

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

FROM THE CANDLESTICK TO THE THRONE

Part 30

THE SEVEN CHURCHES OF ASIA

(continued)

"What thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the *seven churches* which are in Asia" (Rev. 1:11).

According to our Lord's parable of the wheat and the tares, the kingdom of heaven during this past age was to be an age of mingled blessing when the seed of the kingdom of God would be planted and begin to grow and develop in the hearts of a chosen company who would believe on Christ. It was to be an age when *true and false* would be *side by side* in the same pew, when *wheat and tares* would grow in the same field, when *sheep and goats* would roam the same pastures, when *good and bad* fish would be caught in the same gospel net. So alike were the tares and the wheat that the Lord Himself declared that men should not try to separate them, but that both should be permitted to *grow together until the time of the end* when God would send forth His angel-messengers to divide the wicked from the righteous, the spiritual from the carnal, the sheep from the goats, and the wheat from the tares (Mat. 13:36-43).

This mixture in the church — the wheat and the tares — becomes, later on in the Revelation, the gaudy harlot riding astride the beast of the carnal nature and worldly government. This great whore is described as "arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication" (Rev. 17:4). Ray Prinzing draws our attention to the fact that even as the seven infant churches were "golden" candlesticks, though beset by flesh, error, carnality, and abominations of various kinds, so this wanton harlot carries in her hand a "golden" cup. Ray wrote, "*Golden* bespeaks of things of intrinsic value, or, spiritual things. There is no doubt that religious Babylon has held in her hand a golden cup — treasures of truth, spiritual enrichments, revivals, times of divine visitation, but she has also mixed in of her own abominations, gross manifestations of the flesh, idolatry, carnality, spiritual adultery, whatever filthiness can be mentioned, it is all found in that cup, and then it was given to men to drink, until all the earth has become drunken with this awful mixture of flesh and spirit.

"Again this is noted in Daniel 5:2-3, as Belshazzar 'commanded to bring the silver vessels which his father Nebuchadnezzar had taken out of the temple, and they drank wine in them.' They would take hold of the cup and place in it their own wine, and dishonor the true by mixing it with the false. As the spirit of man is joined to the spirit of the world, the spirit of self-aggrandizement, stroking their own ego, yet all the time claim to be doing it for the Lord. It's Babylon — CONFUSION — taking the things of intrinsic value, the songs of Zion, the quickened Word, the precious blood of Christ, the anointing of the Spirit, and mixing it all up with the frivolity of the flesh, equating loudness as the anointing, emotional outbursts are thought to be spirit-movings, and

it is amazing how many are ready to drink from this cup — to become drunken with spiritual fornication, party-time mixing of the holy with the profane. Yet the Word speaks loud and clear, ‘Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils: ye cannot partake of the Lord’s table, and the table of devils’ (I Cor. 10:21). Participation in Babylon’s cup must end!” — end quote.

Again, consider the parable of the wheat and the tares. The master told his servants to ignore the tares and let them grow together in the wheat field until the harvest. Although the tares were the predominant plants in the field, it was **not** a tare field — it was a **wheat field**, and the crop which the Great Sower is interested in, is the wheat! The Lord had planted the wheat, and *an adversary* had crept in during the night and sown tares. And thus it has been during the length of the church age, nearly two thousand years, there have been the true children of God, of God’s planting, and false believers, false doctrines, false ways and works, of Satan’s planting! For these two millennia, the professed church of God has been endeavoring to convert the world to “Christianity.” But this effort has been unsuccessful, since it is out of harmony with God’s plan for this age. The plan for this work to be *successfully* completed, as we know, is the *new age* of the manifestation of the sons of God. Considering the spirit which controls the pseudo-church, it is not surprising to discover in the warnings to the churches in the Revelation, that, instead of effectively converting the world, it finds itself in danger of *being converted* to the world!

I spent a number of years in my early ministry seeking out a “perfect church.” On a few occasions it appeared that I had actually found one! The people were so loving and consecrated, the worship was so glorious and heavenly, and there was such a purity of the revelation of the Lord! But when I stuck around for just a little while, the undercurrents of strife, jealousy, division, flesh, sin, and corruption began to surface. All was not as it seemed! Suppose you had been searching for the perfect church back in the days of the early church. Suppose you had been traveling around in search of the one true church armed with the following list of criteria: (1) perfect doctrines and revelation (2) total dedication and zeal (3) perfect harmony and respect among members (4) no sinners, hypocrites, or non-believers in the church (5) perfect love and consecration (6) perfect worship and order in the Spirit. You could travel from Jerusalem to Galatia to Rome — probably to every congregation mentioned in the New Testament — and you would not be able to find the perfect church based on your criteria!

Many people have searched for the perfect church today and have given up in frustration; some conclude that the Bible must be all mixed up, and maybe God doesn’t really exist. Others reason that, since the perfect church doesn’t exist, they’ll have to start it! Or they fall prey to the cults or cult-like churches who claim that they, and they alone, are the one true church. Millions have cast aside family, friends, jobs, even the Word of God for the false sense of warmth and security offered by organizations claiming to have the only truth or to be the one true church. Well, thank God, the complete membership roll of the church is found only in *heaven*, in the realm of the Spirit, not in the computer of any organization on earth! Only *by the Spirit* can we know those who are truly His!

