

Chapter 1

THE SIGN OF THE SON OF MAN

So many truths come pouring into the soul that there seems to be a lack both of time and of ability to write them. We must indeed be rushing rapidly to the close of this age which we call the *Dispensation of Grace*. The same glorious sun which set in turn upon the successive dispensational days of Innocence, Human Government, Conscience, Promise, and Law is now extending its lengthening shadows across the harvest fields of the dispensation of Grace.

There was a time when the Pharisees came to Jesus seeking a sign from Him that would prove that He was the Son of God. It is a surprising fact that this same question was repeated at least twice in the Gospel of Matthew. (Matt. 12:38, 39 and 16:1-4). Both times they asked for a sign and on each occasion He told them that the only sign that would be given was the sign of Himself, that as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the whale so also should He be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

It seems to me that for centuries our eyes have been kept holden to many of the great truths of the scripture. We have read and reread the Bible, usually taking for granted that we understood perfectly what was written, and frequently just reading over the passages and noticing little or nothing of their message. I do not think we should be overly concerned about this lack of understanding, but we should remember that God never reveals anything to anybody until *He is ready* to reveal it, and He is never ready to reveal anything until the time has come to prepare for that great event which He is about to accomplish.

For centuries Israel had looked for the coming of the Messiah until their eyes were dim with watching, but who among them all had even a hazy idea of how that coming would be accomplished. They did not expect a virgin birth; they did not expect a lowly birth; they did not expect a despised and a rejected man nor a man at variance with their established creeds. They did not expect a crucifixion, a resurrection, or an ascension to heaven. All these things were contrary to their expectations and their long established beliefs; consequently they rejected Him. I suppose that Mary was the first person in all Israel to have the wonder of the virgin birth explained to her and that less than a year before the great event was to transpire.

No, we need not worry about our ignorance of things. Our only concern should be that when God does send us light that *we receive it*, for, if we reject it, the light we have becomes darkness and we can understand nothing. My old instructor, Elmer Hoff, taught me a lesson I hope I shall never forget. He said, "*The moment you say no, you close the door* for the Spirit to teach you anything." What a lesson that is! How badly we all need to learn it! The moment the Spirit of God begins to shed light on a truth, it is time to begin to ask Him to instruct us in it. Do not submit God's revelation to the criticism of some dead church member or preacher, for they like the birds of the air will steal away the seed of the truth before it has a chance to sprout or take root within you.

We will never discover anything that God has hidden from us, but when by His grace He draws back the curtain and reveals the hidden treasure, it is time to grasp it, for if we tarry it will be covered again, and we will miss it. Do you remember that Jesus rejoiced in spirit and said, "I thank thee, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that Thou hast hid these things from *the wise and prudent* and hast revealed them *unto babes*. Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Thy sight"?

There can be no doubt we are living in an hour when the Lord is

revealing many things that concern the coming age. I am certain, however, that even now we see them only darkly. We catch only faint and fleeting glimpses of these wonders of the golden age. We are looking for the *unveiling of* the sons of God. We are looking for the *revelation of* Jesus Christ. The revelation will reveal what is hidden. The unveiling will reveal what has been kept veiled. As the lightning flashes forth from inky clouds, so the manifestation will disclose that which has been hidden in darkness. "Let us therefore fear lest, a promise being left us of entering in to His rest, any of you should seem to come short of it."

One of the greatest truths ever kept hidden from the eyes of man is this: that *Jesus Christ, the only begotten son of God*, was from His birth to His resurrection the greatest *sign* that God has ever given to the world. Everything about His life and His ministry, His birth, His death. His resurrection was a clear distinct *sign* of things that are to come. We may have overlooked the fact that no less an authority than Jesus Christ Himself made the clear definite statement that "as Jonah was a *sign* to the Ninevites, so also shall the *Son of man* be to this generation." Luke 11:29, 30. This passage tells us that Jesus was a sign to this generation in the same way that Jonah was to his generation. When I meditate upon the experience of Jonah as he went into the whale's belly and felt the bars of hell close about him, then to come forth from that hell to experience the glory of a resurrection, it seems small wonder that his preaching so mightily affected the Ninevites that in forty days one hundred twenty thousand souls turned to the Lord. Jonah's experience was a sign to the Ninevites of wonderful things to come when Christ would go into death and hell and then lead forth in triumph an innumerable company of captives from the pit itself. Eph. 4:7-10. But we dare not stop here. The glorious victory of Christ in descending to hell and leading forth a host of captives is in itself a sign of the day when the sons of God will unlock the gates of hell, for the gates of hell shall not prevail against them.

