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February 15, 1903

## BORN OF THE SPIRIT

*‘That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is Spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. The wind bloweth where it listeth and thou hearest the sound thereof but canst not tell whence it cometh and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit’.—John 3:6-8*

Our Lord presents this matter to us, dear friends, and we have the assurance that it is Scriptural, correct. It is proper for us to see to being born of the Spirit. In this connection, He has already said to Nicodemus that only those who are born of the Spirit can enter into the kingdom of God. It becomes, therefore a very important question to you and to me and to all who are seeking to be the Lord’s people to know just what the Lord meant by this expression: ‘Ye must be born again’.

Our view of the subject is not exactly the same as that held by some other Christian people. In fact I think you will agree with me that if we were to sift all the various opinions respecting these words ‘born again’, we will find that Christian people, not only in our day but in centuries past, have been more or less confused, and they did not know whether or not they had been born of the Spirit and what experiences to look for. It is very proper, therefore, for us to look for the meaning of our Lord’s words.

We remark first of all that our Lord Jesus contrasts the birth of the flesh with the birth of the Spirit, thus intimating that the natural birth is a picture or copy of the spiritual birth; and there is a correspondence. Let me call your attention first of all to the fact that no child was ever born of the flesh unless it had first been begotten; and so with those born of the Spirit. Begetting of the flesh—birth of the flesh; begetting of the Spirit—birth of the Spirit. Now it so happens that the Greek word that is rendered ‘begotten’ is the same Greek word rendered ‘born’. It is properly used either way. When we speak of a begetting in the English language, we know exactly what is meant, but in the Greek this is not so and you must be guided by the context to know which is meant. If the context signifies ‘into’, then it

means begetting; if it means ‘out of’, then it means born. Begotten into, born out of; and thus you see the law of nature is followed out. Just so with respect to the begetting of the Spirit. We must be begotten of the Spirit, else we can never be born at all.

As a result of the fact that a majority of Christian people have not noticed this difference, we find a number saying they are ‘born again’ when they should say ‘begotten’. We are not yet born. We are only begotten when we receive the Holy Spirit. We shall have been born when we have shared in the first resurrection.

There are three stages in the natural birth, and so these three stages belong also to the spiritual birth. In the natural—first the begetting, then the quickening, then the birth; in the spiritual we are first begotten, and if we continue on in the way, we will be quickened, and then if we continue on, in due time we will be born in the first resurrection. Only the begetting and the quickening belong to this present life. The birth belongs to the resurrection. Note the Scriptures on the subject: Our Lord Jesus was the first-born from the dead; and we also hope to be born from the dead and to share in His resurrection. And we read again: ‘He is the first born among many brethren’. We hope to be among the brethren, the Body of Christ, which is the Church. And if we are now among those who have been begotten of the Spirit, we have had something to do with it. If the Holy Spirit continues to abide with us and we grow in grace and in knowledge, we become ‘meet for the inheritance of the saints in light’: and then we shall have part in the first resurrection.

Now these expressions ‘begetting’ and ‘birth’ are not meaningless expressions. So many are inclined to get a hazy idea of the Scriptures as though they had

no particular meaning. Why do the Scriptures speak of being begotten again and being born again? We answer—the Scriptures do not speak of being begotten and being born again as things that are to come to the world in general. It is the Church and the brethren who are begotten. The world is to have restitution.

You will remember in examining the Chart of the Ages<sup>+</sup> on this subject that we found that the whole world fell in the person of father Adam, fell from the plane of perfection to the plane of sin and death. You will remember also that we found that in due time ‘Jesus Christ, by the grace of [HGL169] God, tasted death for every man’, and that the result of His sacrifice is to be restitution to as many as will receive his favours. When the due time shall have come in the Millennial Age, in Christ’s kingdom, the world of mankind shall receive great blessings from the Lord. They shall have the knowledge and opportunity brought to them, so that so many of them as will may return unto Him, may be restored to all that was lost in Adam. Our Lord Jesus came to seek and to save that which was lost; that is the ultimate end of his great work.

