

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES

*"Teaching the things concerning the
Kingdom of God..."*

THE SEED IN EVERY MAN

By J. Preston Eby

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The Seed In Every Man

THE SPIRIT IN MAN

Deep within every man there is a secret sanctum where dwells the mysterious essence of his being. This inmost reality is that part of a man which separates him from every other living creature and makes him uniquely mankind. This deep hidden power is what it is of itself independent of any other part of the man's complex nature. It is the man's "I Am," a gift from the I AM who created him. The deep-in human entity of which we speak is called in the scriptures the spirit of man. "For what man knoweth the things of man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God" (I Cor. 2:11). As God's self-knowledge lies in the eternal Spirit, so man's self-knowledge is by his own spirit, and his knowledge of God is by the direct union of the Spirit of God with the spirit of man. I cannot overstress the importance of this in our forward walk into our destiny as sons of God! This truth denies that man is an earthly, physical being having a spirit and declares, rather, that he is a spirit having a physical body. That which makes a man a human being is not his body but his spirit, in which the image of God originally lay.

Most people on earth have forgotten their beginning. But the scripture is clear. "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness...and the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created He him" (Gen. 1:26; 2:7; 1:28). What God actually did was that He imaged Himself in man. God imaged Himself in man by forming Himself in a man of earth. Thus man was created as a visible expression of the invisible God. Now that hasn't changed! What has changed is our perception of ourselves because of the fall. But before we discuss that, let us see just how it was that God imaged Himself in man, and

how it is that man is a spiritual being having an earthly experience, instead of a physical being having a spiritual experience.

Wonderful words were spoken at the very dawn of civilization, recorded in the oldest book of the Bible, which state simply and powerfully the reality of man. "There is a spirit in man: and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding" (Job 32:8). It is something great in man, Elihu conceives, that he is spirit, and, because he is, is capable of being inspired. He is not here speaking of Adam as he was in the primordial glory of Eden, nor yet of regenerated man in this wonderful age of the Holy Spirit; but, speaking thousands of years ago in the present tense, he magnifies man as being able to be inspired, just because he is spirit. And it is God, who likewise is spirit, that inspires him!

Can we not see by this that the very being of man has a God-ward or divine side, being related constitutionally to Him. The testimony of scripture is incontrovertible that there is a spirit in man, or what is the same, the fact that we are, as being spirit, permeable and inspirable by the Almighty!

The word "spirit" means literally, breath, and denotes a quality of life because, in the case of the spirit in man, God is able to breathe Himself into it and through it. The word "inspiration," as used here, denotes the act of inbreathing. Anyone who is inspired is "breathed into," visited internally by the power of life, and so quickened in mind, raised in intelligence, ennobled in nature, and empowered in ability. In this way Bezaleel was inspired when he "was filled with the Spirit of God, in wisdom and in understanding, to devise cunning works, to work in gold, and in silver, and in brass, and in cutting of stones, to set them, and in carving timber" (Ex. 31:3-5). Anyone is inspired just as far as he is raised internally, in thought, feeling, perception, or action, by a divine movement within! It is God's Spirit quickening our spirit, and thus bringing a change, a release, a raising so that our spirit may function as it was designed to function. This is what Jesus described as being "born again," the spirit

that already existed as the offspring of God being brought forth, just as a flesh baby is brought forth into the world, into a new realm, a new level of identity, a new consciousness, a new expression, a new ability, a new standing, new rights and privileges and inheritance! We all understand that a baby's life does not begin at the moment of birth — it is simply released into a new dimension where it can attain to its full potential in that realm. Thus it is with the new birth! Our spirit did not originate at the moment of our new birth — it had to already exist or it could not have been born! That which is thus “born” of the Spirit is spirit! It is this capacity of being spirit that qualifies man as an inspirable creature.

This reveals man's capacity for God; to experientially know the presence of God, to let in the divine nature, to entertain the eternal Spirit witnessing with his spirit, to be energized by Him and filled with His glory, in every faculty, feeling, and power, being a vessel and channel for the life of God, to think His thoughts and do His works. Thus, “the Spirit beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children (offspring) of God!” (Rom. 8:16). And “because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts (spirit), crying, Abba, Father!” (Gal. 4:6). “There is a spirit in man, and the inbreathing of the Almighty giveth them understanding.” Only because man is spirit is all this possible!

In that long ago beginning God “breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul” (Gen. 2:7). Now all the animals and beasts of the field are also called “living souls” in the creation story in Genesis. But there is a difference! Let the fact be imprinted indelibly upon our minds that none of these became a “living soul” by the inbreathing of God! God did not Himself breathe into the nostrils of cattle, lions, elephants, birds, fish, cockroaches, or any other creature. Their “breath of life” is of an inferior quality to that of man. The breath of life of the animal kingdom is merely the oxygen of our lower atmosphere. They are, therefore, a creation of God but are unrelated to God. The breath of life in man, however, originates out of the very spirit-essence of God Himself — inbreathed — thus,

when a man dies his body returns to the dust from whence it came, but his spirit returns to God who gave it! (Eccl. 12:7).

In Genesis 1, God speaks of *adham* (male and female), and only *adham* as being made in His image. The point is emphasized by repetition. As humanity's story unfolds through subsequent chapters, we discover that what makes humans different is a quality called "spirit." None of the rest of earth's creatures possess it! By "spirit" the Bible means relationship with God, and the capacity to be aware of God, to communicate with Him, and participate with Him in His great and eternal purposes. Worship is the key evidence of the spiritual quality of the human race, and the universality of worship is evidenced in altars, temples, priesthoods, sacrifices, rituals, prayers, praise, and religious exercises of all kinds. Burial of dead, use of tools, or even architecture and the arts do not qualify as evidence of the spirit, for non-spirit beings such as birds, beaver, elephants, chimpanzees, and a multitude of others engage in such activities to a limited extent. But no animal worships! There are no chimpanzee or ape altars, temples, priesthoods, or prayers of any kind. Only man worships! Only man is a spiritual being! Only man is aware of God! Only man has heard from God! To worship is as natural for man — any man, saved or unsaved — as barking is for a dog! Oh, the mystery of it!