So it was that God told King Ahaz, "Therefore the Lord Himself shall give you a *sign*. Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a *son* and ye shall call *his* name *Immanuel* (God with us)." Isa. 7:14. It was not the virgin birth that was to be the sign. It was *the Son that was born of the virgin* that was the sign. Therefore when Simeon came by the Spirit into the temple after the birth of Jesus, he prophesied saying, "Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel, and/or a *sign* which shall be spoken against." Luke 2:34.

The Lord Jesus Christ was the *only begotten Son of God*. He was a Son in a way that no other man has ever been a son of God. He was begotten by God. He came from the *bosom* of the Father. He was a Son before other men existed and when He partook of flesh and blood. He was born, *not* of the will of the flesh, *not* of the will of man, but of God. He was born through the miraculous work of the Holy Spirit and even as a human being He was begotten of God.

Now that which is *born of God* is *begotten of God* as James says, "Of His own will begat He us with the word of truth that we should be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures." Jas. 1:18. We can therefore reverently say that the blessed Jesus was the *only begotten* Son of God, but that He was a *first fruits* and a *sign* that *other men*, thousands of *other men*, would through the miracle working power of the Holy Spirit become sons of God, *begotten of God* through the omnipotent power of the Holy Spirit. These are they who are born not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God. Jno. 1:13. Strange and glorious as this may seem, James in the verse quoted above shows that we who are being born of God are ourselves but a *firstfruits* of all God's creatures. Jas. 1:18. We are a *sign* therefore that all creatures shall be eventually *born of God*.

I wish with all my heart that Christians would *stop* believing that they are *born again* the moment they believe. This doctrine, taught

almost universally among evangelical people, has been an enormous hindrance in the progress of Christians, for they, thinking they have reached sonship, fail to press toward the mark of full sonship in Him. If men could only see that "that which is *born of God cannot sin*, for His seed remaineth in him and he *cannot sin* because he is *born of God*," (1 Jno. 3:9) then they would not be in such a hurry to declare that they are *born again* and thus full sons of God. There is a universe of difference between being justified by faith and being born again. Both the thief on the cross and the Philippian jailor believed on Christ and were justified from their sins, but I think we would be very wrong to imagine that they had done any more than "receive Him" and, because they had received Him, power was given to them to *become* sons of God.

We shall yet see walking on this earth a great company of *begotten sons* who have been *born of God* even as Christ was born of God. These sons will be completely incapable of sin in any aspect or in any sense of the word. I am sorry to say that, though I have been a believer for many years, yet I am still capable of sin in thought, word, and deed. But I think I can truthfully testify that I am far less capable of sin now than I was when I first believed, and I see such a growing hatred within of all that pertains to sin's realm that sin is rendered well nigh impossible. Those who thus walk are in the process of *becoming* sons of God and, when that birth is complete, they will have this testimony, "They *cannot sin* because they are born of God." "Beloved, now are we the children of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when He shall appear we shall *be like Him*, for we shall see Him as He is. And every man that hath this hope in him *purifieth himself* even as He is pure." 1 Jno. 3:2, 3.

We speak too lightly about the deep and sacred things of God. We speak flippantly about such divine eternal wonders as the new birth, sonship, the fulness of the Spirit, transfiguration, and the manifestation of the sons of God. The light and frivolous way in which these truths are handled proves beyond a doubt that those who handle them understand them less than Belshazzar understood the sacredness of the vessels of the Lord from which he drank wine with his lords and ladies. If we are going to approach God at all, we are going to have to come in an attitude of wide-eyed awe. We shall have to approach with reverence and godly fear lest we blaspheme and take the name of the Lord in vain. I hate to hear any man use light, frivolous, and familiar terms when speaking of the things of God. Surely if Michael the archangel durst not bring a railing accusation against the devil because we are forbidden to speak evil of dignities, then I must approach all the sacred truths cleansed by the blood and having my mind renewed and hallowed by the Holy Spirit.

With this exhortation fresh upon our minds let us think briefly of what it will mean to be *begotten of God*. I could be wrong, but it seems perfectly clear to me that only three people were ever born sons of God. By this I mean that only three people ever came into this world who were sons of God at birth, body, soul, and spirit. The first son so born was Adam, who having no human parents was formed *by the Spirit* of God from the dust of the earth. He was a son of God. (Luke 3:38). He was clothed upon with the life and glory of the Lord. To him was given the power to live forever, but to him no power had been given to discern between good and evil. The second son of God born of the Holy Spirit *was Eve*. When the Lord had caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, he opened his bosom and from a rib of this son He formed a woman, a son of God in all the glory of Adam, made by the Spirit, *begotten by the Spirit*, and clothed upon by the life of God Himself. She was a true son of God even as Adam, for neither male nor female is known in that realm. No corrupt and dying blood flowed in the veins of these inhabitants