But during this age, in which God’s election is taking place, choosing out of the nations a ‘little flock’ to be joint-heirs with Jesus Christ their Lord—during this age, there is no restitution work going on. Why not? Because God’s time has not come for that work. First the elect must be gathered together, then the restitution work will begin. But now the point we want you specially to notice is—that this elect Church is to be a *new creation*, of a new nature, different from the world. ‘Ye are not of the world for I have chosen you *out* of the world’. Mark, not ‘I have chosen the world and am trying to bring them’. The work of this Gospel Age is separate and distinct from the work of all the other ages, and just as soon as we realise that this Gospel Age is the time in which our Heavenly Father is doing a certain particular work, just that soon we begin to understand what our Heavenly Father is doing.

The Church that is being gathered out during this Gospel Age then is to be a new creation, of a different nature from the remainder of the world. They are to be changed in nature; they must be ‘born again’ or else they cannot have this new nature. Now

what is your nature, according to the flesh? The Apostle answers: ‘We were all children of wrath, even as others’. But as members of the human race how were we? We were all sinners. ‘By one man’s disobedience the many were made sinners, even so by the obedience of One, the many shall be made righteous’.

But now God has called us out of the world that we should be a kind of first-fruits of His creatures—a new creation. What nature does He propose to give to His Church? Does He propose to make us angels? I remember very well that I used to sing, and I suppose some of you have sung it too, ‘I want to be an angel’. The angelic nature is higher than the human, that is true; and if God had called us to that, it would be a glorious calling and I would rejoice in it. But when we go to His book, we don’t find that He has called us to be angels, but we do find that He has called us to be something higher than the angels. ‘Ah well’, says one, ‘you are too ambitious’. No. I am not ambitious, but I desire to attain that to which we are called, and the Word of God teaches us that God is choosing the Church from amongst the world now and that he is going to give this Church the *divine* nature. Why Brother Russell you don’t mean that. Yes I do. We must either take God’s Word as it is, or let it alone. If we are going to take our own judgment, let us throw the Bible away. But when we come to be taught of God (and that is the proper teacher for those who would enter the school of Christ) let us take His Word; and the Word of God on this subject is that He has given unto us ‘exceeding great and precious promises, that by these we might become partakers of the *divine* nature’; and I believe it. It is not a question of whether you and I would be satisfied with something less. It is God who is making this call and He puts the terms and conditions upon it and He fixes the reward and no man has anything to do with it. It was all fixed of God long before you and I were born. God, as we saw last Lord’s day, has made a very narrow way and it is only when we come to see that He is choosing out of the world a Royal Priesthood to become kings and priests unto God, to rule on the earth and to be ministers of God to bless all the families of the earth—only then do we begin to see why God made the way so narrow that few would find it, and after finding it, would care to walk in it.

Take another thought in this connection, dear friends. We are called to be members of the Body of Christ, called to be joint-heirs with Him, partakers with Him of all His fullness; so the question is, what

<sup>+</sup> This Chart can be found in VOL. I of MILLENNIAL DAWN. For convenience, it has been included at the end of this article.

is His fullness, what is His standing? Is He a little lower than the angels? We find that He humbled himself and became a man in order that He, by the grace of God, might taste death for every man; and having accomplished that work, we find that God hath highly exalted Him and given Him a name that is above every name, far above angels and principalities and every name that is named 'and He is now seated at the right hand of the Majesty on high', at God's right hand, a position no angel occupies. Having this idea in mind, we see that the Church, which is being called out during this age, is called to be 'members of His Body'. Another figure used is that we are called to be 'the Bride, the Lamb's wife', partner in all His glory and honour. And all these promises belong to us if we have been begotten of the Spirit and shall be born of the Spirit. Now then, dear friends, you see that it is not remarkable that the Lord should insist that we should be 'born again' and that only those who are 'born again' should have part or lot in the kingdom. Why so? The Apostle Paul tells us that 'flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God'. Humanity cannot inherit the kingdom of God. The kingdom class—of which Christ Jesus our Lord is the Head, the King—has the promise that they shall be *joint heirs with him* to sit in His throne to bless and rule the world. He is not flesh and blood nor flesh and bone, but is highly exalted above every name that is named. He did not lose anything by the great humbling which He endured on our behalf, for while the Father permitted Him to become flesh and blood in order to die for our race, yet now He is highly exalted, even to the *divine nature*. Mark the words of the Apostle: 'As the Father hath life in Himself, so hath He given the Son to have life in Himself', inherent life, immortality, the Divine nature; and that is what no angel has. All the Angels of God, no matter how high their rank or station, they are all supplied by God with life; but, 'As the Father hath life in Himself, so hath He given the Son to have life in Himself' and that He should give it unto whomsoever He would. Dear brothers and sisters, you and I have been called to receive this same grace, life inherent: and so the Apostle declares, 'We seek for glory, honour and immortality'—the Divine nature.