Douglas Wilson once wrote, "There has been a very sore cry in a great many of our hearts. There has been a cry that has risen from the very depths of our spirits. It is a cry to know the Lord, even our God! It is a cry to be one with the Lord our God. It is a cry to be with our God even as it is written that 'he that is joined to the Lord is one Spirit.' We have not understood from whence this deep cry comes. We have not known the depths from whence it came. But the Lord knows, for He put it there and has caused it to come forth. Is it not written that 'deep calleth unto deep'? So is it then not written that the depth of man calls unto the depth of God? And the depth of God also calls to the depth in man! The earth is filled with the call of God and the call of man. The call rises up into the ears of God and He hears it, for He has put the call within us.

“The Lord would have us know that from the very beginning, when He brought man forth out of the dust of the earth and gave unto him of His own breath, His own Spirit, then He put a depth in man that was equal to the depth of God. For do we not know that if God lives in us, and if we are the temple of the living God, then the depths that are in us must equal those depths that are in God? Else we could not contain God, neither could He dwell within us as our life.

“But the depth that God had put in man became darkness unto man. So man knew not this depth. Man deemed himself to be but a created being of God. Man did not know the depths of his nature! He knew not that which was deep within him. For to him the light had gone out and no longer moved in the depth of his life. Unknown to man the light was shining dimly and man was only faintly aware of it. Yet there was to come a day when this light would begin again to be manifested!” — end quote.

Recently I heard one “kingdom teacher” make the following statements: “I want to say a word to all the spooky people out there who believe in pre-existence, in having had some kind of spiritual life in the bosom of the Father before the world began. We were not there — HE was there! The reason I am telling you this is because there is a teaching that goes around the camp of sonship people which suggests that you were there with Him at that time. I can’t take the time today to point out to you how that is not true, and it defiles the truth. It corrupts the truth because God said to honor your father and your mother. Do you know why? BECAUSE THEY ARE THE ONES WHO GAVE YOU LIFE! That’s the first commandment with promise. My life did not begin in the beginning or before the beginning. God might have thought about me, He may have known that I was going to come forth, but in due time I came forth from my parents” — end quote.

This dear brother simply lacks spiritual understanding. He supposes that the whole life of man derives only from his earthly parents! He must never have read the scripture wherein we read, “And ye have forgotten the exhortation

which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of Him: for whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth. Furthermore, we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live? For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but He for our profit, that we might be partakers of His holiness” (Heb. 12:5-6, 9-10).

Someone says, “Oh, yes, God is the Father of the spirits of all those who have been born again.” Yet the scripture cries out, “O God, the God of the spirits of all flesh” (Num. 16:22). You see, brethren, we must think spiritual sense about these things! That we might better comprehend, I must follow this instructive passage with some pertinent questions. Meditate deeply upon these. Does every flesh man have a spirit? Is every man, saved or unsaved, composed of spirit, soul, and body? Or do only believers possess a spirit? If every man has a spirit, where did his spirit come from? Did it come from God? Did it come from his parents? Did it come from the devil? Was your spirit, when you were born into this world, already “fallen”? If not, when did it “fall”? Is God actively in the business of begetting “fallen” or “dead” spirits? Is God really the Father of the spirits of ALL FLESH? When did your spirit originate? Did it originate at the time of your physical birth? Did it originate at the moment of your conception in the womb? Did it originate before your conception? Did it exist way back there when you were “chosen in Him before the foundation of the world?” (Eph. 1:4). Did it exist when “God, who cannot lie, promised eternal life before the world began?” (Titus 1:2). To whom did He promise eternal life at that time? Could He have promised it to you if you were not there?

That our spirit came out of God, we know, for we read, “The burden of the word of the Lord for Israel, saith the Lord, which stretcheth forth the heavens, and layeth the foundation of the earth, and formeth the spirit of man within him” (Zech. 12:1). He who takes responsibility for the vast

expanse of heaven and earth, also takes responsibility for forming (maturing) the spirit of man which is within us, and He is the God of the spirits of all flesh.

What revealing light of revelation Jesus gave when He opened the truth about the origin of both man's flesh and his spirit when on that star-studded night long ago He explained to the questioning Nicodemus, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the spirit is spirit" (Jn. 3:6). This in my opinion is one of the most profound and awe-inspiring statements in all scripture. According to Jesus, my earthly parents are the parents only of my flesh, for that which is born of the flesh is flesh. That's all it is! On the other hand, God, and only God, is the Father of my spirit, for that which is born of the spirit is spirit. Spirit begets spirit! And God is the God and Father of the spirits of all flesh! How could we ever think of God as the Father of the flesh? He is the creator of flesh, of the physical, but He is the Father of SPIRITS. "God IS spirit," so He could father nothing less than spirits. As Father He puts the same life-force into His children; and this life-force is that which animates the flesh so that the body without the spirit is dead (James 2:26). This is true of all men! What a glorious statement this is — "the Father of spirits"!

That is what redemption is all about! It liberates us from the flesh consciousness of the natural-minded man and brings us again into the conscious awareness of our Father and that we are spirit, the offspring of God. We are being made like Him because we are of His same substance. Speaking to His disciples and to the multitudes Jesus once said, "But you are not to be called rabbi, for you have one teacher, and you are all brethren. And call no man your father upon the earth, for ONE IS YOUR FATHER, which is in heaven" (Mat. 23:8-9). Need I remind you that these words were spoken to men under the law; Jesus had not died or risen again, the Holy Spirit had not been poured out, nor was the new covenant in effect. He informed every one of these people that they ALL HAD ONE FATHER AND He is "our Father, which art in heaven."

That wonderful prayer Jesus taught His disciples, which we call The Lord's Prayer, begins with the words, "Our Father which art in heaven." Until men recognize by the illumination that the Spirit brings who their Father is they remain lost and dying in the dense darkness of the carnal mind. Spiritually, they are no different than the adopted child who has never been told he is adopted and has no concept of who his biological parents truly are or where he came from. Our Father is not the one who gave us our physical life in the womb of our earthly mother. The only reason Jesus would tell the vast throng gathered around Him, "Call no man your father upon the earth, for ONE IS YOUR FATHER, which is in heaven," is that we all must recognize that our life did not begin with our physical birth. Our true Father is not a man upon earth, but our Father who is in heaven! Can we not see by this that our life did not begin on earth — it began in heaven! Nothing could be plainer than this. Over and over again Jesus taught the multitudes about their "heavenly Father." Just look up the word "father" in Strong's Concordance and see how many times in the four Gospels Jesus told the people that God was their Father! Once we know who and where our Father is it is easy to understand where our life began and from whence we came. Our birth, our beginnings were with God! God is our Father. Aren't you glad!