of Paradise. No death-dealing carnal mind corrupted them to bring their members under the power of death and sin. They lived in a realm long since closed to the human race. They were clothed upon not with garments of wool and cotton or even seamless robes, but, because of their heavenly brightness and their blessed communion with God, they lived in a realm of transfiguration and were no more in need of earthly garments than an angel. All creatures of that perfumed, effulgent paradise were under their wise and loving control. No timid creature raced in terror from snarling ravenous beasts. The pitiful cry of a dying thing was never heard. Peace reigned supreme and love without alloy. Had this blessed son in his unfallen state walked the earth centuries later, he, too, would have stilled the waves, raised the dead, and healed diseases as did Christ, the last Adam. But this was not God's plan.

The *third person* to be born of the Spirit of God was Jesus Christ. Christ had existed before the world was. Christ, who proceeded from the bosom of the Father, the One by whom and for whom *all things* were created, was born into this world by the power of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit, who had made *Adam from the dust* of the earth and who had formed *Eve from the bone and flesh* of Adam, now by the power of the Most High overshadowed a virgin and brought forth a Son from her womb. These and these alone were *born* sons of God, but God has given power to all members of the human family who *receive Christ* to *become* sons of God, for as many as received Him to them gave He power to *become* sons of God. Male and female will not be recognized in Christ. Both alike are *sons*.

My heart sings a thousand hallelujahs, for this earth in God's good grace is yet to see a whole race of sons of God, begotten by the Holy Spirit in the extremity of the age. They are not to rise from the dust of the earth as Adam, but by the power of the Holy Spirit they will arise from the dust and ashes of their crucified selves. "I am crucified with Christ," said Paul, "nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." *This is sonship*, for in some miraculous way the "I" that was crucified and the "I" that lives are not the same, but from the ashes of our crucified selves God has brought forth a son of God.

There was a very great difference between the unfallen Adam clothed in glory and Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who for our sin laid aside His glory. For He, though equal with God, did not grasp at equality, but made Himself of no reputation and took upon Himself the form of a servant and was made in the likeness of men (fallen men), and, being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. This He did because man was fallen, and to lift him back to sonship He had to come into the condition in which man was that through the shedding of His everlasting incorruptible blood in which flowed eternal life He might give back to all men that eternal life which they lost through disobedience. As in Adam *all die*, even so in Christ shall *all be made alive*. "For if by one man's offence, death reigned by one, *much more! much more! much more!* they who receive abundance of grace and of the *gift of righteousness* shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ. Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon *all men* to condemnation, even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon *all men* unto justification of life. For as by one man's disobedience *many* (i.e. *all*) were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall *many* (i.e. *all*) be made righteous." Rom. 5. 17-19. But when this glorious work of redemption had been completed by the shedding of His precious eternal blood, He rose from the dead because death had no power over Him and was highly exalted and given a name that is above every name that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow of things in heaven and earth and under the earth. In my heart I hear Him pray, "And now, O Father, glorify Me with the glory that I had with Thee before the world began." Jno.

17:5.

We might well fill the whole book with this glorious truth of sonship, but that is not our purpose now. Our purpose now is to show that this glorious Son of God, begotten of the Father by the Holy Ghost, was a *sign son*. He was a sign of a *vast family of sons* who would also be begotten and born of God through the centuries intervening between Bethlehem and the end of this age. This is the truth that inspired Paul's heart as he exultantly wrote, "Whom He did foreknow He did predestinate to be conformed to the *image of His Son*, that *He* (Jesus Christ) might be the eldest in a *vast family of brothers*."

There was a time when certain Greeks came to Philip and said, "Sir, we would see Jesus." When Philip and Andrew told Jesus of the request, Christ made this strange statement of truth. "The hour is come for the Son of Man to be glorified. Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth *much fruit*." Jno. 12:20-24. I am sure you must understand what He was telling them, for a spiritual mind could scarcely miss this truth. They wanted to see *Jesus*, but they did not know that if they wanted to see the *complete Christ*, the first and the last, they would have to wait until the harvest time at the end of this age when that single corn of wheat that fell into the ground and died would be a *whole ear of wheat* full of kernels, each one in the exact image of the one who fell into the ground and died, but rose again. This is the fulness of Christ. This is Christ with that vast family of sons in His own image.

