

THE GATHERING HOME OF SAINTS

Devotional glimpses of our hope.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1	The Awakening In His Likeness
CHAPTER 2	The Face To Face Meeting With Jesus
CHAPTER 3	The Waiting Arms Of The Father
CHAPTER 4	The Marriage Of God's Dear Son
CHAPTER 5	Reception At The Father's House
CHAPTER 6	The Enthronement With The Lamb
CHAPTER 7	Moments Of Reflective Praise
CHAPTER 8	Thanking The Ministering Angels
CHAPTER 9	The Breaking Of Death's Power
CHAPTER 10	Bringing Forth Earth's Princes

"Conclusion"

THE GATHERING HOME OF SAINTS

Chapter 1

Close your eyes for a moment to that present awareness of imperfection within to those hideous faults of these earthen vessels that so frequently humiliate those high aspirations of the new mind and picture before your mental vision the glory of the perfect day of

AWAKENING IN HIS LIKENESS.

No sense of sin disturbs the holy perfect thought of a mind completely tuned to that of the Lord Himself, responsive like the aerillion harp to each breath of the Spirit of God that plays as a gentle breeze upon it a mind and heart enlarged to share the very thoughts of God's Own heart, and capable of those most high and blessed emotions of the joy of the Lord Himself, as moment by moment, age upon age, the blessings of eternal oneness with the Lord drench us with delights, wave upon wave, forever....

Our spiritual life is made up of awakenings, rousing of the senses, from our first awakening to the light of Truth and Love and the realms of things eternal.

Perhaps in moments of holy contemplation the Lord awakens our mind to depths of truth we had not before suspected. Perhaps at times of great pressure, when the foes of the soul are too strong for us at such a moment He opens our eyes, like the eyes of Elisha's servant, to those great forces working together for us -- *the Hosts of the LORD*, the limitless supply of all the divine resources. Perhaps, like Jacob, our hours of weariness have become times of vision and great reassurance of divine promise so that we feel we have just awakened to the personal watch care of our God and His never-failing faithfulness, so that we are constrained to say, "*SURELY THE LORD IS IN THIS PLACE, and I knew it not.*"

Our spiritual life is made up of such awakenings. *THIS* is the *ultimate* of all our awakenings, and each awakening of our present course makes it nearer.

Here is that moment of sweet release from all limitation of human frame, the moment of *VICTORY*. This is the awakening "where sin and sense molest no more", and the mind soars like the eagle to the sun, to gaze upon and to comprehend all the glorious fullness of truth's ultimate reality. In Scripture it is compared with the full light of noonday.

Doubly precious not only will that moment of blessed truth introduce us into the closest, fullest, relationship and awareness of the glories of eternity, it also will mark the completion, the bringing to perfection, of Our Heavenly Father's most wondrous purpose for us.

The moment of reaching the goal, the reaching out and grasping of the prize of the high calling, the moment too, that will be, that *He* reaches His goal for *me* -- His work in me *finished*, and the great seal of divine approval pronounced, "It is very good," and, as in a dream, I will realize that *He speaks of His work in me!* And His "well done," shall be, though all eternity, *enough for me.*

Only in the peaks of our present spiritual experience can we remotely sense that height of the Father's triumph in His achievement, the bringing of His child to glory, the setting of the jewel in His crown. "*They shall be Mine.*"

That moment of awakening to see what He has wrought! Will it not surpass our brightest hopes and sweetest dreams? The years of pilgrimage all lead to this. That delight in the Lord, deepening with time, will be answered in the granting of the heart's desires, to be experienced in ten thousand joys, all compressed into that moment of change.

How wonderful! It takes a whole pilgrim walk to change our mind, but just the twinkling of an eye to

change our body. What body will be this? While that veil intervenes we can grow no nearer in our comprehension than our Brother Paul and Brother John.

When Paul wrote 1Corinthians 15, he did not know. Now he knows! He knew enough, that it would be a body pleasing, yes pleasing to the Lord. He knew that it would bear no resemblance to this body of humiliation. He knew that it would bear great resemblance unto the glorious body of His Lord in heaven. Even John, lost in spiritual depths of thought and vision, could only say, "It doth not yet appear what we shall be," and yet that dear brother whose faith perceived each vision as a revealing of the glory of his Lord, and each truth for its solid rocklike certainty, could add, with no hiding of emotion, "we know that, when it is apparent what we shall be, we shall be like Him." What manner of love is this?

Years of contemplation of the glory of God, that excellence of the qualities of the divine Mind, and the wonders of His mighty attributes, the absorption, in that holy state of heart, of the beauty of the Lord, all leaves its mark, like the light exposed through the lenses of spiritual understanding upon the deeply sensitive heart.

The Spirit, the very disposition of the One we come to so dearly love, enters the heart, as the perception of His holiness penetrates the mind, and by the sharing of His very nature of light and love the glory is reflected, and the evidence begins to show, Whose child we are.

Thus does He lead His child to glory, from one blessed stage of His likeness to another. The faint glimpses of His glory, endearing in our spiritual infancy, imperceptibly grow through each maturing year and experience. How we would rejoice in heart to hear the remark of the effect of His Spirit in our being, and His nature in our whole demeanor, "Isn't he like his Father?"

The moment of awakening reveals that final blessed state, and I shall have my Father's eyes, eyes full of compassion, of deep perception, and of holy love, eyes that will reflect, within my own depths of being, those same beauties of character I have come to know and so dearly love in Him.

The Bride of Christ, the jewels that form that heavenly Jerusalem, each part is found to have the glory of God. And even in those scenes of breathtaking wonder of which the half has not yet been told, the King's daughter is at once at home, a child of that Light, before Whom she appears, all glorious within.

In that beautiful description in the 45th Psalm, in which the Spirit-filled mind of the singer bubbles over with delight at the blessed scene envisioned, we find the queen clothed in most precious garments of gold. All the richest qualities of the divine nature now are hers. She is radiant in her robes of fine needlework. Each single stitch an expression of love for that One it has become her all-consuming desire to please. And yet, in the midst of glory,

"The Bride eyes not her garments, but her dear Bridegroom's face.
I will not gaze at glory, but on my King of Grace.
Not at the crown He giveth, but on His outstretched hand.
The Lamb is all the glory of Immanuel's land."

Chapter 2

THE FACE TO FACE MEETING WITH JESUS.

We read of Rebekah in Genesis 24:64, that when she saw Isaac she "lighted off her camel." Actually, the Hebrew word allows the translation, she "*fell* off her camel"! What, I wonder, will be *our* emotions as we meet Jesus face to face?

All that journey Rebekah must have asked and learned so much about the Isaac she had never seen, and that faithful servant Eliezer, sent forth with the precious mission to find a wife meet for his master's son, would readily tell her all that was in her heart to ask. Undoubtedly he spoke of

the great riches of Isaac's father, and his righteousness and faithfulness, yet how, above all else he possessed, he treasured most the son of his love. He would speak with such feeling of that wonderful act of offering Isaac, and of that son's readiness to be offered, that it would bring tears to Rebekah's eyes. And he would tell her of the great promise of blessing and happiness for all mankind that resulted from this act of faithfulness and love.

Isaac was indeed someone very special to be honored for the place he held in the purposes of God, but for Rebekah, there was a deeply personal meaning to all that she learned of this one she was on her way to meet. He was the one she was to marry. His future and her future were to become one. Everything they possessed would belong equally to each other, including that very special relationship with his father. Her only aim of existence would be forever to make him happy, just as her happiness would be his joy.

What would it be like that life of completed union? What would *he* be like, when, at the end of the journey, all her mental pictures and dreams would, like the light of a candle, be swallowed up in that first noontide glimpse of his smile as she meets him face to face?

Now does he walk to meet her, and as he steps towards her the whole objective and goal of the long journey is realized!

The express desire of Isaac's father, the love of Isaac toward this future bride, the mission of Eliezer, the joy of Rebekah, for each it is the moment of blissful realization.

And so with us, the One "Whom, having not seen, we love, in Whom, though now we see Him not, yet believing (in His love and desire towards us) we rejoice," with the unspeakable joy of one betrothed to the most wonderful person in the whole universe, the express image of His Father's glory.

The face of Jesus, as described by Paul, was as a light from heaven above the brightness of the sun at noon. In that face Paul knew he had looked upon the glory of God. John, in vision, also saw that face "as the sun shining in its strength." The word he uses signifies its full dynamic power, a brightness too great for human eyes to bear. Symbology, yet conveying great truth concerning this wonderful Being to Whom no human form nor any glory of the celestial spheres can compare. Such language is as the smoked glass that enables us to view the unviewable, and to glimpse something of that glory filtered down to human tolerance of vision, though humanly incomprehensible.

*Face to face with Christ my Savior,
Face to face, what will it be,
When in glory I behold Him,
Jesus Christ, Who died for me?*

And shall we say when thus we meet, "Who art Thou Lord?"