The heavenly Father is Spirit, in the Spirit state known as heaven. As spirit, we know Him as our very own Father, and the only substance of our true being. We find ourselves coming alive to Spirit, to God. This is what Jesus has accomplished redemptively for all men through His blood! The fact that we are spirit is the very basis of Christ's redemptive work. It is not the coming of His Spirit into us that makes us God's sons, but the apostle plainly said that "because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father" (Gal. 4:6). We no longer feel strangers to our heavenly homeland! God has redeemed us, renewed us, delivered us, and in His Son made us to be again who we truly are!

One of the greatest needs for understanding among believers is in this area of comprehending the relationship of all men to God. Paul expressed it on Mars Hill, saying, "The God who made the world and everything in it, being Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in shrines made by man, nor is He served by human hands, as though He needed anything, since He Himself gives TO ALL MEN life and breath (spirit) and everything. And He made from one every nation of men to live on all the face of the earth, having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their habitation, that they should seek God, in the hope that they might feel after Him and find Him. Yet HE IS NOT FAR FROM EACH ONE OF US, for in Him we live and move and have our being...for we are indeed His offspring. Being then God's offspring, we ought not to think that the Deity is like gold, or silver, or stone, a representation by the art and imagination of man" (Acts 17:24-29). God's offspring! And this was spoken to Greeks who not only knew nothing of Jesus Christ, but had no awareness of the one God.

Paul is not talking here about born-again Christians, he is speaking of the fact that there is a spirit in man — in all men — and God is the Father of spirits, the God of the spirits of all flesh. The one Father of all spirits is but one Spirit. Thus all spirits are related and unified in Him. We easily forget the human birth of every man and all these earthly relationships, races, cultures, and characteristics when we recognize the One Father from whom we all came. In Old Testament days it was a great discovery of truth for people to realize that "The Lord our God, the Lord is One." In the days of many gods this was a great revelation! In our day, however, most of the civilized world recognizes the truth of the oneness of God. The problem now is to awaken people to the truth that the One God is the Father of the spirit of every man! This is among the deepest and most precious truths of scripture. No star that shines in the firmament of revelation is more clear or glorious than this; no truth ever dropped down upon our earth from the heavens of God's Spirit is more full of significance. This Fatherhood gives meaning and a tenderness to this life of ours, and is the very foundation of

the value of man's life, and reveals why Jesus came from the heavenly realms to redeem all men by His own precious and divine blood!

THE VALUE OF EVERY MAN

The grandest of all truths is that CHRIST IS THE IMAGE OF GOD! If you want to know what God had in mind when He said, "Let us make man in our image, and after our likeness," you have only to look at Jesus Christ. That is what God meant! "But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost (who know not who or where they are): in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of CHRIST, WHO IS THE IMAGE OF GOD, should shine unto them" (II Cor. 4:3-4). "In whom we have redemption through His blood...who is THE IMAGE OF THE INVISIBLE GOD, the firstborn (prototype) of every creature" (Col. 1:14-15). His dignity is still further elaborated in these words of the writer to the Hebrews: "Who being the brightness of His glory, and the EXPRESS IMAGE OF HIS PERSON...being made so much better than the angels" (Heb. 1:3-4). The Amplified Bible reads, "He is the...expression of the glory of God — the Light Being, the out-raying of the divine — and He is the PERFECT IMPRINT AND VERY IMAGE OF GOD'S NATURE...taking a place and rank by which He Himself became...superior to angels."

How totally inadequate do our words become in the light of words of such wonder as these! Jesus is the prototype of what God intends man to be. He is God's finished product, God's perfect man; what every man should be and ultimately will be. We will only understand the majesty of man in God's image when we see Jesus as THE BEAM OF THE DIVINE GLORY, and THE OUT-RAYING OF GOD'S PERSON. Jesus Christ is the express or exact image of the Father's being, the perfect imprint and very image of God's nature. The allusion here is to the impression made in ancient times by a seal on molten wax; and as the image made on the wax is the exact representation (though on another substance) of the die, so is Christ the precise representation of the Father

in human flesh. And thus He was able to say, "If you have seen me, you have seen the Father."

The life of Jesus is the life of God transmuted into the form of our human life, so that we may see, touch, hear, know, understand, and experience the very being and nature of God in human terms. The natural mind cannot understand such a truth as this, but this is what God meant when He said, "Let us make man in our image, and after our likeness." CHRIST is the image of God and God meant for every man to look and speak and act and be just like Jesus Christ! Can you not see the mystery? This is the value of man's life in redemption, for God sent One who was all that man was meant to be to purchase us — not to harps and golden streets and fluttering wings in some far-off heaven somewhere — but back to relationship with God as sons in His very own image.

As we consider the wonderful advent of man created "in the image of God" we can only conclude that this is a SPIRITUAL MAN brought forth out of the very spirit-substance of God almighty, and bearing His own divine nature, character, power and attributes. The image of God is the nature of God reproduced in man. Thus, man is the true image of God! The divine nature was best and fully expressed in the man Christ Jesus who shined upon mortals the truest revelation of God and lifted man's sights higher than their poor thoughts would allow. Jesus revealed to men their true origin, heritage, and destiny. He came to show man what man really is, was intended to be, and through redemption and so great a salvation shall be — THE IMAGE OF GOD. Christ is the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last. In Jesus Christ you see man as he was in the beginning, and as he ever shall be world without end — THE IMAGE OF GOD WITH DOMINION OVER ALL THINGS.