I do not think we should build our faith on visions that men have seen, but I was once deeply impressed by one who told me he had seen a vision of Christ. In the vision Christ appeared as a huge man who seemed to fill all things. But closer observation showed that the huge form of Christ — head, body, hands, and feet — was composed of numberless thousands of little men, each in the exact image of each other and all in the image of Christ Himself. This is what Jesus wanted to teach us when in answer to the question, "We would see Jesus," He pointed to a single kernel that fell into the ground and became a harvest of identical kernels at the end of the age. Oh, Lord, I shall certainly be satisfied when I awake in Thy likeness.

There are three things in this vast world, and only three: — the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life;

briefly, appetite, avarice, and ambition. I do not think you will be able to avoid the conclusion that all the inventions, creations, and contrivances of man are in existence to cater to these three things. It was with these three things that Eve was tempted. She *saw* the tree was good for food (the lust of the eyes), a tree to be desired (the lust of the flesh), a tree to make one wise (the pride of life), and though the temptation was not from within but from without, she yielded to it and partook. The temptation of Christ was on the same basis exactly. The first appeal was made to the flesh through appetite. "Command that these stones be made bread." The second was made to the eyes to awaken covetous-ness and greed. "All this will I give you if Thou wilt fall down and worship me." The third was to the pride of life. "If Thou be the Son of God, cast Thyself down from hence."

I shall not attempt to develop the thought given above, for that is not the purpose in mind, but the truth that we must see here is that Jesus Christ *overcame the world, the flesh, and the devil* and all that is involved in them, and that He overcame so thoroughly and delivered such a crushing defeat to the wily tactics of Satan that it is actually recorded by the Holy Ghost that the *devil left Him* and angels came and ministered unto Him. Matt. 4:11. Truly Jesus said, "The prince of this world cometh and findeth *nothing in Me*." No wonder he left Him. I think we would be right to conclude that never again did Satan come to tempt the Lord, but his next efforts were to destroy Him.

In His great victory over the power of Satan He was a sign that pointed unerringly to another company of *overcoming sons*. In all the churches of Revelation there were two classes of people — those who were *overcomers* and those who *were not*. It is to the overcomers that the glorious promises are given, for they follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth, have partaken of His mind and of His will, and thus are equipped to reign in His kingdom. Thus to them it is said: "To *him that overcometh* will I give to eat of the tree of life which is in the midst of the paradise of God." Rev. 2:7. "He that *overcometh* shall not be hurt of the second death." Rev. 2:11. "To *him that overcometh* will I give to eat of the *hidden manna*, and I will give him a white stone, and in the stone a *new name* written which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it." Rev. 2:17. "*He that overcometh* and keepeth My works to the end, to him will I give *power over the nations*, and he shall *rule them with a rod of iron*; as the vessel of the potter shall they be broken to shivers even as I received of My Father, and I will give him the *morning star*." Rev. 2:26-28. "He that *overcometh* will I make a pillar in the temple of my God and he shall go no more out and I will write upon him *the name of my God* and the name of *the city of my God* which cometh down out of heaven from my God and I will write upon him my new name." Rev. 3:12, 13. "To him that *overcometh* will I grant to *sit with Me in My throne* even as I *overcame* and am set down with My Father in His throne." Rev. 3:21. "He that hath an ear let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches."

When any man becomes a lover of the will of God, then he becomes a hater of the world and an overcomer of the world. Christ's greatest secret was that He did always the things that *pleased the Father*. When any man lives in this manner, the world is overcome as a matter of course. No man will ever be an overcomer until the Christ within him is greater than he that is in the world. 1 Jno. 4:4. "Whosoever is *born of God* overcometh the world." In the lives of most Christians the world is greater than Christ. They do not know it, perhaps, but it is certainly so and at times it is glaringly evident.

Every Christian should seek that God would open his eyes to show him that the world and all the things therein are but vanity and vexation of spirit. Everything that belongs to the world is of a passing nature. It fades as the green leaf. It is like the grass that today is green in the field and tomorrow is burned as if in an oven. It is like the mist that appeareth for a little time and is gone, or like a vision of the night that vanishes with the awakening. It is a bubble that bursts, a whiff of perfume that came from nowhere and disappeared into nothingness. "I said of laughter, it is mad, and of joy, what doeth it?" I love Phillips' translation of 1 Jno. 2: 15-17. "A man cannot love the Father and love the world at the same time, for the whole world system, based as it is on man's primitive desires, their greedy ambitions, and the glamour of all they think splendid, is not derived from the Father at all, but from the world itself. The world with all its passionate desires will one day disappear, but the man who is following God's will is *part of the permanent and cannot die*." Who is he that overcometh but he that believeth that Jesus is the Christ? This glorious overcoming first Son of God is a sign and a herald of a vast company of completely overcoming sons who will stand in His likeness at the end of the age.

