

DEEPER TEACHINGS
(MEAT OF THE WORD)

#43

THE PERFECTION OF MAN

By Sam Fife



According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon.

1Co 3:10

THE PERFECTION OF MAN by Sam Fife

Let us go on to Perfection

Unto a Perfect Man

This study begins in Hebrews 5:8. Jesus, speaking to the Hebrew Christians through the apostle Paul, said,

Verse 8 “Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; 9. And being made perfect, he become the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him; 10. Called of God an high priest after the order of Melchisedec. 11. Of whom we have many things to say, and hard to be uttered, seeing ye are dull of hearing. 12. For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are became such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. 13. For every one that useth milk is unskillful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. 14. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.

Heb. 6: 1. Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, 2. Of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment. 3. And this will we do, if God permit. 4. For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, 5. And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, 6. If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame. 7. For the earth which drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed, receiveth blessing from God: 8. But

that which beareth thorns and briers is rejected, and is nigh unto cursing; whose end is to be burned.

In this scripture, Paul has one theme: leave behind the baby principles of Christ, leave behind the sound foundational truths, leave behind the milk of the word, leave behind the doctrines of salvation, of baptism in water, leave behind dwelling over and over again on the doctrine of the baptism of the Holy Spirit, leave behind the doctrine of the resurrection, of eternal judgment, and let us go on unto perfection.

This may not be a message for some Christians today. There are some Christians who can't leave behind all these doctrines. That's why this isn't preached to them. But this is a message for us, Beloved, as it was to the Hebrew Christians. God has one purpose for us and God had many people for us to minister to out in the world.

LET US GO ON TO PERFECTION!

Paul was dealing with one of the greatest tragedies of the ages. He wrote this book to the Hebrew Christians to deal with the tragedy. What had happened to them? These are the Christians you read about in the first 5 chapters of the book of Acts. The Hebrew Christians of Paul's day were the Christians that were saved there in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost; the Christians who had the fire of God so burning in them that they were selling all of their land and putting their money in the work of God. But this was some 30 years after these people had this fire in their hearts; and, as always happens, the devil had gotten in. He put his organizationism in and he and his demoniac kingdom began to press in and to try to put a stop to the whole thing. The way had become hard, the years long, and it was easier to settle down a little than to continually press in to the battle. Instead of crying out to God that the living fire would burn in their hearts continually, some of them would rather say, "Well let's calm down some." It was so much easier to relax a little, to give in

a little bit here and there. So, slyly and insidiously, little by little, the devil had taken the people who were once filled with the fire of God. The devil had brought them down to the point where they were described as people who, instead of teaching others, had need themselves of the very basic Word. Oh, Beloved, do you see this tragedy? God wants us to see it as a warning because once again the Word of God is coming forth in all of its glory. Once again God has lifted the veil of darkness that has shadowed that glorious land of what God has set before us, and He has given us a vision of this thing. He is speaking once again from heaven through His prophets, supernaturally, right out of the spiritual realm and saying, "My children, rise up and march into the land with me." Here was a message in tongues: "Hold not back my children. Hold not back. Press ye in: press ye in, for I am with thee, saith the Lord, and I will take ye into the land; yea, even the glorious land, saith the Lord thy God. And thou shalt dwell every man in peace under his vine and under his fig tree, saith the Lord thy God. And thou shalt breathe of the land that floweth with milk and honey, saith the Lord."

Once again the glory of God is poured out. I saw a young girl who came into our assembly a couple of months ago, confused, discouraged, in all sorts of problems and trials, and I saw her stand here a few moments ago, and I saw the hand of the Lord upon her in glory that few people are seeing in this world today, and my soul marveled before the Lord. Suddenly I gained a consciousness of the fact that God has once again poured out His Spirit upon all flesh. He doesn't need a great big preacher or anyone who has attained to a high and spiritual position, but God is doing this thing. He is stretching forth His hand pouring out His Spirit upon His children, and it is God that is doing it! If He picks these children up and is using them, we had better recognize Him!