We have come to the most sublime of all truths. The beauty of these celestial realities is found in the fact that all Jesus did He did "for us" — not in our place, but on our behalf. A musician demonstrates the beauty of the music he teaches

in order to show the learner the way by practice as well as precept. This was the precious import of our Lord's sinless life and of His demonstration of power over the whole flesh realm, including death. Our heavenly Father demands that all men should follow the example of our Lord and Master. In order to enter the kingdom of the heavens, the anchor of hope must be cast beyond the veil of this carnal, dying realm into the Shekinah into which Jesus has passed before us; and this advance beyond the law of sin and death must come through the joys and triumphs of a people "led by the spirit" who are "the sons of God" as well as through their sorrows and afflictions.

It is by facing the enemy in the crucible of experience and by the authority of the spirit that victory is snatched from the jaws of defeat. Each and every test in our lives is an opportunity to prove for ourselves and demonstrate for those about the triumph of the spirit over the flesh. That is how Jesus did it! He knew that He was not a physical man possessing a spirit. He understood clearly that He was a spirit encased in a body. Therefore His spirit must have dominion over His flesh, not the other way around. He lived, spoke, and acted by the life of God in His spirit, even the Father who dwelt in Him. Step by step, battle by battle, victory upon victory we also ascend into the heights of the kingdom of heaven (spirit), the image of God, and the dominion restored in man!

One can never comprehend the length and breadth and height and depth of God's great plan of creation and redemption until first he understands that Jesus Christ is the revelation of the value of every man. In the mysterious mists of Eden God breathed into man the breath of His own divine life and prophesied of this man that he would be the image and likeness of Himself, and in due time would take his place in the Father's great kingdom with dominion over all the works of His hands (Ps. 8:3-9; Heb. 2:6-9).

There is a story about a little piece of wood that once bitterly complained because its owner kept whittling away at it, gouging it and making holes in it. But the one who was

cutting it paid no attention to the stick's protests. He was making a flute out of that piece of ebony, and he was too wise to stop when the wood complained so bitterly. The man said, "Little piece of wood, without these rifts and holes, and all this cutting, you'd be just a stick forever — a useless piece of ebony. What I am doing now may seem as if I am destroying you, but instead it will change you into a flute. Your sweet music will charm the souls of many and comfort sorrowing hearts. My cutting you is the making of you, for only thus can you be a blessing in the world." The meaning of this little parable is clear: That flute, whose music blended so sweetly in the orchestra, was made a flute only by the knife and file that filled it with rifts and holes which seemed to be its very destruction. But the purpose of the master was the cutting away of the outward form so that breath could flow through it. The breath upon the wood created a melodious sound which made it an instrument to the praise of God. Ah, the Lord is shaping us, my beloved, cutting away the denseness of our outer shell with its darkened understanding, making rifts and holes in the way that seems right to the natural man, that the in-breathed spirit of life from God may sweep through our earthen vessel, producing the image of God, that His glory might be revealed in creation. Isn't it wonderful!

This divine potential lies in the spirit of every man and shows the value of man's life. Some do not believe that the seed of God abides in every man, but I do not hesitate to tell you that every man has within him a spirit as well as a soul and a body, and the spirit of every man originated with God and came out of God. If every man is spirit, soul, and body, then where else did man's spirit come from? Are you going to tell me it came from the devil? When the Word became flesh and tabernacled among us we learned the true dignity of man. The wonder is not that God could stoop so low but that man was created so high! It was because of the value of man's life that Jesus came and took our nature. The sinless Son of man reveals indeed what a fall man has suffered, but shows what a destiny is his, when once the image of his Creator has been restored. Why lift a sot from his gutter to

care for him and rehabilitate him and bring him to God? The reason is that man has in him some touch of the eternal and therefore must be saved; and some ultimate tide of compassion moves us to save him! His salvation is not merely from his drink, from his lust, from his sin and bondage and hell; it is salvation unto all his awesome potential as a child of the Father in heaven! It is this divine value of man's life that brought Jesus from the portals of glory to save him! Is this not what Jesus' parable of the Prodigal Son teaches us? It was a son that the father saw afar off, and ran and fell upon his neck and kissed him and killed the fatted calf and put shoes and a robe upon him and called all his kingdom to feast and rejoice with him. His son had come home! Man is the offspring of God and is meant to be the head of creation. THAT IS THE VALUE OF MAN'S LIFE!

Can man who has sunk so low be raised so high? Consider with me the destiny of one muddy road. The clay, left long enough, hardens into a sapphire. The sand becomes by refraction of light an opal. The soot is a diamond in the rough. And the water when it freezes, is a snow-white star. Ah, there is a finer destiny for muddy humanity, but you do not see it in our raw state! Only the mighty pressures and processes of God's redemptive dealings can transform the murky elements into the essence of divine beauty, glory and power! And this, dear one, is the answer to Job's piercing question, "What is man, that Thou shouldest magnify him? and that Thou shouldest set Thine heart upon him? and that Thou shouldest visit him every morning, and try him every moment?"

Sin-cursed and sin-broken, sick and weak, murderer and prostitute, proud and arrogant, mean and vindictive — all that is humanity! But is that the value of mankind? What is the value of human life? JESUS is the value! For just such humanity there was the Man from Galilee, the Son of God, the express image of the Father, the pure, sinless, harmless One, love personified, the heir of all things, the Lord of the universe — there was that One nailed to a cross, to redeem every man that ever lived or shall live. THAT IS THE VALUE

OF MAN'S LIFE! JESUS IS THE VALUE OF MAN! The price that is paid for an object reflects its value. The price God paid for humanity was His own Son in the image and glory of the Father. God saw beneath man's tattered garment and marred image His own omnipotent potential buried there. Love pierced through the gloom and roughness and saw a diamond in the rough, but a diamond sure enough. It was within that divine spark within man's spirit capable of being renewed that we find the reason for the cross. If we would have been less than the offspring of God He could have sent something less than His own Son to redeem us! No one redeems the life of a monkey or an elephant or a cat or a dog with the life of a man. Oh, no! There is no correspondence there. The cross was God's great act by which He released His life-flow, the precious blood of Jesus, to heal, quicken, and restore man to his place in God.

