

EVENING AND MORNING

by George Warnock

Warnock's devotional reflections on the biblical pattern of evening and morning in God's creative work, drawing spiritual lessons from the movement from darkness to light in God's redemptive purposes.

7 Chapters

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Evening And Morning

Preface

In this time of spiritual visitation God would remind His people over and over again that He is consistently seeking to draw them into direct, unhindered union with Himself, that through them He might reveal His glory unto the nations. Whenever forms of truth, and religious structures and systems are emphasized, the people of God are invariably bogged-down in human contrivances that will eventually lead them nowhere. Proper doctrines and methods and structures we will always require, but God wants us to know that the structure of His Church is just as much an outgrowth of the Law of Life (and therefore just as much subject to change), as is the case in any other living thing that He has created. If there is LIFE, then there must needs be GROWTH, and CHANGE, and TRANSFORMATION--otherwise God's purpose in imparting that life has not been fulfilled.

This is the particular emphasis of this writing, and one that we believe is very needful in this hour. God is doing a NEW THING in the earth, and man's attempt to re-establish some religious structure of the past, useful as it may have been in another day, is vain and futile. Truth is unchangeable... as unchangeable as the Living Christ, who is indeed the Way, the Truth, and the Life. But Truth has been planted in the earth, to CHANGE the people of God, and to lead them forward and upward into the ever-unfolding desires of His own heart.

This writing has been out of print for several years now; but with the help of God's people we are able to send it forth again, believing that it will bring new vision and illumination to many.

-- April, 1979 -- The Author --

Unfolding Revelation

To men of foresight and understanding it is quite evident that the Church of Jesus Christ is about to enter into a new phase of life and truth in this the most critical hour of her long history. It seems, of course, as far as the vast majority of the people are concerned, that the sun is about to set upon a once glorious, and radiant, and triumphant Church. But to those whose eyes have been enlightened, and whose hearts have been enlarged to perceive what God is doing, it is not really the setting of the sun, but rather the rising of the sun, even the beginning of a new day. God's order, established right back in the book of beginnings, is first "evening" and then "morning." This must of necessity be so, because invariably in God's dealings with men the darker the hour of human frustration and peril, the brighter is the light of hope that radiates from the hearts of those who are the children of the light. It all depends on our viewpoint. By that we mean, it all depends upon the side of the pillar of fire from which we make our observation. If we are dwelling with the Egyptians as God's judgments begin to fall, then certainly there is darkness--a darkness that becomes so intense one can actually feel it. But if at that very moment we stand with the chosen people, with anticipation and hope of a great and complete and speedy deliverance, then our homes are full of light. Or if we stand with the hosts of Egypt as they pursue the covenant people of God, there is gross darkness. Yet on the other side of the blackness there is light--radiant and glorious--enlightening and cheering God's people as they face the future, and the prospect of a glorious inheritance, even though such a prospect might be intermingled with perplexities and questions concerning the ways and means of entering into it.

Why such a great contrast? Simply because the people are dwelling on different sides of the same cloud. The Church has an old chorus about "turning those ugly clouds about" But that really solves nothing. It is not a mere change of circumstances that we need. Turn the clouds about as often as you will and they continue to be clouds of darkness and apprehension and fear--as long as we are dwelling on man's side of the cloud, away from the sun. The only solution is in getting on the other side of the cloud, where the sun is in full view. What a beautiful sight it is when you climb into a plane on a cloudy day and soar into the atmosphere far above the clouds, and hasten forward to your destination in the clear blue sunny skies of the atmosphere above, with the clouds under your feet. I sometimes say to people by way of encouragement, "Keep looking down." For ours is a heavenly heritage, as it is also a heavenly walk. God "hath raised us up together, and made us sit together (with Him) in heavenly places in Christ Jesus" (Eph. 2:6). As we take that position with Him in "the heavenlies" in Christ Jesus, then indeed there is no place in our thinking for defeat. By defeat we mean some kind of a partial victory, or a falling short in some sense of the word from that high and holy calling by which and unto which we have been called. We mean exactly that. If there is a falling short of that high-calling in any sense of the word, that means defeat. Why does the Church of Christ insist that a 90% or a 99% conquest of the inheritance would be more honoring to God than total victory? Why do we feel that if we retain just a small fraction of the old nature and the old life, with the rest given over to the judgment of the Cross, that God is truly glorified? The spirit of Saul prevails everywhere in the Church of Christ. He insisted he had fulfilled

the commandment of the Lord and was quite proud of the fact. But "what then is this bleating of the sheep, and the lowing of the oxen that I hear?" asked the prophet. Well, of course, the prophet did say to destroy everything, but surely he did not mean exactly that. He could not have meant that all those "good" things of the Amalekites, and the king himself, should be slain. These he would bring as a sacrifice unto the Lord! In vain do we honor the Lord by bringing all the good of our old nature unto Him, and seek to keep our WILL on the throne. We feel we just simply must keep the king of Amalek alive in order to honor God, because man is a "free will moral agent." The fact is that man is in no sense "free" either as the seed of Adam or as the seed of Abraham. Jesus makes this abundantly clear. Only the Son can make one free, and this is the only true freedom that man can have (Jn. 8:32-36). By natural birth we are impelled by the desires or the WILL of the flesh and of the mind, which leads only to bondage; and we are energized by the spirit of disobedience (Eph. 2:2, 3). It is only by the grace of God that this wall of rebellion is broken down, and we are called forth into the light by His creative voice. One only knows true freedom when that last great stronghold of the old life is broken down, even the king of Amalek, the WILL--and the will of God takes its place. Then we may truly say, "I delight to do Thy will, O God"; and again, "My meat (my very food, my very life) is to do the will of Him that sent me, to finish His work" (Jn. 4:34).

In this writing we want to emphasize two things. First, that Truth is basically and fundamentally unchangeable, throughout all ages--and consequently in going on with the Lord there is a going back to the Genesis, back to the origin of Divine principles. And second, that in this process of restoration, there is a new unfolding of the Divine glory, and a new unveiling of the Divine purpose. There is a perfect balance here that we must maintain to keep us on the solid rock of the Word on the one hand, and to enable us to build up the temple of the Lord to perfection on the other.

This principle of restoration is amply illustrated in Nature, as it is also in the Scriptures. After all, we must expect this to be so, for Nature is but a manifestation of the Word of God. There was a time when men had no Word but the Word of Nature, and it was such a clear revelation of the mind and character of God that the apostle was able to say, "The invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse" (Rom. 1:20). The heavenly bodies are for "lights" as well as "for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years" (Gen. 1:13). There are orbits of Truth. There are seasons of Truth. There are days of Truth. The moon orbits the earth, and the earth the sun--returning in their circuit month after month and year after year. It may even be that our galaxy orbits other celestial galaxies in a vast circuit too great to even calculate. So Truth is thrust forth from eternity, making a vast circuit in the heavens of His eternal purpose, and returns to eternity. Jesus said, "I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world; again, I leave the world, and go to the Father" (Jn. 16:28). This seemed very clear to the disciples, inasmuch that they finally felt they understood the mystery of the Son and of the Father. But they were still a long ways from a clear understanding of what He meant. Again, the apostle Paul said, "For of him, and through him, and (un)to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen" (Rom. 11:36).

This truth concerning the circle of Truth is beautifully illustrated in the book of Ecclesiastes. "One generation passeth away, and another generation cometh: but the earth abideth for ever. The sun also ariseth, and the sun goeth down, and hasteth to his place where he arose. The wind goeth toward the south, and turneth about unto the north; it whirleth about continually, and the wind

returneth again according to his circuits. All the rivers run into the sea; yet the sea is not full: unto the place from whence the rivers come, thither they return again" (Eccl. 1:4-7).

In this passage the wise man goes on to say, "There is no new thing under the sun. Is there any thing whereof it may be said, See, this is new?" Basically this is true. Fundamentally "the thing that hath been, it is that which shall be; and that which is done is that which shall be done..." To the man making his observation "under the sun" this is true. We wonder how this might apply in this day of great scientific and technological achievement, but actually all men have done is to uncover secrets of energy and power and knowledge that God placed there in the original creation. Even the explosion of the hydrogen bomb is but a miniature reproduction of that process of combustion which has been going on in the sun for centuries. We want to emphasize this truth right here, before we seek to understand some of the mysteries of unfolding revelation. There is a returning to first principles, to the original foundations--when first principles have been neglected and the former foundations destroyed. God is the Lord who changeth not: and Jesus Christ is the "same yesterday, and today, and for ever." He is the Truth; and therefore He is not subject to change, nor variableness, nor shadow of turning. In His relationship with men, He is ever seeking to bring us back to Himself. Back to first principles, back to the first love, back to original foundations, back to the first altar at Bethel, back to the rebuilding of the Temple of God, back to the old paths set forth in His Word. It is because men have forsaken the first principles of Truth that they have wandered about so long in the wilderness of their own choosing. Many have lost their way in the vain imaginings of their mind, while confidently believing that they are pressing on with God into new realms of Truth. When men begin to lay aside the Scriptures on the assumption that they have gone beyond what is written in the Word, they are destroying the very foundation upon which solid Christian character is built, and are throwing away the compass that alone can direct them to the haven of rest which they imagine they have already entered.

Now then, with the solid foundation of Scripture beneath our feet, we want to consider from the Word and from various illustrations in Nature, what God has to say about a new way of life for His people, a new realm in God that is available to His chosen ones. We want to hear what the Spirit would say to those who have hearing ears in this great hour. After the great outpouring of the Spirit of recent years, which had given so many of us a new vision and a new hope, had begun to dwindle away in the sands, there was general disappointment and perplexity as to what had actually happened, and why. It was about this time that the Lord quickened this passage of Scripture to me; and since then I have discovered that He had quickened the same passage to others who are going on with the Lord: "Remember ye not the former things, neither consider the things of old. Behold, I will do a new thing; now it shall spring forth; shall ye not know it? I will even make a way in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert" (Isa. 43:18, 19). Two things were made very real to me. That God did have a new realm of life that He was preparing to bring us into, and that we would see it. "Shall ye not know it?" God's people have always been so prone to accept the part for the whole, the earnest for the inheritance, the first fruits for the harvest. It seems that the wilderness experiences of life are so hot and dreary and wearisome that any little oasis in the desert we gladly claim as our very own, and feel that it must be the inheritance that we have been looking for. In the various seasons of Truth through which the Church has come, God has brought us into a small measure of the inheritance, little by little. In the closing days of Moses' ministry on the plains of Moab, he brought the children of Israel into a small portion of their inheritance, east of

the Jordan. But the real measure of the inheritance was Canaan, west of the Jordan; and for the conquest of this realm, Moses must pass off the scene and make way for new leadership under Joshua.

Because we are so prone to accept the part for the whole, the Lord must come forth in mercy and dry up the springs of former blessing that we might move on with Him. He causes the figs to wither from the fig tree and the grapes from the vine--that we might go forth once more into the unknown path that leads eventually to the full heritage of Canaan fruitfulness and victory. In the meantime, there is "rejoicing in hope," as we become "patient in tribulation." And though we understand it not, even while we wait in patience for the land of fruitfulness, there is fruit coming to fulness in the barren ground of our "waiting." For even "patience" is a fruit of the Spirit--and not just a necessary evil that we are called upon to suffer. Therefore we can sing with the prophet, "Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labor of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls: yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will joy in the God of my salvation." With such a testimony faith is renewed and hope is born afresh, and we may continue: "The LORD God is my strength, and he will make my feet like hinds' feet, and he will make me to walk upon mine high places" (Hab. 3:17).