Whenever God requires anything of man, there is always a reason for it. The reason so many people fail to attain the great heights of the Spirit is because they are unable to see God's purpose, and therefore they have no particular incentive to seek the great heights that are in Him. We have been far too taken up with theories about heaven and childish notions about mansions in the skies to be able to see the true purpose of God. I have positively no hesitation whatever in telling you that according to the scriptures God's plan for man from the very foundation of the world was to make man the true

lord of the universe and to bring all things into subjection to him. This is certainly Paul's theme when in Heb. 2 he says, "For unto the angels hath He *not* put in subjection the world to come — but one in a certain place testified saying, *What is man* that Thou art mindful of him? Or the son of man that Thou visitest him? Thou madest him (man) a little lower than the angels. Thou crownest him (man) with glory and honor and didst set him over the *works of Thy hands*. Thou hast put *all things* in subjection under his feet. For in that He put *all in subjection under him*, he left *nothing that is not put under him*. But now we see *not yet* all things put under him." Heb. 2:5-8. This is a very definite and glorious statement and shows in few words the true purpose God had in creating man. It shows the reason for the fall and all the intricate infinite preparations of man through the fall, through suffering, through tribulation, sickness, death, and a thousand other trials that man might eventually be fit and equipped for the rulership which God ordained for him in the very beginning. All this truth is found in the very first words God ever spoke about man. "Let us make man in our image and after our likeness and let us *give him dominion...*" Gen. 1:26. If men and women could see this by the Spirit instead of the fairy tales we have been taught through the centuries about harps and mansions in the sky, they would have some incentive to partake of the glorious sonship God is looking for in His people.

Now, would it not seem to be divine sense, human sense, and common sense that, if the almighty God is preparing man to reign over His creation, if He is preparing him to rule the earth, if He is planning to put all things in subjection under his feet, then that man must be prepared for this lordly rulership? Could the wisdom of God set a man to be lord and ruler of the world if the world can overcome him? He who is to rule the world must be an overcomer of the world. Does not the scripture say, "Know ye not that ye shall judge angels"? Could we imagine God's setting one to judge Satan who is continually overcome by Satan? Or can he be a judge of sin who is overcome by sin? Will he not have to be a complete overcomer before he can judge the world or angels? He who is overcome by thieving can scarcely be called upon to judge the sin of theft. Abraham said of God, "Shall not the judge of all the earth do right?" What greater argument then can be presented than that he who is to *rule all things* must first of all have *overcome all things*] Even in the world as it is now no one can rule that which he has not overcome. Let all those therefore who hope to reign with Christ set their hearts and affections on *overcoming the world* and all things in it. It is our understanding of these precious truths that is the ground and foundation of our faith, and "this is the victory that overcomes the world, even *our faith*." Jno. 5:4.

Let us turn away from our subject long enough for a word of exhortation. I do not see how a Christian is ever going to be an overcomer and enter into sonship by following the ordinary course of church activity. There is something about the continual *vain repetitions* of the church that keeps Christians in a state of spiritual infancy. When the Jewish offerings and sacrifices got to be nothing but a ritual which they performed every week. God turned His face away in disgust and said it was a weariness to Him and a stench in His nostrils. What more is there to the wearisome repetitions into which the churches have entered? Do they not go through the same ceremony every week as they sing their hymns, say their prayers, give their offerings, and wait for the preacher to pronounce the benediction? This is not the path that leads to sonship. Regardless of what your traditions may be, this is the path to spiritual stalemate and infancy.

Every man must come to know God *personally, individually, and independently of all theories and traditions*. He must through private communion with his Lord enter into such friendship, unity,

and fellowship with Him that should earthly and spiritual dependencies vanish he would be completely undisturbed and unmoved, or should every Christian be removed from the earth and he left alone that he would feel no lonesomeness or lack in anything. David, the king of Israel, had entered this blessed abiding place when he took up his harp to sing, "God is my *refuge and strength*, a very present help in trouble; therefore will not we fear though the *earth be removed and the mountains carried into the midst of the sea.*" Psa. 46:1,2. And again the same knowledge must have filled his soul when he said, "He that dwelleth in the *secret place of the Most High* shall abide *under the shadow of the Almighty.*" Psa. 91:1. There is a secret place for us in God where crowds can never come. There are gardens to which Jesus often resorts with His disciples. Jno. 18:2. There are mountains of transfiguration where He leaves the clamoring crowds below while He takes a few up higher with Himself. The shout and song of revival meeting has been a method of God during the dispensation of grace, but to *sit with Him in His throne* will be the order of the kingdom. I have no hesitation in saying that the last sands of this imperfect age of grace are running through the hour-glass of time and the perfect kingdom morning is at hand.