It would do us all a world of good to take inventory of our attitudes — how we see men. I fear that we would be both surprised and disturbed to see how often we view men out of our carnal minds rather than with the eyes of our heavenly Father — the Prodigal's Father! Oh mystery of mysteries! Jesus went to the cross not only to take away our sins, He went there for the good in man, to redeem it and restore it into the image and likeness of God. The deepest mystery of all is that God is multiplying Himself in man, and is bringing Himself into a new dimension. There is a MAN seated upon the highest throne of heaven. Not an angel, not a cherub, and not even merely a spirit — but a MAN! That man is still clothed in the body that walked along the shores of Galilee, for the cave of Joseph of Arimathea is empty, although that body has been spiritualized by the power of incorruptible life.

The dwelling place of a son of God is in the Father and the dwelling place of the Father is in the sons. The sons are the out-ricing of the Father's substance and the perfect imprint of His nature in human form. I never enjoy trying to see pictures where no picture exists, but it is plain to an understanding born from above that ultimately all men will be manifest sons of God, for Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God, died and rose again to save and redeem and restore all

men to God as His very own children. The Prodigal is all men! Jesus is the firstborn of every creature! That will be the glorious consummation of God's ages-long purpose to make man into His image and after His likeness. Nothing short of that can suffice. Only then will God be ALL-IN-ALL!

The words came to me some time ago, the startling and remarkable expression Jesus made when He stood in the earth and declared, "I am the bread that is come down from heaven, that if a man eat of it, he shall never die. I am the living bread. I am the bread that is come down. I am the bread that is become personified in a body of flesh upon this earth. I am the bread that is from heaven." Immediately the question came to mind — Why was He the bread that came from heaven? Why did He say, "from heaven"? Why did He not simply say, "I am that I am," or "I am the bread that your Father has provided on the earth"? This is reminiscent, of course, of the manna that came from heaven, the food that God sent from heaven to the children of Israel in the wilderness. Why did the manna come "from heaven"? Could it not have crawled or grown up out of the earth? Could it not have just appeared on the ground?

As I mused within myself concerning this mystery, the inspiration of the spirit commenced to articulate within me the wonder of this great truth. It came to me so powerfully as an illustration. Consider with me for a moment a group of astronauts who are soaring away from earth to a strange planet in a distant galaxy. While traveling on their journey through space their spacecraft develops a serious problem, and they are forced to land on an unknown planet in a far away solar system. The name of the planet is Timur. Having landed, they realize they are stranded! They know nothing of this world into which they have descended. As they step out of their spacecraft they discover a very hostile environment. Everything there is inhospitable to them. All vegetation on the planet is toxic to their system. They cannot eat or drink anything, for all is death to them. They cannot breathe the atmosphere. Everything militates against them.

Soon, the realization dawns within their consciousness that their resources are finite. Some desperate action must be taken. They contact earth about their predicament. Their government agrees to dispatch a rescue expedition. A second spacecraft comes from earth and in due time lands on the planet Timur. This second group of astronauts step out of their ship and say to those who are stranded there in that world, "We are the men who have come from earth. We have the bread that is from earth. We bring the water that is from your homeland. We bear that which is not hostile to you, for it is from your own world. The food we bring is compatible with who you are and what you are. It is biologically adapted to your constitution. We have come from earth and we have the bread that is your bread, the drink that is your drink, that which pertains to your state of being, which will sustain you, energize you, quicken you, and give you expression of who and what you are. We have the bread that has come from earth!"

Can we not see that the bread from earth was the bread from home! Let there be no doubt in the mind of any man that Jesus came from heaven and descended into this earth realm, into our darkness, into our limitations, into our bondage, into our ignorance, into our sin, into our false identity, into our distorted perceptions, into our natural life, into our carnality, into our physical, mortal sense of being. He stepped, as it were, out from His spacecraft and proclaimed to lost men, "I am the bread that is come down from heaven! If a man eats of this bread he will live and not die, because I am the bread that is come from the realm that you came from. I am the one from your homeland, out of your true habitation! I am the one sent from your true world, the world of Spirit, the world of the Father, the world of divinity, the world of eternity. I am from that world, and I have come to speak a word into you! The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life. These words are adapted to your constitution and pertain to the realm from whence you are. I am the bread that has come from the heavens, and when you eat this bread, when you receive

this word, when you are energized by the Spirit of Life that I am, you will live and not die!"

Now we would ponder briefly on "our spirit" contrasted with "His Spirit," for Paul declared, "The Spirit Himself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God" (Rom. 8:16). And again, "God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of His Son" (Rom. 1:9). There is a distinct difference whether we are serving God with our flesh, or with our spirit. The spirit of man in the unregenerate individual does not serve the Lord, for it is in darkness, and knows not from whence it came nor who or what it is. But our Lord Jesus Christ is that "TRUE LIGHT which lighteth every man that cometh into the world" (Jn. 1:9). Ah, when HE lights our candle, when our spirit is quickened by His Spirit, there is awakening, illumination, comprehension, and we begin to see into realms of spiritual life and reality to which, heretofore, we had been blind. This involves more by far than someone informing us that we are a spirit, a spiritual being, and that we should therefore actively begin to live out of our spiritual reality and identity instead of from the intellect of our soul and the desires of the body. It is not by mere knowledge or human effort that we can live out of spirit — the spiritual life! The awakening we must receive involves the sovereign, dynamic, living, redemptive operation of God within our spirit producing the actual standing up within us of a new creature raised up by the power of God through the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Ghost (Titus 3:5).

Are we so blind that we cannot see the impossibility of our awakening ourselves? We cannot quicken ourselves, nor can we regenerate ourselves! The very idea is idle and senseless; for the plain reason that being regenerated is the same as having inspiration — it must originate out of God as a work upon our spirit. The precise thing needed is to be raised out of the separated, self-centered, blind ignorance of the carnal mind by the sovereign intervention and penetration of the Holy Ghost. Are we then going to lift ourselves by our own bootstraps, stand up out of our grave of darkness, sin, and death by our own volition? Can the

dead raise themselves? Are the ignorant capable of instructing themselves? Do the blind open their own eyes? A baby does not even birth itself! Regeneration is a renewal that consists of the inbreathing of God's Spirit, effecting union with His life. "And you hath HE quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins: wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience...even when we were dead in sins, (HE) hath quickened us together with Christ, and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus" (Eph. 2:1-2,5-6).