Many Christians have been boasting a lot about their position in the "heavenlies," the "high places" of Christ Jesus. But actually there has been very little thought of attaining to that realm, and living there in total conquest and appropriation, But it is there, yet to be possessed. God has given us "access by faith into this grace wherein we stand" (Rom. 5:2). In the midst of the drought and the barrenness, faith and confidence and hope spring forth anew, and there is the assurance: "He will make me to walk upon mine high places."

He Taketh Away The First

In the process of Christian development we are constantly entering transition periods wherein God would take us out of the old way and bring us into the new. And it is this interim period, this transition, this overlapping of the Divine dealings with us, that causes so much perplexity. We are loathe to relinquish the old till we have the new in our grasp. We would fain enter into new realms in God, but fear to step forth in full confidence and assurance into the unknown way. The new way must first of all be embraced by "faith," seemingly intangible faith, whereas the old appears to be very real and substantial. "No man also having drunk old wine straightway desireth new; for he saith, The old is better" (Luke 5:39). Therefore it is always in accord with Divine principle that "new wine must be put into new bottles"; and again, "He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second" (Heb. 10:9). This is what seems to cause most of the trouble--when He begins to take away. We are not talking about the taking away of certain aspects of carnality, the old ways of the flesh. We mean, when He begins to take away something that was once a glory and a beauty to our lives or ministries, and that which may have been an evident source of blessing to others. We knew that this particular way was of God. We knew that God was moving mightily by His Spirit. What has happened? Often we have been asked this question concerning the great moving of the Spirit of recent years. Our only reply is: God is preparing to lead His people on to a greater fulness, a greater measure of the inheritance, a greater involvement in the realm of the Divine will, and therefore He must dry up the springs of former blessing in order to encourage us to move on

afresh with Him. We may even feel that these circumstances are the result of some Satanic influence that would rob us of the blessing. Often we may not recognize that it is a Divine influence that would urge us to move forward to greater depths in God. Then one glorious day all becomes clear and plain to us, as we walk with God. Suddenly we realize that "all things" have been working together "for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose". For the first time we begin to appreciate the fact that any blessing or manifestation of the Spirit in our lives was but a foretaste, an earnest, of that which He has for us. Therefore, when He would remove this blessing, or cause it to recede from our lives, this removal of the blessing is in actual fact a PROMISE from the Lord of greater days ahead. It is not an indication of defeat or fruitlessness. There are special promises for the dry and the thirsty, for the weak and the helpless. If God has made you feel dry and empty, accept this condition as a promise from His Word: "I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground" (Isa. 44:3). Upon what kind of ground? "The dry ground." Then why do we resent the fact that we are so dry? Are you hungry? It is because God put that hunger there. And this know also, that God put that hunger there that He might satisfy that hunger. In fact, He had the provision for your need in preparation long before you had the hunger. Nor could you really be hungry, unless the provision was there first. This was so in the old creation, and it is so in the new creation. God made provision for man's need long before He made man. He made the fruit trees, the orchards, the vegetables, and all plant life for man's sustenance. Then He created man with a hunger and an appetite and a taste for the food that He had made. Let no man think for one moment that your hunger and your thirst after God originated in yourself, and that it sprang from some inherent longing within your own heart for God. God put it there, and if He put it there, He already had the provision for that hunger in His own heart of Divine provision. He is the great El Shaddai, the "breasted God"--the God of your daily provision. The hunger that is in your heart and mine is by Divine appointment and Divine creation, and can only be satisfied as we come unto Him, unto His own breast of Love and Truth and light, and there feast upon Himself.

Then again do we bemoan the fact that we are so weak? Especially if there was a time in our life when we felt we were strong? Then let us accept the fact that in making us "weak," He has given us a promise that we might embrace, as truly as though He had spoken audibly from Heaven, For He declares to those who are weak, "He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increaseth strength" (Isa. 40:29). He giveth power to whom? "To the FAINT..." Then why do we feel we need power rather than weakness? Herein lies a secret that we must all learn sooner or later. The strength and the power of human leadership in the Church has been most destructive to those who have exercised it, and has been one of the greatest hindrances of their going on with the Lord. We are not talking about the harm that may have been done to the saints in consequence of the iron hand of leadership. For as a matter of fact, if they have truly walked with God, it has done them no harm whatsoever, but only good. In this process they have been brought low, that God might exalt them in due time; and they have been crushed that God might bring forth the fragrance of His Spirit from this crushing. "Bread corn" must be bruised. The olive berry must be beaten, that the flow of the olive oil might bring blessing to others. The grapes likewise must know the pressure of the winepress in this hour of the harvesting of the vines. The truth is beautifully brought forth in a chorus, recently given to a sister in the Lord:

Would you be poured out as wine upon the altar to me?

Would you be broken as bread to feed the hungry?

Would you be so one with Me that I may do just as I will,

To make you life, and light, and love--My Word fulfill?

That We May Know Him

What we want to stress in this article is the fact that the Lord, though directing us constantly back to basic and fundamental principles of the Word, does at one and the same time lead us forward and upward to a new and higher and ever increasing revelation of His glory. The Word is the same. The Truth is the same. But if it is indeed the Word of God and the Truth of God, then there is a continual unfolding of that Word and of that Truth in the lives of His people. That is why "theology" as such has really no place in Christian progress nor in Divine revelation. By "theology" we mean the "science about God." God never was interested in telling us about Himself. Nor was Jesus ever concerned in telling the disciples about the Father. He came rather to REVEAL THE FATHER and MAKE HIM KNOWN. Not facts about Him, but to MAKE HIM KNOWN. In seeking to know about Him we have confused our own minds and the minds of the people with reasonings and questionings as to His attributes, His characteristics, His manifestations. But God will have a people in this last day who come to KNOW HIM, and in knowing Him they will assuredly manifest HIM to others, by showing Him forth from their lives, declaring Him in words of fire, and radiating Him from their countenance. Then will humanity come to know Him, when they see Him revealed in His many sons, just as He once revealed Himself in His Only Begotten.

Another Generation Cometh

"One generation passeth away, and another generation cometh: but the earth abideth for ever." The casual observer sees nothing but history repeating itself. But the man of vision sees Truth being re-enacted in ever abounding fulness. The generations come and go, so that the world continues as from the beginning. But just as in the natural generation of Adam there has been a continual and ever increasing manifestation of the law of sin and death and the curse--from the very fall of Adam unto this present time--so also in the spiritual generation of the Last Adam there has been, and there will continue to be, an ever increasing and continual unfolding of the law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus, Who will deny that the law of sin and death holds and exercises a far greater dominion and rulership over the bodies and souls of men than it ever has from the foundation of the world until this day? The fact that science has succeeded in lengthening the life span of man by a few years is quite incidental and not too significant in view of the fact that the life span of man has broken down from well over 900 years as in the beginning to something considerably less than 100 years today. And man's achievement in lengthening our days by a few years is almost meaningless when one considers that man has also achieved such scientific knowledge that he even fears for the survival of the human race! And why is this? Because of the law of sin and death which came to the throne when Adam walked in the pathway of disobedience and fell off from his Creator. So far-reaching and devastating has been the sway and lordship of the kingdom of death, that today humanity stands on the brink of extinction!

But there is another generation in the world today that co-exists with the generation of Adam, and it is the generation of the Last Adam. This generation likewise has been in a continual process of development and ever abounding fulness, because of the functioning of the law by which it lives. This law is the Law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus. As the law of sin and death has just about reached its climax in the old generation of Adam, so the Law of the Spirit of Life hastens on to its glorious fulness in the generation of Christ. Seemingly there have been great setbacks along the way. Dark ages... heresies... church divisions... great conflicts that have raged through the centuries against the saints of the Most High. But this has all been a necessary part of the eternal purpose, and now the great conflict of the centuries hastens on to its final and glorious conclusion. God by His grace reaches back into the chaos of the past, picks up the tangled strands of seeming failure and mistake, transforms them by His grace and power, and weaves them into a pattern of glory and beauty. All this He does in preparation for the great unveiling, the great manifestation of His sons. Now the message is one of FORGET and GO FORWARD. God would comfort His people in the midst of desolation and failure. "Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her WARFARE IS ACCOMPLISHED, that her iniquity is pardoned: for she hath received of the LORD's hand double for all her sins" (Isa. 40:1, 2).

The Fulness Of Sin And Of Grace

Basically sinful man is just the same as Adam was when he first fell from his Creator. But that sin and that corruption that now prevails in humanity because of man's original disobedience has come to horrible fulness. The grapes of wrath are not only ripe, but they are over-ripe, as the original implies in Revelation 14:15. The fulness of sin and death is such that no flesh could survive the desolation that lies ahead unless the Lord Himself were to cut the days short. We recognize this fact. Men in all walks of life recognize it. Men in high places recognize it. The hearts of men who know what the score really is are failing them for fear, as they contemplate the things that are about to come upon the world.

Basically the generation of Christ is also the same as it was in the beginning. We are born again by the same Spirit, washed in the same blood, partakers of the same gifts and the same promises. But what about the full and complete expression of the law by which we live? What about the full and complete expression of the Law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus? Are we going to credit Adam with having more power and authority than Christ? Are we going to infer that the law of sin and death has an even greater potential than the Law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus? Are we going to believe that the law of sin and death has the power and ability to stretch forth its poisonous tentacles into every area of humankind, to the complete perversion of body, soul, and spirit? And then at the same time draw back in unbelief at the revelation of the Word concerning the Law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus? Five times in Romans 5 does the apostle Paul use the expression "much more" relative to the power of the grace of God, in contrast to the sin of Adam. Shall we not believe that there is a much greater and a "much more" potential in the Law of the Spirit of Life, than there is in the law of sin and death? Is there not to be a "much more" effectual working of the grace of God in the Last Adam, than there ever was in the disobedience of the first Adam? In other words, are we going to honor the power of Adam and Satan above the power of Christ and the Holy Spirit? We realize that the theologians will allow for the working out of the plan of God in the Last Adam somewhere in a certain kingdom, or perhaps after a certain rapture; but the plain teaching of the Scripture is that as we are born into the family of Adam, so are we born into the family of Christ; that we inherit the power of grace from the Lord Jesus, as we inherit the curse of sin from Adam; that we have God's righteousness in Christ by imputation, just as we have Adam's sin and death by imputation; and that as we grow up into Adam's sin unto its horrible climax by reason of natural generation, by the same token WE GROW UP UNTO CHRIST IN ALL THINGS by reason of spiritual generation.

Our problem seems to be simply this. We believe in the horrible manifestation of sin and death in Adam because it is a matter of history in the past, and of fact in the present. Whereas we reject the glorious manifestation of the Law of Life in Christ because it is not too manifest in history, nor scarcely visible in present day fact. Men will not believe until they see. But the generation of Christ, though scarcely visible as yet, is even now believing what they cannot see; so that in the day of their manifestation they will be seen of those who cannot now believe.

Who Shall Declare His Generation

We speak of the progeny of Christ. He was cut off from the land of the living, leaving no one to declare "his generation." But God nevertheless made room for a generation. As others have already pointed out, God even left a blank space for the generation of Christ in the genealogy of Matthew. There are exactly 41 generations from Abraham to Jesus, and not 42 as Matthew would

seem to indicate. However, Matthew did not compute the generations unto Jesus, but "unto Christ" (Matt. 1:17). This makes all the difference. There are but 13 generations from the carrying away unto Babylon unto Jesus. But Matthew said "unto Christ," because "Christ" includes the Body which would declare His generation. "For as the body is one... SO ALSO IS CHRIST" (1 Cor. 12:12). Not "so also is the body of Christ," but "so also is Christ." "Christ" includes the body, because "Christ" means "Anointed One" and we share the "same anointing" (1 Jn. 2:27), are partakers of the same Spirit, and therefore become "of his flesh, and of his bones" (Eph. 5:30). How we appreciate the accuracy of Holy Scriptures and we must honor the honesty of the translators, who might very easily have changed the figure to read 41 generations to make it conform to reason. But the original said "42 generations" and that is how they translated it, regardless of the seeming discrepancy.