Once again it is time to move into the land, but once again Hell is winding up its wheels of organization and preparing to stop you. I don't say preparing to stop this church or this Revival Center, or this move of God, because he is not going

to stop this move of God. But, brother, we had better put it down on this level: he is getting prepared to stop you! He is getting prepared to do the same thing to you that he did to those Hebrew Christians back there. He is preparing to press against you until you back up a little bit, and a little bit more until finally your soul and your spirit have not the courage to go on, and you wind up for the rest of your life rolling around in the few truths that God is bringing forth right now, instead of going on into all the glory. I've seen Hebrew Christians become a cold, dead thing. You can become as cold and dead as the first century Christians became. As Pentecost brought forth 60 years ago became a cold dead thing, you will become a cold, dead thing. Do you know the only thing that will save us? If we keep pressing in. No wonder the Word of the Lord keeps coming forth saying, "Press in, my children, press in!" You know what happened to those Hebrew Christians? They didn't press against Satan and as a result of it, Satan pressed against them. Instead of them driving him back, he drove them back. And that is the way it's going to be, if you don't drive him back, he is going to drive you back. If you don't press in against him, he is going to press in against you. There is no such thing, there is no such thing, as a standing still. There is no such thing as taking any part of this lightly. There is no such thing as hesitating here and there. It is either going to be that we will press in against him and his kingdom and drive him all the way back to the borders of the land, and drive them out of the land in our individual lives and in the move of God as a whole; or else the devil will press in against us and we will wind up lapping up the milk of the Word again. So the Word of God to us, Beloved, let us go on to perfection. Let it ring out in your soul. Let it ring out from your heart. Wherever you are, move in against the forces which are seeking to move in against you. With the anointing and the power of the Spirit of God and the Word of God, turn him back in the name of Jesus because the word is:

LET US GO ON TO PERFECTION.

Remember when Jesus walked into the synagogue on the Sabbath day and there healed a man? He looked at the Pharisees and he said "is it lawful to heal on the sabbath days?" And the Bible says, "No man durst answer." No man had the courage nor the knowledge. They were so bound by rule and doctrine and religion that no man could stand up and publicly proclaim that God was more interested in meeting human need than in having a religious organization and a bunch of religious rules. Those are just stepping stones. God's sole and primary purpose is to meet human need. God's purpose is to defeat sickness, to defeat sorrow, suffering, pain. His purpose is to defeat death. In these last days, the time has come when God is looking for a people to break free of the bondage of religious rules, to move on to the glorious victory of defeating death. God is looking for some Sons of God who will stand on their own two feet, stick out their chests, bare their wings in Christ and proclaim, "I am not going to die. I don't have to accept sickness, pain, suffering, or sorrow. I don't have to accept death." God is looking for a people who will rise up and say, "In Christ we are more than conquerors over all these things." This thing of being ruled over by death has ruled the human race for 6000 years. No one has dared, in the past raise up and say to the world, "I don't have to die." But God's finally found some Sons who are going to do it. They are going to think you are crazy and you are going to feel the pressure. But if you are called of God into this last day move and if you have the courage to go on, the Spirit of God is going to tear at your heart until you set this thing visible before the world with your testimony. You can do away with this lie with which Satan has bound humanity for centuries -- this lie that one has to die. I am only one and you are only one, but God is going to give us others to stand with us. God is looking and that's what it's going take - Sons who have the courage to rise up and proclaim to their brethren, "We don't have to let this thing rule over us." In Christ we

can break through. We can break through to that immortality and take authority over death itself. We can fulfill those words in the Word of God, “Then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, “Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?” For this corruptible shall put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality. Oh death shall have its sting pulled and the grave its victory taken away from it. Let us go on to perfection.

The Word of God says, “This will we do if God permits.” What does Paul mean? He went on to say, “for it is impossible.” Notice this line-up. It is impossible for those who have tasted the good Word of God, the powers of the world to come. You know what he is talking about. He is talking about Hebrew Christians who have had the baptism of the Holy Spirit, who had seen the healing power, had tasted of the good Word of God, had seen the supernatural miracles, tasted of the powers of the world to come, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost and were enlightened and had tasted of the heavenly gift – If they shall fall away to renew them again unto repentance. Paul was dealing with many people whose hearts had become so hard and had sunk into such depths of spiritual hardness, that after they had tasted of all of God’s good things, it was impossible to warm their hearts again. It was impossible to restore that first fire. He is not dealing with lost salvation here in any way whatsoever. He didn’t say, “Let’s get saved again and this will we do if God permit.” He said, “Let’s go on to perfection and this will we do if God permit” Now, Beloved, we have tasted of the heavenly gift, we have been enlightened, we are tasting of the powers of the world to come. I stand in God’s pulpit and warn each one of us today. If we linger, if we fool around, yea, if we do not press in toward the enemy, the enemy will press in toward you, and he will push you back. You can reach a point where your Spirit becomes so deadened and your heart becomes so cold and these good things that you are tasting that once thrilled