Ray Prinzing once said it so aptly, "Strange indeed the past theology of man. The corpse is floating upon the water and we throw it a life-rope and tell the corpse that if it will grab hold we'll help to pull it in. What nonsense! He is dead, he can't grab hold of anything. The man is DEAD IN TRESPASSES AND SINS, his back is toward the light, he is all enwrapped with self-rebellion against the Lord, there is no light in him at all. Then we are supposed to call out to this one totally dead in trespasses and sins, 'Come to Jesus!' How can he come? He's dead to all spiritual life, he has no power to turn around and walk towards God. Then we blame him for not coming to Christ for salvation! How foolish! But now, if a mighty one overtakes him, and light is brought to this one in darkness, and life is given to them, then shall they respond and serve Him.

"When they are covered with the love of God, there will be no need to tell them what sinners they are, and knock them down a little further into the mud. 'A bruised reed shall He not break, and smoking flax shall He not quench, till He send forth judgment unto victory' (Mat. 12:20). We shall not give them any more condemnation and smother that last little spark they have, but rather it shall be fanned into a strong flame, and the message will be clear that God is their Father and does love them, and freely offers them His abundant life. It is a life which maketh rich and addeth no sorrow, for in His presence there is fullness of joy, and at His right hand there are pleasures forevermore.

"Praise God, His mighty ones shall flow out with love and life unto all men. They won't condemn the sinner and tell him to clean himself up. They won't cry to those who are dead to come and receive life. They shall TAKE LIFE to those who are dead, they shall bring help to those who are weak and undone" — end quote.

We know a little about the Holy Spirit but we have known very little about the human spirit because it is buried, concealed deep beneath the shell of our soul and body. Every man has a spirit, but the outer realms of soul and body, the flesh life, cover it up. The living Word of God comes as a sharp, two-edged sword, to pierce our soul (carnal mind) in order to break it away from the spirit "For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit..." (Heb. 4:12). Only the living Word of God can do this! Some people entertain the erroneous notion that all the divinity they will ever need to know lies inherently within their own spirit. They recognize no godhood outside of their own spirit. The testimony of scripture, however, is clear, "What? Know ye not that he which is joined to an harlot IS ONE BODY? For two, saith He, shall be ONE FLESH. But he that is joined unto the Lord, IS ONE SPIRIT" (1 Cor . 6:16-17).

The analogy is drawn from a man joined to a woman — these two, joined, are ONE FLESH. "One flesh" denotes one whole, specific, particular individual. It does not mean two of the same kind. It is two making one. We all understand how it is that a man is not a whole man, nor is a woman a whole person! They each are distinct and complementary aspects of Adam's life. Adam was created both male and female (Gen. 1:26). Only in the joining of man and woman do we truly have ADAM. In like manner, he that is joined to the Lord is ONE SPIRIT! Adam, male and female, is the representation of the nature and being of God. God is spirit and man is spirit, yet we are each distinct and complementary aspects of divine life. The idea that each of us inherently contains within our unquickened spirit the full attributes of deity is a lie of enormous proportions. Only the

joining of our spirit with His Spirit makes man ONE SPIRIT or A WHOLE SPIRIT! This is what Paul means when he says, "Ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, IF SO BE THAT THE SPIRIT OF GOD DWELL IN YOU. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His" (Rom. 8:9). That is, he does not belong to Christ as a wife belongs to her husband, he has not the necessary spiritual complement, he has not experienced union with God by the spirit. This fact explains why the scriptures emphasize the work of the Holy Spirit within us and through us!

There are many works of the Holy Spirit within our spirit. Teaching — When HE the spirit of truth is come, HE will teach you all things and lead you into all truth. Quickening — It is the spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing. If the SPIRIT OF HIM who 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. Begetting anew — Born of water and of the Spirit. Dwelling — The SPIRIT OF GOD dwelleth in you. Leading — As many as are led by the SPIRIT OF GOD, they are the sons of God. Strengthening — Strengthened with might by HIS SPIRIT in the inner man. Witnessing — The Spirit Himself beareth witness with our spirit. Revelation — God hath revealed them unto us by HIS SPIRIT. Gifts — For to one is given BY THE SPIRIT the word of wisdom...faith...healing...working of miracles... prophecy, etc. All these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as HE will. Transformation — We are all changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD. Sonship consciousness — God hath sent forth the SPIRIT OF HIS SON into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father. Sealing — Sealed with that HOLY SPIRIT of promise. Confidence — Hereby we know that HE dwelleth in us, by THE SPIRIT which He hath given us.

The Spirit of God is able to perform all these actions, and many more, within us just because we are spirit. God can act omnipotently on all created things, as things. He can penetrate all central fires and dissolve or change every most

secret atom of the universe, but it cannot be said that these things receive Him. "To as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God" (Jn. 1:12). NOTHING CAN TRULY RECEIVE HIM BUT SPIRIT! Just as a man or woman do not join themselves in union (marriage) with a rock, or tree, or fish, or chimpanzee simply because there is no correspondence of life, so the Spirit of God does not enter by the power of life, mind, will, emotion, action, and personality into any except spirit of a corresponding nature. He may pass through things and affect them in some way and on some level, they can be shaken, melted, exploded, and reformed, for truly all things are in His hands and subject to His power — but they derive nothing from Him that is personal to Him. No creature can truly receive Him save one that is constitutionally related to Him in a correspondence of life. There must be intelligence offered to His intelligence, sentiments to His sentiments, reason to His reason, will to His will, personality to His personality. To speak of an inspired mountain, or planet, or breeze of air, an inspired tree, or an inspired brute, has even the sound of absurdity. Not so to speak of an inspired man! For man is a spirit, a nature configured to God, and therefore able to receive Him. Spirit only can be inspired, and there is a spirit in man, and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding. Oh, the wonder of it!

Only man, of all God's glorious creation, can be penetrated and lighted up from within by the mind of God, to have an understanding of things unseen by the inspiration of the eternal Father, in one word, to be spirit, and have the consciousness even of God, as being irradiated, permeated, filled, ennobled, glorified by His infinite Spirit and His divine fullness.