It was Eliezer who identified Isaac to Rebekah. That same Spirit of God that has led us all the way, will then complete its sacred task of union long before begun. There will be no mistaking that One endowed beyond all measure with that Spirit, that same Spirit that has so long linked our hearts with His. "Thine eyes shall see the King in His beauty..." When we think of a person we think of his face. The face identifies, and the face is the index of character, the eyes, the

windows of the soul. Only in such human terms may we now envisage that meeting with the Lord Jesus.

The woman's description in the 'Song of Songs' of the one she loves can find no feature of her beloved that is not altogether lovable. The choicest language known to man is there used to describe this wonderful warmth and beauty of character that we call Our Lord Jesus. Here is that Wonderful Being Who, at His Father's command, brought into being everything that is made. The mystery of the atom, and the secrets of life, the laws of the universe that hold all things together in a state of constant vibrant power, all is known to Him, the Wisdom of an all-wise God. What immeasurable comprehension, skill, and mighty power.

We shall stand before that One, Who, having made the great nebulae of unfathomable space, and strung the necklace of a myriad stars to form the Milky Way of light across the heavens, at the same voice of His Father, descended to this earth, to be born of woman, and to share in wondrous intimacy every feeling of the human creature He had made. So close does He come, and so close shall we stand before the Source of that love, that uttermost love for me, witnessed at Golgotha, the same in glory. Do I know anyone who, in love for me, would *die* for me?

What shall I say or do when I stand right there before my Savior and Redeemer?

"Mary", "Rabboni!" When Mary then clung to the Savior's feet what depths of emotion overflowed and were shared between them both. What glimpse is here suggested to the mind of that sweet hour in the experience of each redeemed one when he meets his Savior! Where human language fails, those depths of each heart's gratitude and love will be expressed by perfect vehicles of adoration and praise. All that we want to say to Him that now we can only express in our tears, all the love we hold for Him, *all* will be told, *face to face*.

The veil still intervenes, hiding from our eyes the full knowledge of what that meeting yet will be, but our heart observes no such limitations. Our heart can pass, even now, beyond that veil to feel the warmth and preciousness of that indescribable moment. Our heart can *feel* the desires of His heart mingling with the desires of our heart, and that mutual ache is drawing us ever closer towards that moment of mutual satisfaction and delight.

Rebekah also was veiled, and only with the eyes of faith could *Isaac* anticipate the full beauty he would yet behold in her. Jesus, and His Bride, each by faith can penetrate that veil, and see beyond all present limitations of time those precious glimpses of that moment of joy unspeakable and full of glory when we meet. Then shall all veils be lifted, and we shall **see** face to face, and **know** Him as we are and shall be forever known of Him.

Chapter 3

THE WAITING ARMS OF THE FATHER.

*O Lord, that I might view my present walk,
each test, each trial, each concept of Thy Truth,
against the glory of that perfect day.*

*Oh that with retrospective wisdom blest,
I could retrace each step, remold each thought,*

with noonday vision of my Father's face.

In Exodus 24, verse 9, we find, with Moses, seventy elders climbing the holy mountain.

Exodus 24:10 (AV) "And they saw the God of Israel: and there was under his feet as it were a paved work of a sapphire stone, and as it were the body of heaven in his clearness.

11 And upon the nobles of the children of Israel he laid not his hand: also they saw God, and did eat and drink."

We know this was a visionary representation. We have the words of spiritual authority saying, "No man hath seen God at any time." Likewise must this apply to other visions of the divine presence and glory, to Isaiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, and John. Genesis 32, verses 24 to 30, speaks of Jacob wrestling with God until the break of day. "I have seen God face to face." The thought filled Jacob with deepest awe and wonder. "I have seen God face to face, and live", for no man can do this. No man can see God's face and live!

Thus is conveyed to our minds the underlying vastness of truth, the utter holiness of God. Such holiness is a consuming fire of all that is feigned, all that is impure, all that is unworthy to stand in His most holy presence.

*"Eternal Light, Eternal Light, how pure that soul must be,
When placed within Thy searching sight,
It shrinks not, but with calm delight,
Can live, and look on Thee."*

Yet once man did walk and talk with God in the cool refreshing breeze of evening, before sin intervened to alienate and estrange from Creator the creature made to bear His likeness. What Adam sadly lost and missed the walk of faith has found and cherished. Communion of heart with heart, and in this age, one Spirit shared, and confidences too, between the Father and His child. Save for that Way, that ladder He has made to bridge the distance separating Holy God from fallen man, no one would yet have come to know the Lord. There would have been no Word, no message sent of truth. Yet 'Way' did He provide when He sent His Son, a 'Way' anticipated by the faith of ages past. "I am the Way," "No man cometh to the Father but by Me."

*Here is the blessing of the pure in heart, who long for separateness from sin.
Their oneness of desire, the Lord to please.. Their total aim, His nod and smile to win.*

Bringing us to God is a process involving first the passing through that door, once found, of faith in that blood that lift's away *sin's guilt*. It then entails pursuit along a road the end of which is to lift away *sin's power*. This road is lit by a lamp to the feet, the guidance of His Word, instructing steps, reproving slips, and strengthening resolve by the power of the Spirit of Holiness. All this is involved, and it would be an undertaking of impossible magnitude were it in any other hands than of the Captain of our salvation, Jesus. 'First and chief bringer', so does that title "Captain" imply, of "many sons to glory."

The provisions of grace sufficient for such work, the furnishing of every need to bring us to that final presentation before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, **all** is the Father's doing, **all** is the Father's work, the fulfilling of the Father's desire. To achieve this wondrous goal He employs the skill and judgment of His beloved Son, so aptly described as the Arm of God. Thus TWO most wonderful Minds, united by One Spirit, are actively directed towards the

achievement of that moment of presentation, focusing every enabling power in common purpose to that one blessed end.

Oh that Wonderful Mind of my Father, that sees a long way off even the first turning of the eyes, hears that first groaning of the soul, that loathing of self, that dissatisfaction with the husks appropriate only to the lower beasts. That Mind that knew when man first left the safety of his dwelling with the One Who brought him forth, now following his own unworthy course, knew that one day that same man would return, return home. So, with arms outstretched, the Father waits that hour when He might greet His wayward child and say, "This son of Mine was dead, and is alive!" That pathway of contrition do we tread today, before mankind. That Father's smile, its warmth along the path to urge us on, the whispered voice, "Yet closer come, thou art not near enough.." all love's constraining do we feel within our hearts. Each faltering step is thus endowed with light of hope, and ever present is the knowledge of those waiting arms that reach to take me to Himself.

This fellowship, this walk with God, we know, even now along that way. We know the power of those arms, sustaining, reassuring, everlasting, always there. We bow beneath that humbling hand when human pride rebels. Its disciplines we accept as tokens of His love, that of His holiness we should partake. In weariness and weakness, those arms become our bed. In face of stumbling, they bear us up lest we dash our feet and trip. And when, in disregard of his full warning, we may fall, yet still they lift again to set us straight upon the path that leads to closer walk, and deeper knowing, and more faithful love.

These are the arms we know and each have proved. They wait there at the end when faultless in His presence we shall stand, and know that full atonement with our God. Each one the Master takes by hand and leads them to the Father's presence, as He says, "My Father, O Righteous Father, this is " yes, and then will He confess my name.

Faultless in the presence of His glory, blameless before the throne of His holiness, my righteousness will be all of Him Who is of holiness the Source. The vessel in His hands will be pure gold, in furnace tried, and on it will be stamped in everlasting character, *HOLINESS TO THE LORD*.

Oh may it never end, that age of love's embrace, triumphant in the outcome of His work!

If I in Thy likeness, O Lord may awake,
And shine a pure image of Thee,
Then I shall be satisfied when I can break
The fetters of flesh, and be free.

I know this stained tablet must first be washed white,
And there Thy bright features be drawn.
I know I must suffer the darkness of night
To welcome the coming of dawn.

And O! The blest morning already is here.
The shadows of earth soon shall fade.
And soon in Thy likeness I'll with Thee appear,
In glory and beauty arrayed.

When on Thine own image in me Thou hast smiled,
Within Thy blest mansion, and when
The arms of my Father encircle His child,
O! I shall be satisfied then.

"O send out Thy light and Thy truth. Let them lead me; Let them bring me unto Thy holy hill, and to Thy tabernacle..." Psalm 43:3.

Chapter 4

THE MARRIAGE OF GOD'S DEAR SON.

A wedding is a time of joy. The joy of this wedding will surpass the total joy of *every human ceremony that has taken place.*

Even the thought of it brings joy, and in that joy a sense of encouragement, and with it, a sense of blessed urgency that motivates to greater zeal and endeavor in the preparation that precedes our completed union with the Lord. "The marriage of the Lamb *is come.*" The sound of that glad proclamation, how it stirs our hearts! Now, in every way this marriage has to be the most remarkable of all, because the completion of union involves every faithful saint of the age.