your soul so tremendously, will become commonplace to you. it will then be impossible for God to restore you and take you on to perfection except that this fire of judgment come upon you . . . You will go through, only, so as by fire. God spoke it to someone, "I've anointed your lips for prophecy, where is the prophecy? I've called you to build up my people, where is the word coming forth?" Don't neglect those things which God seeks to bring forth in you. We must go on to perfection. There is no slowing down. There is no stopping place until we reach that point. One of the most awful pictures that is presented to the eye of human history is the picture of the children of Israel as they came out of Egypt. I want you to see the beginning of their journey, and I want you to see the end of their journey. They came out of Egypt. They were filled with the good things of God. They had gold and silver in their hands, rings on their fingers, because God had poured out His blessing upon them so much that even the Egyptians gave them favor. That Red Sea rolled out before them with mighty miraculous power and they went through on dry land. They saw their enemies crushed by the mighty hand of their God; they grabbed their timbrels and began to dance and they said, "The glory of God of Israel is upon us, let us go on to victory. But as we follow them on their journey, we find they were tested. Brother, that's what we are going to get as soon as we come out - the testing. As the testing comes against them we find them slowing down and slowing down and losing their joy and pretty soon you find them becoming murmurers. They slow down more and more. Then we see them at the end of their journey there at the border of the land, a group of sniveling, unbelieving, murmuring, crying cowards who said, "We cannot go on; let us go back!" That is what is going to happen to whoever stumbles in the way, whoever neglects to press on. God has brought us out with silver and gold, the mighty redemptive works of Christ and the supernatural power of the living God. He has brought us out with great riches. Now we go through the field of testing.

Each one of us has our choice set before us. From here on out you can be an ordinary citizen, you can educate your children, you can build yourself a home, you can buy yourself an automobile, and you can die. If that is what you want you can have that choice. You can be a fine church member, you can join the church, you can become a Sunday school teacher, you can get involved in all the fleshy, foolishness that is going on in the church system in our world around us today; and you can die a fine respected member of the church and citizen of the world. Or you can find yourself a Pentecostal church where they have the baptism of the Holy Spirit and speak in tongues, where someone gets healed once in awhile, where you can praise God and shout Hallelujah. You can run from revival to revival, always seeking a thrill in God, and you can die that way if you so choose. Or you can set your eyes on that heavenly pillar of fire and pillar of cloud that is leading us. You can walk through the wilderness of testing and come to the border of the land. We can stand beside old Joshua and Caleb and say, "If our God be with us we are well able to go up and possess the land." You can march in against the giants and with the mighty hand of God upon you, and with David's sling in our hands, can sweep them to the right and to the left. We can go on to perfection. It is our choice.

When Jesus was preaching to a group of people in the world of His day, one said to Him, "Oh, blessed is he who shall eat bread in the kingdom of God." This man was so carnal, so fleshy and materialistic. He was looking for a visible kingdom to suddenly come floating down upon him. He didn't know that the kingdom of God was all around him right then. He was talking about a great feast that was supposed to be out in the future and Jesus gave him a parable that let him know that the feast was already before him. He said a certain man made a great supper and sent his servants to say to his people, "Come, for all things are now ready." He said they all began to make excuses. One said, "I bought some land and I have to go take care of it." One said, "I have

some oxen and I have to watch over them." And one said, "Well, I have to consider my wife, I can't, come. Pray, have me excused." Beloved, it is supper time: the feast is now ready. We don't have to wait for the kingdom to come in. The kingdom is here. We don't have to wait for the future to conquer sickness. We can conquer sickness now. We don't have to wait for the future to conquer pain. We can conquer pain now. We don't have to wait for the future to conquer death. We can conquer death now. All things are now ready. That's the attitude God wants us to have. Do you know why the church isn't experiencing these things? For the same reason they didn't in Jesus' day. They're too busy with houses and land, with automobiles, with wives or husbands or sweethearts. There are many excuses, "I've got to do this or that," or "I can't come because of this person or that one." The Spirit of God says in God's eyes they are not reasons, they are excuses. It is time to put them in the place where they belong and come to the feast.

