

# **Vision Third. - Concerning the Building of the Triumphant Church, and the Various Classes of Reprobate Men. Chap. I.**

The vision which I saw, my brethren, was of the following nature. **Having fasted frequently, and having prayed to the Lord that He would show me the revelation which He promised to show me** through that old woman, the same night that old woman appeared to me, and said to me, "Since you are so anxious and eager to know all things, go into the part of the country where you tarry; and about the fifth hour I shall appear unto you, and show you all that you ought to see." I asked her, saying "Lady, into what part of the country am I to go?" And she said, "Into any part you wish." Then I chose a spot which was suitable, and retired. Before, however, I began to speak and to mention the place, she said to me, "I will come where you wish." Accordingly, I went to the country, and counted the hours, and reached the place where I had promised to meet her. And I see **an ivory seat ready placed, and on it a linen cushion, and above the linen cushion was spread a covering of fine linen.** Seeing these laid out, and yet no one in the place, I began to feel awe, and as it were a **trembling seized hold of me, and my hair stood on end, and as it were a horror came upon me when I saw that I was all alone.** But on coming back to myself and calling to mind the glory of God, I took courage, bent my knees, and again **confessed my sins to God as I had done before. (Eze 1:28)** Whereupon the old woman approached, accompanied by six young men whom I had also seen before; and she stood behind me, and listened to me, as I prayed and confessed my sins to the Lord. And touching me she said, "Hermas, **cease praying continually for your sins; pray for righteousness,** that you may have a portion of it immediately in your house." On this, she took me up by the hand, **and brought me to the seat,** and said to the young men, "Go and build." When the young men had gone and we were alone, she said to me, "Sit here." I say to her, "Lady, permit my elders to be seated first." "Do what I bid you," said she; "sit down." When I would have sat down on her right, she did not permit me, but with her hand beckoned to me to sit down on the left. While I was thinking about this, and feeling vexed that she did not let me sit on the right, she said, "Are you vexed, Hermas? The **place to the right is for others who have already pleased God, and have suffered for His name's sake;** and you have yet **much to accomplish** before you can sit with them. But abide as you now do in your simplicity, and you will sit with them, and with all who do their deeds and bear what they have borne."

## **Chap. II.**

**"What have they borne?"** said I. "Listen," said she: **"scourges, prisons, great tribulations, crosses, wild beasts, (Heb 11:36, Heb 11:37) for God's name's sake.** On this account is assigned to them the division of sanctification on the right hand, and to everyone who shall suffer for God's name: to the rest is assigned the division on the left. But both for those **who sit on the right, and those who sit on the left, there are the same gifts and promises; only those sit on the right, and have some glory.** You then are eager to sit on the right with them, but your shortcomings are many. But you will be cleansed from your shortcomings; and all who are not given to doubts shall be cleansed from all their iniquities up till this day." Saying this, she wished to go away. But falling down at her feet, I begged her by the Lord that she would show me the vision which she had promised to show me. And then she again took hold of me by the hand, and raised me, and made me sit on the seat to the left; and lifting up a splendid rod, (Rev 11:1) she said to me, "Do you see

something great?" And I say, "Lady, I see nothing." She said to me, "Lo! do you not see opposite to you a **great tower, built upon the waters**, of splendid square stones?" For the **tower was built square (Rev\_21:16) by those six young men who had come with her**. But myriads of men were carrying stones to it, some dragging them from the depths, others removing them from the land, and they handed them to these six young men. They were taking them and building; and those of the stones that were dragged out of the depths, they placed in the building just as they were: for they were polished and fitted exactly into the other stones, and became so united one with another that the lines of juncture could not be perceived. And in this way the building of the tower looked as if it were made out of one stone. **Those stones, however, which were taken from the earth suffered a different fate; for the young men rejected some of them, some they fitted into the building, and some they cut down, and cast far away from the tower. Many other stones, however, lay around the tower, and the young men did not use them in building; for some of them were rough, others had cracks in them, others had been made too short, and others were white and round, but did not fit into the building of the tower. Moreover, I saw other stones thrown far away from the tower, and falling into the public road; yet they did not remain on the road, but were rolled into a pathless place. And I saw others falling into the fire and burning, others falling close to the water, and yet not capable of being rolled into the water, though they wished to be rolled down, and to enter the water.**