Oneness... !

A full assembly of the firstborn church.. the gathering home of the saints of light. Each one united with each other in *perfect oneness..* oneness of mind, and of every deep feeling of the heart, one in every thought. Harmony and concord.. not of polite low-key and deferential diplomatic smiles from afar, but intensely alive sharing of deep love for truth and holiness and one another and, most of all, for the Lord Jesus. Each one perfectly in tune with the Lord.

The mind of Jesus ... perfection of accordance with the mind of God, a mind of purity and light, a mind totally full of wholesome holy thought, and yet so deeply aware of all that goes on in each other mind of that whole assembly of saints. An intellect full of understanding, rich beyond present thought in treasures of wisdom and knowledge. Creative of all that is beauty, capable of every perfect expression of all that is lovely.

This glorious mind of Jesus, reflected like the sun in 144,000 characters like gems, each one a precious part of His Father's peculiar treasure. A composite Christ, with one heart, and one holy anointing without measure, and in one mind, the mind of Christ. "I in them ... perfect in one.."

This present anticipation of that joy of full oneness in completed union is something that each saint has shared with the Lord. Fellowship with Jesus has involved a sharing of this desire, and the depth of that fellowship at each stage of the way could be measured by the depth of that joy and the sanctifying power of that hope. As the heart has been enlarged to comprehend more and more of the love of our beloved Bridegroom so that vail has seemed to grow thin before us, as though something of the brightness of that awaiting glory was shining through its folds as light of the most blessed reality sent forth to greet us, to welcome, and to bring us to His holy hill, into the radiance of the presence of His glory.

Yet it is like looking at the sun through darkly smoked glass. There is, there has to be, limitation

in what the Lord is able to share with us in our present state .. or we, like Saul of Tarsus, would need to be led about, blinded by a glory this frail body was not designed to bear.

This situation.. I suppose we could call it the Rebekah and Eliezer journey, is fertile ground for the development of that needed trust and confidence in the One calling us, sending His Spirit to bring us to a glory beyond the power of human mind to conceive or trace. As day followed day, Rebekah would ask more and more of Eliezer. Day after day the picture grew in her heart of the one who waited to share with her such mutual delight and joy. But until that moment of meeting she knew only in part, and so do we. And we prophecy in part, we talk together now on the basis of a partial knowing yet to be swallowed up in the full brightness of perfect day.

What will that meeting be with that One Who, having not seen, we love..? We have mentioned how we are told in Genesis 24:64, that at the sight of Isaac meditating (we think we know what about) in the field, she *fell off her camel!* One polite translation says she "dismounted quickly," but the word means to fall! Such were *her* emotions.. *what will be ours?*

So long has our Master waited.. waited for that moment of completion in every saint of the work of grace.. waited for that hour of total sharing with no limitation, with full mutual appreciation and comprehension of all eternal and divine truth. "Father" .. He had prayed so earnestly near His darkest hour, "*Father, I want these to be with Me, I want them to see My glory, I want them to share it.*"

It is His desire ... *my Master's desire* ... that I should be with Him where He is, and that I should behold His glory.. without a veil. (Gen.24:65.) No language can describe the blessedness, the happiness, the deeply shared joy, when Jesus with each saint together realize the fulfillment, the filling full, of each other's heart's desire. This is the consummation, not of earthly love.. something grander, higher far than all earthly love, the consummation of uttermost love.

That full measure of a Father's love was first expressed in Jesus. It was Jesus Who first loved, and it is He Who undertakes by that continual immersion in this realization and every other sanctifying truth of the Word that needful cleansing of the mind, that singleness of heart-longing for Him.. the bringing of every thought to the adoration and obedience of Christ. All to one blessed end. And every thought of holiness that Our Lord inspires, and every attitude of praise and act of loving acclamation and desire, is a step along the aisle.

When, at last, the point is reached, the perfect merging of my every thought with His, the full triumph of divine grace within my heart, true holiness beautifying His dwelling place therein, it will be that "love for me once crucified" that will then joy over the fruitage of that same love's labor in me.

"Who is this that cometh up from the wilderness, leaning upon her Beloved?" Leaning ... That implies trust, but more than mere knowing He is there. It speaks of loving confidence that He Who drew me from a spiritual desert into the pastures of love will still pursue in me His task, and at the end present me to Himself, not me alone, but all who have been drawn and captivated by that same love.. a glorious church, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing. Can we envisage ourselves without one blemish? "Able to present me faultless.."

In language so beautiful, yet familiar, of marriage, we have a remarkable illustration of the Lord's way to reach our finite minds without exploding them, for His thoughts are higher than

ours as heaven is higher than earth. The language is human, the truth divine The eyes of our heart are open wide, yet when every spiritual sense has indulged that new mind of His creation and saturated and satisfied its hunger and thirst for the knowing of its Lord, each saint is well aware that yet there is more.. the half has not been told us.

The thought of a betrothal, a marriage, and its joy.. this is the Lord's selection from human experience. From man's beginning did the Lord institute what was ideally designed to be the most joyous act of human kind. And this He takes and uses as analogy to draw our minds away from every joy of earth to high above the loftiest realm of human thought.. to drift indeed in realms unknown to man, and glimpse the glories of eternity. How can we grasp the concept of that "forever with the Lord"?

The endless age composed of countless gemlike moments of perfect alignment of all thought and activity in heart delight and mutual joy. I in Him, enveloped in Him, and He in me.. When every saint will think as one, and act and speak in the unity of one single mind, that of the Lord Himself, and yet contribute, each its special part to play, to that one glorious Body, each supply according to one blest design that which will enrich each other part.

Grace, unmerited and undeserved favor from a divine heart, grace is at work this moment, taking the things that are nothing, to make of each a valued part, a precious contribution, not one superfluous, to that glorious whole.

Each step of this way, each day, has been our joy to find in Jesus our every want. "I need Thee every hour.." When we are not singing the words the sentiments are there expressed in hearts that ache for the Lord. That aching must be precious to the Lord. But what is our emotion when we hear the Master's voice, as in a dream, and know it is of me He speaks the words, My glorious Head, as He surveys His work of grace in me, the least of those uncomely parts, "**I, your Head, need you.**" So here eternally *my utmost need and His* together meet, and perfect love in perfect oneness flows.

RECEPTION AT THE FATHER'S HOUSE.

The Lord's Own choice of human analogy now will prompt the heart to reach beyond that blessed moment of completed union, Bridegroom and Bride, to that scene of joy, that festal occasion of such shared delight . . . the marriage supper.

In eastern custom this glad feast of revelry and dance and love would last for many days, and involve a whole community. That which began with the Bridegroom's approach to the home of His Bride in accordance with His betrothal vow.. "I will come ... and take you unto Myself..." now continues in rejoicing as He takes her to His Father's House.

"I go to prepare there a place for you.." With feeling must those holy lips have framed those words, and yet He surely knew that words could not convey to finite minds, still strangers to the place of which He spoke, the fullness of the glories of His Father's House. For this is Heaven itself, to which the Holiest of the Sanctuary point in Tabernacle and in Temple, where shone between the gold-winged cherubim that light of the very presence of God, the glory illuminating that sacred place. Hidden from the eye of common man, that glory remained veiled throughout those days of shadowy vague portrayal, and to this hour the veil of human limitation intervenes between the state of man and things divine.

With all the advancing knowledge of our day, a knowledge increasing at such rapid rate, and doubling within decades the accumulated knowledge of man's history past, man has but scratched the surface. These are but *the edges of His ways*. Countless are the secrets that remain and mysteries too even in the material realm. If we do not comprehend earthly things how shall we fathom heaven?

Earth is a place. The universe occupies space, each star and nebulae having position and magnitude in material terms. But Heaven is not a place in that sense. It is a different realm of existence to that of man. Long centuries past have men looked upwards from the earth, some from the north, some south and others east and west, and pointed to the starry space beyond terrestrial things when indicating heaven. In such vague gesture only could he point to where God dwells. For space expands the further we might go, the opposite of finite here of earth.

This is our Father's realm, immeasurable in human terms, not place, but state divine. Here human language, formed to describe all human experience and thought, at once must fail when venturing into the divine, or else must coin expressions incomprehensible to the mind of man. Thus words like "omniscience," "omnipotence," are like "the ether" terms confessing ignorance, a way of alluding to the indescribable.

This is His Father's House where Jesus said He went again, that in that holy realm of things divine He might prepare for each of His beloved friends in partnership to share, that He might come again and take His own within that palace of blessedness, that home of love, and "habitation of His holiness and glory." (Isaiah 63:15.)