Through many years of experience I have learned the valuable lesson that as long as there is even *one imperfect* person in a church you do not have, nor *can* you have, a perfect church. By God’s design the churches are full of imperfect, immature, needy, and broken people, whom God is in the process of restoring and making whole! If you are looking for the perfect church *in the*

candlestick realm of the Holy Place, you are truly making an effort in futility! There is no such thing! The seven golden candlesticks are prefigured by the candlestick in the Holy Place of the Tabernacle of Moses. In the Holy Place the oil of the candlestick burns out, the wick from day to day needs trimming, the bread on the table of showbread contains leaven, a type of evil, and will grow stale, needing to be replenished. Everything in that realm is corruptible, imperfect, and temporal! We are forced to accept every group of people on the basis of their *degree of maturity and perfection*, for when they are compared to the stature and perfection of Christ, they fall short. Thus, we can proclaim with those who sang the song of Moses unto the Lord, “FOR THOU ONLY ART HOLY!”

What another word of wisdom Ray Prinzing shared when he wrote: “We recognize that we are neither fully out of the old, nor totally into the new, and therefore we offer no condemnation for anything or anyone in this time of transition. ‘Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God’ (I Cor. 4:5). Our heart desires to truly WORSHIP HIM, IN SPIRIT AND IN TRUTH, yet as we come together betimes, and have our services, we readily admit that we carry over the forms of the past, to sing, pray, preach — it is all we know. And some mix in more of the old traditions with the new moves of the Spirit, while others try to remain as free and flexible to His leadings as possible. But I dare say, we are not yet true thoroughbreds in our worship! But we also have confidence that HE will complete His work in us, and ultimately we shall freely and joyfully render unto Him the worship which He desires. While we wait for the establishment of HIS KINGDOM, however, we have no desire to build any more with the ‘old stones of Babylon.’ This leaves us without any current identification, no institution, no label, no brand, and we confess that we are but ‘pilgrims and strangers’ passing through this present age, for we have here no continuing city, but we SEEK ONE TO COME. Praise God!” — end quote.

The seven churches of Asia with their mixture of truth and error, flesh and spirit, are a picture of the church, the one church, the New Testament Church, the true church, throughout the church age! God’s people, for the most part, are IN BABYLON. How could the Lord say, “Come out of her MY PEOPLE,” unless the church is dwelling in spiritual Babylon, just as Israel of old was in captivity in the literal Babylon. My point is this: We cannot draw *clear lines* between the church and Babylon! Babylon is a **system**. The church is a **people**. Multitudes of the people who make up the church are IN BABYLON! They are controlled by Babylon, they have absorbed the ways and culture of Babylon, they think like Babylon, they talk like Babylon, they act like Babylon, they enjoy life in Babylon! And yet the people themselves are NOT BABYLON! Coming out of Babylon does not then *make you the church*. All of God’s people are the church, including those in Babylon! When God calls you out of Babylon you are His “called out” on a different or higher level than those in Babylon who have been called out of sin and the world. But both are “called out” and all are “the church”!

This is a great mystery, and my prayer to God is that He may give all who read these lines the spirit of wisdom and revelation to perceive and see the true nature of all things. The Babylon system *calls* itself the church. It is *not* the church! Someone says, “That is a Baptist church,” or, “that is a Methodist church,” or, “that is a Pentecostal church.” There is no such thing as either a Baptist church or a Methodist church or a Pentecostal church! They don’t exist! There is a

Baptist *religious organization and system* which *calls itself the church* but it is not the church. The **living redeemed people** are the church! And the **Baptist religious system** is Babylon! So here we have a seeming contradiction! On the one hand we do not call Babylon the church, while on the other hand we refer to the people in the religious systems as the church. *It is because much of the church is in captivity in Babylon!* Now, there are those who “come out of Babylon” and they appear to be “another church.” Some even deny that those in Babylon *are* the church! But the truth becomes very clear as we consider the seven churches of Asia! Most of them were already living in some form of religious Babylon, yet they were the Lord’s church whom He both praised and rebuked!

In chapter one of the Revelation we see the Lord Jesus walking in the midst of the churches with eyes as a flame of fire and feet like unto brass, as if they burned in a furnace, and His voice as the sound of many waters. This is the **prophetic spirit** of Christ in the midst of the churches! The Son of God walks in the midst of the churches in **judgment**. His eyes pierce through the façade the church has built up around itself, and His feet bring the refining fire of God every where He steps. The message is clear: The Lord Jesus is the authority over the church! Some ministers, whether apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, or teachers, try to be little dictators over the Lord’s people. Many churches have been spiritually devastated by leaders who take advantage of the Lord’s flock. But the pastor is not the authority over the church — the One we have to deal with is the One who walks in the midst of the churches!

“Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also *loved the church*, and gave Himself for it; that HE might *sanctify and cleanse it* with the washing of water by the word, that HE might present it to Himself *aglorious church*, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be *holy and without blemish*” (Eph. 5:25-27).

Make no mistake about it, HE WILL HAVE A GLORIOUS CHURCH, and it is the result of building — He is both the Author and the Finisher. There is a tremendous purging process on the horizon among the many groups and institutions of man, for although the systems themselves are Babylon, yet those within the systems are HIS PEOPLE. They may be but abused and brainwashed babes in Christ — but He will finish in them what He has begun! Oh, yes, there is a work begun, and salvation is a process, and those touched with His salvation are HIS, but in need of much purging and processing. The responsibility is HIS, for it is He who has redeemed them unto Himself, and line upon line Christ will work in each heart, every man in his own order, from glory to glory, until every man is made *complete in Him*. God is performing this great work in His **firstfruit company** now, and we are experiencing what it means to be refined by fire, purged, purified, changed, transformed and conformed to the image of the Son of God! For the called-out firstfruits the *place* is HERE, and the *time* is NOW! The work taking place in the lives of God’s sons in this hour is but the *first step* in God’s great redemptive, reconstructive, and restorational purpose. When God has finished His purifying, all who name the name of Christ will advance into heights and depths in Him! Mystery of mysteries, Christ *loved the church* and gave Himself for it that He might *sanctify and cleanse* and present it to Himself a GLORIOUS CHURCH without spot, wrinkle, or blemish. The final vision of this glorious church is the NEW JERUSALEM COMING DOWN FROM GOD OUT OF HEAVEN PREPARED AS A BRIDE ADORNED FOR HER HUSBAND. This is not Israel, the wife of Yahweh — this is the church, the *bride of Christ*! The New Jerusalem is *the ultimate reality of the church*!