Another point right here, dear friends: If we are begotten of the Spirit, when did it take place? Let us see on the Chart. On last Lord's day [Sunday] we

looked at the lowest plane, the plane of sin and death, and we found that the whole world of [HGL170] mankind fell in the person of father Adam to this plane. He was created perfect (**a**) which represents the plane of perfection; but he fell and all his race have been born sinners. And we saw also that it is not possible now for anyone to step back again to the plane of perfection; it is impossible for any to be actually right before God; and so the Apostle declares: 'There is none righteous, no, not one'. But we saw also that we can reach the plane of perfection in a reckoned way; that is to say, God counts some of us as getting from the plane of sin and death to the plane of perfections. It is not so actually: we are counted so. And so the Apostle says we are justified, made right. Adam was perfect, Abraham was justified by his faith, and you and I have been justified by faith in God, so that He no longer looks upon us as 'aliens, strangers, foreigners', but He reckons us, when we believe in Christ Jesus for the forgiveness of our sins, as having stepped from the plane of sin and death to the plane of perfection. Now I hope that all in this room have taken that step. That is the first step and you can't take any other step unless you first take that step, being justified freely by His grace through our Lord Jesus Christ. This, then, brings us to the plane of reckoned righteousness. Justified actually? No. How? By faith lifted up, by faith counted right. And what after we are justified, dear friends? Is that all? No, that is just the beginning. We are just ready then to be called. Why, says one, I thought I was called when I was justified. No, dear brothers and sisters, the Lord calls all men to repentance and He does more—He *commands* sinners to repent. But that is not our high calling. It is one thing to tell a man he ought not to continue in sin and that he ought to accept Christ for the forgiveness of his sins, but it is quite another thing to call him to joint-heirship with Christ. No sinner is called to this. It is only the justified who are thus called. By the time we have passed from the plane of sin and death to the plane of perfection (reckonedly), it may be said then that we are sons of God. Adam, for instance, is spoken of in the Scriptures as being the son of God. He was a son according to the flesh as long as he was in harmony with God; and now, if you please, any man who accepts Christ for the forgiveness of his sins and sets his face toward righteousness might be called a human son of God, because reckonedly he has come

back into harmony with Him. And it is to this class, if we may so speak of them as sons, that He says, 'My son, give me thine heart'. What does He mean? He means, 'give me thine affections, everything, consecrate yourself fully to the Lord', just as the Apostle, addressing this class and calling them 'brethren' says: 'I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice'. He calls them 'brethren' because they are not of the world. The Lord never called the world 'brethren'. But having come to a state of justification, then the Apostle says: 'I beseech you therefore, brethren', etc. Now you see, dear friends, there is something to be done, dear friends, after we reach the point of justification; in other words, justification is the first step necessary to be taken, but the important step is after that. Let me quote you the Apostle: 'Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ'. Is that all? No, '... by whom also (by Jesus Christ) we have access into this grace wherein we stand (going further, you see) and rejoice in the hope of the glory of God'. What, the glory of God? Yes, all who have entered into this condition of consecration, all who have become members of the Body of Christ have a hope 'of the glory of God'. What glory? Why, 'the glory, honour and immortality' which the Apostle speaks of. Only those who are born in the first resurrection will get this 'glory, honour and immortality'. God has good things in store for the world; but He has invited us, first of all to accept the forgiveness of sins. And I know some dear Christian people who thought so well of their justified condition that they stood there for years and years, not knowing anything about any further step which the Apostle says is their 'reasonable service'.