No man has heard His voice or seen His shape, yet in our Savior do His glories shine, and while the natural eye has never seen the glorious things prepared for sons of love, yet to our hearts the Spirit shows such precious glimpses of these things for us to yet be fully known. The intellect draws back. With no precision can it view those scenes in heaven when the Lamb with such rejoicing brings His Bride, yet even now, by that Spirit's power, we rise as if on eagle's wings, and feel the warmth of heaven's love and apprehend the joy of that blessed hour that lies beyond the sphere of natural sense and opens to eternal life.

What comfort lay in the Master's assurance that His Father's House embraced so many resting places for the sons of His love. Since the common version used the word "mansions," four centuries ago that word has somewhat lost its onetime simple thought of *home*. Verse 23 of that same chapter John 14, repeats the word. There it is translated "abode," and in its roots John's favorite word "abide," gives clue to that sense of warmth and rest, and satisfaction of the soul, first our rest in Him, then, wondrous thought, His rest of satisfied desire in us. "O sweet home of the soul.."

What feasting and rejoicing there awaits the holy hearts of saints! What untold depths of a Father's heart of love will find their full expression of delight as He draws His family to Him, precious jewels in His glorious crown. The love like sweetest incense that will fill that holy Temple ... Each heart delighting in its treasure in each other's precious company. And as each child of love is now brought forth resplendent in a body like the Lord's the Father from His treasure house of things divine delights to share those sacred holy things dear to His heart, whose glory and whose brightness in our previous state we could not bear ... The riches of His Wisdom, and the wonders of His Skill, and every blessed purpose of His Holy Perfect Will.

Only the best of fare becomes a marriage feast, and poorer families with modest means may well incur great debt to rise to such an occasion, or else depend on gifts to supplement their own provision. What nightmare, what great disaster, and what shame if before the climax of the feast the wine ran out! No wonder it was known to water the wine and eke out the rich food with cheaper fare when the effect of the first and better provisions had made the heart glad and the senses less discerning.

The feast our Father has prepared for those that love Him reflects both riches beyond dream and highest taste. Nor will the fare decline with time, for as the feast progresses further guests appear, and joys are shared and thus increase, until all shall turn to fellow and confess "the best He kept until the last."

At such a wedding festival two families meet and celebrate the new-formed bond that now unites the people of the Bride with those of the Groom. Thus in the course of this great feast as men begin to hear the sound of truth, catch notes of joy in heaven at their response, and taste the blessings stemming from this union above, the Bride with God's dear Son, they too will come, men will respond in heartfelt joy to that glad call to celebrate and join with hosts above, acknowledging the union that will forever bind the family of God in heaven with that of earth.

Psalm 45 verse 12, includes amongst the guests that come to share that atmosphere of nuptial joy and great exuberance of spirit, one name the "daughter of Tyre." And look! She bears a gift! In holy Writ we know that Prince of Tyre, another name for Satan with his pride and arrogant power. This one was born in his domain, and once had known indeed the power of sin, the pride of this world's life estranging every soul from God. From that poor wretch the sevenfold power of Satan had been cast. The life, once waste, now fills with purpose and resolve. No longer servant to the king of Tyre, yet neither to herself did she belong, for she was purchased, wondrously redeemed with price that spoke such volumes of great love. A deep compulsion now lays claim, persistently it draws her to respond to Him Who gave His all on her behalf. And now, responding to that love, she comes, to bring her gift of gratitude and praise, a willing offering of her heart. The seal on alabaster box breaks to pour forth those contents, oh so precious to her Lord.. While at the sight all heaven rejoices with great joy. And are there tears in Bride and Bridegroom's eyes as now they turn to feast upon that blessed smile that radiates the Father's face?

So will the excitement grow as more and more come into truth's most blessed light and fellowship, and learn to sing the songs of life with hosts above, until from every corner of the earth the incense rises and the chorus grows to form with that same song from every part of heaven a mighty anthem full of joy and praise from lives reflective of their Lord, and hearts that love His Ways.

Dear to the hearts of saints who know their God is this delightful thought. Amid the rapturous scenes of heaven above when glory fills the souls of all who share that sacred place of love at Jesus' side, their Savior's joy will yet be fully known when from that table of delights are portions sent to those who once had feared that for them nothing was prepared. What fellow feeling will be shared as beggars from the dunghill, every one those saints in glory seated busily will send, in sympathetic language to the heart of every man, the invitation.. "Come!"

The Feast of fat things that will gladden earth has its great beginnings in those scenes in heaven

when Jesus takes His Bride within His Father's House, to drink anew with her the wine of sacred love that seals a covenant of grace yet to beget to life abundant all mankind. Nor will that marriage supper end until from every corner of this earth all men that river of His pleasure come to drink. And not only will they from that river drink but each will in its crystal waters take their stand, and as its waters cleanse their feet and walk, they will indulge in bathing every part until in full immersion they are swept along to find the blessed fullness of that life eternal of full knowing of their God.

The Father's arms are aching for that hour when from their worthless ways all men will turn. A long way off the Father has enjoyed the prospect of a family in heaven and in earth complete. The best robe waits, the ring of everlasting love, the feast and the rejoicing when at last He will proclaim.. "This one who once was dead to Me and heaven's love, is now *alive!*"

Then will the Christ, with healing in its beams, rise as the sun to gladden hearts on earth with cheering warmth, and overspill to man the joys of truth and righteousness, that atmosphere of love, that pure devotion to His Will that fills all heaven. And thus the Father's House, His dwelling place, expand, to then include the hearts and lives of men that fill a sin-cleansed earth. So will His House become a House of Prayer for all mankind, when all desires of human hearts there meet and satisfaction find forever in their God.. in Whom are all their springs.

They all will eat the fatness, drink the goodness of the Lord, and come to know the treasures of His Wise and Faithful Word, while showers of blessing gladden all the earth.

The Word resorts to *poetry* to describe what still defies man's language to portray. The bliss of spirit realms is still beyond our thought, though now so thin the veil that intervenes. Yet wisely did He choose this form of speech. How else could He enable us to bear the glories that await us there? We need that hope, we need its sanctifying power now in our lives. We find such joy in even the vaguest glimmers through that veil of untold realms beyond this mind to comprehend save now in part. What will it be ... that ... '*face to face*' ?

The language of a marriage and its joys is part of that poetry. It conveys in contemplation now to minds too limited to fathom all its depths something of glory we are yet to fully know.. enough, and more than we could have hoped for here below! This is no abstract truth, but truth which centers in a person we have come to know and love. Whatever scenes await us there beyond, we know Our Lord will not be stranger to His own. With Him they walk today, and in His Name they pray for those desires He prompts within our minds, and for the longings He has kindled in our hearts.

When Jesus said, "I will return and take you to myself within My Father's House, the language of betrothal did He use, so precious to the heart of every saint. And we the language of betrothal also spoke when to the invitation of the Spirit we replied.. "*I will,*" and echoed there those words that changed Rebekah's life.

Those blessed expressions of His heart and mine began this fellowship, and ever since propelled our feet towards one goal. And nothing in our lives is now more real than this relationship with Him. So real, it has dismissed the things of earth as if a dream, for we have eyes for Him alone. These truths we know, and yet, like Sheba's queen, our breath is taken at the sight of Him Who sits on glory's throne, and they who share the honor at His side.

Chapter 5

RECEPTION AT THE FATHER'S HOUSE

The Lord's own choice of human analogy now prompts the heart to reach beyond that blessed moment of completed union, Bridegroom and Bride, to that scene of joy, that festal occasion of shared delight, the *marriage supper*.

In eastern custom this glad feast of revelry and dance and love, would last for many days, and involve a whole community. That which began with the Bridegroom's approach to the home of the Bride in accordance with the promise, "I will come again and receive you unto myself;" now continues in rejoicing as He takes her to His Father's House.

"My Father's House."

With feeling must those holy lips have framed those words, and yet He surely knew that words could not convey to finite minds, still strangers to the place of which He spoke, the fullness of the glories of His Father's House. For this is Heaven itself, to which the Holiest of all in Tabernacle and in Temple points, where shone between the gold-winged cherubim that light of the presence of God, the only illumination of that sacred place. Hidden from the eye of common man, that glory remained veiled throughout the days of this shadowy portrayal of Heaven itself, and to this hour the veil of human limitation intervenes between the state of man and things divine. Even in this enlightened age of advancing knowledge we have yet so much to learn regarding the things of the material realm. We do not near comprehend the fullness of its countless wonders and mysteries. If we do not understand earthly things, how shall we fathom Heaven?