THE LIGHT OF THE CANDLESTICKS

“The seven *candlesticks* which thou sawest are the seven churches” (Rev. 1:20).

Candlesticks are for light! In the opening verses of the Bible we read, “And God said, Let there be *light*: and there was *light*” (Gen. 1:3). “And God said, Let there be *lights* in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and God made two great *lights*; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night: He made the stars also” (Gen. 1:14,16).

I would draw your reverent attention to the words used here for light. The Hebrew text of Genesis 1:3 says, “Ye hi or: wa ye hi or.” The nearest to a literal translation our language will permit is to say, “Light be, and light was;” or even better, “Exist light, then exists light.” Our English word, light, appears again in the English translation of the Bible in the plural form in the fourteenth verse, “God said, Let there be *lights* in the firmament of the heavens.” There is, however, a vast difference between the word for *light*, the substance, in verse three, and the one translated *lights* in verse fourteen. In verse three the Hebrew word is *or*, while in verse fourteen the word is *ma-or*. This latter word is best translated as “luminary, light container, or light holder,” and these light holders are placed about throughout His universe like street lights in a big city. We have the same distinction in the Greek where *phos* appears as light, the essence, and *phoster* as the word for a light container. The *ma-or*, then, are the great luminaries such as the flaming suns, and even their reflecting satellites called moons, the meteors, and the nebulae; but *or* is the very substance and essence of light.

In the Old Testament symbology the Hebrew word used for light, when speaking of God as light, is *or*, that is, light substance; and in the New Testament the Greek word for light, when speaking of Christ as light, is *phos*, that is, light substance. The significance of this is noted when we see that the characteristic word for the body of Christ as light in the New Testament is *phoster*, or light holder. Jesus Christ then is The Light and we, as His body, are the luminaries which contain or shine forth the light. **THUS WE ARE THE CANDLESTICK!** The most significant appearance of this word in connection with the body of Christ is in Philippians 2:15, “That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, *among whom ye shine as **lights*** (*phoster* – light holders, luminaries) in the world.” This word is comparable to the luminaries of the Old Testament. The *ma-or*, or light containers. In Revelation 21:10-11 we find, “And He showed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, having the glory of God: and her light (*phoster*) was...clear as crystal.” The candlestick realm, when purged, cleansed, purified and matured *becomes* the holy city, the New Jerusalem shining with the plenitude of the glory of God!

So beautifully is the truth unveiled, in the New Testament writings, that Jesus Christ is the Head of His body, and that His body is the church! (Eph. 5:22-33; II Cor. 11:2). It is a beautiful thing to contemplate, a precious thing, a wonderful thing. Jesus is the Head, and the body, though being many, is one body. Everything of its life and interests and doings originates from the Head. The Christ within is the life of each member. In the book of Revelation the churches are the lamps in which HE burns and shines by His Spirit, and the light which shines is His own life. As

lamps, or candlesticks, the churches are the forms into which His Spirit flows as oil. In them His word burns as light. The members of the body of Christ are the *forms* by which the Christ of God appears as light in the world! It is not the forms themselves which are to appear, but the light that burns and shines in them. In Him, then, the forms become lights or luminaries. “YE are the light of the world.”

God’s first concern has always been for His people. You ask, Is He not equally concerned about the world? Of course He is — and that is why He has placed the candlesticks in the world, *to be the Light of the world!* Some say to me, “Don’t bother me with those deep revelations — my burden is to reach the world for Christ.” Those who speak thus have missed the whole point! The candlesticks are just dim lights in a world of darkness, and when the candlestick flickers and goes out, as it has in so many churches, then darkness covers the earth and gross darkness the people. God is after something greater than the candlesticks! The light of the candlesticks is seen in the opening chapters of the Revelation, but when you come to the closing chapters there are no more candlesticks, just the holy Jerusalem coming down from God out of heaven, having the glory of God! Then it is that the *nations* walk in the light of that city, and the *kings of the earth* bring their glory into it.

The “deep revelation” found in the visions of John between the candlestick and the New Jerusalem coming down from God out of heaven, is the revelation of God *by which* we are changed and transformed and brought from the candlestick to the throne! The Lord wants to walk in our midst with *ever-increasing Light*. If you want to forget the “deep revelation” and just remain a flickering candlestick in the world, then go ahead! You can do some good, you can affect some souls and bring blessing to some people. We can all be a blessing! But if you really, truly desire to reach the *world* for Christ, you must give yourself to *becoming* the *overcomer* who shall be a son of God, who shall inherit all things, and in whose light the nations and kings of the earth shall walk! The path of the just is just that way — *it shineth more and more unto the perfect Day!*

The Lord has promised *greater works* than those He did, *greater works* than any of us have seen in our lifetime, because He has *all power in heaven and in earth* to invest in His people as they are prepared for it. You want to reach the world for Christ? The greatest thing you can do for humanity in this hour is to pay the price to become a *manifest son of God!* The whole creation is groaning, travailing for the unveiling of God’s sons! We ourselves are groaning within ourselves in mighty, heart-wrenching travail, seeking God for the adoption, the placement as sons, to wit, the redemption of our body! This is the word the Lord is speaking by the mouths of His prophets in this day, and we are compelled to give ourselves to it, to yield ourselves under the mighty hand of God, to wait upon the Lord, until we receive the *greater glory* from on High! There is little hope for this sin-cursed world until the next great move of God, the greatest *ever seen*, breaks in power and great glory upon the horizon! Let us not settle for less, let us not sell creation short!