When this amazing fact was first pointed out to the writer, I was casually thumbing through my Bible and came across the account of the various encampments of the children of Israel from the time they left Egypt, until they arrived on the plains of Moab. And right there in my Bible I had already numbered the various encampments for a study I had given several months previously, and there were exactly 41 encampments! The 41st encampment of the children of Israel was in the plains of Moab; the 42nd encampment was under new leadership, even Joshua, as they moved forward to the Jordan to take the land of their heritage.

41 Encampments Under Moses

The first encampment after leaving home base in Rameses of Egypt was Succoth; the second, Etham; the third, Pihahiroth; the fourth, Marah; and so forth till they finally pitched their 41st encampment in the "plains of Moab" (Num. 33:1-48). This seemed to have been the largest encampment of all. It extended from Bethjesimoth even unto Abelshittim in the plains of Moab, right by the Jordan river, opposite Jericho. Long and weary and discouraging had been her wanderings in the wilderness. Israel had travelled a long, long way from the time they left Rameses in Egypt. They had known much travail and sorrow. It was a waste and howling wilderness... a land of drought, of barrenness, of scorpions, and fiery serpents. Many a time had their soul become discouraged because of the weariness of the way. Many a time they had turned back in their hearts unto Egypt, and desired to return. But God had closed the Red Sea behind them, deliberately barring their return. Where there is no vision, the people perish. That is to say, the people who lack vision perish because of their own lack of vision. Moses endured as "seeing Him who is invisible." The backward look to the good old days is the most damaging vision that people in the Church can have. It hinders progress, because God is moving His people upward and forward to new realms in Himself, and He positively refuses to restore to our midst the old time religion or the revival of yesterday. Men who are looking for such a restoration are in constant frustration and anxiety, as they vainly attempt to restore the structure of the kingdom of God as they have known it in the past. God's restorations are always in the realm of progress and development and unfolding revelation. Man is prone to fear the unknown way. We admire the pioneer--their bravery, their initiative, their boldness in stepping forth into the unknown. But few desire to be pioneers. We gladly accept the heritage they leave to us, and boast about the pioneer spirit of our fathers, but it seems we have no desire to make further conquests even if we do see unknown realms to be conquered. Very few there are who are prepared to travel the unknown way with the Lord of glory.

The New Generation

A new generation had arisen in Israel. The old had perished in the wilderness--until there was but a handful left. Israel had made a long, circuitous journey from the time they left Egypt, till they arrived at the plains of Moab opposite Jericho. The cycle of their wilderness wanderings had just about been completed. Israel had returned almost to the place from whence they had started some 40 years before. In all their journeys, their wanderings, their blessings, their Divine provision along the way, their guidance by the presence of God in the pillar of cloud and in the pillar of fire--ISRAEL HAD NOT GONE ANYWHERE. They were no further along in the conquest of their heritage than they were 40 years before. This is exactly how it seemed. So the Church of Jesus Christ from its inception in the beginning until this day has not really gone anywhere. We may talk as we will about our warfare, our conquests, our victories, our blessing--let us face the facts. We, as a Church, have not made any real progress in the conquest of the world, and factual statistics make it very clear that the Church is on the road to extinction at the rate she is progressing--or should we say, retrogressing. This is most alarming to Church leaders, but most encouraging to men of vision. True, we may not have gone anywhere, and we seem to be back where we started--at least the circle is about to be completed--but there is one big difference. This time we go forward to take the whole land! This time we shall not fail! Because this time we are under new leadership. This time the Son of God goes forth to war, riding upon a white horse, and with a sharp two-edged sword proceeding out of His mouth. And the armies of heaven which follow Him likewise are riding upon white horses, with the same two-edged sword as their offensive weapon. This time we go forth together, conquering the enemy, and completely subduing the territory that Christ purchased for us some 2000 years ago, but which we have never really appropriated. It is the realm of the "heavenlies," our heritage in Christ Jesus, which we have long talked about, admired, and claimed to possess, but never really appropriated.

Here we stand like Israel on the plains of Moab, having known the direct leading of the Lord throughout these 41 encampments, but not having gone anywhere. But the 42nd generation is about to make her 42nd encampment--under the leadership of our Joshua! This is the generation that was "to come," the people that were created to "praise the LORD," even to show forth and manifest His excellencies in the earth (Psa. 102:18). The Last Adam left no seed in Adam's line to declare his generation; but he himself became the "corn of wheat" that fell into the ground and died that there might come forth a harvest in his image and likeness. This is the "seed" that shall "serve him; it shall be accounted to the Lord for a generation" (Psa. 22:30). This is the focal hour of all history. This is the culmination of our long period of wanderings, of barrenness, of fruitlessness. This is the purpose for which we have come to this hour. Here we must pause but a short time to hear the words of Deuteronomy--the second giving of the law--wherein Moses would remind us of all the ways and the blessings and the goodness of the Lord, and then pass off the scene to make way for new leadership under Joshua.

There is something especially blessed about the completion of the circle, the return of the seasons, the changing of the north wind to the south wind, the banishment of darkness in the light of the dawn. How we must stress the fact over and over that restoration is not merely the repetition of history. As the strong north wind blew upon the early church it gradually drove them further and further away from the Truth. Israel wandered further and further to the south, away from the land of their heritage. But then the south wind began to blow, and Israel started back towards the north.

The south wind of Reformation began to blow on the Church, and she too has been coming back, slowly and gradually, back to the place from which she started. But still we have accomplished little, and have really gone nowhere. Here we stand, ready to make that final and great conquest for which we have waited all these centuries.

Deuteronomy... Then Joshua

Deuteronomy is a necessary preliminary to Joshua. We may talk about being in Canaan all we will, it doesn't place us there. We may boast about our heritage but that doesn't make it ours by way of experience and possession. It is ours, and we must recognize that it is ours, otherwise we will have no faith or courage to undertake its conquest. But let us not sit back with the dying generation in the wilderness while they try to reassure themselves: "Certainly Canaan is mine... God gave it to father Abraham hundreds of years ago... in fact I have even eaten of the grapes of Eschol and some of the pomegranates... nothing to get excited about..." But there they are, dying in the wilderness, having no thought whatever of possessing what God had given them!

Deuteronomy means the second giving of the law, But in the second giving of the law there was something vastly different than in the first giving of the law. In both cases we have conditions laid before us whereby we are to enter into the land of promise, live therein, and subdue it. But in the second giving of the law we have a history of their failures and their rebellion and their disobedience and hardness of heart--and how God was nevertheless going to bring them into their heritage for His righteousness' sake. He tells us, moreover, how He Himself actually used the howling wilderness, and the drought, and the barrenness, and the manna--to humble them, and to prove them, and to prepare them for their new heritage. The inheritance is through promise, and not through the law; but the law is our "schoolmaster" to bring us unto Christ. The discipline of the law seems to have been necessary to bring us unto the realization of our weakness, to manifest our failures and shortcomings, that in the full realization of our own futility and nothingness, God might be truly glorified. Deuteronomy brings us into this realization by reminding us of our failures and mistakes, and showing us how--through it all--God was working a needful discipline and preparation in our hearts for the day when He would bring to pass what He had promised, for His own name's sake. May we be quick to learn this lesson, because the hour is at hand when the new generation must arise and go forward. So much of the old way, the old forms, the old traditional glory of men and ministry still remain throughout the Church. We boast we are not under law, but under Grace. Yet grace is lacking, and the love of God is lacking, and the Spirit does not dominate our lives. All this testifies strongly that we are under law. Only the Son makes one free. If He has not come into the house to abide, the servant abides, and the servant speaks of law. Let us pause here in the plains of Moab, here in the 41st encampment, and hear the words of Deuteronomy.

First, God would remind us that it is not really a great distance into the land of our heritage. Really it was only "eleven days' journey" from Horeb (Ch. 1:2). God can, and will do a quick work on the earth, and cut it short in righteousness. It is the chastening and the discipline that takes so much time. It is our own rebellion and disobedience. Once we have learned the lesson of obedience, the problem is solved.

Then God would remind us of His own goodness and the manner in which He hath blessed us (Ch. 1:10). The Church seems to imagine that the blessing of God is a sure sign of His approval of our ways. God's blessing in no way indicates His approval; rather it betokens His love and mercy.

Through all this blessing, Israel was a rebellious people (Ch. 1:26). But God was faithful. His glory cloud never left them by day, nor the pillar of fire by night (Ch. 1:33). We have known of several instances where the fire of God had appeared over a church, or over a minister. Israel had the fire of God over their tabernacle for forty years, every night of the year. Still they were a stiff-necked people, rebellious and disobedient. Again, the Lord would remind us why He brought us out of Egyptian bondage. The very purpose of it was to bring us into Canaan fruitfulness. Anything less than that is not God's second best--it is disobedience. "He brought us out from thence, that he might bring us in..." (Ch. 6:23). It is a realm of total victory and fruitfulness. A land where the Lord removes ALL SICKNESS from His People. A land where ALL THE ENEMIES of God's people are completely destroyed. "Little by little" is God's ordained way; but that in no way minimizes the extent of the victory. The process goes on "until they be destroyed." No enemy shall be able to "stand before thee" (Ch. 7:13-26). "A good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and depths that spring out of valleys and hills; a land of wheat, and barley, and vines, and fig trees, and pomegranates; a land of oil olive, and honey; a land wherein thou shalt eat bread without scarceness, thou shalt not lack any thing in it..." (Ch. 8:7-9). It is the heritage of PERFECT LOVE; that realm in God where love is not only used occasionally as God supplies the grace--but where LOVE DOMINATES; where the thoughts and intents of the heart are motivated by Love, and all action proceed from Love, even as in the ministry of Jesus Himself, In that realm there is no failure, because "Love never faileth." The fruit of the Spirit abides perpetually, bringing life and blessing and sustenance to all in need. In this realm even the gifts of the Spirit lose their significance, just as the moon loses its brightness in the dawning of the morn. The part gives way to the whole, the seed breaks forth into the blade, the ear, and the full corn. Faith proceeds unto hope, and hope buds forth in Love. Without faith it is impossible to please God, but God is Love; and when Love is formed in His people God walks in them, thinking His thoughts, leading His way, doing His will, and manifesting His wisdom and knowledge and purity and righteousness in this world of sin and darkness.

We are called upon to "remember all the way" which the Lord thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness (Ch. 8:2). That may come as a surprise to us. Was God really leading? Was it not in disobedience that Israel wandered about these many years? Yes, it was in disobedience. But God was using the wilderness experience to chasten them, to humble them, and to prove them, that He might have a prepared people to enter into a prepared place. God wants us to know two things: that we have failed, and that He is faithful. That we have wandered about in frustration because of our own disobedience and rebellion, but that through it all He has been chastening, proving, humbling, and preparing for the day of victory and triumph. "He humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna."

