I had never thought much about how illiteracy affects one's perception of the world. He knew very little about life in his own neighborhood. Although he had occasionally met people from other cities, he had little idea where those cities were in relation to his own little world. Knowing only how to live by crime, he ended up in prison, where he finally learned to read. This opened up a whole new view of the world — a world he'd never known before, even though it had existed about him all his life. He discovered new options and began to make better choices about how to live. Crime was no longer his occupation, and he turned to productive pursuits. Learning to read words redefines our understanding of the world around us.

There is another kind of illiteracy that has an even more profound impact on our comprehension of *reality*. This could be called SPIRITUAL ILLITERACY — that is, the inability to read — to perceive and understand the language of the Spirit, the realities of the spiritual world! When we lack this ability to make sense of the broad vistas of spiritual truth, we are left trying to interpret spiritual realities from the ignorant, limited, and distorted perspective of the carnal mind — natural reasoning and human understanding. It is like an ant trying to understand the world of men! And I tell you that the world and the church today are literally filled and overflowing with SPIRITUAL ILLITERATES! Oh, they can *read* with their human ability. They *understand* with the carnal mind, the Adamic intellect. But when the beloved John says, "Blessed is he that *readeth*," he doesn't mean that every unregenerated sinner and every carnal baby Christian who picks up the book of Revelation and peruses its pages is blessed thereby! Not at all!

Rather, blessed is he that *readeth* with the understanding of the Spirit! Blessed is he that *readeth* the divine language of heaven! You may have that beatitude of God as a continual vision before your eyes, as the constant voice of the Spirit in your ears, and as an everlasting inspiration in your heart, if you will diligently seek the Lord in the pages of this book. May God flash this "blessed" promise before your eyes, sound it in your ears, and cause your heart to swell with the inspiration of it until Jesus Christ is fully revealed in your life!

We must now prepare to launch out into deeper waters. The word "read" is a special word in the Greek, it is *anaginosko*. *Ana* is "re" or "again" and *ginosko* means "to know." The meaning is

simply this: Happy is the one who *remembers* or *by reading knows again* the message of this prophecy! You will not be able to hear with natural ears nor understand with natural minds what I am now going to say. It is my deep conviction that the book of Revelation is already recorded *within you* in the Christ! It is not enough to say that we are called to sonship and that God is today giving us great and wonderful revelations of His purposes. We must also recognize by the wisdom of the eternal Spirit that we were *chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world* (Eph. 1:4). Then we are told also in verse four, "...having PREVIOUSLY *marked us out* for sonship through Jesus Christ for Himself according to the good pleasure of His will."

Not only were we chosen *in Christ* before the foundation of the world, but God put a mark upon us *then*, that secured us for our role as sons of God, that we should be separated and blameless in this world. Paul adds another dimension to this beautiful truth in his words to Titus, "In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, *promised before the world began*" (Tit. 1:2). Thus we have a ray of insight into the fact that we were *chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world, previously marked out* for sonship, and *promised* eternal life *before the world began*! We were chosen in Christ in that long ago beginning and known by the Father in a way that goes far beyond a mere "twinkle in the eye" or a "thought in God's purpose." We did not exist simply "in the mind" of God. Oh, no — we were there — a *reality*! Chosen — marked out — promised! Before! In due time we were made subject to vanity, lowered out of our pure spirit existence, into this world of limitation and testing, for Father's wise purpose.

Each and every son of God had his beginning in God and existed in Christ before time began, before ever we came to this earth to be perfected by the knowledge of good and evil, knowing both by experience and suffering. Our coming into this dark realm was with the purpose that through the desperate furnace of trials, suffering, and experience in this shadowy land of sin and death, we should come to the knowledge of good and evil, fully overcoming in it, to stand at last before our Father in a perfection and power like unto His own. God did not desire robots or untested children who were like Him apart from the wisdom, understanding, righteousness and nobility of character that come by **experience**. There is no other way! We were sons of God even then, but nothing of the dimension we shall be when our salvation is complete, for we are being transformed into the image and likeness of the firstborn Son who is the Prince and Captain of our salvation. Of Him it is written that He was *made perfect through suffering*, and being made perfect, He *became* the author of eternal salvation, *called of God an high priest after the order of Melchizedek*.

In the long, long ago, before the earth was graced with light or ever stars twinkled in the night sky, there was a day when God revealed His glorious plan of creation and redemption to His spirit-children who were chosen in Christ and predestinated to sonship as part of that marvelous purpose. On that holy occasion the morning stars broke forth in rapturous chorus and all the sons of God shouted for joy at the revelation of the Father's will! We do not shout unless there is something to shout about, and those young sons of God lifted their voices with the morning stars in contemplation of the marvelous purpose they would fulfill. I do not doubt that they understood that the sufferings of this world would work in them an eternal weight of glory that would redound to the honor of the Father and be the firstfruits of deliverance for all God's vast creation to be born in this universe of sin and salvation. So shall it be for each of us, my beloved, when the purpose of God is complete, for we came out of the loins of our *heavenly Father* a very little

son at first, to suffer the humiliation of temptation, sin and death, to be at last fully redeemed and matured into the character, wisdom, and power of our heavenly Father, *presented faultless* before the throne of His glory with exceeding joy!

The time of our birth, who our parents would be, what life experiences we would pass through, were all foreordained by the Father. And those sons who have entered upon the stage of action in this present generation stand at a special and significant juncture in God's great purpose of the ages! Truly this is the *Christ generation*, we are the *firstfruits people*, that we may enter our promised land of God's fullness even as we stand upon our two feet! It is my conviction that the mental-spiritual faculty which was present with God before the ages began, became a dormant portion of our being when we were born into this realm of the flesh. Ray Prinzing wrote so eloquently of this great truth that I am compelled to share his words here.