When Jesus Christ, the *sign son*, was baptised with the Holy Ghost, He knew the fulness of God in a way that no other man has yet known it. God gave the Holy Spirit to Him *without measure*. "God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto Him." Jno. 3:34. However much other men have experienced the fulness of the Spirit or however glorious was their baptism in the Holy Ghost, I feel they are all terribly lacking when compared to Him. His life was under the complete dominion of the Holy Spirit. The words He spake, the deeds He did, the prayers He prayed, the miracles He performed, the places He went were all the result of that limitless fulness which God gave unto Him. His birth, His life. His works, His death, His resurrection, His ascension were all by the Holy Spirit. He made no mistakes in any word He spoke for He spake by the Holy Spirit. He made no errors in judgments for judgment was not His but God's. He was never overcome by the arguments of clever men but silenced them all with a word of wisdom from God. When Aaron the priest was anointed with the holy oil, Moses poured it on his head until it ran down over his face and beard, over his body and down to the very skirts of his garments. This is typical of that measureless fulness of the Holy Spirit which Christ enjoyed — not just a drop of oil on the forehead applied by the finger, but oil in abundance for the whole man. Psa. 133:2.

All who read these lines must be able to give proof after proof and evidence upon evidence that Jesus Christ possessed the glorious fulness of the Holy Spirit, so we will refrain from going further to make proof of that. But let us consider that great company of sons who are to come in His image and in the *same fulness* that He, the sign Son, had.

Self-satisfaction is an enormous, blinding, deceiving evil. A man who thinks he is righteous never bothers to seek righteousness, but a man who knows he is unrighteous will seek the righteousness of Christ. While scribes and Pharisees prided themselves that they were the children of Abraham, they knew not that they were the children of the devil, and they hated Christ for telling them so. "For they, being ignorant of God's righteousness and going about to establish their own righteousness, had not submitted themselves to the righteousness of God." Rom. 10:3. The same principle holds true regarding the *illness of the Spirit*. It is a great indictment against us all that we have claimed the fulness of the Holy Spirit when indeed our lives showed little or no sign of the Holy Spirit at all, let alone His fulness. It is a pitiful misconception prevalent in the entire professing church that each division in it should imagine that the

Holy Spirit is imparted by obedience to the form of baptism laid down in their particular creed.

I do not want to belittle or depreciate anything that God has done for any man. We should be extremely thankful for any experience we have had in Him, but let us abolish all opinions that would lead us to believe that our little thimbleful of water is God's ocean, or that our little Pentecost was the Spirit without measure or all *the fulness of God*. Let us rather realize that at best we have partaken of a mere *earnest* of our inheritance and that the whole inheritance still lies out ahead of us. We have partaken of a few luscious grapes from Canaan, but just beyond us lies a whole realm flowing with milk and honey and wine. Why should men refuse the meal after they have tasted its goodness? Why do we refuse the inheritance because we have partaken of a few pennies ahead of time? Why be satisfied with a stagnant pool when a river of the water of life is flowing from the throne of God? Paul prayed that we might be filled with *all the fulness of God*. Jesus declared that those who believed on Him as the scriptures had said would find *rivers of living water* flowing from their beings. Let us then wake up to the fact that we know nothing as we ought to know, and we have received nothing as we ought to receive. Our confident assurance that we are filled with the Spirit has been a blindfold that has kept us from seeing the rivers and oceans that lie just beyond us. Do not cast away the good that God has given you, but do, I pray you, cast away all self-satisfied belief in your fulness, for this dams up the fountains of living water. If it is true that rivers of living water can flow from the innermost being of men who believe on Christ, then there is one thing of which I am certain. Before those rivers of living water can flow from our being, all obstructions will have to be removed that they might first flow into our being. Let us settle it in our hearts that there is an everlasting fulness that can only be ours as we become empty of self-righteousness and give up our proud belief in our own fulness.