God’s work in us begins by making us a new creation with a new nature, a new spirit, and a new mind. The light of the candlestick is at the top of the candlestick. It is my earnest prayer that the Spirit of God will give each one who reads these pages the spirit of thoughtfulness and revelation. If your spirit is able to grasp the truth of this you will see that “the light of the body is the eye” or the understanding, and it is the *mind* that must be renewed and enlightened by the spirit

of Truth, giving light to the whole temple of God. Just as the light is at the top of the lampstand, so is the mind at the top of man's body. "Be renewed in the spirit of your mind" (Eph. 4:23). "That...the Father...may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him: the *eyes of your understanding being enlightened*; that ye may know what is the hope of His calling, and what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints" (Eph. 1:18)

Christ is seen standing in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks, representing something. Since Christ is pictured as standing right in the midst of the candlesticks, He is the One who is actually *fueling*, or supplying the needs of, the candlesticks, as His Spirit is represented by the oil. Christ is thus *embodied* within these seven churches. Even the positioning of the candlestick in the typical Tabernacle in the wilderness speaks powerfully to us. You will remember that the candlestick was not in the Holiest of all, but was located in what was known as the Holy Place, which is the area of the Tabernacle just before the Holiest of all or the Most Holy Place.

This positioning of the seven-branched candlestick gives us some special truth about the church age. The church does not dwell in the Holiest of all — the place of *fullness*! It does not walk in the realities of the *third compartment* of the Tabernacle, the Most Holy Place, nor yet in the glory of the *third day*, the fullness of the Day of the Lord. The church of this age has remained in the second compartment of the Holy Place, in the second feast, the Feast of Pentecost, and in the life of the second day, which falls short of full resurrection and perfection. "Come, and let us return unto the Lord: for He hath torn, and He will heal us; He hath smitten, and He will bind us up. *After two days* He will revive us: in the *third day* He will raise us up, and we shall live in His sight. *Then* shall we know, if we *follow on to know the Lord*: His going forth is prepared as the morning; and He shall come unto us as the rain, as the latter and former rain unto the earth" (Hos. 6:1-3). "Behold, I cast out devils, and I do cures today and tomorrow, and the *third day* I shall be perfected" (Lk. 13:32).

Believers of this age have with one accord sold themselves woefully short of all the great promises of God! Christ has entered in to that which lies within the veil, the absolute fullness of God! He has opened up the way for men to enter into a full and complete salvation, into the *realm of sonship*. Jesus is the *apostle* of our faith. He is the *sign Son*, the *first-begotten*, the *pattern Son*. All who are to come to sonship to God shall follow Him through the veil and come into that wonderful fullness of the resurrected, ascended, glorified, and enthroned Lord. It is now time, above all times, for us to mightily stress these truths! I see no possibility of any long delay until the *manifestation of the sons of God* becomes a reality. I know not the day or the hour, but it is my deep conviction in the spirit that we are now in the *generation* that shall witness this marvelous unveiling. I live daily in the expectation of the glory of God! Should my eyes grow dim and my gait unsteady with the passing of the years, I shall still rest in hope of the glory that *shall be revealed*!

Thus it is written, "Then the Lord will create over all of mount Zion and OVER ALL WHO ASSEMBLE THERE a cloud of smoke by day and a glow of flaming fire by night; over all the glory will be a canopy. It will be a shelter and shade from the heat of the day, and a refuge and hiding place from the storm and rain" (Isa. 4:5-6, NIV). Mount Zion represents the spiritual place

of reigning with Christ! If we are ascending mount Zion in the Spirit, and beginning to reign with Christ in the Spirit, the glorious light of Christ must be always shining from within us. David, who reigned gloriously from the mount Zion of old, spoke from experience when he said, “He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God. And HE SHALL BE AS THE LIGHT OF THE MORNING, when the sun riseth, even a morning without clouds; as the tender grass springing out of the earth by clear shining after rain” (II Sam. 23:3-4).

The sons of God are those elect and chosen ones who shall eventually *rule over men*. And we are to do so with the light of Christ shining out from within us to dispel all the darkness in people and in all the kingdoms of men. We are to be filled with so much of the light of Christ that we will shine forth as the sun in its brilliance, when it rises over the horizon to shed its rays over all the earth. All the inhabitants of the world, being ruled by the power of the Spirit within the sons, will then grow in the Spirit “as the tender grass springing out of the earth by clear shining after rain.” All men will be set free from their bondages of sin, sickness, ignorance, selfishness, limitation, human government and religious domination, and will then worship the Lord in spirit and in truth, and walk in the word of God within them. They will grow to the full stature of Christ, in the light of the glory that is seen in us, in the power and glory of the kingdom of God! They shall grow up into righteousness, understanding, love, faith, and power with God until eventually even the shackles of corruption and death shall fall from off their lives. Creation shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption. And our growth to the full maturity of sonship manifest will make all this possible!