"The Psalmist knew what it was to have the Spirit of God breathe upon him betimes, and with that Breath came new understanding, such as when he wrote, 'Lord, Thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations. Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever Thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, Thou art God. Thou turnest man to destruction: and sayest, RETURN, ye children of men' (Ps. 90:1-3). Past, present, future, HE alone has been our HOME, our dwelling place. Outside of a CONSCIOUSNESS OF HIS PRESENCE we are but homeless wanderers, seeking to return into Him. This, too, has been expressed in verse:

In Thy holy habitation did my spirit once reside,

In my first primeval childhood was I nurtured by Thy side.

For a wise and glorious purpose Thou hast made me here on earth,

And withheld the recollection of my former friends and birth.

Yet at times a secret something whispers, You're a stranger here!

And I feel that I have wandered from a more exalted sphere.

"In *Intimations of Immortality* William Wordsworth also writes:

Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting:

The soul that rises with us, our life's star,

Hath had elsewhere its setting, and cometh from afar:

Not in entire forgetfulness, and not in utter nakedness,

But trailing clouds of glory do we come FROM GOD WHO IS OUR HOME.

"A meaningful incident was once related by a Radio Commentator, reporting on how a young couple brought a new baby brother home to his four-year-old sister. The little girl kept begging to be allowed to be left alone with him. Finally the parents gave permission. There was an intercom in the baby's room, so they listened closely so if necessary they could rush in. The little girl walked quietly to the crib where her baby brother slept, and her parents heard her plead, 'Tell me about God. I'm forgetting.'

"Ah, how quickly we have forgotten our Father, and home! Being conscious of the world around us causes us to **forget** — yet do we not hear the Spirit calling? And in the words of Paul, 'Now it is high time to **awake out of sleep**: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed' (Rom. 13:11). It's time to awaken to the realm from whence we came, that we might return. And as the song expressed it so beautifully, 'The Spirit is drawing us upward and onward to the place from whence we came.' Praise the Lord!

"'He has made everything beautiful in its time; He also hath planted eternity in men's heart and mind (a divinely implanted sense of a purpose working through the ages which nothing under the sun, but only God, can satisfy), yet so that men cannot find out what God has done from the beginning to the end' (Eccl. 3:11, Amplified). Ah, that sense of a destiny that nothing under the sun, but only **God** can satisfy! Having come from Him, once shouting for joy at the purpose to be wrought out, in our spirit there lies buried a sense, a knowing that we do belong to another realm, and nothing of this earth realm can satisfy. Men may try to fill their lives with the pursuit of fame and fortune, or just settle for the proverbial 'wine, women, and song,' but none of it satisfies for God has linked us to a higher realm. And when finally He awakens us to heavenly things, immediately there is a response, 'This is it! This is what I have been searching for!' Or again, to borrow the words of a hymn, 'ALL that I want is in Jesus, He satisfies, joy He supplies, life would be worthless without Him, ALL that I want is *in Christ*.'

"In every generation there have been those who 'confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on earth. For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country' (Heb. 11:13-14). A country — the Greek word is *patris* meaning: a father-land. They sought for the land of their Father, the land of their begetting, their home-land. IF you were of this earth-realm only, you would not desire another land for your roots would hold you to the fleshly, earthy. But because you have *come from afar*, there is that deep (though perhaps unrecognized) desire to return. For when HE turned you to destruction, He also implanted the command deep within your being, 'RETURN, ye children of men.' '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' (Rom. 8:29). The word "foreknow" is from the Greek word *proginosko* meaning 'to know by experience beforehand.' HE KNEW US BY EXPERIENCE, and PLACED HIS MARK UPON US, a sure word that we would ultimately return to be conformed to the image of His Son" — end quote.

Now our Father is calling us to a *remembrance*! We do not remember the former glory of our existence in the presence of the Father in spirit, but we do have fleeting glimpses of it! Our elder brother fully came to this remembrance and said, "And now, Father, glorify Thou me with the glory which *I had with Thee before the world was*." In our longing for the Father's love, in our yearning for His presence, and the ecstasy of it, as we put on the mind of Christ, we are able to

see our beginning in God before the ages began, and having this vision, we are awakened more and more to *reality*!

When each of God's sons is born into this world there is encoded in the depths of our spirit the *secret knowledge* of why we are here and what path the Father has marked out for us in our journey through this realm. Only by the quickening and enlightenment of the blessed spirit of truth within us is this dark veil of the conscious mind pulled apart that the hidden understanding of the deep things of God may spring out of the most holy place of our spirit. We think of it as a new and glorious *revelation* — but all divine revelation is but a REMEMBERING! That secret knowledge of heavenly things, which were given us *in Christ* before the foundation of the world, is called **THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST!** It is the same divine knowledge that is written in code in the visions of John on Patmos! And this information, this sacred secret, is also encoded *within our spirit* — we are "knowing again" the revelation of God's Christ! "Blessed is he that *readeth*, blessed is he that by reading *knows again* (*anaginosko*) the words of this prophecy!"

Let the reality and power of this prophecy open within you, beloved, for it is already recorded there! Once the understanding of this prophecy comes to you *by the Spirit* you will know what you knew before the ages, and what is hidden in the depth of your spirit! Don't look to me to understand the words of this prophecy, look within yourself! On bended knee, and with a broken and contrite spirit, seek the face of your heavenly Father for the light that the Spirit brings. It is there that the book will be revealed, and it is there that it will be experienced! Our awakening to these holy things is but a *remembering*, a *knowing again* of mysteries we once heard in Christ before the foundation of the world!