

1.

A SPIRITUAL VISION

"That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him." Eph 1:17

The Bible is a wonderful book. Like any other book, it was written by men. Yet with this book there is a great difference. The men who wrote these holy words were directed and inspired by God. God Himself led these men to pen His thoughts and words so that other men could have the benefit of reading them. This great fact is what makes the Bible so precious.

Since the Bible was given by divine revelation, it must be understood in the same way. Due to its spiritual origin, man needs spiritual understanding to comprehend what it is saying. In fact, in its own pages the Bible claims that this is so. In I Corinthians 2:14 we read: "But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." When we read this book we need God to open our eyes to see what He is saying.

Not only does this apply to the general thoughts and concepts in the Bible, but to each individual word and phrase as well. Behind many words of scripture lie unfathomable revelation and meaning. If we could only see with spiritual eyes just a portion of what God is really saying, we would stand in awe and give Him glory.

An example of how much revelation and meaning can be contained in the words of the Bible is found in the name of Jesus Christ. At first glance these two words appear to be simply the name and title of a man no different from any other. Yet behind this name above all names is the creating power of the universe, the manifestation of God, the Savior of the world. There is actually no limit to what can be seen of Jesus Christ and His glory. The complete spiritual revelation of Jesus Christ is beyond human comprehension.

As it is with the name of Jesus Christ, so it is with the word "Church." Behind this one word also is much spiritual revelation. The Church in all her beauty, her power and her majesty is something which all Christians need to see. We all need to have God unveil our eyes to see the Church, the body of Christ. She is a spiritual reality. Her destiny is to be the final dwelling place of God. Her function is to defeat God's enemy. Her reward is to be the bride of Christ. This is not a small thing. The importance of the Church is beyond description.

One of the saddest things today is that so very few of God's children have seen the smallest part of this revelation. Without such understanding it is difficult for us to be a vital part of what God is doing. Our efforts for God may often be misdirected and

futile. If we do not understand what He is trying to accomplish, how can we work in a proper way to fulfill His purposes? Without God's light, our only alternative is to walk in darkness. How many of the foolish things which Christians do could be explained in this way!

For many Christians, the meaning of the word "church" is limited to "a building for Christian meetings," a "religious organization" or a "social institution." While these believers may quickly explain that the church is actually "the body of Christ," their daily experience of it is not that at all. They possess the right teaching, yet the revelation or the experience of that revelation is lacking. Unfortunately, for most the first three definitions are their only reality.

In our country every Christian has access to a Bible. How easy it is for us to simply scan the surface of its pages. Too often we pick up only the outward form of something and miss the inward substance of it. In the Bible, God has shown us a revelation of the church and what our part in it should be. What a tremendous need there is for us as Christians to both see and experience this reality!

It is the goal of this writing therefore to help unfold, unveil and explain the "great mystery" of Christ and the church for every believer to see (Eph 5:32). Let us pray together that God would use it in this way: "Dear Lord Jesus, open our eyes we pray, to see a vision of Your church in the way that You would have us to see it. Let the veils fall from our minds so that we could comprehend her reality. May our lives be touched in a way that would alter our course to satisfy Your desires instead of our own. Dear Jesus, we open to You and give ourselves to You completely that we may be a vital part of Your work on earth today. Amen."