Then Jesus said in the parable, "The Lord would say go out and get the lame and the blind. Go out in the highways and hedges and compel the people to come in." But he said those who are bidden to my feast shall be rejected. The Word of the Lord is going forth again today. The move of the Spirit of God is in the earth. God is speaking not just from the earth, but from heaven. He is saying all things are now ready. Those who make excuses will be just as surely be set aside as those Jews were set aside. When Jesus said, "Those that were bidden will be rejected," he was prophesying that the Jews would be set aside and that judgment would come upon them, as it did in 70 A.D. Those who will make excuses today, who will be too busy doing other things, will let it pass by them. They were bidden but they made excuses and they will be set aside and judgment will come upon them, because they knew not the hour of their visitation. I think I hear it ringing in my soul, Let Us Go On To Perfection. That is the message for today. That is God's message that we have to live by, and that is the

message that we have to preach. Let us go on to perfection, forgetting those things which are behind, pressing on toward the mark of the high calling in Christ Jesus. Let us go on to perfection.

UNTO A PERFECT MAN

This is a study of God's purpose for His church in the last days. As it's revealed in the book of Ephesians, the 4th chapter, beginning with the 8th verse and reading through the 15th verse.

8. Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. 9. (Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? 10. He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.) 11. And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; 12. For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: 13. Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ: 14. That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive: 15. But, speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ:

Here we have revealed for us God's purpose for His last day church; God's purpose for His last day saints. In verse 8 we read that when Jesus ascended up on high he gave gifts unto men. He distributed ministry gifts in His church. Now in verse 11 we're told "and he gave some, apostles; some, prophets; some pastors; some, evangelists; and some, teachers." These are the scriptural church ministries which Jesus instituted in His church at His ascension. Apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers. Then, in verse 12, we are told the purpose for which Jesus implanted these

ministries in His church: For the perfecting of the saints. Notice the Bible says, "these ministries were given for the perfecting of saints." Not just the evangelizing of the saints, but for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ; "til we all come in the unity of the faith." That is, all believing the same truth, no more division, no more schism, all believing the same truth; "and the knowledge of the Son of God." That is, until we come to the same knowledge that Jesus Christ had of God: Unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. That is to become exactly like Jesus. So we're told that these ministries (apostles, prophets, evangelists, etc.) were placed in His church by Jesus, to bring the saints to perfection - to edify them or to build them up (that is what the word means in the Greek) until they all become exactly like Jesus. Now, there are many in the church today, who try to bring this word perfecting down and make it mean something less than becoming exactly like Jesus. They will tell you that it simply means to be mature. Well, that's true - it does mean to be fully matured. But, according to the word of God, for the Christian to be fully matured is to be exactly like Jesus. They will say that it doesn't mean to be absolutely perfect. But, dear friends, that's just what it does mean. If you want to see just what the word perfecting means here, you only have to compare it with the Greek word that's used by Jesus, in Matthew 5:48, where He said, "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." Here obviously, the word "perfect" means perfect; because Jesus said even like your heavenly Father is perfect. And the same Greek word is used in Ephesians 4 where we're told that the ministries were planted in the church for the perfecting of the saints, as is used in Matthew 5:48 where Jesus said, "Be ye perfect, even as your heavenly Father is perfect."