But the Apostle says: 'Don't you see, brethren, a further step?' Go on. You must get beyond this step of justification and enter into this further grace wherein it is our privilege to stand, to be seated with Christ in 'heavenly places'. Well, now, where does the begetting of the Holy Spirit come in? I answer—it comes in just at this point. Are there any conditions? Yes, the conditions are: a full consecration of the life to God. All who accept the Apostle's proposition and who do present their bodies a living sacrifice, they are due to get the Holy Spirit immediately when the consecration is made. And He tells us that now is the acceptable time for this step. Why, says one, don't you claim that the Millennial Age is the acceptable time? Yes, I claim it is the acceptable time for some

things, according to God's Word; but now is the acceptable time to become a member of this particular Body—the Body of Christ, and to have the privilege of offering our poor bodies to God and have Him count it as worth something and then to permit us to sacrifice it and to accept the sacrifice. And He gives us the promise that we shall be partakers of the Divine nature, begetting us to a new nature that eventually we might be born of the Spirit, 'be like Him'. No wonder then that you and I highly appreciate the privilege of living in this Gospel Age. We should esteem it a privilege to lay down our lives on God's altar. Suppose we did not know what He is going to give to those who love Him. Mark you, the Apostle does not say that these promises are for those who 'don't hate God', but for those who *love* Him with *all their heart* and soul and being; and He is testing them. For instance: when you and I gave ourselves to the Lord and He accepted us, what did that mean? It meant that our sacrifice was acceptable. How gracious on His part to count it worth accepting and to say that He had accepted us into His family, to be counted as Sons of God. And, 'If children, then heirs; heirs of God and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ our Lord, *if so be that we suffer with him*'. Mark this, dear friends—not merely if we will make a consecration; but after we make this consecration and start in the narrow way, He is seeing to what extent we really mean it. So now we have the matter before us and you and I are still in a place where the Lord may find out how sincere we were in our consecration we made, how earnest we were when we gave all to Him and said we would accept what He had to offer. I say that if we did not know what God was going to give us, we could still be sure that He would give us 'exceeding, abundantly better things than we could think or ask'. But when He has told us that we shall be made partakers of the Divine nature, then we [HGL71] can say with the Apostle: 'Let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus' who is the author of our faith.

You and I could not hope to be counted worthy of a share in the glorious things the Father has held out for us by anything that we could do. It is He who assures us that He is with us and will not suffer us to be tempted above that we are able. It is not His intention that the gold shall be destroyed, but only that the dross shall be consumed. It is not His intention to crush the stones, but that He shall shape

and fit and polish us, making us 'meet for the inheritance of the saints in light'. (Col. 1:12.) And so our confidence is in Him, and if we commit all to Him, He will bring us off conquerors and more than conquerors.

Now let us notice, if you please, how the Church is to walk in the footsteps of Jesus. I think that it will do us good. This figure (g) represents our Lord Jesus at thirty years of age. He came into the world, leaving the glory which He had with the Father before the world was. He became poor, not He pretended to become poor, but 'he who *was* rich became poor'. He laid aside His glory; He was made flesh, not that he got into flesh and pretended to be flesh while he was in reality something else; but He who was rich became poor, leaving the glory which he had with the Father; and when he was born, He was a perfect man, not a mere man but a perfect man. And there was necessity for this, for He could not have redeemed the world unless He had been a perfect man. You remember the Apostle's declaration that the 'blood of bulls and goats could never take away sin'. Why? Because it wasn't bulls and goats that had sinned. And an angel could not redeem the world for it wasn't an angel that had sinned. Man had sinned and so a man was necessary to redeem the world. Hence the Scriptural declaration that our Lord Jesus became the man Christ Jesus that—'As by a man came death, by a man also came the resurrection from the dead'. Thus it was that our Lord Jesus left the glory and honour of a Spirit being far above angels, and humbling Himself, was made flesh—a perfect man. And so our Lord was on the same plane that Adam was. He had come into the world to redeem Adam's race. (Rom. 5:12.) It was the death of the *man* Christ Jesus that paid the penalty. It was because he became a man that he could pay the penalty.