The Purpose Of The Manna

This unrest, this dissatisfaction, this hunger that persists among many of God's people is ordained of the Lord to prepare us for Canaan fruitfulness. That manna in the wilderness causes us to hunger. It was designed for that purpose. It was never intended to satisfy our appetites, but it does meet our present need. God has been faithful in giving us all we need in the wilderness. But it has left us in a state of hunger, and with Divine intent and purpose. And what was that purpose? "That he might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the LORD doth man live" (Ch. 8:3). In other words, the manna was intended to

meet our need, but to leave us in a state of hunger--that we might feast upon the Word of God. God is faithful to supply that measure of sustenance we need for our present need. There is manna from heaven daily; there is water out of the rock; there is healing along the way when we need it; there is the pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night. But without that spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him... without that feasting upon the Word with eyes and minds illumined, and ears quickened to hear what the Spirit is saying to us today... without that vision of Canaan fruitfulness and victory... there can be nothing more than frustration and defeat, and a looking back for a restoration of the good old days of a past revival. Perhaps the Protestant Reformation was the greatest thing since the dark ages. Perhaps the Wesleyan revival was greater than anything the world had seen up to that time. Perhaps Pentecost as we have known it was the greatest revival since the days of the early Church. Perhaps the revival of spiritual gifts and ministries was the greatest thing that has happened in our generation. Perhaps it was refreshing to rest under the palm trees and drink of the water and eat of the figs in the little oasis of Elim. But God would lead His people into realms in Himself, such as the church has never known, and He refuses to take us back to any place of blessing that He brought us through in the past. The manna does not speak of a carnal ministration. It speaks of "spiritual meat" (1 Cor. 10:3). When God prepared this spiritual meat in heaven, He called it "angel's food" or the "bread of the mighty" (Psa. 78:25). Then he sends it forth by His Spirit to sustain us and to strengthen us, but to leave us in a state of hunger, that in our great hunger and unrest and dissatisfaction with the "status quo" we might feast upon the living Word--which is only LIVING and vital as it illuminates, and enlightens, and gives us a vision of the heritage that lies before us.

Balaam Declares God's Purposes

Here on the plains of Moab, in the 41st encampment, we have seen an awful lot of carnality and disobedience--insomuch that we might wonder how God could ever bring forth a triumphant people. Balaam, who could not curse the people of God, resorted to false teaching--and actually encouraged the people to sacrifice to the gods of Moab. The inroads that worldliness has made into the Church, and the idolatry that seems to prevail everywhere, are almost unbelievable. Great was the anger of the Lord that was kindled against the people because of their folly, but God's purpose was not to be altered because of the failure even of the majority. In the prophecies of Balaam we have many significant things that were spoken of natural Israel, and therefore they speak to us. For in all God's dealings with natural Israel, they have become "ensamples" or "types," and "they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come" (1 Cor. 10:11).

First, "The people shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations" (Num. 23:9). They are a peculiar people, zealous of good works. They are not a part of this world system. They are in the world, but are not of the world. They are of God, but are sent into the world as ambassadors for Him. like Israel, we have become corrupted with the gods of the heathen amongst whom we dwell. God will yet have a people who shall be true to their calling as ambassadors, who are not citizens of this world order. How He will do it is beyond our imagination. We have become so intermingled with the world order that few Christians even consider that we are supposed to be separate from it. Put God took His people out of the midst of another people before, and He can do it again. And once again He is well able to furnish a table in the wilderness.

Secondly, God has a purpose which shall not miscarry. "God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do it, or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good? Behold, I have received commandment to bless: and he hath blessed; and I cannot reverse it" (Num. 23:19-20). We are constantly meeting opposition to these great end-time truths with suggestions like this: Who do you think you are, that you should come into a realm in God that great men in Church history, or the original apostles, never entered into? That really has nothing to do with it. God's purpose demands a triumphant Church in the last day. God's purpose demands that there shall be a "glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish" (Eph. 5:27). (And this, remember, is "with the washing of water by the Word.") God's purpose demands that there shall be a harvest of the grain, in exact likeness to the seed that was planted. God's purpose demands that the building rises up unto glorious completion. God's purpose demands that the holy Temple of God comes into glorious perfection. It is not a case of our worthiness. It is God's Name that is at stake! It shall yet be said amongst the heathen, "What hath God wrought" (Num. 23:23). "Then said they among the heathen, the Lord hath done great things for them" (Psa. 126:2). There is a promise of total victory. "He shall not lie down until he eat of the prey, and drink the blood of the slain" (vs. 24). All enemies must be placed under the feet of Christ, and as members of His body, we are "the feet" of Him who reigns in the heavens; for heaven is His throne, and earth is His footstool.

Thirdly, "How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob, and thy tabernacles, O Israel! As the valleys are they spread forth, as gardens by the river's side..." (Num. 24:5, 6).

Man's first home was in a garden, and his final home is in a garden, even the garden of the Lord. He is the vine, and we are the branches. We are the "planting of the LORD, that he might be glorified." The river of life flows forth from the throne of God, to water that garden, and the trees that grow on the banks of that river shall flourish and be fruitful. The nations of the earth shall eat of the fruit of those trees, and the leaves thereof shall be for their healing. That is why the Lord is concerned about the bringing forth of the fruit of the Spirit in our lives. We might be satisfied with the gifts and blessing of God. But God knows that real deliverance and blessing shall only come to mankind as the fruit of the Spirit comes to maturity in those who have been so blessed with His gifts. Then the prophet goes on to say, "His Kingdom shall be exalted... he shall eat up the nations his enemies, and shall break their bones, and pierce them through with his arrows" (Num. 24:7, 8). They shall take the kingdom, for theirs is a "royal priesthood," and they are "kings and priests unto God."

Total Conquest

Anything less than total conquest... anything less than a complete and final possession of the heavenly realm (that realm in the Spirit unto which we are called, and in which we wage our warfare)... anything less than complete conquest spells defeat. Right here on the plains of Moab the Lord warns His people that a falling short of the Divine command will bring ultimate defeat. "If ye will not drive out the inhabitants of the land from before you, then it shall come to pass, that those which ye let remain of them shall be pricks in your eyes, and thorns in your sides, and shall vex you in the land wherein ye dwell" (Num. 33:55). Jesus was able to say, "the prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me" (Jn. 14:30). Because there was no place for a Satanic foothold in His being, there was no ground for defeating Him. The warfare in the "heavenlies" has

for its battleground the body, soul, and spirit of man. As we grow up "unto Him" in all things, we must also come to that place where there is no standing-room for Satan, no ground on which he can take his position.

These are the ones who have the seal of the living God in their foreheads. They are the ones who have the mind of Christ. The spirit or mind of man was first to become darkened and lost by the fall, and it is the first to become enlightened and restored. This is the realm of this great spiritual warfare, the warfare of "the heavenlies." As victory is attained here, that will bring ultimate victory to soul, and body. This is God's order: "your whole spirit and soul and body..." (1 Thess. 5:23).

We have no argument with those who feel they have already entered into their Canaan inheritance. But we do want to encourage those whose hearts are crying out to God for the more abundant life in the Spirit. We recognize that in the various "times and seasons" of restoration there have been certain areas of limited conquest in the Canaan realm. We read away back in the book of Joshua, that God gave them rest from all their enemies. "And the Lord gave them rest round about, according to all that he swore unto their fathers: and there stood not a man of all their enemies before them; the Lord delivered all their enemies into their hand. There failed not aught of any good thing which the LORD had spoken unto the house of Israel; all came to pass" (Josh. 2 1:44, 45). This should settle the fact, that as far as the natural promises to Israel were concerned, God did fulfill them completely. Yet David as a prophet, who spoke prophetically of the day of Christ, mentioned another day of rest; and that day is briefly described as, "To-day if ye will hear his voice" (Ps. 95:7; Heb. 4:7). Paul uses this passage in the Psalms to show that God had a greater fulness of REST for His people, beyond what He had given them through Joshua. This, he declares, proves that Joshua really never did bring them into rest, otherwise God would not have spoken of another day. He concludes, "There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God" (Heb. 4:9). It is the rest of a finished redemption; a sabbath rest, of which the seventh day in creation, and the conquest of Canaan, were but types and shadows.

Now Paul declares that the day of rest is "TODAY if ye will hear his voice." It is still TODAY; and the heritage remains unconquered, and yet to be possessed. Both Paul and Peter were quite aware of a greater fulness to come in the last time. "The night is far spent, the day is at hand..." (Rom. 13:12). "The God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly..." (Rom. 16:20). Peter speaks of "times of refreshing" that shall precede the coming of the Lord (Acts 3:19). He speaks of the present world as a "dark place," but he likewise speaks of darkness and light, and in that order "a dark place... until the DAY dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts" (2 Pet. 1:19). This REST still remains unfulfilled, but available. And "Some must enter therein." In what day? In this day, this TODAY of God's promise, if ye can hear His voice. It is the day when God's people hear His voice, and, follow on in the pathway of perfect obedience. We know this is that day because many are hearing what the Spirit is saying in this great hour of impending victory.

The true test of victory is the ability and power to bring others into it. And the fact that throughout the Church of Jesus Christ, not merely the nominal Church but in true believers, there is so much bondage and frustration--this is sufficient proof that the true heritage of the saints has not been appropriated. Nor will God be satisfied till Christ is formed in His people, and we can truthfully say, "I live... yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." It is time we got honest with ourselves; for certainly nobody else is being deceived but ourselves. How men will maintain their own righteousness in a

vain attempt to convince themselves that all is well. We have so many excuses. "That was really a mistake, not a sin..." Or, "That was just the Irish in me..." Or, "After all, I'm only human..." Call it what we will: a mistake, or Irish, or human, it is not Christ; and God cannot be satisfied with anything less than the living Christ abiding within your life and mine, in all His glorious fulness.

Partial Victory Spells Defeat

Subjugation is not victory, as Israel soon discovered and as honest Christians are beginning to confess. Judah could not drive the inhabitants out of the valley, because they had chariots of iron. Perhaps a good enough reason; but God promised total conquest, and they fell short of it. Benjamin could not drive out the Jebusites--so they dwelt together in beautiful co-existence. We are warned not to get too spiritual, lest we be no earthly good. We feel a little bit of the old nature is almost necessary in the business world, in this world of selfishness, where every man has to fight for survival. Manasseh could not drive out the inhabitants of Bethshean and other towns. But they did put the Canaanites to tribute. After all, why should we get so excited about subduing all those "good" traits of our personalities? Why not so subjugate them unto the Lord, that God may use them for His glory? The big "I" that is so manifest among God's people, and especially in the ministry, is perhaps one of the greatest stumblingblocks to the work of the Lord in this hour. All bad habits are to be completely erased and banished from the life: outward sins, immorality, smoking, drinking, revelling, and the like. But learn to co-exist with jealousy, wrath, strife, pride, division, envy, conceit, and so forth. Oftentimes what we call a "strong personality" is nothing less than SELF that is bolstered by these and other traits of human nature.

Neither did Ephraim drive out the Canaanites... neither did Zebulun drive out the inhabitants of Kitron... And so the story goes on, from one tribe to another, and the best that can be said is that the enemy, though co-existing rather peacefully, has been placed under tribute. It has become the acknowledged way of life in the Church, and considered to be the ultimate in Christian victory. For a while this policy might seem to succeed, and all seems to go fairly well, as it did with Israel. But God warned that anything short of complete conquest would mean ultimate defeat. Sooner or later "the prince of this world" cometh, and because there is standing room in our nature, his horrible works are manifest and we are brought into bondage. That is why it is so important that we follow the Lord all the way into complete victory, and the complete destruction of every hidden enemy lurking in secret corners of our nature. Have we not all shuddered at the revelation of the great potential for evil that has arisen in our own nature? Have we not lamented over the fall of some great man, and wondered how one so mightily used of God could have been so completely overtaken? "The beauty of Israel is slain upon thy high places: how are the mighty fallen, for the shield of the mighty is vilely cast away, the shield of Saul, as though he had not been anointed with oil... how are the mighty fallen in the midst of the battle!" (2 Sam. 1:19, 22, 25). We wonder at it, because we fail to realize the potential that lies dormant in the old nature, a potential which is bolstered and energized by compatible spirits in the world of darkness. Then an unholy conception takes place, and the Serpent brings forth after his kind. "When the lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin; and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death. Do not err, my beloved brethren" (Jas. 1:15, 16).