It will be spiritually instructive for us to understand how that in the Tabernacle of Moses there were three different kinds of light. And by this light there were three different kinds of order. In the Outer Court the sun was the light, but there was night in that realm for when the sun went down in the western sky the Outer Court was veiled in darkness. Then in the Holy Place there was the candlestick, and there was a glimmering light in that compartment, not a very bright light, but a light sufficient to illuminate that realm by day and by night. That light was produced out of an indwelling, out of oil that was *in the candlestick* producing light. It was not a perfect light because the wick had to be trimmed daily, and the oil must continually be replenished. There was a necessary service rendered to that candlestick by the priests to maintain the light, just as we have needed the ministry of the word, the dealings of the Spirit, and seasons of refreshing and times of revival in order to rid our lives of recurring carnality, keep a supply of oil, and maintain the light of God burning in our lives. That is the Holy Place! But you know, when you enter into the Most Holy Place, the Holiest of all, the light of that realm is the Shekinah, the blazing, penetrating fullness of the glory of God, and there are no shadows and there is no night there! It is eternal light! The Shekinah is not dependent upon anything. It is not drawn or derived from any earthly substance. It doesn't have to be serviced. There is no wick to trim, no oil to pour, no priestly ministration of any kind to maintain it. It simply **is**, because God **is**!

Yet, the candlestick is a wonderful encouragement and edification to all who are pressing forward into God. The candlestick was kept burning in that Holy Place “from evening to morning before the Lord.” This statute was given to show us that the light of the Spirit is always available to us, even during these dark, spiritual hours of our walk in the flesh. We will never be left alone in this world with its troubles, testings, and trials, for we are assured that His light is always shining in our hearts to guide and direct us on the pathway we should take, by the Spirit. Therefore

we should be filled with the oil (anointing) of Christ at all times, whether it is a time of more light as He sends seasons of refreshing to cause us to blossom and grow up in Him, or the time of the darkness of a spiritual night, for His light is always shining in His heavenly, spiritual Tabernacle within us. By His glorious light within, we are able to make it through this dark night with faith, understanding, illumination, confidence, and trust in Him. Not only will we make it through this dark night of trial and testing, but we will do so triumphantly and victoriously, overcoming every obstacle, hindrance, and limitation of the flesh realm. We will turn our darkness into glorious Day as we walk in the light of the indwelling Spirit, ascending at the golden altar of incense to worship our Father in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, where we are enabled by His life to pass beyond the veil into the eternal and immortal glory of the Holiest of all! In order to enter in beyond the veil the glorious light of Christ must always be shining from within us so that we do not stumble as we make our way from realm to realm.

While the church is a light to the world, the light of the candlestick in the Holy Place of the Tabernacle reveals clearly that the light is, first and foremost, the revelation of Christ within ourselves to guide us on our journey into God. The Holy Place typifies the church realm, for it was the realm of the candlestick. When we step through the door, which separates the Outer Court from the Holy Place, immediately we come under the influence of the light of this candlestick. Everything in the Holy Place is seen in the light of the candlestick which is the light of Christ in our spirit. Your light is a flaming expression and manifestation of the glory of God and is fed by the oil that is put in your vessel. That's what the candlestick is all about; it is the life of Christ living in you!

It is the illumination of Christ, the anointing within, which draws us northward to the table of showbread where we begin to fellowship with Christ in His word. We begin to sup with Him and He with us. We hear His voice and take into us His word which is made strength and sustenance to our new creation life. We then move on to the golden altar of incense to proclaim the praises of Him who has called us out of darkness into His marvelous light. This is not the soulful, toe-tapping, hand-clapping, dancing music we hear in many places. This realm of praise and worship is the declaration of His virtues out of a heart of brokenness, love, consecration, and adoration. This is the realm of praise *in the spirit and by the spirit* which God begins to inhabit. This is the place where our transformation begins! The golden altar is the final piece of furniture in the Holy Place — located just before the veil into the Holiest of all. The incense is a cold, hard substance which, when placed upon the fire on the golden altar, is *transformed into a spiritual fragrance* which wafts it way through the veil into the Holiest of all! This is the place where we are changed and begin to pass from the Holy Place into the Most Holy Place. When we have passed through the veil there is *no candlestick*; rather, the glory of God in the full power of Christ's resurrection is the light of that realm!

The candlestick was to burn continually, which speaks to us of living in a continual awareness of the presence and revelation of the Lord. When we stepped into this Holy Place of the indwelling Spirit the light of His glory released in our lives permeated the whole room. How we thank God for the light produced by the candlestick in the Holy Place, though it is limited in its power and range of illumination. We're grateful for the "in-part" realm, for only by passing through the dim light of the Holy Place can we enter on in to the blazing Shekinah of the Holiest of all! The revelation of the Lord in this Holy Place (church realm) is always calling us onward. The

revelation of the Lord within ourselves will never leave us in the same position where we receive it. This should let us know, that as wonderful and glorious as this Holy Place is, it is not the ultimate in God! He is ever calling us toward the Most Holy Place, into Himself, in that dimension of fullness where it is His glory alone that fills the room. In the Most Holy Place there are no distractions of wick-trimming and making sure there is adequate oil in the lamps. There is only the constant, unchanging, undiminished, brilliantly shining glory of His all-consuming presence! In the Most Holy Place there is no more labor of baking and replenishing the bread on the table. There is now the eternal, incorruptible manna within the ark of the covenant! In the Most Holy Place there are no more distractions of periods of burning incense — times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord — seasons of God's movings through our prayers, praise, and worship. There is only the abiding *law of the spirit of life* in Christ Jesus, the state of *being His nature* by which we *are all that He is!*