Now you know that under the law, thirty years of age was manhood's estate. So not until thirty years of age could He undertake the work that he had come to do, although as a boy He had an interest in that work, for you remember on one occasion He said to His parents: 'Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?'

And at thirty years of age, what did he do? We answer in the language of the Scriptures: 'Now when Jesus began to be about thirty years of age, He cometh to John at Jordan to be baptised'. You see he was watching for the time. He could not do it sooner,

but just as soon as the time was up, He wanted to make His consecration, to start the work that was before Him. He began to get ready before thirty years of age; and when He was thirty, He gave Himself. Do you mean to say, Brother Russell, that he was in opposition to the Father before that? By no means. You were not in opposition to the Father when you were justified. And the Apostle does not mean those who are in opposition to the Father when he says: 'I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice'. It was necessary that Jesus should come and make a formal presentation of Himself. Hear the language of the prophet: 'Lo, I come to do thy will, O my God. In the volume of the book it is written of me'. And you remember that it was just at this time that the Holy Spirit came upon Him, even as John bore record. 'John did bare record that Jesus therefore was the sent of God'. When did the Holy Spirit come upon Him? At the time of His consecration. What did that imply? The begetting to a new nature. Having humbled Himself, He became a man; and now He had consecrated His body and all His powers to God, to be sacrificed, to take the place of the typical sacrifice. As the Apostle says; 'He taketh away the first (the type) that He may establish the second'. It was there that our Lord Jesus made His sacrifice—at thirty years of age. Where did yours begin, my brother? If you are a priest, it must be that at a certain time your sacrifice began. Could we offer ourselves, says one 'without spot or blemish'? Would God accept anything that was spotted or blemished? I answer, dear friends, that this is the wonderful feature of it, for God counts those who are justified as being without spot or blemish. Justified means cleared; 'justified freely from all things'. Is not that a wonderful thing? *Counted* as though we were perfect men and women. No one but God could make such a wonderful plan. But He has arranged it and you and I follow in the footsteps of Jesus because we were redeemed by His blood, and being justified freely, we can present ourselves. Mark how the Apostle puts it: 'I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, *acceptable unto god*, your reasonable service'. You holy, you acceptable unto God, and God has said that nothing can come upon His altar that is impure, blemished? Yes, that is exactly the teaching of the Word. Coming into harmony with God through faith in Christ, we may present ourselves, holy, acceptable,

our reasonable service. Now then it is true that during this Age we are asked to present our bodies a living sacrifice. No one in any previous age was asked. Why not? Because they were not justified. Why? Because the Apostle explains that 'the blood of bulls and goats could never take away sin'. But when the real atonement was made, then it was possible to have the real justification.

When our Lord consecrated Himself, what happened? The Father accepted Him. And how did He indicate it? By giving the Holy Spirit. And what was this? It was the begetting of our Lord Jesus to the new nature. And during the three and one-half years of our Lord's ministry, this new nature was performing sacrifice. Day by day He was laying down His life, until at the end of three and one-half years, as He hung upon the cross He exclaimed: 'It is finished'. What was finished? The work that the Father had given Him to do. What work? The work of redemption. The man Christ Jesus died. What about the new nature? I answer—it began at thirty years of age and by the time He died, the new creature was three and one-half years old. After three and one-half years and he had finished the sacrifice—then what? Why, He arose from the dead three [HGL172] days after His crucifixion. And what then? He was born of the Spirit, 'The first-born among many brethren', and you and I hope to have part in the same resurrection. What, you don't mean the same resurrection? Yes, for He is the Head over the Church which is His Body, and just as you would not call it two births for a child if the head were born first and the body afterwards, just so with the first resurrection. And the Apostle says in his letter to the Philippians: 'That I might know Him and the power of His resurrection'. His resurrection is not only the first in the sense of going before all others, but it is the first also and specially in the sense of being chief. As we read: 'Blessed and holy are all they that have part in the first resurrection. On them the second death hath no power, but they shall be kings and priests unto God and shall reign on [over] earth a thousand years'. Our Lord Jesus was the first to have part in the first or chief resurrection, and if we are faithful, we will also share with Him in His resurrection: as the Apostle says: 'That we might know Him and the power of His resurrection'. Read in the 3rd [Chapter] of Philippians how the Apostle points out that all things else in this world are as loss and dross (v. 7) as compared with the privilege of having fellowship with Him and a share in His glory.