Nor is there any place for boasting of our own security, or standing in judgment of others. "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." Saul was mighty in the anointing, mighty in

prophecy, mighty in battle, and mighty in God. But because he "spared Agag, and the best of the sheep..." it brought him to ruin. The fact that he would dedicate these to the Lord makes no difference. Obedience always remains God's ultimate desire for His own, and is better than sacrifice. We hear a lot of appeals these days for "sacrifice," on the basis that God needs what you have, and if you will give Him what you have and what He needs then the work of the Lord can go forward in victory. We may very easily quiet that inner voice by giving of our substance, or giving of our time, or doubling our efforts for the work of the Lord. Yet through it all there is the persistent demand of the Spirit: "My son, give me thine heart." Giving Him yourself, you give your all; but giving Him your all, and withholding your SELF, you give Him nothing. For the cattle on a thousand hills belong to Him, as well as the gold and the silver and the treasures of this world. Nor does He really need a house to dwell in. "But to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my Word" (Isa. 66:2).

The Day Is At Hand

Now let us go on to the next illustration of the circle of God's purpose. "The sun also ariseth, and the sun goeth down, and hasteth to his place where he arose." We are discovering that as in the old creation, so in the new creation, there are circles, orbits, of Divine truth and revelation. People are always saying, "History is but repeating itself..." And the Church cries out with every fresh moving of the Spirit, "We had that forty years ago..." or some such statement as that. What most Christians fail to realize is this: that with every setting of the sun and rising of the same, there is a NEW THING accomplished in the earth. There is a new measure of growth transmitted to the trees and shrubs and plants of the earth. Day after day, and year after year, there is a continual participation in the life of the sun, and a growing unto maturity. Some years ago, we stood before those great Sequoia trees in Sequoia National Park. Here we saw the General Sherman tree, the biggest living thing in the earth, weighing something like 625 tons, and about 102 feet in circumference at the base. There it stood when Abraham left Ur of the Chaldees, perhaps a little sapling, But it witnessed the truth of the passage we have just read, literally thousands and thousands of times. The sun rising, and setting, and rising again. But to this little tree it meant more than that. It meant a growing unto maturity. It meant a struggling against the elements. It witnessed winter and summer, over and over again, But it survived, and grew, and there it stands today in all its grandeur and greatness.

So with the Church of Jesus Christ and with the individual lives of God's people. There is a continual increase of the Christ within, and of His government and peace in their lives. There is a new unfolding of the Divine purpose. "His compassions fail not. They are new every morning: great is thy faithfulness" (Lam. 3:22, 23). Men who lack vision are forever bemoaning the setting of the sun, as if that were the close of the day. But the setting of the sun is not the close of the day, it is the beginning. According to the book of Genesis (and we have discovered that we must continually go back to the Genesis to discover God's order) "the evening and the morning" constitute God's full day, and not "the morning and the evening." "The night is far spent, and the day is at hand..." Even now before the full rising of the "Sun of righteousness" into the new day of His glory, there is the shining forth of the first rays of dawn. The daystar is arising in hearts. Even in this world of darkness there is glorious hope and promise, so that we may say with the Psalmist: "Even the night shall be light about me. Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee; but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light are both alike to thee" (Psa. 139:11, 12). Faith is bright in the midst of darkness, because of the promise. But faith is budding forth into Hope, which is even brighter, because it is anticipating the dawn. Then do we enter into LOVE--which is the full expression of Faith, and Hope, the very life of God Himself radiating from the lives of His chosen ones.

The New Commandment

When Jesus was here, He was the Light of the world. But the light shone in the darkness, "And the darkness comprehended it not" (Jn. 1:5). Now there is a difference. The darkness is beginning to

pass away. True, it will get darker, and darker, as far as the present order of mankind is concerned. But there shall be light in the homes of the people of God. John said, "I write no new commandment unto you, but an old commandment which ye had from the beginning" (1 Jn. 2:7). It was the old commandment of the Word. It had particular application to his day and hour. It is the same Word that we have today; but now it takes on new meaning. Therefore he continues: "Again, a new commandment I write unto you, which thing is true in him and in you: because the darkness is past (Lit. 'is passing away'), and the true light now shineth" (1 Jn. 2:8). When Jesus was born the darkness did not apprehend the Light. But now it is not so. The darkness "is passing..." The Word which we had from the beginning now takes on new meaning. It is a "new Commandment." The same Word, but it comes forth in the dawning of a new day, and therefore it is NEW. It is the new day of LOVE. Anything less than that is darkness. "He that loveth his brother abideth in the LIGHT..." Surely none is so blind as to claim that the Church has entered into this heritage of LOVE!

Perfection Of Love

The lack of love is only too evident and blaring everywhere we look, in ourselves or in others. The apostle John makes it abundantly clear that walking in the light is WALKING IN LOVE. We would like to convince ourselves that walking in the light consists of adhering to proper creeds and doctrines. But regardless of creed and doctrine, the solemn fact remains: "He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now" (1 Jn. 1:9). Such a man does not even know where he is going, "because that darkness hath blinded his eyes." There is no neutral ground here. We may admit on the one hand there is not much love, and on the other claim that we do not hate. Love is Light, and the absence of the light means darkness. If there is no genuine Love, God calls it HATE. We need to read the Love chapter often, 1 Corinthians 13. We are inclined to think we know what Love is, and therefore its great potential scarcely stirs us. It is nothing less than the very realm of God, abiding in Him, and participating in His own heart of longsuffering, kindness, humility, meekness, unselfishness, and truth. All else that pertains to the realm of spiritual manifestation must give way to the fulness of LOVE, as the first rays of dawn give way to the rising of the sun. "When that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away." "Won't heaven be wonderful?" says one. But God wants this perfection of Love here on earth where it is needed. "Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven..." Pray, tell me, what kind of a heaven are you going to that is going to require the exercise of "longsuffering," "kindness," "meekness," "humility," and "unselfishness." Read 1 Corinthians 13:4-8 once more, and imagine, if you will, what circumstances in Heaven might arise that would require the exercise of PERFECT LOVE. "Suffereth long..." Will Michael the Archangel impose grievous burdens on you that are just too heavy for you to bear? "And is kind..." Here is a man in heaven that has wandered about on the golden streets, oppressed, weary, and foot-sore... and you pause for a moment to give him a word of cheer, or a helping hand. "Charity envieth not." You will have to be careful when the rewards are given out, lest you find yourself envying the Christian that has been given the largest or most beautiful mansion. But then you will have perfect love, so you can resist the temptation. "Vaunteth not itself." Another minister is sent forth to do some great work in the Kingdom of Christ, and returns with a glowing report. The angels rejoice, and the saints rejoice with them... he is not "puffed up" or proud of his achievements; he has arrived at the place of perfect love! Selfish? Why no! If he has more than he needs for his mansion, he'll distribute his

abundance among the saints that have a smaller mansion and cheaper furniture... he is not seeking his own, he is entirely unselfish. A scandal is raised against Gabriel, but the man who has arrived at Perfect Love has overcome... he "thinketh no evil," and the rumor is squelched. No matter how laborious the task that the Lord gives him to do, he "beareth all things" cheerfully. Won't it be wonderful when we get to heaven, "when that which is perfect is come"?

But God wants perfect LOVE here in the earth, where it is so desperately needed. Heaven is full of love now but God wants it here. Jesus therefore taught us to pray, "Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven." Now we believe that Jesus taught us to pray that prayer because it is God's intention to answer that prayer. We have discovered that the prayers that are ordained of the Lord, and that are inspired in the hearts of God's people by the Spirit, are nothing less than the travail of the Spirit of God within the spirit of man to bring forth unto birth and full manifestation THE EXPRESS WILL OF GOD. It is not a case of you and I getting under some burden of human contrivance, and trying to persuade God to do something that He is reluctant to do. It is a case of so moving in God, knowing His will, functioning out from His very own heart. that we share His yoke; and the express will and purpose of God becomes our chief concern. Nor can we rest, or give Him rest, till He establish, and till He make Jerusalem "a praise in the earth." The reason we cannot rest is because He cannot rest. And as we partake of His desire and yearning for the perfection of His Son in His other sons, there is that heaven-born groaning within, to accomplish the PERFECT WILL of God in the earth, even as it is done in heaven. God is not in the least concerned about PERFECT LOVE reigning in Heaven. Nothing less could even exist in that realm of PURE LIGHT. He does want, and He will yet have, PERFECT LOVE reigning in the hearts of His people, and to this end we pray. "If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and HIS LOVE IS PERFECTED IN US" (1 Jn. 4:12).

Come O South Wind

"The wind goeth toward the south, and turneth about unto the north; it whirleth about continually, and the wind returneth again according to his circuits." The same old wind going through its various circuits! Yes, but not really so. It blows in one direction as the north wind. Then it completes the cycle, becomes the south wind, and blows back from whence it started. God's order is first darkness, then light. First chaos, then order. First barrenness, then fruitfulness. First weakness, then power. First death, then life. Never have we heard so much about positive living as we have in the past decade or two, and never has there been so much frustration amongst God's people. We have come to believe, somehow, that anything that speaks of coldness, or barrenness, or fruitlessness is from the Devil and must be strenuously resisted. We are encouraged to reach forth and grasp the glory, and the power, and the victory, and the fruit of the Spirit. The fact is we are negative by nature, and victory is not ours by blindly refusing to acknowledge our own futility, and vainly attempting to arouse some secret potential of our character within. This might have its place in the realm of this world system, but not in the realm of God. God is consistently seeking to bring us to the place where we recognize the utter nothingness and futility of our whole being and way of life by nature, For it is in the full recognition of all that we are in the realm of weakness and failure that we may reach out and grasp hold of the Divine promises. It is only when Jacob is smitten in the place of strength, "in the hollow of his thigh" that he finally submits to defeat, and clings to the angel of God, And it is only in his defeat, and in clinging to the angel after his defeat, that his name is changed from one of weakness to one of POWER WITH GOD.

The North Wind

The north wind will certainly strip us--leaving a veritable picture of frustration and defeat in its wake. What a sorry sight it is to behold the barren fruit trees in the orchard, like so much firewood, with the turning of the seasons and the blowing of the north wind. But we are not too alarmed about it in the realm of Nature--even though we do not like it. Nor should we be too alarmed about it in the realm of the New Creation. We accept the seasons, as periods of Divine provision, and we embrace each winter season as a PROMISE. Each winter is a promise of springtime and life. I mean it is a promise from God's Word. For He hath said, "While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease" (Gen. 8:22).

Therefore the songwriter says, "Awake, O north wind; and come, thou south; blow upon my garden, that the spices thereof may flow out" (Song of Solomon 4:16). Notice the order once again: first the north wind, and then the south. First the cold, then the heat. First the snow, then the warm rains of spring. "He giveth snow like wool; he scattereth the hoarfrost like ashes. He casteth forth his ice like morsels: who can stand before his cold?" (Psa. 147:16, 17). It is the blowing of the north wind, But it is still the Word of God. The north wind bringing the snow and ice was because of "his commandment upon the earth." But it was not intended to destroy, but to prepare... to

prepare for the day of spring when the south wind would blow and melt the snow and the ice and the frost, and cause the waters to flow in the River of God.