I do not propose to discuss here the many promises that go to prove that we can be filled with the Holy Spirit, but the undeniable fact that Jesus Christ, the sign Son, was given the Holy Spirit without *limitation or measure* is also an undeniable" proof that there is an experience of equal glory and magnitude awaiting all those who will enter into sonship. Indeed, every day I am convinced more and more that it is the ever increasing fulness of the Holy Spirit that produces sonship, for by it we are both born of God and brought to the maturity of full sonship. It is a most significant fact that, at the moment Jesus was filled with the Holy Ghost, there came a voice from heaven declaring Him to be God's *beloved Son* in whom He was well pleased. Matt. 3:17

There is a fulness of the Spirit awaiting all those who long for sonship. It is a fulness that none but Christ has ever received. It is a fulness reserved for the time of the manifestation of the sons of God. It is a fulness that brings to a complete maturity. It is the *early and latter rain* in the first month. It was John the Baptist who said, "Of His fulness have we all received and grace for grace," (Jno. 1:16) and there is no doubt whatever that we have all received *of His fulness*, but we have by no means received His fulness. It was the beloved Paul who many years later bowed his knees before the God and Father of the Lord Jesus Christ and prayed "*that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.*" Eph. 3:19. Have we ever even remotely understood what it would mean to be filled with such divine and almighty fulness — filled with *all the fulness of God*? For centuries we have grovelled along imagining our little stagnant pool was His mighty ocean, so robbing ourselves of His fulness. We have wrestled with the demon at the foot of the mount, excusing ourselves because we could not cast him out, when just above us in the mount God was declaring, "This is my beloved Son," Matt. 17.

It is unfortunate that Christians in these latter days have always associated the fulness of the Holy Spirit with power for service. They grasp eagerly for the baptism of the Spirit in a vain and selfish hope that they will have superhuman power over sickness and disease, or that they will have a spectacular ministry, or be possessed with spiritual gifts. But there is something far more important than this that has been completely overlooked. There is something far more important than powerful preaching and working of miracles. That important thing is the purifying effect the Holy Spirit will have upon the individual and personal life.

The scripture declares that we are *changed by His Spirit* from *glory to glory* until we come into the image of the Lord. "But we all with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as *by the Spirit of the Lord.*" 1 Cor. 3:18. This is a truth Christians are missing. It is pitiful that we have overlooked it so long. We are like the disciples who sought who would be *greatest*, not knowing that he who would humble himself and become least would be the one who would be filled with the fulness of God.

I feel I cannot be too strong in my earnest exhortation to all who read that we would earnestly seek day by day to have an ever increasing fulness of the Holy Ghost. It is your God-given duty to seek the Spirit with far greater earnestness and sincerity than you would for silver or gold. I greatly fear that the god of this age is the dollar bill. It is called the almighty dollar and certainly that is the honor given it by most Christians today. Earthly and financial gain has become the prime and foremost requisite in most Christian lives while prayer, meditation, the reading of the Word, praise, kindness, love, the grace of giving, tithing, the leading of the Spirit, constant communion, repentance, and all such things that pertain to the fulness of the Spirit have been relegated to the realm of annoying nuisances that hinder us from going all out for the god of his age. How sorely we need to read and learn the lesson taught us by Peter when he wrote, "And beside all this, giving all diligence *add to your faith* virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience *godliness*; and to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, charity." Now listen to the promise that follows this exhortation. "For if these things be in you and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ... For if ye do these things, yet shall *never fall*; for so an *entrance* shall be ministered unto you *abundantly* into the *everlasting kingdom* of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ." 2 Pet. 1:5-8, 10, 11.

It is time to stop, look, and listen. It is time to see if our rush for gold is cancelling out our progress toward the kingdom of God. We are living in very, very important times. We are continually hearing wonderful things. But I warn you that the heights of sonship, the kingdom, and all the *fulness of God* are not attained by merely hearing about them. They must be our heart-absorbing, soul-consuming quest. Otherwise we will be like those who have heard the pipe but have not danced, and those who have heard the voice of mourning and have not wept. It has always been a vicious trait of man to hear but not to do. Thousands love to hear and read new things and listen to spiritual revelation, but never raise a finger to attain. Don't waste time telling me that we need do nothing about it. Don't try to persuade me that all we need do is believe. I would rather far listen to Paul who knew what he was talking about when he said, "Forgetting the things which are behind and reaching forth unto the things that are before, *I press toward the mark* for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." Again he says, "Leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, *let us go on to perfection.*" Heb. 6:1. This last exhortation plainly shows that constant adherence to elementary doctrines is as great a hindrance to spiritual progress as

anything could ever be.

I firmly believe it is time to leave the shadowy imperfect things of the dispensation of grace and begin to lay hold on those more permanent things that belong to the kingdom. Let us therefore no longer be interested in laying the foundation of repentance from dead works and faith toward God, baptisms, laying on of hands, but let us seek to go on to the perfection of sonship and *the fulness* of the Holy Spirit.

When I speak of *the fulness of the Spirit*, I am not speaking of an initial baptism of the Holy Spirit such as you may have received thirty or forty years ago, but I am speaking of an *ever increasing fulness* that gradually saturates and overwhelms your life, your being, and your walk until all your thinking, your walking, your talking, and your doing is done by the Holy Spirit Himself. Your whole life becomes a life lived in a realm that is strange and ethereal to all other men because almost all men live on a plane completely governed by the natural and the carnal mind.