And now as the Lord passed through these experiences, you and I must also pass through them. As we saw before, you and I don't get on to the plane of perfection actually. We are only reckoned perfect and there comes a time when we are privileged to consecrate ourselves; and the Lord does not lay down any particular day, as in the type when thirty years are the proper time; but if you have the ear to hear and the heart to understand, you may present your sacrifice during this acceptable time, during which God will accept our sacrifice; and after that—what? Begotten to the new nature. And then—what? Walk in the spirit and 'Let *this* mind dwell in you richly', let it abound more and more. We are to have this new mind growing in us, just as a child when it is begotten grows and grows and grows until it shall come to the place where it is matured enough to be born. And so you and I are to grow in all the fruits of the Spirit. At first it may be that none will take any knowledge of us that anything has taken place. The way in which they observed the change in our Lord Jesus was that He now had a mission to perform. And so at the beginning of our consecration, it may take us a little while to get our bearings and to find out where we are; but just as soon as we find ourselves, we see that the Father's business is the most important business of this life and we begin to arrange other matters so that the Father's business may have the supreme effort of our lives.

And when we are thus begotten of the Spirit, then we come to the quickening stage. It is quite a while with some before they are given any indication of being alive, quickened. 'But if the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your *mortal bodies* by His Spirit that dwelleth in you'. He is not speaking here of the resurrection and the quickening of the immortal bodies; it is our *mortal* bodies. I trust that many of you have made this full consecration. I trust that you have had the first experience of endeavouring to become dead to sin; and I trust you have gone further and that you have had the Spirit quickening you, energising you, and that as you go forth each day to your duties you say to yourself: 'How can I spend this day so that it will be to the praise of Him who hath called me out of darkness into His marvellous light?'

In proportion as we get the truth, we are getting that which puts strength and energy and vim into us and makes us active in the Lord's service. I trust that every one who has made the consecration is having

this quickening experience, so that we may not be overcome by the cares of this life and thus come forth 'still born'.

The Apostle also uses other figures in speaking of us as sons of God. These sons of God are now in an embryo condition so to speak. We have this treasure in an earthen vessel. We are waiting to be clothed upon with our house from heaven, which we are to get in the resurrection when we shall be 'like Him'. We want not only to be begotten to this spiritual nature, but we want to be born also.

The figure **(k)** on the Chart represents our Lord Jesus, this being the plane of glory. Figure **(n, m, p, and q)**, represents the nominal church as a whole as we see it—made up of all classes. First of all are the unjustified, those who are not even trusting in the Lord for their justification, even though they have attached themselves to the church. These are tares, pure and simple. We are not wishing to say anything disrespectful of them but are merely wishing to show that they have not come on to the plane where the Lord recognises them. And then we have a larger class, **(p)** those who are on the plane of justification; and they are what the Scriptures call 'the household of faith'. They have taken the first step of justification and are on the plane where they receive God's recognition. Many of them are satisfied to stay there, though very wrongly, for He merely justified us and gave us the privilege to consecrate in order that we might go further—to the next plane above; and you will observe that there are two classes **(m, n)** here also. You have known them and I know them. It is like the cream and milk, if you please. The first class are those who never made any claim of having presented their bodies a living sacrifice. The Church proper, however, is only those who have been begotten of the Spirit, whoever they may be. We don't recognise any sectarian lines or creeds, because we don't find that to be the Scriptural teaching. But we recognise all who have their names written in heaven, and that is where you and I want to have ours written.