Truth And History

When will the Church of Christ realize that the restoration of Truth is not merely the repetition of history? Truth is certainly related to history, because it is related to mankind. But Truth is eternal in nature. It springs from eternity, proceeds to do a work in time, and culminates back in eternity. As creatures destined for eternity, and possessors of eternal life, we must feed upon the eternal principles of Truth, and not merely upon certain historical facts which are recorded in the Scriptures. It is not enough to see how truth was manifest in the days of Moses, or of Aaron, or of David, or even in the early Church. We certainly receive the Truth as it related to them, but we must follow the Spirit of Truth as He would continue to unfold the glory of Christ in His relation to us today, and our relation to Him in eternity. Therefore, as we look into the inspired records of history, and feed upon the Truth that we discover there, we have no thought in mind of attempting to restore some historical structure of the Kingdom of God as we have known it in the past. Rather we desire that the Lord should bring into being in our own lives, and in the Body of Christ, that structure of the Kingdom which pertains to us here and now, according to our place in the circle of His eternal purpose. Therefore, bearing in mind that we are living in the ends of the ages, we are persuaded that any realm of Christian experience that falls short of the Divine ultimate in our lives or in the Body of Christ, though perhaps having had its place as a temporary expedient, must eventually and very shortly give way to the Divine ultimate. This divine ultimate we must state here and now to be nothing less than full conformity to the image of His Son, where He abides in us in all His fulness, and His Love is PERFECTED in us.

The Law Of Life

This realm knows no boundaries of human limitations, and has no law to control it--for this realm constitutes its own law--even the Law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus. Many would like to boast that they are already in this realm, because they are not under law but under Grace. This is certainly Divine provision, but it has not been human experience. For if we are not walking in full conformity to the will of God, possessed by His Spirit, the fact remains that we are under a certain measure of law whether we can quote the Scriptures about our standing in Grace or not. It is not in quoting the Scriptures that we dwell in freedom, anymore than we can declare the cake to be good because it was made from a good recipe. Paul declares, "Ye are not under law, but under Grace," but he likewise makes it plain: "If ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law" (Gal. 5:18). God would make us completely free from law in this day of His glory. But it is only as we become captives of the Son that we are really made free. We might readily cast off the restraints of all forms of law, and brand everyone a legalist who would cling to them. But as long as we retain the least element of control over our own lives we are not free. We are, in fact, under the law--because we are under the law TO SELF. Consequently many people, insisting that they are free from the law, have come under greater bondage to the law of sin and self than men do who feel they must remain under the law of Moses. Who then is the legalist? The man who is bound by the law of Moses in an endeavor to measure up to its precepts? Or the man who throws off all such restraints, perhaps retaining a measure of Christian principles, but for the most part going his own selfish way? In either case the man is a legalist. The man who is saved by the Grace of God, and

knows it, and yet persists in living his own life--he is a legalist. "If ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law." True liberty consists of vital union with the Son... in fact, in becoming bound to the Son with bonds of the Spirit which effectually and experimentally liberate one from the former bondage to sin and self. "If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed." And the Lord makes it very clear, He only makes free as He comes in to take possession of your household, and to "abide." (See John 8:32-36).

A Marked People

If these writings help in any way to stir up God's people, and to implant a new hunger and thirst for the Word of God, then it shall not have been in vain. And we are thankful to see that there is a certain restlessness and dissatisfaction in the hearts of those who are pressing on with the Lord. We are speaking of those who are walking with God, and therefore sharing His secrets. These are the ones who are being "marked" in this day and hour, by the man with the inkhorn at his side. "And the Lord said unto him, Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh and that cry for all the abominations that be done in the midst thereof" (Ezek. 9:4). This "Marking" we believe is even now taking place. Judgment is about to fall, but it must first begin at the house of God. Before the man goes forth with the slaughter--weapon in his hand, the chosen ones are being marked. Before the four winds of the earth are loosed upon mankind, "the servants of our God" must be sealed in their foreheads (Rev. 7:3). Many agencies in the earth and in the Church are desperately trying to solve earth's problems, but basically the problem is the Church itself. Instead of being the answer to human need, we are the problem. God's problem has always been with His own people, not with the world. Continually every day His Name is blasphemed amongst the nations, because of His people. They are the real problem, because they are supposed to be the "salt of the earth." How then can we condemn the corruption of the world, when the salt has lost its savour? We are the real problem, because we are supposed to be "the light of the world." (Jesus was the Light when He was here; but WE ARE now that He has gone away. See Jn. 9:5; Matt. 5:14). Why then do we condemn the world for walking in darkness, when the light has become well nigh extinguished? Our responsibility is to shine forth the light of God, just as Jesus did when He was here. Yet vainly do we attempt, with our feeble candle, to point men to Jesus as the Light of the world, who lives somewhere in the distant recesses of the universe. We may only enlighten the minds and spirits of men as we reflect and radiate His glory--and not as we try to get men to behold "the Light" somewhere away off in the heavens. "Arise, and shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the LORD is risen upon thee..."

The River Of God

"All the rivers run into the sea; yet the sea is not full: unto the place from whence the rivers come, thither they return again." The sea does not overflow its boundaries, because God has ordained that from the sea the rivers shall again be replenished, and the process will go on repeating itself. Therefore, just as the generations go and come, the sun sets and rises again, the winds blow from the north and then from the south... so the rivers flow on and on into the oceans, and are constantly being replenished from the same oceans into which they flow, as God sends the rain, and stores up the ice and the snow in our great mountains.

Some years ago I stood on the great icefields in Jasper National Park which constitute the main source of supply for three of the continent's great rivers: the Athabaska which empties into the Arctic, the Saskatchewan which eventually finds its way into the Atlantic, and the Columbia which flows into the Pacific. Huge glaciers many miles across, and up to 2500 feet in thickness keep replenishing these rivers with their endless supply of ice and snow, as they melt in the sunlight, and are replenished with a new supply in every winter season.

The Snow From Heaven

God said, "As the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven. so shall My word be" (Isa. 55:10, 11). We can appreciate the rain, because we know what it accomplishes. It may come through wind and storm, but at least there is a blessing in it. But the snow brings anxiety, discouragement, and coldness. But God brings the seasons, whether it be for the rain, or for the snow. Men in the Church stand in doubt of this "endtime" message, and question, Who are we that we should enter into this great fulness of grace and glory and power that has not been known from the foundation of the world? But it is all according to God's purpose. It is all according to God's seasons. It is not a case of "Who are we?" It is a case of "How great Thou art, O Lord!" God is doing this for His own glory and praise, and not because we are anything. After all is said and done, man is frail and weak and helpless and futile--regardless who he is. The sooner we come to this realization, the better it will be, and the more quickly will we come into the fulness for which our hearts have longed. Whether it be Moses, or David, or Solomon, or Isaiah, or Paul, or Peter, or James, or John, or Luther, or Wesley, or great men that we might name in the world today... they are all but dust and ashes. (We will not attempt to name the great men of today, however, because probably we would name the wrong ones. Why? Because the great men of any generation are not really great in the eyes of that generation. It is usually true that great men are persecuted and rejected by their generation, while the following generations arise and build their sepulchres. Exaltation in their own day and by their own people would have frustrated the greatness of God's purpose in their lives. But because they were faithful in bearing the cross of rejection in their generation, they have now taken their place in the roll of honor in heavenly places, and in the annals of human history.) David said, "I am a worm, and no man." He was not just trying to be humble, but he said that in full recognition of what he was by nature, Oh that God may show each and every one of us that we are but stubble before the wind, as the flower of grass that fadeth away in the heat of the

sun! By nature that is all we are. The day of man draws swiftly to its close. This is the Day of Christ! He must be exalted in this day, and He alone.

Perhaps we do not see any profit in the snow and the ice and the hoarfrost relative to spiritual things. But its purpose is the same as in Nature. Its purpose is for melting in the hour of spring. If we are cold, and barren, and lifeless--that is part of the Divine purpose--providing, of course, that we are prepared to acknowledge it. Then we may rejoice in our condition. For to the barren God gives a promise of fruitfulness. "Sing, O barren, thou that didst not bear; break forth into singing, and cry aloud, thou that didst not travail with child: for more are the children of the desolate than the children of the married wife, saith the LORD" (Isa. 54:1). Let the spiritual eunuch rejoice that he has been a dry tree, "For thus saith the LORD unto the eunuchs that keep my sabbaths, and choose the things that please me, and take hold of my covenant; even unto them will I give in mine house and within my walls a place and a name better than of sons and of daughters..." (Isa. 56:4, 5). Are you entering into God's sabbath rest? Are you ceasing from your own works, that henceforth it might be the Son abiding within and doing His work? Do you call this sabbath of the Lord a delight, "not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words?" (Isa. 58:13). Then God says He has for you the very heritage of Jacob, and that you will ride upon "the high places of the earth."

He Sendeth Forth His Word And Melteth

There is a melting taking place in the Church of Christ. The snow and the ice and the hail and the hoarfrost have served their purpose. Now in their melting they will release a flow of water, of living water, that shall cause the rivers to swell, and bring blessing and life to all humanity. The river of God shall be "full of water" in this great hour of melting, this day of spring. Whithersoever this great river shall flow, it shall bring healing and life to a world that is waste and barren. The desolate wilderness shall be a thing of the past. The Garden of Eden shall be on ahead. The fruitfulness of the heritage of Jacob, even the land of Canaan, lies ahead; and that great and terrible wilderness of human failure shall be left behind.

In this melting, this flowing of the river of God, there is a losing of one's identity in the great stream of the eternal purpose. We will continue to be individual living stones in the Temple of God, individually shaped and molded and fitted into His spiritual habitation, But in the stream of His purpose we flow together, losing ourselves that we might truly find ourselves in Him. It is not merely as individuals but in union with the Body of Christ that we shall come into his Divine fulness. Says Paul, "That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend (apprehend) WITH ALL SAINTS, what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, Which passeth knowledge, that ye might be FILLED WITH (UNTO) ALL THE FULNESS OF GOD" (Eph. 3:17, 18). It is too much for us to even grasp with our minds, But in union with God who is Love, and in fellowship WITH ALL SAINTS, there is to be an apprehension of the very FULNESS OF GOD, nothing less than the very FULNESS of all His Divine perfections and glory.