Heaven is no 'place' as earth is a place in the material universe. While man long centuries past has looked above and pointed to the starry space beyond terrestrial things when indicating heaven, regardless of his location on this sphere of earth, in such vague gesture only could he indicate the dwelling place of God. For space expands the further we might go, the opposite of finite here on earth. This is Our Father's realm, immeasurable in human terms, not 'place' but state of the divine, and human language formed but to describe all human life and thought at once must fail when venturing into the divine, or else must coin expressions lacking meaning in the experience of man. "Omniscience," "omnipotence," like "ether," confess only our ignorance, but give a term whereby we speak of that defying human comprehension. In Scripture also do we find expressions which by stating opposites thus contrast with the things we know. "Not mortal", "not corruptible", "incapable of fading away", by such terms does the mind reach out towards that glory which is Heaven, and the state of those who share that wondrous realm.

This is the Father's House where Jesus said He went again, to there prepare, in holy realm of things divine, a place for each beloved "friend" to share with Him. Then would He come again and take His own within that home of love, the palace of blessedness, "the habitation of His holiness and glory." (Isaiah 63:15) Concerning Him, Whose Name is Holy and Who inhabits eternity, no man has "heard His voice or seen His shape;" yet in Our Savior do His glories shine, and while the natural eye has likewise never seen the glorious things prepared for the sons of His love yet to our hearts the Spirit grants such precious senses of these things to come. It is a

brightness ill-defined. The intellect draws back. With no precision can it view those scenes in heaven when the Lamb, with such rejoicing, brings His Bride. Yet hearts now touched by the Spirit's power can feel the warmth of heaven's love and apprehend the joy of that blessed hour that lies beyond the sphere of natural sense, and opens to eternal life.

What comfort lies in the master's assurance that His Father's House embraced so many resting places for the sons of His love. Since our common version used the word four centuries ago, "mansions" has somewhat lost its onetime simple thought of "home". John 14 once again repeats the word in verse 23, where translated "abode", and in its roots John's favorite word "abide" gives clue to that sweet sense of warmth and rest and every satisfaction of the soul, first ours in Him, then, wondrous thought, *His rest* of satisfied desire *in us!* These places of delight the Master has prepared within His Father's House each bear a written name. Oh can it be that one is marked "reserved" for *me*? Within the heart now lies the key. "Do you find there within, Dear Father, and blessed Lord, a place of sweet accord and rest *reserved* alone for Thee?"

What feasting and rejoicing there awaits the holy hearts of saints! What untold depths of Father's heart of love will find their full expression of delight as He draws His family to Him, such precious jewels in His glorious crown! The atmosphere of love of that occasion! Each heart delighting in its heavenly "treasure" in each other's precious company. Each child of love the Father thus brings forth will share those sacred holy things dear to His heart. Their glory and their brightness in the present human state we could not bear. The riches of His wisdom, and the wonders of His skill, and every blessed purpose of His holy perfect Will. Then shall we more perfectly explore the heights and the depths, the full dimensions of His great love.

Only the best of fare becomes a marriage feast. Poorer families with modest means may well incur great debt to rise to such occasion, or depend on gifts to supplement their fare. What nightmare would it be, what shame, if, say, the wine ran out before the climax of the feast. No wonder it was known in those first advents times, to water the wine, and eke the food out with some cheaper fare, when the effect of the first and better spread had made the heart glad and the senses and palate less discerning. The feast Our Father has prepared for those that love Him reflects both highest taste and riches beyond dream. Nor will the fare decline with time, for as it progresses further guests appear, and joys are shared and thus increase, until all shall say, "the best He has kept to the last!"

At such a wedding festival two families meet and celebrate the new-formed bond that now unites the people of the Bride with the family of the Groom. Thus, in the course of this great feast, as men begin to hear the sound of truth and taste the blessings stemming from this union in Heaven, the Bride with God's dear Son, they will respond in heartfelt joy to that glad call to celebrate and join (while still on earth as men) with hearts above, acknowledging the union that will bind the family in Heaven with that of earth. Psalm 45 includes amongst the guests that come to share that atmosphere of nuptial joy and great exuberance of spirit, one named "the daughter of Tyre." And, look, she bears a gift! In Holy Writ we read of Tyre's Prince, and recognize in his arrogance and pride the description of Satan too. This one was born in his domain, and once had known indeed the power of sin, the pride of this world's life estranging her soul from God. Yet, now responding to the invitation, there she stands, to bring the gift of gratitude and praise, a willing offering of her heart, while all in heaven rejoice at this glad sight.

So will excitement grow as more and more come into truth and fellowship and sing the songs of

life with hosts above, until from every part of earth the chorus rise, to form with that same song of heaven a mighty anthem full of joy and praise, from lives reflective of the Lord, and hearts that love His ways. The feast of fat things that will gladden earth has its beginnings in those scenes in heaven when Jesus takes His Bride within His father's House to drink with her anew the wine of sacred love. Nor will it end until all men that 'river of His pleasure' come to drink. Then will the Christ, with healing beams, rise as the sun to gladden hearts on earth with cheering warmth, and overflow to earth the joys of truth and righteousness, the atmosphere of love, the pure devotion to His Will that fills all heaven. And thus will the Father's House, His dwelling place, expand to then include the hearts and lives of men that fill a sin-cleansed earth. So will His House become a House of Prayer for all mankind, when all desires of human hearts there meet, and satisfaction find forever in their God.

They all will eat the fatness, drink the goodness of the Lord, and come to know the treasures of His holy faithful Word. When the Spirit with the Bride say "Come!", and of life's abundance man will freely drink, what showers of blessing then will gladden earth! What joy the prospect brings us even now. What strength from that rejoicing now we gain. What stirring of our faith to know that hour for other of our brethren has begun. Beyond is all rejoicing! Now is the intervening veil so thin. We hear the now not far off voice that hails these joys begun. We sense the gladness, taste the feast now spread, and test the power of eagle's wings that lift our minds away to share in Heaven's bliss. They carry us on through every age to be whose blessedness will stem from this great feast, the Marriage of the Lamb.

Chapter 6

THE ENTHRONEMENT WITH THE LAMB.

There stands the queen, radiant in her happiness, the light of inner glory shining through her eyes. And now comes the moment of great triumph for her King, as, seated on the throne of glory, He draws her to His side. *"Sit thou at my right hand, here on my throne."*

Is it to me He speaks, that worthy Lamb of God? *His* place of royal majesty becomes His *worthiness*. He claims no honor more than faithfulness has won. Those shouts of acclamation as first He took that place, all His the praise as high above each name of every high exalted power His Name was placed. A perfect recognition of His worth, to which the ages of His faithfulness have led.

With me it is so different. Who is, who can be yet, sufficient for these things? Yet has He lifted from the dunghill to set among princesses and princes those who beg for mercy's crumbs and find no cause of pleasure in their flesh. Their only claim on heaven's grace is hunger, the inner aching of the soul for righteousness and freedom from sin's stain. Their heart confesses all its deepest need, and gratefully accept what grace supplies. Yet what wisdom lies beyond the Father's choice of such, whose sinful state confessed, would love Him most, and tell it in their tears. He brings to naught the things that are with things that in their eyes are naught, yet in His sight so dear. All human cause of pride, great intellect or skill, how it would intrude, impede that task of grace, His workmanship of love. As David laid aside ill-fitting armor of Saul's pride, so we with deep relief depend our all upon no fleshly frame nor strength of body or of mind, but on the faithfulness of Him Who never calls but can complete what He began. For never does He ask without supply abundantly of every needed aid.

That queen all glorious there displays no merit of her own supply, but stands a miracle of grace and witness to His skill, not hers. The shouts of praise that rend the heavens now as she ascends that glory throne are not for her but for that love that faced the cross on her behalf, nor would it rest until she shared that closeness at His side. And thus begin the ages all with glory filled, exhibiting His kindness, grace and love towards us in His Son. All that she is, and every grace in her enthroned that will so well equip her for that royal place, is all of Him. It is His glory she displays Whose throne she shares. What depth of satisfaction this must bring each grace-filled heart. For only love divine could plan such bliss for loyal souls that live to praise their King.

How does He then equip ignoble Galilean folk to seat them on a throne far higher than the greatest throne of earth? Earth's princes are in youth prepared for rulership one day with governors, special schooling, university. They learn to live with riches and with power. Beneath each sovereign's shadow do they grow acquainted with intricacies of highest life and protocol. Is that *my* life? How can *I* hope to see upon that higher throne *a place for me*? Thus does He prove my trust that, with the call, the wise almighty God proveth all my training needs. I do not need to fear that He Who draws me near will thoroughly prepare for glory His dear Son, and yet forget to school those who will share that righteous rule.

"Why is this happening to me?" do now we ask, when hard experience, joys and tears, all fill my cup? What purpose lies in circumstance that seems remote from ways that I might plan the discipline of saints? Yet touch-by-touch impression of the Potter's hand prepares the vessel He has planned, and when we see what He has wrought we'll understand. Then, looking back to trace life's pattern we will see how it relates, each tiny need, each taste of grace, to heaven's place prepared, that ministry of grace reserved by name *for me*. Thus 'tailor made', befitting every saint, the path is formed and every step ordained to lead to what awaits, a reign of mercy, understanding love, in able hands of those who grace explored while here below. The needs of all mankind are known to her, His queen, and for each need she has discovered grace. She knows the ways of human souls, their very thoughts, and none could warmer guidance know than those responding to her call to "Come".