### Chap. III.

On showing me these visions, she wished to retire. I said to her, "What is the use of my having seen all this, while I do not know what it means?" She said to me, "You are a cunning fellow, wishing to know everything that relates to the tower." "Even so, O Lady," said I, "that I may tell it to my brethren, that, hearing this, they may know the Lord in much glory." And she said, "Many indeed shall hear, and hearing, some shall be glad, and some shall weep. But even these, if they hear and repent, shall also rejoice. Hear, then, the **parables of the tower**; for I will reveal all to you, and give me no more trouble in regard to revelation: for these revelations have an end, for they have been completed. But you will not cease praying for revelations, for you are shameless. The tower which you see building is myself, the Church, who have appeared to you now and on the former occasion. Ask, then, whatever you like in regard to the tower, and I will reveal it to you, that you may rejoice with the saints." I said unto her, "Lady, since you have vouchsafed to reveal all to me this once, reveal it." She said to me, **"Whatsoever ought to be revealed, will be revealed; only let your heart be with God, and doubt not whatsoever you shall see."** I asked her, "Why was the tower built upon the waters, O Lady?" She answered, "I told you before, and you still inquire carefully: therefore inquiring you shall find the truth. Hear then why the tower is built upon the waters. It is because **your life has been, and will be, saved through water**. For the **tower was founded on the word of the almighty and glorious Name, and it is kept together by the invisible power of the Lord.**"

### Chap. IV.

In reply I said to her, "This is magnificent and marvelous. But who are the **six young men** who are engaged in building?" And she said, "These are the **holy angels of God**, who were first created, and to whom the Lord handed over His whole creation, that they might increase and build up and rule over the whole creation. By these will the building of the tower be finished." "But who are the other persons who are engaged in carrying the stones?" These also are holy angels of the Lord, but the former six are more excellent than these. The building of the tower will be finished, and all will

rejoice together around the tower, and they will glorify God, because the tower is finished." I asked her, saying, "Lady, I should like to know what became of the stones, and what was meant by the various kinds of stones?" In reply she said to me, "Not because you are more deserving than all others that this revelation should be made to you - for there are others before you, and better than you, to whom these visions should have been revealed - but that the name of God may be glorified, has the revelation been made to you, and it will be made on account of the doubtful who ponder in their hearts whether these things will be or not. Tell them that all these things are true, and that none of them is beyond the truth. All of them are firm and sure, and established on a strong foundation.

## Chap. V.

"Hear now with regard to the stones which are in the building. Those **square white stones which fitted exactly into each other, are apostles, bishops, teachers, and deacons, who have lived in godly purity, and have acted as bishops and teachers and deacons chastely and reverently to the elect of God.** Some of them have fallen asleep, and some still remain alive. (1Co\_15:6, 1Co\_15:18) And they have always agreed with each other, and been at peace among themselves, (Phi\_2:2, Phi\_3:16; 1Th\_5:13) and listened to each other. On account of this, they join exactly into the building of the tower." "But who are the **stones that were dragged from the depths,** and which were laid into the building and fitted in with the rest of the stones previously placed in the tower?" "They are those who suffered for the Lord's sake." "But I wish to know, O Lady, who are the other **stones which were carried from the land.**" "Those," she said, "which go into the building without being polished, are those whom God has approved of, for they walked in the straight ways of the Lord and practiced His commandments." "But who are those who are in the **act of being brought and placed in the building?**" "They are those who are young in faith and are faithful. But they are admonished by the angels to do good, for no iniquity has been found in them." "Who then are those whom they **rejected and cast away?**" "These are they who have sinned, and wish to repent. On this account they have not been thrown far from the tower, because they will yet be useful in the building, if they repent. Those then who are to repent, if they do repent, will be strong in faith, if they now repent while the tower is building. For if the building be finished, there will not be more room for any one, but he will be rejected. (Heb\_6:6-8; Heb\_12:17) This privilege, however, will belong only to him who has now been placed near the tower.