Oh, that all men everywhere might see the origin and constitution of our human life as spirit, with its Author and Creator! In the original scheme of existence, it was purposed that man should be complete, and, as it were, infinite in God, by reason of his perpetual participation of God. This is the true and normal state of man! In that normal state man was to be a continually inspired creature, conscious always of

God as of himself, living and moving and having his being in the radiant essence of the Father. Paul said that only in Christ are we complete. "For in Him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. And ye are complete in Him" (Col. 2:9-10).

The Emphatic Diaglott says, "In Him dwells all the fullness of the Deity bodily; and you are replenished by Him."

The Amplified Bible reads, "In Him the whole fullness of Deity continues to dwell in bodily form, giving complete expression of the divine nature. And you are in Him, made full and having come to fullness of life...you too are filled with the Godhead."

J. B. Phillips translates, "It is in Him that God gives a full and complete expression of Himself in bodily form. Moreover, your own completeness is realized in Him."

Finally, Kenneth Wuest renders, "In Him there is continuously and permanently at home all the fullness of absolute deity in bodily fashion. And you are in Him, having been completely filled full with the present result that you are in a state of fullness in Him."

This great truth, on the other hand, reveals clearly the true idea of man's fall. When the Holy Spirit of truth unveils your eyes and your mind is renewed, you realize that you are a spiritual being and that you have always been a spiritual being. When Adam was lowered out of his pure spirit existence and entered this physical world, he came into a realm of darkness and death. The life of the spirit dwelt within him, yet encased within the womb of the outer flesh. Thus, there were two ways set before mankind — the way of life in the spirit by living in union with God through the tree of life, or the way of death by walking after the flesh in union with the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. The fruit of the tree of life would constantly invigorate man's spirit in the knowledge and strength of divine existence, whereas the tree of the knowledge of good and evil would invigorate man's flesh in the knowledge and power of the outer,

physical, carnal world. The serpent offered Eve the power to be "like God" or the personal sense of "godhood." "God doth know that in the day that ye eat thereof, you shall be as gods, knowing good and evil." And after the woman and the man partook of that realm of sense-consciousness, self-determination, and fleshly wisdom, God Himself acknowledged that they had indeed become "as one of us, to know good and evil" (Gen. 3:22). Yes, they had become AS GOD! They had assumed a state of GODHOOD! The only problem was that it was a godhood in the wrong realm! It was a godhood of independence from the life of God, not a Godhood through union with God. Man became a self-created god, a self-centered god, truly the god of this world, but not the expression of the divine nature. The Spirit of God which had been in union with man's spirit fled, and man's spirit sank low into the hidden depths of his being. A long night of darkness, sorrow, sin and death ensued!

Let us understand the paradise of God with the tree of life in its midst! The tree of life is mentioned very simply in the opening chapters of Genesis. It was IN THE MIDDLE — that is all that is said about it! "And the Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden...the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil" (Gen. 2:8-9). The life that comes forth from God is in the middle. In the middle of the realm in which Adam lived and the world over which he was given dominion was not Adam himself, spirit, soul, or body, but the wonderful tree of God's very own eternal and incorruptible life. Adam's life was to come from the middle which was not Adam himself, but God in him. This means, simply, that with God as his center man would have Life! Man was created with the dual capacity of living in the spirit or of walking after the flesh. He was free to eat of the tree of life, or to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. One of man's inherent potentials was to know God in the spirit as the center and source of his life!

But — like the tree of life — the other tree also STANDS IN THE MIDDLE! In the middle. Death. Within! In man's very nature. One of man's inherent potentials was to know Self as the center and source of his life. But Self would not bring life,

it would mean death. Man could make the world, the outer physical realm, his soulful senses and bodily appetites, his center. Death dwelt in that center! How do we know that sin is "in the middle" just as life is "in the middle"? Jesus understood it! He explained it! "There is nothing from without a man, that entering into him can defile him: but the things which come out of him, those are they that defile the man. For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: all these evils come from within, and defile the man" (Mk. 7:15,21-23). These inspired words carry us right back to the garden of Eden! There were two trees in the middle. Life and death were in the middle! Two trees in the midst of the garden of man's experience and being. "For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the spirit the things of the spirit. For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life..." (Rom. 8:5-6). Two minds — in the middle!

In the two trees of life and death in man's middle the Holy Spirit points out man's LIMIT. In these two trees is contained the BOUNDARY set by God upon man from the beginning. This LIMIT declared how low a man could fall and how high a man could rise. Man could fall as low as the tree of death, the carnal mind, the realm of the flesh could carry him — unto the whole dreadful realm of darkness and death in which is contained every sorrow, tragedy, pain, trouble, sickness, hatred, strife, heartache, ignorance, fear, and torment known to man; or, he could rise as high as the spiritual mind, the realm of the spirit could carry him — unto the eternal and incorruptible life of God in which is contained all the joy, peace, righteousness, love, faith, wisdom, glory, and power of GOD HIMSELF!

What fathomless bounds are contained in this LIMIT! Man, by walking in the spirit, can rise as high as God in the realm of His life, or by walking after the flesh can sink as low as the devil in the world of darkness and death. Neither of these realms are illusion; they are both realities! What a LIMIT!

And man was destined to fall as low as he could fall and rise as high as he could rise. The totality of man's experience is to be found within this limit established by God for man. All that both death and life are would ultimately be experienced, known, and demonstrated by man. This is his limit. This is his territory. This is his destiny. Both realities are in the middle! Within man. One or the other is every man's center, the sphere of his existence. But mark it well — both cannot be the center of any man's life! He who eats of the tree of life will find that the death realm has no more dominion over him. And he who eats of the tree of death will discover that he becomes alienated from the tree of life — driven from the garden. Thus, both trees, both realities are in the center of man's life, but both cannot be the center of his life! "For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live" (Rom. 8:13). "This I say then, Walk in the spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lusts of the flesh" (Gal. 5:16).

The tree of life in the midst of the paradise of God was truly "in the world" but not "of the world." The life of this tree was right within man, the life of God in his spirit, and man's spirit was not of this world, not formed of the dust of the ground, but breathed into his nostrils by the Father of spirits. "God breathed into his nostrils the spirit (Heb.) of life." The glorious life of Christ on earth is the essence and reality of the tree of life in the midst of the paradise of God. This tree of life within man had absolutely nothing to do with the realm of earthiness of man's soul and body, for it was heaven's own divine life breathed into man. In the tree of life God invited man to find Him as the center and source of life!