What are these qualities of grace that will adorn this daughter of the King of Glory? For none unsuited will receive that final call to share that throne. In that prospectus of the school of Christ, what subjects rate the highest, and which least? And by what standard will she be prepared? What constitutes a "pass" percentage-wise, for those who learn not seven times but seventy to forgive? All this the Tutor knows! Will I get by? Will I scrape through? Is there some easier standard set, some lower grade, some lesser goal? Perhaps a part-time course, for Sundays and the meeting nights? Is there a minimum I just might gain on which realistically to set my sights? And will such standards fit me for the infinite, make me a vessel meet to bear His Name?

Ah no, dear brethren, let us not confuse the modest recognition of our own unworthy state, acknowledgment of fault, ability 's deep poverty. Let us not mistake the meaning of His call of such unworthy objects of His love. We all learn not to live beyond our means, nor build on fantasies a house of dreams, but this is something else. *No* man or woman, *no not one*, could take this honor for himself save for that *call divine*, and have we yet assessed those *means divine* beyond which we must not live? Have we explored the wisdom of our Father's mind, the heritage of each child of His? We are **His** children, Whose likeness will yet shine to testify His Spirit's life within. What do we lack for which faith cannot ask? Have we found room enough to yet receive that heavenly abundance He pours out so liberally, Who 'not by measure' does His

Spirit give? There is no standard yet He cannot reach within each sample of a Master's skill. Each finished saint will be His masterpiece, each one a miracle of grace. In each *perfection is His mark*, or He can not on any sign His Name. In each His fullness is revealed, for by His breath of life is multiplied by that life-force that first live tiny cell of faith, and nurtures until it grows all grace to comprehend. Nor does He rest until that measure full of stature is achieved by holy oil descending from the Head. If such a power now works within our lives, then do we know what end He has in view That Holy Thing that shall be born His child, a son of God.

Our Father does not tease, nor give a stone to those who hunger for the Bread of Life. We barely comprehend the standards set of love, of holiness, of trust, but surely know in each He will achieve an "*uttermost*". His humblest pupil He will raise from consciousness of failure and ill-ease, through every rising grade to thus pursue the loftiest heights of heavenly endowment, precious skills that only He can teach. The meek delight to learn thus at His side, with all their heart they seek, and knock, and find, those precious treasures of their loving Teacher's mind. Their thirst is all He needs, a thirst that naught will quell but Him alone, their Light, their Fount, their Well. Those who for wisdom cry, and for hid treasure seek with such painstaking care, He promises to fill. So much He waits to share with every child of love. Hearken and consider well, thou daughter of a King! Thy beauty He desires, of holiness divine, that He can own as "Mine".

Our Teacher has in hand our every need His end to yet achieve. 'Tis ours to now lay hold, whatever each day unfold, upon that store of grace, accept the cup He gives, and seek our Teacher's face, to know how we should use the privilege bestowed, to serve, to wait, to bear, to praise, to love, to care. Lord help me to respond, my full attention keep, alert to every lesson of each day, that at its close my Teacher's smile will bless my rest.

The queen arrayed in glory realm is well prepared for every human need of earth's great family, and she has learned to live with glory too. Beneath that Sovereign shadow she has sat with great delight, and in His presence tasted that abundant life. In bringing her to glory He causes all his goodness to pass before her. Within her Savior's face she did behold such glories of His Father's wondrous love. And she, beholding, did that Light absorb, and thus the glory from above she did reflect, until her face, like that of Jesus, shone, although she wist it not. Queen Esther was prepared for that great day when she would be escorted to the throne, by daily bathing in the perfumed oil, adorned in garments well befitting royalty, attended by so many helping hands, though for an earthly sovereign was such meticulous care applied. What then of those who now know heaven's call, and willingly their earthly hopes forsake? Can they be less prepared to share His throne, upon Whose reign redemption's work depends?

The throne of heaven's love, of mercy, and of grace, He waits to share. Without the reign of Jesus *and His Bride*, the ransom paid for all in Jesus' blood would be in vain! Such blessed truths we know, and yet, like Sheba's queen, our breath is taken at the sight of glory's throne above, of Him Who sits in majesty thereon, and *they who share the honor at His side*.

Chapter 7

MOMENTS OF REFLECTIVE PRAISE

Those mountain peaks of glory, what view will they afford of endless future all in sweet accord. That Lamb of God, that firstborn church, that Judge of all, innumerable hosts of angels who, with

holy men below, bring blessedness to earth Spread out before our wondering eyes, age after age of sweet surprise from that great creative Mind. Wave after wave of newfound joy, when holiness brings happiness, and perfect oneness seals the bond uniting every mind.

What wonderful possibilities open up beyond all present dreams, and what arresting view will claim our perfect vision from that vantage point of glory. Yet can we doubt there still will be sweet moments of reflective praise, as, looking back from that great height, we trace again the path we trod, and note with perfect insight then along that way the hand of God.

With retrospective wisdom then we will see in that strange maze of life direction from that greatest Mind of all in every step, each joyful hour, each humbling fall. And we shall know at last how many wheels were turned, how many hands reached forth, the overruling in our daily round of tireless Providence. Each circumstance, each incident of life we shall review, and this time see as through a loving Father's eyes, Who, working all together for our good, each pilgrim mile, pursued so great an end. Each day we gleaned the Master's field, each hour discovered in our path what love had placed for us to gather to our heart, handfuls of purpose left for us to find along our way. Thus did He provide that soul-sustaining food that strengthened courage to go on, and each and every time of need had its supply. Thus did we learn to look with grateful expectation to that hand that in response to earnest prayer would open to release its precious load of daily benefits. With mercies new each morning light we came to know His great delight to satisfy, caress, and urge us on to emulate His faithfulness.

How much He longed to bless, then shall we know. Those windows of His heavenly store would open wide, their treasures pour abundantly beyond our need, and more beside. He gave us each the power to prove His promise-keeping love by yielding readily those tiny mites into His treasury, our love, our trust. Such tiny offerings to One so rich, yet all our living, all we were, was represented there. Then shall we know their preciousness to Him Who said, "Give Me thy heart." Shall we like Caleb then look back to that first step of faith to spy the land and taste its fruit, that trust in power divine the prize to give, faith's victory to win? Then shall we not confess His Spirit's power that kept our hearts alive to God through every year of pilgrimage? Did I so run with dogged steps as Caleb? And did I wear his shoes upon my feet? Without them could I have claimed inheritance? And did my faith stay firm when others faded in the thirsty heat of desert march? And did I learn in wilderness the meaning of the secret place? On heaven's vast resources did I lean when streams of earth ran dry? Each saint will say, the Lord was with me, and therein did lie the secret of renewing strength. The warfare over, fight of faith well won, the victor's wreath was waiting for each saint who testified with Paul, "I thank Christ Jesus my Lord, Who hath enabled me."

With what emotion Joseph took the throne, and thus became the blesser of the men who once despised. He, looking back along that checkered course of light and darkness, the father's love, the pit, the slave condemned for other's sins. How faith was tried when natural sight must contradict the hope of earlier vision. When naught went right, how dark that night, yet Joseph understood, and faith yet triumphed with the knowledge, everything that God permits He means for good. What will my story be when I too realize the end of faith, and find hope's bliss, and know how right the path that leads to this? Shall I not wonder at my Shepherd's care, His skill and understanding of the ways of sheep? How tirelessly He watched, unsleeping eyes forever turned upon each member of His flock, and in His bosom did He bear His lambs. Their safety, every one, lay in His hand, and every hour His keeping power made them secure. He led and fed

His own through every age, and found them pasture even in desert land. That rod and staff known to the psalmist were my comfort too, and this I will confess, when, looking back I trace His leading through green pastures, dark ravine, and wilderness.

Dear David knew that enemy within, the senses of failure and estranging sin. The bear, the lion that would take the flock, were no match for the Shepherd. Their presence was to rob, His was to feed and make secure. In vain the spirit's foes encircled and helpless watched from far as He did spread His table for His trusting sheep. How wonderful the Shepherd's care, the love on which we feed in darkest hour, that will not let us go. Each age His sheep will testify His keeping power, the peace that dispelled fear, because He was so near. Each saint will then in glory raise his head and thank his Lord. As each reflects upon the Shepherd's ways, and with the light of perfect day see there revealed full justification of the faith that, when it could not see, yet still believed.

In moments of reflective praise, we shall look back, and fully praise our Savior's ways.