## Chap. VI.

"As to those who were **cut down and thrown far away from the tower,** do you wish to know who they are? They are the sons of iniquity, and they believed in hypocrisy, and wickedness did not depart from them. For this reason they are not saved, since they cannot be used in the building on account of their iniquities. Wherefore they have been cut off and cast far away on account of the anger of the Lord, for they have roused Him to anger. But I shall explain to you the other stones which you saw lying in great numbers, and not going into the building. Those which are **rough** are those who have known the truth and not remained in it, nor have they been joined to the saints. On this account are they unfit for use." "Who are those that have **rents?**" "These are they who are at discord in their hearts one with another, and are not at peace amongst themselves: they indeed keep peace before each other, but when they separate one from the other, their **wicked thoughts remain in their hearts.** These, then, are the rents which are in the stones. But those which are shortened are those who have indeed believed, and have the larger share of righteousness; yet they have also a considerable share of iniquity, and therefore they are shortened and not whole." "But who are these,

Lady, that are **white and round**, and yet do not fit into the building of the tower?" She answered and said, "How long will you be foolish and stupid, and continue to put every kind of question and understand nothing? These are those who have faith indeed, but they have also the riches of this world. When, therefore, tribulation comes, on account of their riches and business they deny the Lord." (Mat\_13:21) I answered and said to her, "When, then, will they be useful for the building, Lady? "When the riches that now seduce them have been circumscribed, then will they be of use to God. For as a round stone cannot become square unless portions be cut off and cast away, so also those who are rich in this world cannot be useful to the Lord unless their riches be cut down. Learn this first from your own case. When you were rich, you were useless; but now you are useful and fit for life. Be ye useful to God; for you also will be used as one of these stones.

## Chap. VII.

"Now the other **stones which you saw cast far away** from the tower, and falling upon the public road and rolling from it into pathless places, are those who have indeed believed, but through doubt have abandoned the true road. Thinking, then, that they could find a better, they wander and become wretched, and enter upon pathless places. But those which fell into the fire and were burned, (Heb\_3:12, Heb\_6:8) are those who have departed for ever from the living God; nor does the thought of repentance ever come into their hearts, on account of their devotion to their lusts and to the crimes which they committed. Do you wish to know who are the others which **fell near the waters**, but could not be rolled into them? These are they who have heard the word, and wish to be baptized in the name of the Lord; but when the chastity demanded by the truth comes into their recollection, they draw back, and again walk after their own wicked desires." She finished her exposition of the tower. But I, shameless as I yet was, asked her, **"Is repentance possible for all those stones which have been cast away and did not fit into the building of the tower, and will they yet have a place in this tower?"** "Repentance," said she, "is yet possible, but in this tower they cannot find a suitable place. But in another and much inferior place they will be laid, and that, too, only **when they have been tortured and completed the days of their sins. And on this account will they be transferred, because they have partaken of the righteous Word.** And then only will they be removed from their punishments when the thought of repenting of the evil deeds which they have done has come into their hearts. But if it does not come into their hearts, they will not be saved, on account of the hardness of their heart."

## Book First. (Cont.)

### Chap. IX.

Give ear unto me, O Sons: I have brought you up in much simplicity, and guilelessness, and chastity, on account of the mercy of the Lord, who has dropped His righteousness down upon you, that ye may be made righteous and holy from all your iniquity and depravity; but you do not wish to rest from your iniquity. Now, therefore, listen to me, and be at peace one with another, and visit each other, and bear each other's burdens, and do not partake of God's creatures alone, but give abundantly of them to the needy. For **some through the abundance of their food produce weakness in their flesh, and thus corrupt their flesh; while the flesh of others who have no food is corrupted, because they have not sufficient nourishment. And on this account their bodies waste away. This intemperance in eating is thus injurious to you who have abundance and do not distribute among those who are needy.** Give heed to the judgment that is to come. Ye, therefore, who are high in position, seek out the hungry as long as the tower is not yet finished; for after the tower is finished,

you will wish to do good, but will find no opportunity. Give heed, therefore, ye who glory in your wealth, lest those who are needy should groan, and their groans should ascend to the Lord, (Jam\_5:1-4) and ye be shut out with all your goods beyond the gate of the tower. Wherefore I now say to you who preside over the Church and love the first seats, **"Be not like to drug-mixers. For the drug-mixers carry their drugs in boxes, but ye carry your drug and poison in your heart.** Ye are hardened, and do not wish to cleanse your hearts, and to add unity of aim to purity of heart, that you may have mercy from the great King. Take heed, therefore, children, that these dissensions of yours do not deprive you of your life. How will you instruct the elect of the Lord, if you yourselves have not instruction? Instruct each other therefore, and be at peace among yourselves, that (Rom\_2:21; 1Th\_5:13) I also, standing joyful before your Father, may give an account of you all to your Lord." (Heb\_13:17)