Then, if you want to compare again, you can compare the Greek word used in Ephesians 4 with the Greek word used in Luke 6:40, where Jesus said, "The servant is not above his

lord or master, but he that is perfect shall be as his master." So that's exactly what the word perfecting means here, to come to perfection, Then if there's any doubt in your mind still, you only need to follow the context to see that perfecting of the saints here means just that; for it goes on to say for "the building up of the body of Christ until we all come to a perfect man; to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." If those words don't mean becoming exactly like Jesus then I don't understand the English language,

Now, notice that the scripture says that these five-fold ministries were planted in the church for the perfecting of the saints, not just the winning of people to Christ; this is only the first step in God's plan. (Evangelizing people, winning them to Christ, calling them out of the world so that they can then go on to be built up or edified until they come up to a perfect man to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ). Since, for the last 1900 years, the Spirit has been calling out of the world a people for God's name, the salvation message has been preached. What a tragedy it is that men have fallen so short of seeing God's full purpose. Probably 90% of the church today thinks that God's only Purpose is to evangelize the world, that the salvation message is the only message that God is concerned about. Beloved, this is far from the truth, it is only one step in God's plan. The first step, true, but only the first! Men have to be evangelized, they have to be won to Christ, they have to be called out of the world: only that they might become a part of the body of Christ and then through the five-fold ministry be edified and built up and come to their perfection.

You will notice that these ministries which are given for the perfecting of the saints, are earthly ministries, not heavenly ministries. There is not going to be any need for apostles and evangelists, for pastors, prophets, or teachers in heaven. These are not millennial ministries (during the 1000-year reign of perfect peace). There is going to be no need for apostles, prophets, etc. These ministries are earthly

ministries, given to operate right here and right now. Therefore, since these ministries, which are given to perfect the saints, are earthly ministries; it is clear that God intended for the saints to come to perfection right here upon the earth.

In past times, most Christians have known that some day we would be like Jesus, but they have assumed that after Jesus returned He was going to perform an instantaneous miracle on thousands upon thousands of unconcerned, lackadaisical Christians, still with all their petty weaknesses and lack of growth, and suddenly and instantaneously transform them into His likeness. They have assumed that that was the means by which we were going to become like Jesus. This is far from the truth. For Ephesians 4:13 says we are to come to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. Ephesians 4:15 says that this coming into His likeness is not to be an instantaneous miracle performed on us by Jesus after His return, but a matter of growth. For Ephesians 4:15 says, "Speaking the truth in love we are to grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ." We are to grow up into Christ and His likeness in holiness, we are to grow up into Him in revelation, we are to grow up into Him in knowledge, in faith, and in power. Our becoming like Him is to be a matter of growth.

In 1 John 3:2 it says, "When he shall appear we shall be like him." It does not say we shall be made like him after he appears. Our becoming like him is to be a matter of growth as through the ministries that Jesus has implanted in his church, the work of the ministry is carried on and the building up of the body of Christ is accomplished until we all come in the unity of the faith, in the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. This is why God is pouring out His spirit across the earth in every denominational church, welding them together in one great big bond of love. He is fulfilling His plan. He is bringing us into the unity of the faith - those who are truly yielding to the moving of the Spirit of God. This is a unity not brought about by an

Ecumenical Council. It's not a fleshly merging together of church organizations but is a unity brought about by the Spirit of God in the hearts of each individual Christian as they are baptized in the Holy Spirit and brought together in union with the Spirit of God and with one another.

As He continues to pour out His Spirit, He is going to fulfill the prophecy of the Old Testament, "And the knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea." He is going to bring us unto the knowledge of the Son of God. The same knowledge of God and His plans and His power and His purposes that Jesus had. Through these means we are going to grow up into Him who is the Head in all things. We are going to come to the measure of the fullness of the stature of Christ. Our growing up into Him in all things is going to culminate and climax in our transforming ourselves into our glorified spiritual bodies, in the eye-twinkling change that Paul speaks of. But the Bible makes it very clear that the last-day saints are not going to see death. Paul says, "We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed," for at the last trump, in an instant, in the twinkling of an eye, the last-day saints shall be transformed into their glorified spiritual body as the culmination and climax to our having grown up into Him in all things. This change will come, not by some instantaneous miracle, but by the power of the spirit of God that worketh in us. In Romans 8:11 the scripture says, "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." This word "quicken" here carries the connotation of changing our mortal bodies into immortal bodies and the Bible says it is going to be done by His Spirit that dwells in us - not by Jesus performing an instantaneous miracle on us. It is this growth into His likeness, as God pours out His Spirit in these last days, that will culminate in our being transformed into our glorified spiritual bodies. The power of this Spirit that worketh in us will enable us to speak the word of faith ourselves that will cause us to rise up

to meet Jesus in the air. But this, of course, is the process by which only those who are yielding to the move of the Spirit of God today shall come into the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ (unto His likeness).