Chapter 8

THANKING THE MINISTERING ANGELS

O could we hear the sound of many wings of angels' flight on wondrous mission bent. Could we but see each messenger speed forth, to aid, to strengthen, comfort and support. Could we perceive the interest of a spirit world, some rising, some descending, all sent forth along the sunlight shafts of love divine... breaking through clouds,... opening prison doors. With ease and grace their wonders they perform,... whispering words behind us,...beckoning on, ... guarding, guiding, watching every step of every saint, to keep in all their ways,...beholding constantly a Father's face. Before we cry, they take our hand to bear us up, and lift us high above the stumbling stones of earth, beyond the things of time and sense to glory realms, eternity's domain, where dwells our Lord. See, he prepares, within His Father's House, a place reserved, (oh blessed thought!) in heaven for me. Sweet are such messages of love. Beautiful the flight of those who bring them to my longing heart, and loan to me their wings.

This debt of gratitude and love we carry over to the scenes above, when, one sweet day, we will meet those wondrous beings who helped us in the way, and wait their charge to greet. Should we repay their selfless ministry with praise, and wonder at their patience with our ways, then will they smile, their holy faces shine, and each confess, "God's be the praise, not mine."

How intimately will each angel know our path, our past, persistence both for good and ill, our petulance and puerile fantasies, and our delight to know that Sovereign Will of God. That character peculiar to me, and all that makes me just the way I am, my deep desires, my inbred state of sin, that inconsistent mixture dark and light, reflected in my struggling within. How wonderful those holy sons of light whose flight from heaven's courts was made for me, who readily descend to sinful earth to grapple with dark powers to save me harm. Yet their successes apprehended not by our poor minds, we rarely even notice that smoothed path, nor sense their effort, vigilance or zeal in faithful ministrations for our sake.

An angel's mind accepts such poor acclaim. They joy to do it in the Father's Name, and recognised or not, they serve the same. And do they each have name, as Gabriel, this great and

noble host of holy minds? If they know joy in heaven when prodigals return, what other deep emotions fill their being? How do they view the wearing low of saints? How did they bear the sight of Calvary? Their memories reach back before the worlds were formed, their joy and glad surprise upon creation's dawn to look upon that man in His dear likeness made. How deep their sorrow when that work of God displayed fell to the Serpent's plan, and man became depraved and turned his back on life and its great Source.

Did we bring angels joy when first we turned our minds towards the Light? They who had known for countless ages past that some great height to the Creator's work was planned, though what it was they could not understand. Yet with desire they stooped to see the first faint glimmer of this mystery. And when the wraps of time at last unsealed were lifted, oh what joy that act revealed among that host who peered to see, but what would their emotion be when they saw *me*? There may have been moments in the work of grace when there was a frown upon my angel's face, yet such was his trust on wisdom divine (if only that trust had ever been mine!) He swiftly would fly to the Father above, and there face to face that communion of love, and swift his return my responses to prove, . . . then back came that smile. With patience he would wait while earnest in prayer my heart was outpoured. Then he would open my eyes, and the answer was there! Oh how he adored those moments of truth when Grace was explored! And so did my Lord Whose eyes he became.

The heart of an angel. Oh brethren, what pure mind was solemnly entrusted with my care? What holy noble character is charged right now, according to that perfect will of God, to hold me and support, that heavenly design in me fulfill? What fitting messenger of so great a love would God commission for salvation's heir? I long to see that being whose delight is in my Lord, His glory and His work. Who never cease to proclaim His Worth, His holiness, His wisdom, and His praise, who loves all that my Father loves, His ways, His character, His endless days.

I close my eyes and see that ladder linking me with heaven's realm. Above it stands My God, Who looking now upon this stony place that makes my bed, sends messages of love that meet my need. Was Jacob first to glimpse the truth of Romans 8:28? "All things" in heaven, "all things" on earth that touch my life....So many working even now towards my victory and His joy. A heavenly collusion is this hour involved beyond my mind to comprehend. In varied guise the messengers appear. One day a brother dear to me, though now passed on, while passing through a darkness of the soul, became aware his cat was occupied in tapping with his paw a screwed up piece of paper at his feet. "Read this!" it was as if it said. And stooping he picked up and then spread out the tiny scrap, to find thereon a text in his own hand of days before. More fitting message could not be framed for that dark hour. In varied ways His messengers co-work in that great purpose of our God. Oh could we hear that sound of many wings of angels' flight on wondrous mission bent. What stimulus to faith! What comfort of great love! What debt we owe to Him Who sends, and they who bear these promises of grace.

I long to look upon my angel's face, and for him thank my God.

Chapter 9

THE BREAKING OF DEATH'S POWERS

In glory there we see the saints at last prepared to share with Jesus in that work so vital to man's

future here on earth *The ministry of glory and the breaking of death's powers.*

That moment now arrives to testify to God's redeeming power to all mankind. The ransom long provided now applied for Adam and in him the race, that precious blood of sprinkling yet must touch the lintels of each heart, that from death's powers each soul may then break free, not merely for one hour but for eternity. No simple task. It is well for us to grasp what God has shown, that process yet involved of loosening sin's hold from every soul.

Like the Niagara, sin comprehends each missing of the mark, ten million drops each moment of man's day, a mighty fall indeed. Vast energy is wasted, countless ages lost, the total of innumerable lives away from God, as blinded minds forsake creation's Source and plunge to that abyss oblivious of all meaning to life's course, for they deny its Cause. These on their swift descent, without relent, pursue their flight from things above, and yet cannot escape redeeming love.

When we survey the scene, that darkness try to probe that fills this earth, we fail to sum the tears, assess the weight, the total burden tell of human grief, the legacy of sickness, pain and loss, but man's Creator knows, and man's Redeemer took that load. Can it be turned, this tide? Can earth be cleansed of sin? Can countless myriads like the sand be washed? Can any change of heart thus wrought in man by any scheme, teaching of righteous ways, or course of holiness, the reaching of those deep emotions of man's heart, can any change of mind achieved change also that deceit of heart, that fickleness of loyalty and love, that trend to infidelity so deep ingrained within the human soul? Can this as well be changed?

We see no profit, though a thousand years be spent transforming guilty ways of man to innocence, unless each step along that upward path of holiness be one of permanence. The trend to sin that now controls man's path, a prison for man's ways, how humanly impossible to break through cold steel bars, those solid walls. Perhaps at time some soul may glimpse another world beyond it cannot reach, and powerless to attain falls back. As gravity decides the downward pull upon each body, so does sin, and from its hold none can break free.

Yet greater far the heavenly force the sun exerts upon this earth controlling in its course each planet that would wander from its path. Nor does it let go hold, or each would make its headlong plunge through depths of space. Such is the greater power than sin, that from its mighty Source above will grip this earth and draw each heart, each intellect, to influence all thought and overwhelm with love divine. When stars that "turn to righteousness" shall shine, their holy power will mightily combine to beam into this darkness with a grace reflected from the heavenly Father's face, to captivate and thus forever hold each human mind, and reach the "blind", the "deaf", and loosen tongues now tied that cannot tell His praise. Oh may that joy be mine!

The baptism of water of the flood that overwhelmed and cleansed the ancient world in days of Noah was made an awing sign to all mankind, a future baptism to portray not now of water but the fire of that all-searching Spirit of a Holy God. And when the work is done destroying every trace of evil past, the dark refuge of lies will sweep aside, hypocrisy, deceit, and all that's feigned. Then will His "**Peace, be still!**" reecho from each heart of His redeemed, His Spirit, as a dove, go forth, the gospel of His peace to bear to weary souls, the olive branch, the helping hand that will enable sin-lamed feet to stand before the Savior of the world.

And then, shall I beside Him stand, those blessings of His peace to shower upon a weary land? And shall I have a part when grace has well refined my inward being, the last touch of the Potter's hand, the furnace fire to fit the vessel for the service planned, shall I those deepest needs of man so understand? And will I be equipped to deal with leprosy of soul, each wound of sin to heal, each broken heart console?

How well the Master Craftsman first designs, and then prepares, refines with great precision for each future role the instruments of peace. These are the tools that He will use to shape mankind, to reach the deepest corners of the mind, to peel the scales from eyes now blind to heavenly love. These weapons He will use so wisely to defeat the giants of doubt, and penetrate the darkness and despair that have so long forbidden man's approach to claim his heritage of promised rest. So long these mighty foes have darkened hope and come between those human longing of the soul for something better than this vanity of existence without God. And man has striven in vain to reach that blissful state of happiness that outlasts that weak momentary pleasure of sin. For in each path a dreaded giant has stood between him and his goal. The fear of death's long shadow dims the sight of every forward step of man. So has it been since man began. Such giant obstacles impede all progress towards happiness and rest, and yet no giant can withstand one pebble from the brook, that living Word of God, the stream that gladdens Zion today.