There has been a light coming from the candlestick, the church, which allowed us to see all that is in this realm and to find our way into all the purposes of God that pertain to this realm. The light of the candlestick is the illumination of the Holy Spirit through all of the anointings, revelations, gifts, ministries, and graces which quicken our lives. The light of the candlestick enables us to find our way to the table of showbread where we feed on Christ as the word of God in one another, for “the bread which we break, is it not the *communion (fellowship) of the body of Christ*? For we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread” (I Cor. 10:16-17). The light of Christ in the candlestick also makes it possible for us to arrive at the golden altar of incense before the veil where we offer the incense of our prayers, praise, and worship, and very *being*, unto the Father. It is this place, when truly in the Spirit and by the Spirit, which opens the way for us to enter in *beyond the veil* into the Holiest of all. Now we can understand this realm of the candlestick — *the church!*

THE SEED-PLOT OF REVELATION

Some of us have surely noticed how all truth in the book of Revelation is germinative in the seven churches. We find the *seed-plot* for all that happens throughout the whole book in the experience of the seven churches! Thus it will be seen that the germs of all those evils which in the days of their fruition bring God's judgment into men's lives, and upon the Lord's people collectively, are already at work in the midst of those who have been called out of the world unto salvation. The Lord's word to the churches, “Repent, or I will come unto thee and do thus and so...” cannot be separated from the judgments we see later throughout the book of Revelation. His warning to the churches is not one thing and the judgments that follow another thing. They are the *same thing!* The very judgments that fall upon men throughout the book are in very fact the *fulfillment* of Christ's warning to the churches! They are not judgments upon Israel, Russia, China, the Arabs, Europe, or America — they are the corrective, remedial, redemptive judgments upon those apprehended of God by which we are purged, purified, and transformed into the image of God's Son! The judgments recorded in the book of Revelation tell the story of how the evil began as tares sown in the field of God's kingdom, the means used by the adversary to sow and develop them, and the wonderful process by which the Lord sends His messengers and gathers the tares into bundles and burns them. When this great work is fulfilled **in us**, then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father!

When our lovely Lord Jesus came into this sin-cursed world bringing the word and power of the kingdom, He ushered in a new and glorious age. It is very doubtful that any in those days had the remotest idea that it was the Father's intention to take the next two thousand years to complete the great work of preparing the *kings of the kingdom*! Jesus came to bring in the new age of *the church*, the *seed-bed* in which the kingdom could grow and develop to its **next stage**. When the conditions are fully ripe for this **next stage** of the kingdom, *this age will completely pass away*. How our glad hearts rejoice in the sacred knowledge that we are standing even now at the dawning of the **next new age** and the **greater glory** of the kingdom that it brings!

The Word of God contains mysteries which little by little are opened to us like the opening of a rose. In His wonderful kingdom parables Jesus revealed the great mystery of the *progression of the kingdom* from stage to stage and from realm to realm. He said, "The kingdom of heaven is like unto a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and sowed in his field: which indeed is the least of all seeds: but when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof" (Mat. 13:31-32). Again, "Behold, a sower went forth to sow; and when he sowed, some seeds (the word of the kingdom) fell by the wayside, and fowls came and devoured them. Some fell upon stony places...some fell among thorns...but other fell into good ground, and brought forth fruit, some an hundred fold, some sixtyfold, some thirtyfold. Who has ears to hear, let him hear" (Mat. 13:3-9). And yet again, "The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field: but while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way..."

As Jesus taught, it is like a farmer planting his seed in the soil. He makes the field ready and plants the seed in the ground. The seed lies buried under the earth, lost from sight, of course. If I had my way, I would expect a field full of corn tomorrow morning! After all, I put a lot of time and energy and money to prepare this soil and plant this seed. I did the right thing. I sowed the seed. An experienced farmer understands, however, that it is going to take *time* for the seed to sprout, to grow, to develop through all its stages, and ultimately bear fruit at harvest. The consummation doesn't come immediately nor instantly, but in season. Seedtime and harvest! That is God's method of operation in everything He does. It's been this way since the beginning, when God took six "days" to fashion the heavens and the earth, and it will continue to be His way throughout all the limitless ages. The Lord is ambitious, but also very deliberate and methodical. He enjoys growth and expansion! That is the way of His plan and purpose, always. Do not despair, precious one, if the work of God in you seems very slow. As long as there is some progress, however infinitesimal it may appear to the eye, **GOD IS AT WORK**! He will never leave you nor forsake you, even through the long, cold months of winter when *nothing is happening*, He will not abandon the work of His hands, nor will He turn from His purpose in you. God will complete that good work He has begun in you! Oh yes, He will! You see, this is the deep mystery of the kingdom of God. Jesus has taught us that it comes like silent leaven, grows like a grain of mustard seed, develops like corn, which is "first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear."

The good seed, this extraordinary seed, is our blessed Lord Jesus Christ, who is the *Word of God*. It is a very good seed, for it is the germ of spiritual, divine life! It is the *incorruptible seed*! When this seed was planted in the earth it began to grow vigorously and brought forth first the glory of the early church. Then, from move to move, from visitation to visitation, from revival

to revival, from dealing to dealing, this seed has grown and multiplied and reproduced in the earth and now it is time for the *cash crop* that will bring blessing to all the families of the earth — the *manifest sons of God*! The sons are the *final product* of the planting of the Lord, the precious *fruit*, the seed *exactly like the first seed that was planted* — Jesus Christ! The sons are the increase of the kingdom of God within the Lord's elect. Within that first, extraordinary seed was a preview of the kingdom when Christ in His entire body of sons will appear in the glory of sonship. And that, precious friend of mine, is how the kingdom of God will also increase and expand from age to age throughout the ages of the ages with the unending increase of God! Think about it! Just as Jesus was the first seed for this age, bringing forth a harvest of many sons, so the sons are the first seed for the next age. What an increase of the kingdom they will bring! And the harvest out of the age now dawning will be the seed-bed for the age that follows after that. And of the *increase* of His kingdom there shall be NO END!