One might well ask about the other group, Christians who have been converted and have been sitting in the church for years and have not grown at all. And what about those who are sitting in the church now and are not seeking to grow in spirit? What about those who are rejecting the move of God? How about those who are fighting against the move or denying the great move by which the Spirit is being poured out on every denomination. Thousands of laymen and ministers are receiving the baptism of the Holy Spirit and moving on- with the Spirit of God. What about those who are not only rejecting it, but are fighting against it? How shall they be like Jesus when He shall appear? For the Bible does say we shall all be like him when he shall appear. That is, all who are truly born again, all the body of Christ. But, we know that there are many born-again Christians who have just been born again and that's all. They have never grown in the Spirit, they deny the baptism of the Spirit, the manifestations of the Spirit, the gifts of the Spirit; those instruments which God has given to build us up so that we can come to our perfection. What about them?

Well, the Bible reveals two processes, by which the true church is going to be prepared for Jesus' coming. The first is those who are yielding to the moving of the Spirit of God and moving on with Him as we have just pointed out; whereby the ministries of apostles, pastors, prophets, evangelists, and teachers are going to bring us to perfection. But the Bible reveals another group of Christians who are going to be saved so as by fire. Fire, in the symbolism of scripture, always is a symbol of the judgment of God. The Bible reveals a group of Christians who are going to be saved so as by fire, that is, saved by God's judgment coming upon them. In 1 Corinthians 3:11 we hear the Spirit saying through the apostle Paul, "For other foundation can no man

lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." Here Paul is talking about the foundation, our confession of faith, our conversion. Then in verse 12 it says, "Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay or stubble;" here he is talking about what we build upon the foundation of our faith in Christ. He is talking about the works that we do as Christians, and he compares those works which are of the Spirit of God to gold and silver and precious stones. He compares those works which are not, to wood, hay, and stubble. Then he goes on in verse 13 to say that every man's works shall be made manifest. Bear in mind that Paul is talking about Christians here, those who have already laid the foundation of Christ. He is talking to the Corinthian Christians. He says, every man's work shall be made manifest or revealed, for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire. Now Paul says there is going to come a day that is going to reveal every man's works and it is going to be a day of fire. He goes on to say, "And the fire shall try every man's works of what sort it is. If any man's works abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's works shall be burned up, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire." Here it is revealed that there is a group of Christians who are going to be saved so as by fire, by judgment coming upon them. He reveals here that every Christian's works are going to be revealed. Then he says that they are going to be revealed by the day of fire. It is fire that is going to try every Christian's works. And so Paul reveals here just before the coming of the Lord Jesus, there is going to come a day of fire upon the earth. We see it building up all around us today as we read our newspapers. A day in which judgment is going to come upon the earth. Not only judgment upon Christians also. For he is speaking of Christians and what they have built upon their foundation of Christ, the works that they have done. He is not talking about the world here, but about the judgment that is coming upon Christians. He said there is going to come a day of fire,

which is going to reveal every Christians' works for what they are. That day of fire is coming upon the earth, the fire which will try men's works, is the great tribulation which the prophets have prophesied of down through the centuries.

The Christian church has been lulled into sleep and into laziness by false doctrine that the church was going to be raptured out of the world before the tribulation came. This is not true. This tribulation is the day of fire which Paul speaks of here, which is going to reveal every man's works for what they are. There is coming a day of horror upon the earth, upon the universe, as the great battle with Satan's kingdom comes to a climax and God's judgment comes upon Satan's kingdom and all evil. This day of fire is going to reveal every man's works. For only those who have been moving with the Spirit of God and have been led by the Spirit of God to such anointing and power, yea, which have come to the same anointing and power that Jesus had during his earthly ministry are going to be able to stand in it. The others who have been lackadaisical, have been lazy and unconcerned, who have been lulled to sleep by a false teaching that the church would be raptured out of the world before this tribulation; it is going to be a horrible experience for them because they are suddenly going to discover that they don't have the faith, neither the anointing nor the power to go through it.