Before that conquering power of Truth can be unleashed against the enemies of man's peace with God, each man must learn again the innocence of childlike trust. It still must be for man a walk of faith while perfection of character the goal not yet achieved, yet then within man's grasp if with all heart and mind he is absorbed in Truth. The holy image of his God will then shine through, and brighter grow within His new-formed child, and holiness pursued will be attained, truth in the inward parts, the life of Jesus manifested in men who barely knew His Name.

How sweet the cloud of incense that will rise when lips long silent in His praise will yield the precious contents of each heart alive to God. And then that glory lifted from mankind at Adam's fall will yet again descend His dwelling place in human hearts to fill, and beautify each temple where it rests.

Could we conceive such ministry as this? And we have barely glimpsed the glory of this work that far exceeds all previous glories known, man's noblest works, and even the glory shown with shaking mount and stirring trumpet sound at Sinai. They all must pale before the sight of countless children of the Light that the call of Spirit and of Bride bring forth, the glory of a perfect earth. The Christ equipped for that great work stands poised. They wait the moment ready for command, the signal that will change the scene from darkness, dying, and despair. ***"Let there be Light now, everywhere!"***

Oh brethren, how we haste the hour! How earnestly we long to lift that veil that hides from countless hearts of men that Light of Life that is the Lord. To watch those eyes then in surprise wide open to the feast prepared of God. Wine of the Spirit, how its warmth in every heart will gladden every scene. The fatness of abundant living satisfy the deep desires and appetites of perfect men who bear the image of their God. Within each heart a holy fire will testify a walk with God and He with them. If this is dear to our poor hearts, what must it mean to Him!

Chapter 10

BRINGING FORTH EARTH'S PRINCES

The moment comes for which so long prepared, the raising up of worthy men of God, whose singleness of heart in ages past shone forth as lights in this dark earth. Each one a life of simple trust deterred by nothing that this world could bring to contradict that vision of an all-wise God. How these will first appear once more upon this earth we cannot tell. Perhaps at first unnoticed they will rise like soldiers from the fields in which they fell in far off days, picked men of valor proved, the army of Immanuel, their presence to be felt in that great hour of need beyond the battle of the day of God a time when poor bewildered men surviving desolation know not which way to go, or where to find the heart to start again.

For such an hour of man's "wit's end" the Father has reserved this band He has prepared to witness to the power of holy walk with God. However they come forth, that moment of rebirth of these, faith's witnesses, will surely draw the praise of countless hosts above admiring angels who sustained the courage of these noble minds that claimed the shadow of Almighty care, for they had found the "secret place" reserved for total trust, not in seen material things of dust, but in that deep unfathomed love of God. They walked in faith, nor did faith need to lean on human comforts of the flesh. Prosperity was theirs, but founded not in earthly bliss, nor yet in smoothed untroubled road of tranquil life. They knew no city built by man with walls sufficient to repel the enemies of the soul, while sin and sorrow stalked the earth, and death was in control. It was their inner man that prospered, not their flesh. Their mind found stay in God and thus found rest. The Rock of Ages was foundation sure of better prospects glimpsed, and welcomed from afar. Their city **He** would build, without Whom every man but built in vain. For God to sign the deeds was in their minds enough, and they could confidently wait secure, for they endured as seeing One above. From hope they borrowed for each day its joy, and thanked their God.

Now each comes forth, with wondering eyes survey the scene, perhaps with feelings mixed, as Noah did first behold the life-drained earth, flood-washed, and desolate. Yet eyes accustomed to faith's vision keen regard not anxiously immediate things of natural sight. So trained they are to see far off, no present view confines the mind, nor does a faith so tried regard the natural boundaries of human strength. What seems impossible to man they wave aside who know their God. Through every obstacle they see a way, and mountains fall at faith's command, nor do they hesitate to face the giants that stalk the land, for giants there are that stand between man and his rest. That confidence will never be misplaced that hangs its all on heavenly powers above, and ways and purposes of Him Who framed the worlds. However dark the scene that time of trouble leaves each hour they know will brighter be, and in their faith poor man will see way out of his tragedy. If enemy appears (and enemies will there be in that fair day), or limits are revealed of natural strength, they know of old the Lord did so arrange that thus His glory be explored.

What noble leaders these as earth's returning multitudes come forth from death to learn the ways of life. For these shall lead the blind in ways they have not known, and as man feels for God it will be men of faith who then will shine, inspire, enlighten, share the eye-salve they have learned so well to use. New senses they will rouse in man's bewildered mind, and purpose in his step, and light of hope will turn out darkness from the soul. The King in holy beauty men will "see", and will explore the land of untold breadth, the wondrous everlastings and the infinite that are the realms of the Eternal God. These teachers of mankind will point men to the Word, and in the leaves of Scripture men will find the healing of their mind. When Ezra stood to read God's Law,

the Levites helped men understand what truth was all about, and so will these. Thus man will come to know the love, and find the arms, and feel the bond, and every other joy that can be known, belonging to the family of God. The trivial transient toys of present state will be exchanged for things that satisfy the perfect mind in tune with God, a mind that, like its Maker, can create, and man with wisdom true will be endowed, to take once more dominion of this earth. And willing offerings then men will be, who once distorted judgment, hated light, and evilly disposed of men of faith.

As one who wakens from a fitful dream, man's past will seem unreal in that fair day, and gladly will he welcome in new light the very ones his eyes, once blind, despised. How touching then the scenes this change will bring. The helping hand of Abel reaches out to wipe away the guilty mark of Cain, and brothers cleaved by hate will love again. And everywhere the story is the same. There Joseph's brethren stand, now filled with awe. At last they understand and seek the door, in terror of a wrath they well deserve. But Joseph had wisely worked on all their hearts, through circumstance and trial overruled, and knew that they had learned at last the way of self denial. No longer could they break their father's heart. So when they looked on Joseph now with fear, his tears and kindly words filled them with cheer, as arms outstretch he said to them, "*Come near.*"

Look back on every record of the past, and mark the enemies of men of God. Each foe is marked out for the aid of those who once spitefully they misused. The hand of mercy and of grace will wipe the fear and guilt from every face, and readily onetime enemy embrace. The wicked hands by which the Savior died will one day reach out to the Crucified with penitential grief. How great then their relief, to hear the "forgiveness", and "Come near." "You meant it for evil, God for good." Such gems of truth they never understood when Satan reigned. Those very hardships disciplines and pain, prepared just men, and tested faith to uttermost degree. Men's lives He gave, examples now to me. And in the age now opening they will see fruit of their suffering in the hearts of men who through their work of faith will live again.

How fit will Moses be, as closing eyes reopen to ignore the passing age that intervened, when God shall tell him, "There's the land, go forth!" "The straggling band of Israel first you'll lead, but there behind them see the Gentiles too." Then Samson will share secrets of his strength to all who seek to take the Nazarite vow of consecration to Almighty God. Then all will Samson's victory know, together bring the house of sin to ruin, when in men's hearts the power of God is shown. When princes rule in judgment who can tell the sum of earthly blessings that will flow from righteousness? As faithful hearts of old behold the special part the Lord has long prepared for those who love His Word, what deep emotions fill that worthy band, who greeted from afar Emmanuel's land.

CONCLUSION of this story cannot be until we shall exhaust eternity! Nor can we now with noonday sight appreciate the things of which we write as we shall then. So near to us the hour, so dear the hope for which we long. Yet close proximity leaves still a veil between those blessed things and me. Six thousand years have passed since Abel's blood was shed, and we have reached that resurrection day, as saints beyond the veil will testify. Yet none of us below can visualize the scene when resurrected hosts of men rise from their graves. The answer to the questions voiced by Paul, *how* man will rise and *how will he be clothed*, he now, at last, may know, but while we wait below, these things must still remain hid from our eyes. The program we hold dear, but we must wait the hour the curtain will be raised before the blessed details are

exposed. The intellect of saints is tied to time, and cannot clearly see beyond this hour. The words we use are based on present need, and, like dear Paul, if we were carried now to view those scenes and then return to earth, we could not tell what we had seen, for human language fails when trying to describe another realm. The Lord so understands both our desires and all the limits of our present state.

Hence here throughout the Word He uses poetry to convey the feelings and the joys of things unspeakable...*The earth transformed to paradise, the lion and lamb in sweet accord, the little child that tames the wild beast...* Through types and shadows too He speaks, and men of old act out for us great truths.... *In glory garments does the priest emerge to bless the flock of God...*

Where speech and intellect fail the heart may still pass veil and human boundary. If now it burns within, we know that He Who fills our minds this day with precious glimpses of the truth for which we long, Himself has blessed to us the bread of life, and hears our prayer to with us stay until this night be gone.

May hope's sweet vision brighter grow each hour until we meet beyond to break death's power, and know in greater fullness than those joys He waits to share.

Amen.