The kingdom is like seed that is planted, sprouts, grows, passing through various stages over time, until at last it produces the fruit within which is the seed just like the original seed planted — only multiplied *many, many* times! In the time of harvest, we shall bring forth seed identical with the seed of Christ that was planted in the fertile soil of our hearts. We shall then become more seed exactly like that original Seed that was planted in our hearts! When Jesus was asked by His disciples to explain the parable of the wheat and tares, He said, “The field is the world; **the good seed ARE the children of the kingdom**; but the tares are the children of the wicked one” (Mat. 13:38). Let us pay attention to the words of Jesus. “The good seed are the children of the kingdom.” In this parable He is not viewing us as having the seed within us, or as having the kingdom planted within us, as He does in other parables. Rather, He presents us as being “the good seed.” In other words, Jesus saw us as being equal with Him, as a good seed just like the original Seed of Christ. We are becoming like the original seed of Christ through the planting of the incorruptible seed within us, but Jesus saw us as being already complete. Jesus saw us as, not the “blade,” or the “ear,” but He saw us as the “full corn in the ear.” He saw us as seed to be harvested! The seed that we are becoming is identical to the original Seed of Christ that was planted within us. And this seed shall be sown again to reproduce many times over according to the power of the original Christ-seed.

The kingdom of God operates by God's law of reproduction and increase. Just as all vegetation and animals and humans in the world are brought forth by the law of germination, growth, and increase, so is the law of the kingdom of God! Nature is but the outward, visible revelation of God's spiritual principles. Just as it is impossible for a wheat seed to produce apples, so it is impossible for the Christ seed within us to bring forth anything but Christ. As the Christ was planted within us, so that original seed must bring forth not only the spirit of Christ, but also *a body just like His glorious body*! God will give us a body like that of Christ, either by transformation while we live and stand upon our two feet, or by resurrection from the dead. The body that we receive must be *exactly like* the seed of the *resurrected Christ* who has been planted within our hearts (I Cor. 15:38). The Christ seed that we are becoming will have the same *life* that is in Christ. The seed will come forth with the *likeness* of Christ, the *mind* of Christ, the *nature* of Christ, the *righteousness* of Christ, the *compassion* of Christ, the *mercy* of Christ, the *love* of Christ, the *miracle-working, creative power* of Christ, the *fullness* of Christ! It must be this way, for the law of God reveals that everything must “bring forth after its kind.” The seed to be harvested is identical to the Seed that was planted! The seed that we are becoming shall be

scattered abroad to reproduce after His kind, filling the earth with kingdom sons just like us and, more importantly, just like Jesus Christ!

Armed with the understanding of this blessed truth, can we not see the importance of our wise Husbandman putting His chosen ones to the test, that He might prove us, purge us, and purify us from all that is not the perfection of Christ? It must be so, for if the tares of the carnal mind and fleshly nature were left to be harvested with the Christ life the kingdom of God would be a horrible *mixture* of flesh and spirit, truth and error, righteousness and corruption! Thank God that *at the time of harvest*, when the sons come to spiritual maturity, THE TARES ARE SEPARATED FROM THE WHEAT! The tares are gathered and *burned* in the refining, purging, purifying fire of God! Truly this gives us understanding of our present life and its difficulties! His truth is setting us free within ourselves from the fears, weaknesses, errors, limitations, and bondages of the flesh, of sin, and of religion. And how blessed and privileged we are to see the truth as it is in Christ!

There should be no need to remind any who read these pages that there is a negative side of this principle of sowing and reaping. In the parable of the wheat and tares a remarkable fact is revealed, the fact of continued mixture; up to the end of the harvest the field is a *mixed field*; it is a field divided between wheat and tares. And both the wheat and the tares are in the *Lord's field* — in His church! An enemy sows tares in the midst of God's wheat. Now notice — the tares are sown *after* the wheat is sown! So this is something that happens to the spiritual life of the children of God *after* they have been quickened by Christ! I do not doubt that this enemy is the devil of the *carnal mind*.

The kingdom is birthed into us in an infinitesimally small beginning. But it comes with sufficient power to begin to change our lives! The government of God begins in that undistinguished place where the spirit of Christ takes root in the inner life. Little by little we begin to become aware of what God wants in our life, and the paths of obedience begin to be learned. The desire is created within us, by the new genetic makeup of our mind, to want to do His will. We want to do what He wants us to do and to be what He wants us to be. It is right there that an enemy comes into the Lord's field, and begins to *sow tares*! The tares look just like wheat, but they are *not* wheat, and they are not the Lord's planting! It is right there that the church systems *begin to lay upon the Lord's people* their own man-made laws, requirements, rules, regulations, commandments, creeds, traditions, rituals, ceremonies, programs, works, and a whole world of religious tomfoolery, and leads the child of God down the dead-end street of man-made religion! Oh, yes, an *enemy* hath done this!