Now, Paul uses two symbols here. He says in that day, Christians works will either be revealed in gold and silver and precious stones; or as wood, hay and stubble. In the symbolism of scripture, gold is a symbol of the nature of God. So, inasmuch as gold is the perfect metal that cannot be tarnished, so God's nature is perfection and it cannot be tarnished. Silver is the symbol of the redemptive works of Christ. Silver is the metal which is second only unto gold just as Christ is the second person of the trinity. Precious stones are symbols of the gifts and the operations of the Spirit of God. So when Paul says that those in that day whose works will be revealed by the fire as gold and silver

and precious stones, he simply means that those people will have come to the nature of God through the redemptive works of Christ, having all the gifts and operations of the Spirit of God working in them and the full power of the Spirit of God working in them, will be able to stand in the day of fire. It will flow over their backs like water off of a duck's back. But he reveals that there is a group of Christians whose works are going to be burned up, going to be revealed as wood, hay, and stubble, substances that will not stand when the day of testing, when the day of fire comes. Put gold, silver, or the precious stones in the fire and burn them and they will stand. You will bring them as gold and silver and precious stones. Put wood, hay and stubble in the fire and they will burn up; they are no more. Thus it will be, the lazy unconcerned, lackadaisical Christians who are rejecting the move of the Spirit of God today, going on building their own kingdoms with their fleshly, carnal programs and organizational systems and institutionalisms, building their own systems, in that day it's going to be revealed that not all their works were by the Spirit of God but in the flesh. These will be burned up. It will be revealed that they have no faith, no anointing, no real supernatural power of God to stand like those whom God is building in supernatural power who are moving in the Spirit.

It will be a horrible day for them, but it will break them; it will break them of their pride, of their depending on their natural talents, of their fleshy organizationalism, their carnal systems of the form and ritual and formalistic worship of God. It will break them and they will then, at last, surrender to the Holy Spirit and He in His graciousness through the ministry of those who are anointed shall help them to also come through. They too shall come to perfection, they too shall be saved, yet so as by fire, yet by judgment coming upon them.

These are the two methods, the two processes by which God is going to prepare His Church for the coming of the Lord Jesus.

In these last days, Jesus is going to bring forth again and restore to His church the five-fold ministries of apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers. He placed these ministry gifts in His church at His ascension and He has never taken them out. They have simply been subjugated or the devil has deceived men into replacing them with carnal, fleshy offices and officers in the church, such as board members and that kind of thing. Offices and officers which have been the election of carnal, unspirit-led people and not ministries which the Spirit of Jesus himself has placed in His Church. People have assumed that presbyters or deacons outside of pastors are the only scriptural church offices that God intended for His Church. These are not scriptural church offices or officers at all. They are not the ministries that Jesus placed in His Church for the direction and the guidance in the building up of His Church. They are simply carnal offices that men have brought forth for the purpose of expediency. But, Jesus is restoring to His Church, the scriptural ministries that the Spirit of God sets in the church. First apostles, second prophets, third evangelists, and pastors and teachers. He is going to restore them to His church. He is going to bring forth recognition of them and then He is going to use them for the purpose that He intended, for the perfecting of the saints until we all come in the unity of the faith, in the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.

Because Satan has deceived the minds of men in past centuries, they have assumed that there were only twelve apostles and that God never intended for there to be any more apostles. This is unscriptural. The twelve apostles were chosen by Jesus during his sojourning in the flesh. But the ministries of the apostles that we find in Ephesians 4, we find were given by Jesus at His ascension. And the word apostle as it's used in scripture simply means "special messenger" or "one who is called out by Jesus and sent with a special message to a people who have not heard that message before." All over the world today, Jesus is

supernaturally calling out His apostles and sending them, planting them in certain areas, and giving them the last-day message, which has not been heard yet by the people in that area. We can think in terms of an Oral Roberts. When he was 17 years old he heard the audible voice of God saying, "My son, I will send you to preach my message of healing to this generation." He was sent forth as an apostle, supernaturally called out by Jesus and sent forth to preach the divine healing message, which came as a great surprise to the religious world of our day. We can think of a Johnny Olsteen, Southern Baptist minister, filled with the Spirit who in a hotel room in Milwaukee as he was praying, Jesus appeared to him and said, "My son, I'm sending you up and down the land to make the dry bones live again." And then He said, "That you might know that it's Me that is speaking to you, stretch forth your hand." He stretched out his hand and felt like a thousand volts of electricity suddenly went through him, as Jesus stood there before him: Called to be an apostle and sent across the land. And we can think of men in every city who have been given this last-day message that the church is to come to perfection, and are planted by God in that city, and are bringing it forth in that city. Every one of them have been called out and supernaturally commissioned by Jesus. I say it humbly, I speak of my own experience of a number of years ago when the Lord said I was to establish a revival center and was to preach His last-day message. Then He spoke to me in a tremendous vision and confirmed that it was so. And He has spoken to me in many visions confirming it since then. God is calling out His apostles to His church today.