Well now, says one, I thought there was only the one class in the real church. No, there are two classes in the real church, amongst those who have been begotten of the Spirit. The one class are those who have not only made the consecration, but they are joyfully going on, counting it all joy to be counted worthy to suffer with Jesus. They are the ones who are 'filling up that which is behind of the afflictions

of Christ': and counting it all joy, *knowing* that these things are necessary for their development. They are the kind, who, as 'stones', rejoice not at the blows, but rejoice that the Master's hand directs the blows and that thus they are made 'meet for the inheritance of the saints in light'. 'Rejoice in tribulation', says the Apostle, knowing that your labours are not in vain in the Lord. I need not tell you that this class is only a 'little flock'; you know that. Not many are found after this fashion; but some, thank God. [HGL173] And now this other class—what do they represent? I answer—they are that class mentioned in the Seventh Chapter of Revelation, the foolish virgins, if you please. John the Revelator is here telling what he saw; and he says there was a great company which no man could number. That is not a good translation. The thought is—it is not a fixed number in contradistinction to the 'little flock' which is a definite, fixed number; a great company whose number no man knows, is the thought. The very elect are a limited number and when the number have been found, the election ceases, not another one will be admitted. As in the type, the High Priest, for instance, must be one who had no superfluous fingers or toes or joints, nor must he be lacking in any of these. Why? Because He was a picture of the Christ. There is not to be one more nor one less, and when the number is completed, the election is finished and there will be no more an acceptable time for sacrificing, for it will be at an end.

This great company which John saw he says are those which 'came up out of great tribulation, having washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the lamb'. They are before the throne and serve God day and night in his temple continually. Well, says one, that's good. It is good; it is grand. I am glad for them; aren't you? But mark you, dear friends, that is not the best place to be. We are glad for them that God will not let them go, but that He will bring them through great tribulation so that they may wash their robes. It is better though that we keep our garments unspotted than that we should have to wash them. But says one, do you mean to say that it is possible for one to pass through this life unspotted by the world? No, that is not the thought. The thought is that this class, the 'little flock', is so careful about their robe that if they get a spot on it, they go straight to Jesus Christ, whose blood cleanses them from all sin. But there are others who become overcharged with the cares of this life and they say—

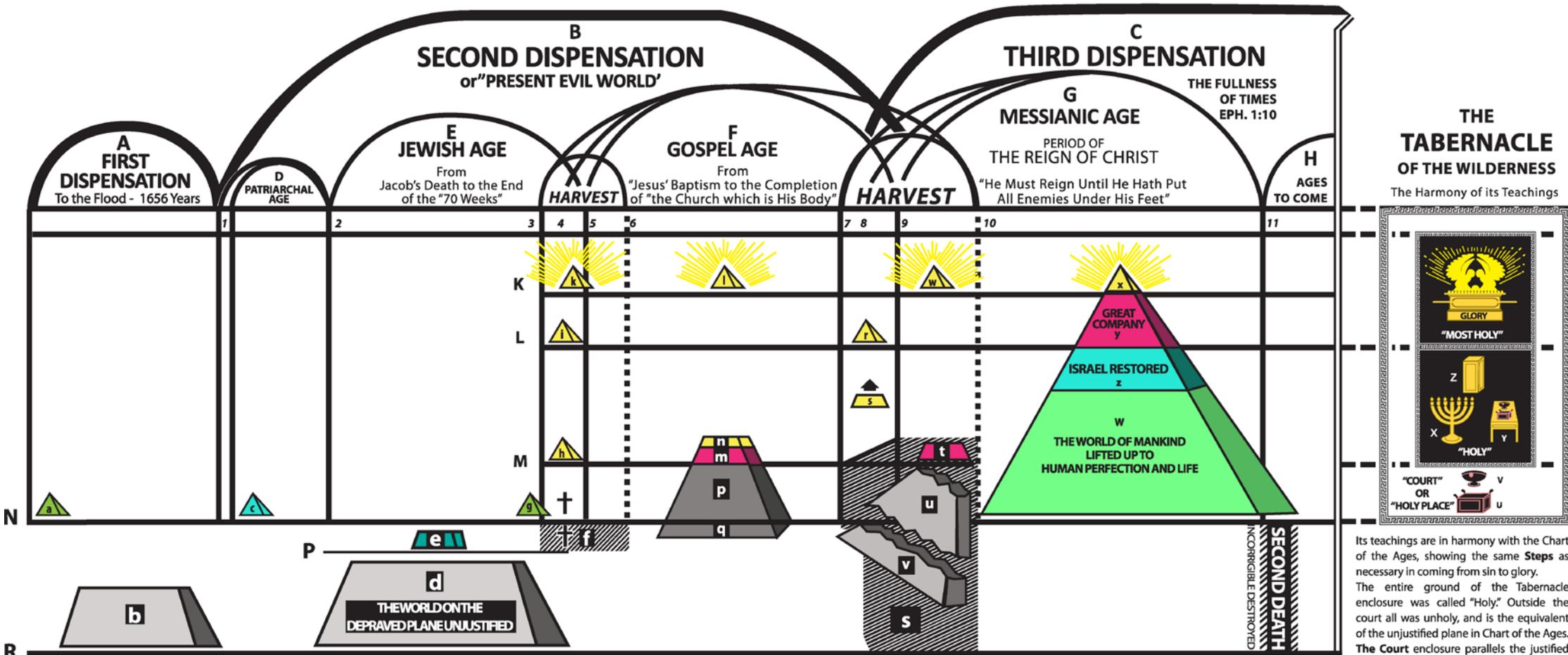
Oh well, I don't think so much about that as I used to; and so they become careless and get their robe spotted; but they still have the robe, for they never deny His name and never would, for they love the Lord. But they are not careful, and because they become careless in this respect, they shall have to pass through great tribulation. We believe that the majority of this class are living to day.