It may be quite a revelation to some to realize that tares look and act exactly like wheat, but a tare is a weed. It grows like a stalk of wheat and is identical to a wheat plant *except at the time of harvest*. The wheat at harvest time has a full head of grain and is bending over with the weight of the grain. A tare is not bent over with the weight of grain for there is nothing but an empty head of chaff. Only at harvest time is the distinction between wheat and tares clearly visible. No doubt all of us have come into contact with tares! We have worshipped with them in services. They went through the same religious motions. They knew how to praise the Lord at the appropriate time, or when the worship leader instructed them to. They even prayed with apparent devotion, but all of their prayers were self-centered. They diligently studied the scriptures, but all of their

interpretations were literalistic and carnal. They spoke the name of Christ, and did all kinds of *religious things*, especially at Christmas, Easter, and in all kinds of programs, concerts, drives, and works. Indeed, the tares have been with us all through our spiritual pilgrimage! And they really do look like wheat! It is only when you come to the harvest, when the Husbandman looks for the *MATURED CHRIST-LIFE IN THE POWER OF THE SPIRIT* that it becomes evident that this is not the Seed!

“Let both grow together until the harvest” (Mat. 13:30). Jesus was clearly stating that both realms would grow side by side, in the same seed-plot, until the time of harvest. Harvest bespeaks of **full maturity**, when each seed has reached its ultimate potential, size, capacity, and brings forth the fruit of what it is in the fullness of itself. And indeed both realms of the spirit and the flesh have been growing together in the church, in the candlestick realm, just as Jesus said they would! The wheat represents the kingdom saints, the sons of God in the fullness of Christ's life, nature, and power. The tares represent the carnal minded Christians of man's false religious systems. It could be no other way!

Multitudes who read the book of Revelation do not grasp the deep truth of why the Spirit began the book with the messages to the seven churches and then goes on to all the horrendous scenes that follow. The natural mind fails to get the connection! But this miscalculation arises from the failure to discern the difference between a *seed-plot*, where the seeds are planted, cultivated, and grown, and the immeasurable harvest that is to follow! The truth is, the messages to the seven churches are not something separate from, or different than, the events in the rest of the book! They are intricately related, the one grows out of the other; they are the very same images, pictures, events, and realities presented at different stages of development!

Let us now notice that the first three chapters of Revelation are introductory. Introductions can be of two types. Those which are casual, serving merely as the opening of the door, bearing no vital relationship to the real heart of the matter to come later in the main body of the work. And those which are absolutely essential, laying out in embryonic fashion the very essence of all that is to follow. Revelation's three chapters of introduction are of the latter type! Every great theme of the book is already found in compact and concise form, in these opening letters to the seven churches. **IF ONE UNDERSTANDS THE INTRODUCTION, ONE HAS GREATLY GRASPED THE ESSENTIAL IDEAS OF THE ENTIRE BOOK!**

As I stated earlier, all truth in the book of Revelation is germinative in the seven churches. A great mistake that many have in their minds is the notion that the seven churches are one thing and the events described through the seals, trumpets, and vials are something else. Such is not the case! The messages to the seven churches are given first because **the church is the seed-plot for the development of the seed — both the wheat and the tares!** Oh, yes! The church is the seed-bed of everything that happens in the whole book of Revelation! It all begins there! The beasts, the women, the cities, the shakings, the judgments, the glory — all these things and many more are found in seed form in the seven churches. All the mighty things that manifest out of the sea, the earth, and the heavens are there in the seven churches in embryonic form. As a plant grows and develops, and the blossoms and fruit come, so does every seed of good and evil in the seven churches become full grown and full blown in the chapters that follow!

Notice how it is that the little seed of Jezebel, the fornicating false prophetess in the church at Thyatira, grows and increases in numbers, organization, and stature until *she becomes* “the great whore that sitteth upon many waters: with whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication” (Rev. 17:1-2). Consider how the little seed of the doctrine of Balaam in the church at Pergamos, increases and intensifies until it brings forth in the earth the corporate beast of the false prophet who has “two horns like a lamb, and speaks as a dragon” (Rev. 13:11).

Then there is the little seed of the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes by which the Lord’s people are brought under the fleshly dominion of men who set themselves up as lords over God’s flock; and this group of pastors, bishops, overseers, superintendents, etc., these usurpers of Christ’s Headship over His body grows and aggrandizes until it *becomes* “that great city Babylon, that mighty city” which “is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird. For all nations have drunk the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies” (Rev. 18:2-3). Then the seed of the struggling little “overcomer” in each of the seven churches, to whom such glorious promises are given, increases in wisdom, stature, and authority in the Spirit until *he becomes* 144,000 sons of God standing upon the heavenly mount Zion, the very pinnacle of power and dominion in the kingdom of God!

John sees the seven golden candlesticks — the church — later on in the Revelation, this time no longer a flickering light in the secluded darkness of the Holy Place of the Tabernacle (the church age), but now become a glorious wonder in the heavens of God’s Spirit, clothed with the dazzling glory of Christ as the light of the noonday sun, a glittering crown of twelve stars of divine government upon her head, and the moon of the cold, reflective light of ritual, law, ceremony, and all outward religious ordinances and forms put *under* her beautiful feet. She is about to give birth to a manchild, a mature son, the manifest sons of God, who shall rule all nations from the throne of God in the Spirit. The little seed of the candlestick has now *become* the glorious sun-clad woman in the heavenlies! And the little seed of the overcomer has *become* the manchild upon the throne of the universe!

We could go on and on, but for the present these few examples suffice to show clearly how the seven churches are the seed-bed of *all* the great events pictured in the Revelation. Every seed in the early church, good and evil, has now grown up in the earth as a mighty power to be reckoned with in this day of the harvest when the tares shall be separated from the wheat!