## Chap. X.

On her ceasing to speak to me, those six young men who were engaged in building came and conveyed her to the tower, and other four lifted up the seat and carried it also to the tower. The faces of these last I did not see, for they were turned away from me. And as she was going, I asked her to reveal to me the meaning of the three forms in which she appeared to me. In reply she said to me: "With regard to them, you must ask another to reveal their meaning to you." For she had appeared to me, brethren, in the first vision the previous year under the form of an exceedingly **old woman, sitting in a chair.** In the second vision her **face was youthful, but her skin and hair betokened age,** and she stood while she spoke to me. She was also more joyful than on the first occasion. But in the third vision she was entirely youthful and exquisitely beautiful, except only that she had the hair of an old woman; but her face beamed with joy, and she sat on a seat. Now I was exceeding sad in regard to these appearances, for I longed much to know what the visions meant. Then I see the old woman in a vision of the night saying unto me: "Every prayer should be accompanied with humility: fast, therefore, and you will obtain from the Lord what you beg." I fasted therefore for one day.

That very night there appeared to me a young man, who said, "Why do you frequently ask revelations in prayer? Take heed lest by asking many things you injure your flesh: be content with these revelations. Will you be able to see greater revelations than those which you have seen?" I answered and said to him, "Sir, one thing only I ask, that in regard to these three forms the revelation may be rendered complete." He answered me, "How long are ye senseless? But your doubts make you senseless, because you have not your hearts turned towards the Lord." But I answered and said to him, "From you, sir, we shall learn these things more accurately."

## Chap. XI.

"Hear then," said he, "with regard to the three forms, concerning which you are inquiring. Why in the **first vision did she appear to you as an old woman seated on a chair? Because your spirit is now old and withered up, and has lost its power in consequence of your infirmities and doubts.** For, like elderly men who have no hope of renewing their strength, and expect nothing but their last sleep, so you, weakened by worldly occupations, have given yourselves up to sloth, and have not cast your cares upon the Lord. (1Pe\_5:7) Your spirit therefore is broken, and you have grown old in your sorrows." "I should like then to know, sir, why she sat on a chair?" He answered, "Because **every weak person sits on a chair on account of his weakness,** that his weakness may be sustained. Lo! you have the form of the first vision.

## Chap. XII.

“Now in the **second vision you saw her standing with a youthful countenance, and more joyful than before; still she had the skin and hair of an aged woman.** Hear,” said he, “this parable also. When one becomes somewhat old, he despairs of himself on account of his weakness and poverty, and looks forward to nothing but the last day of his life. Then suddenly an inheritance is left him: and hearing of this, he rises up, and becoming exceeding joyful, he puts on strength. And now he no longer reclines, but stands up; and his spirit, already destroyed by his previous actions, is renewed, and he no longer sits, but acts with vigor. So happened it with you on hearing the revelation which God gave you. For the Lord had compassion on you, and renewed your spirit, and ye laid aside your infirmities. Vigor arose within you, and ye grew strong in faith; and the Lord, seeing your strength, rejoiced. On this account He showed you the building of the tower; and He will show you other things, if you continue at peace with each other with all your heart.

## Chap. XIII.

“Now, in the **third vision, you saw her still younger, and she was noble and joyful, and her shape was beautiful.** For, just as when some good news comes suddenly to one who is sad, immediately he forgets his former sorrows, and looks for nothing else than the good news which he has heard, and for the future is made strong for good, and his spirit is renewed on account of the joy which he has received; so ye also have received the renewal of your spirits by seeing these good things. As to your seeing her sitting on a seat, that means that her position is one of strength, for a seat has four feet and stands firmly. For the world also is kept together by means of four elements. Those, therefore, **who repent completely and with the whole heart, will become young and firmly established. You now have the revelation completely given you.** Make no further demands for revelations. If anything ought to be revealed, it will be revealed to you.”

~Hermas- The Pastor Book I Vol. 2