Joined Unto The Lord

Some may ask the question, therefore, as to where they should go, and with what group of people they should associate, in order to come into this fulness of God in the Body of Christ. The answer

is very simple: The Lord shapes and molds you as an individual, in the pathway of life which He has before ordained for you, chastens and disciplines you along the way as you submit to the working of His Spirit. His purpose is to join you unto HIMSELF. That is therefore the purpose of the ministry which God hath set in the Body. ministry which succeeds, knowingly or otherwise, in bringing the people into union with the ministry, rather than into union with the Son, has failed in its purpose. This may not always be readily recognized. We may feel that our true loyalty is unto Christ, while at the same time there is unconditional loyalty to the ministry--because of the position that such a one occupies in the work of the Lord. We need to honor those whom God hath sent. On the other hand, those whom God hath sent must be careful to see that the saints are brought into that place of unconditional loyalty to the Lord Christ Himself... that we "grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ" (Eph. 4:15). Then as we all, thus beholding the face of the Lord and being transformed into the image of His Son and are JOINED UNTO HIM, we discover to our joy and amazement, that we are in union and fellowship with the other members of the Body of Christ, who have been likewise taught and disciplined in their individual relationship with Him. We are continually meeting such for the first time, as this effectual joining of member to member takes place. But this joining together is not necessarily for the purpose of setting them straight, or trying to fashion them afresh after our mould. Usually we discover that they have already been molded and trained in some other area of His dealings that we have known nothing about; and now together we flow along into the Divine purpose, for further development in the ways of the Lord, If for a season some do not flow along with us, whom we think should do so, let us not be too disturbed about that. As long as they are waiting upon Him and yielding to the Sun of righteousness, they cannot help but flow together in God's time. Also, we do not need to be unduly concerned if for a season one stream seems to flow along in one channel... with blessing and favor from God... and we in another channel. It is quite possible that in either case, neither of us are in the main river of God. But as we flow along in the stream of God's purpose for us at this time, eventually we will flow together as the great RIVER OF GOD, which is FULL OF WATER, to bless humanity.

The Rain Cometh Down

"For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater: so shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it" (Isa. 55:10, 11). The flowing of the rivers into the oceans seems to be a monotonous, unchanging process. But God would have us know that there is a continual increase of His fulness with the endless rains, and the ceaseless flow of the rivers. So with His Word. It accomplishes something. It prospers in the thing for which He sent it forth. When it comes back to the heart of God it brings with it a fulness that was not there when it first went forth. So it was with the Word, the Logos, that was "made flesh" sent forth from the heart of God upon the field of mankind, to dwell amongst us. He came forth from the heart of God as the rain, but when He went back unto the Father He returned with a fulness that brought a greater measure of glory and majesty and beauty to His Name than before. Jesus said, "I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world: again, I leave the world, and go to the Father" (Jn. 16:28). That seemed clear enough to them, and for the first time they felt they understood the mystery of the Son and of the Father, But Jesus knew they really did

not understand what He was trying to show them. Nor did they have a clear understanding of His purpose in going away, until the Spirit of Truth came forth and revealed the deeper mysteries to them. They were so sure that He came to set up a kingdom and reign on the throne of David. Then why was He speaking about going back to the Father? Why did He not remain on earth and sit on the throne of power and glory? Because the circle of God's purpose would have been broken. He came forth from the Father; now He must go back to the Father, completing the cycle of Truth as it pertained to His incarnation, and thus bringing greater honor and glory to the Father's Name. Were He to accept the kingdom before the completion of the circle of God's purpose, there would have been an emptiness, a voidness, about His incarnation He must finish the work, and return to the Father with abundant FULNESS. He was the true Seed that God had sent forth to the earth, But He sent the Seed into the earth that it might "go down into the ground and die." Only in thus going down into the ground and dying could there come forth that fulness of the harvest. The purpose of the rain is not merely to replenish the rivers, and flow back into the oceans. God desires to "accomplish" something. He wants to "water the earth," that it may "bring forth and bud." And after the budding, He wants the fruit. "That it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater." There had to be a returning unto the Father in the fulness of glorification. And this included the fulness of obedience, even unto death, and that the death of the Cross. Only in the fulness of obedience unto death would there come forth the fulness of glory unto life. When Jesus gave the sop to Judas on the eve of His crucifixion, He was able to say: "Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in him" (Jn. 13:31). Anything less than the fulness of obedience unto death would have meant the cutting short of the fulness of glory, and the Logos, the Word, would have returned unto the Father "void." "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth ALONE..." But He was faithful and the Word did not return VOID unto the Father. He went back in complete fulness.

Something happened that had never happened before in Creation. He didn't merely come from God and go back to God, as it may have seemed to the disciples. He came forth the Lord from heaven, but He went back a Man from earth, crowned with glory and honor, and made both Lord and Christ. Now there is in Heaven a Man, a Perfect Man, and this Perfect Man is Lord of the Universe.

I Go Away And Come Again

Now the circle of God's purpose must begin all over again. He came from God and went back to God in abundant fulness; now the Word must come forth again, this time to accomplish a different purpose. He went away, that He might come forth again, in the Spirit.

The Truth of John 14, which we usually ascribe to the Second Coming of the Lord, is really applicable to the coming of the Holy Spirit. "I will not leave you comfortless; I will come to you... we will come unto him, and make our abode with him... I go away, and come again unto you..." He must go away in the fulness of glorified humanity, perfect man returning to the heart of God, that out from the heart of God He might come forth again as the Spirit of Truth, even as the Spirit of the Father and the Son. Once again the Word goes forth out of the heart of God, this time the Spirit of Truth. This time the purpose of God is to bring forth in the earth other sons, like unto His very own Son, and bring them back unto the heart of the Father in yet a greater fulness! "O the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out... for OF Him, and THROUGH Him, and UNTO Him are all things, to whom

be glory for ever and ever."

He Emptied Himself

When the Son of Man came to earth He laid aside the glory of Heaven, and came into our very likeness and nature, that He might live here as man, and strictly as man, in utter dependence upon the Father. For though He was in the form of God, yet He made Himself of no reputation. literally, it says, "He emptied Himself..." or "made Himself void." Incarnation speaks of God "emptying" Himself--even emptying Himself into human nature. Incarnation placed God, the Most High, in a position of "weakness," of "flesh and blood," of "temptation," of "poverty," of "humiliation." How could the Most High possibly empty Himself into human nature without becoming poor, and weak, and meek, and lowly? Flesh and blood cannot even look upon God and survive. What then shall we say of the Most High who came into our very flesh and likeness? How little do we appreciate of the greatness of the humiliation and suffering that the Almighty subjected Himself to, in merely taking upon Himself the form of man! But He went further and further down the ladder of humiliation. Rather than coming as an earthly King, He took a bondsman's form--that in such a form He might learn obedience... obedience even unto death... and that, the death of the Cross, the death of the criminal. Thus the Son of Man was sinless and spotless from His birth until His death, but He was not declared PERFECT until He had learned obedience by the things which He suffered. He had to be made "perfect through sufferings" (Heb. 2:10). Then God received Him back into heaven as PERFECT MAN, where PERFECT HUMANITY was absorbed back into DEITY--making Him to be both Lord and Christ. He must needs go back into the heart of God, receive that Name which is above every name in earth, heaven, or under the earth--that now He might come forth again in the Spirit of Truth. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of the Son and of the Father, even the Spirit of Truth, who comes forth from the heart of God to begin the circle of Truth over again. As He comes to us, He comes to bring from the heart of God, all that Divine glory and power and life that is now inherent in PERFECT GOD and PERFECT MAN--that the PERFECTIONS of the risen and glorified Christ might become our very life. He must needs go away, back to the Father, that in the coming of the Spirit of God into our lives we would have One who would take the things of Christ and reveal them unto us. Certainly not to reveal to us something that we cannot have! But to show us those things which "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard," and which have not even "entered into the heart of man,"--the things that God has "prepared for them that love Him." They are being "prepared" for us, so we are not being presumptuous if we long after them. Rather, the Spirit within is there to "search all things... yea, the depths of God." He is there in our hearts, not merely to bless us--but to reach out into the vastness of the eternal depths of God, and uncover and reveal those things which He has in store and in preparation for His own. The Spirit searcheth out the heart of God, not merely to satisfy our intellectual fancy, but to satisfy that inner longing within to partake of and receive that which the Spirit has discovered and explored. "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. 16:14, 15). He takes the things of the Father and makes them known unto us; not from the standpoint of mental observation, standing afar off and knowing something about His glory and greatness, but not partaking of it! Rather, He shows the Father unto us in such a way that we know HIM, and knowing Him means abiding in His love and nature. "Love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God... God is love; and he that

dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him" (1 Jn. 4:7, 16).

Will this cycle of Truth be completed? Will God cut the circle short in order that we might escape the suffering and woe that is coming upon the earth? Nay, rather, He uses troubles and tribulations for the completion of His great work. We, too, must learn obedience by the things which we suffer. We too must walk in the pathway of obedience as a servant, obedience unto death, obedience that leads us eventually into complete identification with His very own Cross. He hath sent forth the Word, the Spirit of Truth, concerning the perfection of the Body of Christ, and the manifestation of His many sons, and His Word shall not return unto Him void. It shall prosper in the thing whereunto He sent it forth. The purpose of this manifestation is to bring fruitfulness to the earth, that it may give "seed to the sower, and bread to the eater." It shall bring blessing and deliverance to a groaning Creation. "For ye shall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace: the mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands. Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir tree, and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle tree: and it shall be to the LORD for a name, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off" (Isa. 55:12, 13).

The Mediator Of The New Covenant

Christ, therefore, has become the "mediator between God and man" (1 Tim. 2:5), and he is there to mediate "the new covenant" (Heb. 12:24). The mediator is the "middle man." Not, however, to settle arguments, to negotiate bargains, as in the affairs of men. But he is there to mediate the New Covenant, to administer it and to enact it in His many brethren. This administration of the New Covenant is not completed by writing it upon tables of stone, nor in writing it upon the parchments of the New Testament. It is only the New Covenant as He writes it upon the "fleshly tables of the heart." For this is the New Covenant, the indelible inscription of the mind and will and heart of God upon the mind and will and heart of His people. "This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord: I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them..." (Heb. 10:16). It is not merely the heart feeling the impulses and the virtues of His grace, but it is in the heart being fashioned and molded in the Divine image, till man's heart becomes the very heart of God. It is not merely in the mind being activated to enjoy an intellectual concept of Truth, and to appreciate from a rational standpoint the facts of redemption. It is rather in the mind being "renewed" and renovated so completely and so drastically that it verily becomes "the mind of Christ." There is a complete TRANSFORMATION, a complete change, out of the natural and into the spiritual, out of the soulish and into the realm of the Spirit of God. He, the Mediator, is there in the heavens to administer this covenant, and this He does by coming forth in us by the Spirit of Truth. This Word must not return unto the Father void, or empty. The Spirit of Truth comes down from heaven to take all that righteousness and glory and praise that belong unto Christ, and to effectually administer it unto His brethren, that as He receives them back unto Himself in the completion of the circle, He shall receive a measure of fulness and glory such as He did not have before. Some might object that we could not possibly bring to the heart of God any glory that He did not have before. But for this very reason were we created, "That we should be to the praise of His glory..." (Eph. 1:12).

The Fulness Of Christ

Therefore, as we have in the Lord Jesus Christ the fulness of God; so we have in His many brethren, His body, the very fulness of Christ. The manner in which God manifested His fulness in the Lord Jesus is the same as the manner in which the Lord Jesus manifests His fulness in the Church, which is His Body. This fulness was not manifest in the Lord Jesus by virtue of His inherent Deity, but rather in virtue of the fact that He "emptied Himself," and took a bondman's form, and was found in fashion as a man; and then in subjecting Himself to even greater humiliation, and walking in the pathway of total obedience unto the will of the Father. Likewise the fulness that is being manifest in the Church which is His Body is not in virtue of new birth and sudden rapture. Rather it is to be in growing up unto Christ, abiding in Him, and the word abiding in us, changing... transforming... renewing... purifying... and cleansing this Temple as we, too, walk in the pathway of total obedience unto the will of the Father. Christ must go back to the Father, that as One who had glorified the Father's Name and revealed the Father through His obedience and faithfulness as a Son; so now from His exalted throne in the heavens He might glorify His Name in His many brethren that He with them, and not apart from them, might bring forth an even greater fulness of glory. This He accomplishes by bringing forth the perfections of the risen and glorified Lord throughout the members of the Church, which is His Body. For God hath given Him "to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body, THE FULNESS OF HIM that filleth all in all" (Eph. 1:22, 23).