The second ministry that we have is the ministry of prophet. This ministry or office of prophet is completely separate and distinct, from the gift of prophecy, which is listed in 1 Corinthians 12 and spoken of in 1 Cor. 14. This gift of prophecy is simply an inspired utterance by which one in the congregation under the anointing of the Spirit speaks forth words of inspired utterance which comfort and exhort and

build up the saints. But the office and ministry of prophet, listed in Ephesians 4 is a ministry by which God is calling out people to receive the word of God in dreams and visions and speak it forth to His people. As in the old days, the days of Israel, when God spoke at that time to His prophets in dreams and visions, this ministry of prophet in the last-day move of God in His church is a ministry of confirmation. A ministry by which God speaks supernaturally in dreams and visions to His prophets, confirming to the people the revelation and the message that He is giving forth in these last days through His apostles, is the true message of God. In our own assembly, when God had called me and given me the revelation of the last-day message that He is perfecting His church and how He is doing it, just as he told me to establish a revival center, he began to send the people in as I began to preach the message. Immediately, He began to anoint one and then another. He began to speak to them in visions and called them into the ministry of prophet and raised up prophets in the assembly. The visions that they began to see are visions which confirm again and again and again the message that I was preaching to the people.

Jesus is coming soon, but the church must be brought to perfection, that men must die completely to self, that Christ might come forth in them. That the righteousness of God must be completely fulfilled, that they grow up into Jesus in all things, so that when He shall appear we shall be like Him. Now in our assembly there are seven or eight prophets, two of them 14-year-old girls, whom in every service God will speak to in order to confirm the message being preached from the pulpit. Often He will speak to two or three different people to confirm the same word. In the beginning of the move, God would sometimes speak to me before I went in the pulpit, and have me tell the people before I open my Bible or before I begin the message or before they knew what I was going to preach on, that the message I would preach that day, God would confirm through someone in the congregation in a vision. Then before I was finished

someone would lift a hand with a vision that would be a direct confirmation of the message that was being preached. This is the ministry of prophet that God is restoring to His church in these last days. He is bringing it forth because it is going to be needed because there are going to be so many false messages to go forth in the last days that the church is going to need these supernatural ministries with which to fight and overcome Satan in this last-day battle.

Then, the evangelists are those who are being called out by the Spirit, not just to go from church to church and preach to people who are already in the church; but evangelists who will not only continue to win people to Christ, but will go forth to win people to the message of God that is being sent forth in the last days.

Pastors are the elders (this word pastor is the same word used for elder in the scriptures). They will be raised up to watch over the sheep, to feed the sheep on that which has already been brought forth which strengthens them, and confirms in them the message that God is giving forth.

Teachers will be given to teach the young ones and to unfold and develop the revelation that God is giving in these end-time days. God will raise up these ministries in each assembly. The day of one man ruling over a church or a congregation has passed away. From the midst of the congregations God will raise up those who are called to these ministries. An apostle will be sent in, pastors or elders will be raised up as overseers of the body to watch over the saints, to keep the wolves from leading them astray. They will serve, not for filthy lucre, but for the glory of God. Prophets will be raised up, the evangelist will go forth from that assembly and the teachers will be there teaching the message.

This will be God's divine order that He will bring forth in His Church. God has been bringing it forth in various assemblies and the Spirit has distributed the ministries. Hallelujah! They are recognized by the people as that person who is called to the ministry begins to manifest the ministry.

The Lord has revealed that He will show us the time to hold an ordination service, and each will have hands laid upon them and be officially ordained into His ministry. Thus God will restore divine order to this assembly and thus He will do to all assemblies that He is bringing out and forming by the power of His Spirit.

May God lead you into it in Jesus' Name. Amen