But now for you and me—what is our position? I trust that we have left the world behind and that, by the grace of God, having been justified freely from all things, we have gone on still further and have made a full consecration and that you have been begotten of the Spirit and that you have the new mind, so that now you love the good things, the right things, things that are pleasing to our Lord, and that you are seeking to bring forth in the daily life, not thorns and briars, but figs and grapes. You cannot gather the fruits of the Spirit from those who have not the new mind. The fruit unto righteousness that the Lord is looking for in you and me consists not only in bringing others to a knowledge of the Lord (that is very good, but that is not the only fruit) but the particular fruits that He wishes to find in you and in me are 'the fruits of the Spirit, meekness, gentleness, forbearance, long suffering, brotherly kindness, love'. These things are to be looked for in our hearts and lives. Not as coming in suddenly and overwhelming us in a moment, but it must first have a start. The Lord tells us that He will take away every branch that beareth no fruit. If He does not see some evidence that we are growing in the right way, He will cut us off. And if He finds that we have the appearance of fruit-bearing, then He will take off only that which would go to wood; and that may mean something of trial.

Let us then, dear brothers and sisters, if we have made our consecration to the Lord and have been begotten of the Spirit and realise that we are new creatures in Christ Jesus, let us lay aside every weight and let us not merely walk, but let us *run* the race that is set before us. And we have the Lord's promises that 'He that is for us is greater than all that can be against us'. How gracious and grand are His promises'.

# CHART OF THE AGES

Illustrating the plan of God for bringing many sons to glory, and his purpose—  
 “...In regard to the administration of the fullness of the appointed times, to re-unite all things under one head, even under the anointed one: the things in heaven and the things on earth - under Him.” Eph, 1:1-(Diaglott)



Its teachings are in harmony with the Chart of the Ages, showing the same **Steps** as necessary in coming from sin to glory. The entire ground of the Tabernacle enclosure was called "Holy," Outside the court all was unholy, and is the equivalent of the unjustified plane in Chart of the Ages. The **Court** enclosure parallels the justified or **Perfect Human** plane. The **"Holy"** represents the condition of consecrated Christians, **Begotten of the Spirit**. The **Most Holy**, beyond the second veil, represents the **Perfect Spiritual** condition when "we shall be like Him." The glory plane is still further along the grand climax of hope — "Glory, Honour, and Immortality."

"Write the vision, and make it plain upon tables, that He may run that readeth it" Habakkuk 2:2