The same old theological block that hindered the Jews of Christ's day is hindering God's people today. Their minds were made up. As a Teacher, they would acknowledge Him. As Prophet from Galilee, they would readily accept. Even as King of Israel, they were ready and anxious to receive Him. (Strange that so many are teaching that they refused to have Him as their King. They actually came by force on one occasion to make Him their King.) There was really no problem in receiving Him as teacher, prophet, king, healer, or miracle worker. It was in making Himself ONE WITH THE FATHER that they took such great exception. Not that He declared Himself to be the Father, but rather He declared Himself to be the expression of the Father, the servant of the Father, the one in whom the Father lived, in whom He worked, whose words He spake, whose mouthpiece He was, and whose works He performed. The Son of God was the living Temple in whom God the Father dwelt. He was not the Son of Man as to His humanity and Son of God as to His Deity. He was both Son of Man and Son of God as to His humanity. "That holy thing" that was born of Mary was at the same time Son of Man and Son of God, for God was the Father of His human nature, as Mary was the mother (Luke 1:35). This Son-of-Man-Son-of-God was PERFECT MAN in every sense of the word. In other words, the Son of God was God--made weak, the God--made poor, God emptied out, God the Ruler of the Universe condescending to become a bondsman amongst men! For Jesus testified, "I can of mine own self do nothing." Yet in union with the Father He could do ANYTHING When the truth is brought forth concerning our union with Christ some seem to get the notion that we are seeking equality with Christ. But the exact Opposite is the truth. For we must become utterly weak, that He might be All-glorious in power... helpless in ourselves, that He might be the All-sufficient One. In fact, we are to live the Life of Another. We are to manifest the fulness of Christ, just as the Lord Jesus manifested the fulness of God when He was here. He did nothing, absolutely nothing, independently of the Father, as God the Son working in contradistinction to God the Father. Never once is He called "God the Son." Everything He did and everything He said was in utter and complete obedience to the Father, as the Father dwelt in Him and worked through Him. So with Christ's many-membered Body. We must come to that place where we do nothing in

contradistinction to the Son, as separate from Him. We must come to that place where it is the living Christ living in us, speaking through us, thinking through us... the risen and glorified Lord pouring into our hearts by the Spirit all the perfections of His glorified humanity. This we receive in virtue of the Spirit abiding within, and our complete obedience and submission unto the will of God.

This does not make us to be the Lord Jesus anymore than it made Him to be the Father. But it does mean that we are to be ONE WITH HIM, in the very same manner in which He was ONE WITH THE FATHER. "That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that THEY also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me." How could this possible be? Simply and entirely by the risen and glorified Lord pouring that same fulness and glory in us, as the Father poured His glory and fulness into the Son. "And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, EVEN AS WE ARE ONE: I in them, and thou in me, that THEY MAY BE MADE PERFECT IN ONE..." Glorious day of rapture, says one. But the Lord continues: "That the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me" (Jn. 17:21-23). After this, and only after this glorious fruitful testimony, does the Lord pray that we might be with Him even where He is, right back in the heart of God (vs. 24).

Now someone would like to say, "Please explain the doctrine of the Godhead, in the light of what you have written." This we must refuse to do, for the doctrine of the Godhead cannot be defined. Church councils invariably assemble to define doctrine and creed when the Spirit and the life of Truth have ebbed away and departed. Sound doctrine does not submit itself to definition, because sound doctrine (Lit. "healthful teaching") is that flowing forth of living Truth, and simply cannot be defined. What about the Apostles' Creed? I have never studied it, nor am I really too interested in it, because the apostles were dead and buried when church leaders got together and made the Apostles' Creed. The apostles were not even at the council.

What we, as the Body of Christ, must do in this hour is come back to the apostles' love and life; then we shall go on to that fulness of Christ, the seeds of which they planted in their ministry and testimony, but the fulness of which comes forth today in the day of harvest. This may stumble many who somewhat hopefully look for a restoration of apostolic glory, as if that were the ultimate, But it will rejoice the hearts of those who have the forward and the upward calling and vision, and are pressing toward the mark of the "high calling."

"Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth." The Church say's God is waiting till the last member of the Body of Christ is converted. God says He is waiting for "precious fruit"... and has long patience over it till it receive not only the early, but the latter rain. Not only the "seed rain" but the "harvest rain." Not only for the seed rain of conversion ("being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible..."), but also for the harvest rain of the FRUIT... the rains that bring forth the fruit that is exactly like unto the original seed that was planted. Anything less is utterly unacceptable to the Husbandman. Anything less than the perfection of the fruit of the Spirit in God's people would cause the Name of the great Husbandman to be dishonored. God is jealous over His people with great jealousy. It is His own Name that He is so concerned about. He has planted a Garden, and He has done so for His own Name's sake, He will yet come into His garden, and partake of its "pleasant fruit." He shall yet find joy and delight and REST in the work of His hands. For we are "the planting of the LORD that He might be glorified." He is only truly glorified in His people as they manifest and show forth His glory and His excellencies. He created us that we

should be "unto the praise of the glory of His grace." The fulness that He would manifest in His many sons is for the purpose of showing forth the "praises (the excellencies, the virtues, the glory) of Him who hath called us out of darkness into His marvelous light."

Growing Up Unto Him

"As the rain cometh down and the snow from heaven..." It is not just another rain, another revival, history repeating itself. Every time it rains there is a new measure of fulness wrought in the earth. It rains, and the seed that has been planted begins to sprout and break forth under the soil. It might not even be visible. Silently does the Spirit of God come into the life and such a one is "born again" by the incorruptible seed of the Word of God. But it is really just the sprouting of the seed. It is a rebirth in the inner man. It is God becoming involved in the life of the individual, that before the entrance of the Word was nothing more than earth... dark, barren, fruitless. Again it rains. Now there is a springing forth of leaves, of twigs, of branches. There is a continual unfolding. One says, "Strange, I never saw that in the Word before." It was there, and you read it perhaps hundreds of times, but you never saw it. Why? Because you were but a sprouting seed hidden away in darkness... or a blade... just beginning to come forth into the light. You have been growing in Grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Now you are able to see what was inherent in the seed, but was never revealed. It was in the Word, but hidden away in the letter, in the shell. It rains, and rains again. The process continues to go on. "All the rivers run into the sea, yet is the sea not full..." Because through the process of Nature the sea yields its moisture back to the air, and the winds carry it across the land. The rivers are replenished, the clouds pour the water back to the earth again. The day of harvest approaches. Things begin to change once more. We get accustomed to new revelation and settle back in satisfaction and delight of our new found joy, then God comes forth again... and there is dismay. It seemed that we were on the verge of having arrived at our true destiny. Our plant begins to take on a new measure of beauty and glory. There is liberty in the Spirit. The flowers of grace appear. There is a beauty and a glory in the life of the individual or in the assembly, such as our hearts had longed for. But it rains again, and those beautiful flowers disintegrate and fade from the vine. Soon they are trampled in the mud beneath. The once beautiful orchard becomes a picture of desolation. We had looked for much. There was promise of much. There is nothing more beautiful than a blossoming orchard in the days of spring. But strangely enough the fruit-grower is not concerned about the fading of the flowers. In fact, he is happy. He must have the rain in due season; but in the time of harvest it is no longer necessary; because he is looking, not for rain, but for the FRUIT of the earth. So often in our lives we look upon and judge circumstances by what we can see. We know that God was using us in the past, because of the fragrance of the flowers of grace, and the beauty of His Spirit upon us. Something must have gone wrong. But in reality God is looking for something deeper, something better, something that will be to the praise of His glory. In short, something that will show forth His own life, His own nature, His own character, His own love. Christ must be formed within before the Husbandman can reach forth His hand and take that which will delight and satisfy His own heart, and that which will satisfy the hunger and thirst of mankind.

Restoration Or New Creation?

We must view the work of God in the realm of Restoration in the light of the fact that God has from the very beginning progressively moved forward with His people into dispensations of His dealings

with men that would eventually bring about an entirely New Creation. There are, of course, seasons of refreshing and renewal wherein lost truths are rediscovered, forgotten gifts are restored, the book of the law is once again found in the temple, and the dimly burning candlestick is trimmed, and shines brightly with fresh oil. But this is by no means God's ultimate. Rather it is a GOING BACK that we might MOVE FORWARD with God in the path of the just "that shineth more and more unto the perfect day."

The prophet Isaiah said, "For brass I will bring gold, and for iron I will bring silver, and for wood brass, and for stones iron..." (Isa. 60:17). We ask for brass, because God promised brass. but in the hour of fulfillment God says, "No, I must give you GOLD." We look for iron... we insist we must have iron... but God says, "No, I promised iron, but my purposes are hastening on to fulfillment... I must give you exceeding abundantly above all you can ask or think... because with your limited understanding you do not really appreciate the nature of my promises... I must give you SILVER."

And so Abraham looked for a land of promise, and longed to acquire it according to God's plan... until he caught a glimpse of the City which had enduring foundations, "whose Builder and Maker is God." In great trial of spirit he looked for a son, a seed, and a nation that would inherit this land... but one day he saw the Day of Christ, and he caught a new vision. He rejoiced and was glad in what he saw. No longer was he to occupy himself with the brass of the promises... now he would partake of the GOLD... even God Himself was to be his "exceeding great reward." The iron of Canaan must give way to the SILVER of God's redemptive purposes, and the WHOLE WORLD was to become the inheritance of this great man of faith (Rom. 4:13).

And so we could go on and on. The glory of the Tabernacle in the Wilderness fades away. but in due season God raises up the Tabernacle of David... and all the furnishings and the ritual and the ceremony of the old Tabernacle is replaced with nothing more than the Ark of the Covenant and the Glory of God. But the Tabernacle of David itself was but a transitional dwelling place, and soon it will give way to the magnificent Temple of Solomon, The Temple of Solomon went into ruin, and in restoration we have the Temple of Zerubbabel. But this temple left the people of God somewhat perplexed. Where was the glory of the latter house, that was to exceed that of the former? Where was the greater than Solomon? Where was the Urim and Thummim? But if the vision tarry, we must WAIT FOR IT. One day the promised GLORY stood in view of the old temple and declared: "Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up." For He indeed was the true Temple of God in whom dwelt the GLORY that had occupied all former temples. But so sudden a transition from the old to the new was too much for the people of that hour. God was saying, I would give you silver for iron, and gold for brass, but they said, "No, we just want the brass and the iron." Then suddenly this new Temple was destroyed... and God raised it up again after three days. But to the consternation of the disciples He must tell them that He would no longer locate in Judea... but He would find His place at the Father's right hand... in a heavenly Zion, that the Ultimate Temple that God had in mind from the very beginning might begin to take on enlargement in the earth. Jesus Himself would be the High Priest of that Temple, and He would also be the King on the throne of that Temple. And more amazing still, we in union with Him would become living stones of that Temple, as well as co-priests and co-rulers with Him in an entirely different order, a Royal Priesthood after the order of Melchizedek.

As we look about us there oftentimes seems to be naught but barrenness and desolation. The trees remain stripped of leaves and flowers and fruit. The ground remains dry and cold and barren. Perhaps there is still a little snow here and there... and very little evidence of life. But here in Western Canada a crocus bravely lifts its head above the ground and declares: "As far as I am concerned, it is the time of Spring... it is the time of New life."

What is God doing today? As far as I am concerned...

IT IS THE HOUR OF NEW CREATION.

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