It is difficult to illustrate what I mean because we have spent our lives interpreting scriptures as they seem to suit our experience regardless of how low the plane may be on which we dwell. But let us for a moment consider the *pattern son*, Jesus Christ, for He is the true pattern and sign of the sons who are to come. The life of Jesus Christ, the pattern Son, the apostle Son, the high priest Son, was a life completely swallowed up by the fulness of the Holy Spirit. Immediately following His baptism it is stated, "Then was Jesus *led of the Spirit* into the wilderness," and I have no hesitation in saying that in His case from that very moment on there was never a thought or a word or a deed which was outside the realm of the Holy Spirit. The works that He did were *in His Father's name*. Jno. 10:25, 5:36. All His words were of the Father. "I do *nothing of Myself*; but as My Father has taught Me, I speak these things." Jno. 8:28. And again: "I speak that which I have seen with My Father." Jno. 8:38. Nothing was ever done to please self in any way, but rather He said, "I do always those things that please Him." Jno. 8:29. Empty laughing and joking had no place in His life, but He "rejoiced in the Spirit" (Luke 10:21), and for the joy that was set before Him He endured the cross and despised the shame. He was born of the Spirit, was baptised in the Spirit, lived by the Spirit, worked by the Spirit, talked by the Spirit, died in the Spirit, rose by the Spirit, and ascended by the Spirit, and even now, though He was crucified through weakness, yet He *liveth* by the *power of God*.

Perhaps it is beyond the scope of this message to speak much of that blessed person, *the Holy Spirit*. But that we may better see our vast need of Him as Lord of our lives, let me point out a few of the names and titles of the Holy Spirit, for each and every name given to Him in the word of God teaches us some new thing that points to our immense need of living and moving in Him. First, He is the Holy Spirit, That is His name. While men struggle for lives of holiness and righteousness, God is telling us that His glorious fulness will make us holy. He is the *Spirit of Holiness*. Angels are spirits and they are holy, but He is the very essence, the source, and the spring of all the holiness in the universe. He is the *Spirit of Adoption* (sonship). What a truth is here, for all those who long for sonship, for all who are led by Him and who are under His control are sons of God and cry from the Spirit within, "*Abba Father*" (our Father). He is the *Spirit of Truth*. All the truth of the universe emanates from Him and all who are under His control speak only the truth of the Lord.

He is the *Spirit of God*. 1 Cor. 3:16.

He is the *Spirit of wisdom and understanding, council, and might*. Isa. 11:2.

He is the *Spirit of the Lord*. Isa. 11:2.

He is the *Spirit of Jesus Christ*. Phil. 1:19

He is the *Spirit of Burning*. Isa. 4:4.

He is the *Spirit of Life*. Rom. 8:2.

He is the *Spirit of Grace*. Heb. 10:29.

He is the *Spirit of Glory*. 1 Pet. 4:14

He is the *Eternal Spirit*. Heb. 9:14.

Each one of these names is worthy of life-long thought and meditation. This is not a variety of names given to break the monotony of sameness. These names teach us that everything we could ever hope for, desire, or accomplish is found in the fulness of the blessed comforter, the Paraclete, that proceeds from the Father and the Son. To those who seek for holiness He is the Spirit of holiness; to those who long for sonship He is the Spirit of adoption. He is the Spirit of truth to all who love truth and the Spirit of wisdom to those who would be wise. To him who longs for understanding He is the Spirit of understanding and where there is need of power He is the Spirit of might. To those who would be in the image of Christ He is the Spirit of Jesus Christ. For freedom from flesh and corruption He is the Spirit of burning and judgment. He is the Spirit of life to all who love life, the Spirit of glory for our transformation, the eternal Spirit bringing all those who are in unity with Him to the fulness of God's life for ever and ever. In Him let us live and move and have our being. He was the all-embracing, all-controlling power in the wonderful life of that *pattern Son*, Jesus Christ, and He will also be Lord in the lives of all those who by the Spirit of glory are coming into Christ's image.

My heart is filled with a burning longing as I think of those whom God is calling to *share the image of His Son*. Oh that we all might seek His fulness, that we might cast from us every unclean and hurtful thing, that base thoughts having their beginning in the corrupt fountains of the carnal mind might be swept away. Those who seek for glory and honor, immortality and eternal life will not find it in the *flesh pots of Hollywood*, but they will find it in the *ever increasing fulness* of the Holy Ghost, and every man who has this hope in him purifies himself even as He is pure.