As George Hawtin once pointed out, by the tree of life man would be full of light, abounding in heavenly wisdom and knowledge, fearful in power and dominion, ethereal as a spirit and shining in the image of God. The fruit of this wonderful tree would indeed make man radiant with the resplendent glory of God as was Jesus, the second man and the last Adam, at the transfiguration, whose face shone as the sun and His raiment was as the light. In this tree of life the effulgent perfumes of the heavenly realm would be

fragrance and life to man's nostrils. He would taste spiritual realities and touch heavenly things. The wisdom and power of God Himself would be wide open to him and he would walk in the presence and glory of celestial realms. The gates of that realm would never be shut by day or by night. Man would need to eat of no other tree nor drink of any of the waters of earth. Man would have "meat to eat" that no other creature in heaven or earth knew of and "water to drink" that none other had ever tasted. The heavens would be opened over his head and he would walk in the glory of the presence of God in Eden!

This was the glory of the tree of life in Eden! And what was that glorious tree? John the beloved tells us clearly in his Gospel, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God...in HIM WAS LIFE; and THE LIFE WAS THE LIGHT OF MEN" (Jn. 1:1,4). This life-giving tree, the living Word of God, even Christ, was from the beginning the life and the light of mankind. The reason Jesus came forth as the visible expression of the Father, the Word made flesh, the tree of life in man's middle, was that there might be a focusing, a manifestation which would become a meeting place for us to come to know God, and become one with Him, as it was in the beginning. "I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever: and the bread which I give is my flesh (the Word made flesh), which I will give for the LIFE OF THE WORLD" (Jn. 6:51). It is in Christ Jesus that God and creation meet, come together, and are made one! Christ Himself is the light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world! The spirit of man is the candle of the Lord, and Christ Jesus is the light that lights our candle! The last Adam is also the second man who has been made a quickening spirit (I Cor. 15:45), and when our spirit is quickened by His Spirit, then it is that our candle is lit! Christ who is our life has been planted in the garden of the kingdom of heaven within us!

This is the dimension missed by those in so-called Metaphysical Christianity, New Age, and New Thought philosophies who suppose that their unregenerated,

unquickened spirit represents their full divinity and godhood. Not so! Only "he that is joined to the Lord is ONE SPIRIT." The unregenerated, unquickened spirit of man is indeed spirit, the offspring of God. But it is not a whole spirit! Apart from union with God's Spirit through the baptism in the Holy Spirit as recorded in the book of Acts, the spirit of man is weak and unable to function as the supreme power of man's life. "I indeed have baptized you with water: but He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost" (Mk. 1:8) "And (Jesus) being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should...wait for the promise of the Father...ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence...ye shall receive power AFTER THAT THE HOLY GHOST IS COME UPON YOU" (Acts 1:4-8). "And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance" (Acts 2:4). "Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John: who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost; then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost" (Acts 8:14-17). Then we read of how Peter went by revelation to Caesarea to speak the word of Christ to Cornelius and his household. The record states, "While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on them which heard the word. And...they heard them speak with tongues and magnify God" (Acts 10:44-46). Later we find that when Paul was on his way to Ephesus he met some disciples of John the Baptist who had been baptized in water unto repentance, but had heard nothing about receiving the Holy Ghost. "And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues and prophesied" (Acts 19:1-7).

I speak the truth when I suggest that not one in a million of New Age, Metaphysical, and New Thought adherents have received any such supernatural experience in the Holy Spirit! The fact is, they have not even met Jesus Christ as SAVIOUR! Nor have they experientially appropriated the CLEANSING POWER OF THE BLOOD OF CHRIST! I also

Speak the truth when I say that men whose spirits have not been quickened by HIS SPIRIT are motivated and controlled by the intellect of the soul (carnal mind), rather than by the life of the spirit. That which they perceive as their "inward Christ consciousness" is in reality just the awesome power of their soul life! Just as a man or woman, without a mate, is not a whole person, and therefore missing a dimension of human reality, so the spirit of man which has not experientially been joined to the Spirit of God in a supernatural union of life, is lacking in its spiritual ability and capacity. It is this very condition that spawns the whole system of "intellectual religion" which is pawned off and misinterpreted as spiritual life!

There is an even deeper mystery to this tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. They appear as two trees; yet in reality there was only one tree, with two sides, two aspects, or two dimensions. It is stated so simply in these words: "The tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil" (Gen. 2:9). There was one tree, and yet two trees! The tree of life is Christ — the living Word of God. The profound truth is that in Eden there were two words — a living word, and a word of death! Christ is the living word! But there is another word, and this word is also from God, but it is a word of death. Who planted the tree of death in Eden? Why, bless your heart, God did! "And out of the ground made the Lord God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight...the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil."

Paul makes these two trees, these two words, very plain when he writes, "Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life. But if the ministration of death, written and engraven in stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not steadfastly behold the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance...how shall not the ministration of the spirit be rather glorious? For if the ministration of condemnation be glory, much more doth the ministration of righteousness exceed in glory" (II Cor. 3:6-9).

Here we have two ministrations, two testaments, two words, which answer to the two trees in Eden — the one is "the letter that killeth" and the other is "the spirit that quickeneth." Yet both of these words are the word of the Lord! Just as God planted two trees in Eden, so was it GOD who gave the law with its external religious forms and observances to Moses, and it was GOD who has given us the living word, with its inward spiritual life in Christ! There are two words, and yet they are but two sides of the same word — the WORD OF GOD!

I firmly believe that the Bible is the word of God; however, when we know it only as the letter, it kills. Laws, rules, regulations, doctrines, creeds, outward ordinances, forms, ceremonies, facts, literalistic interpretations of man, natural concepts, carnal understanding of the written word — there is no life in any of these! There is only death. The dead letter of the word produces dead sermons, dead churches, dead forms, dead meetings, and spiritually dead believers. Yet, the "letter of the word" is still the word of God! But there's no life. Moses preached the law, the law was from God, the law was the ministration of death written and engraven in stones, and everybody that received the law died. It was the ministration of condemnation. It had the power to condemn men, to judge them, to punish them, to tell them what they ought to do — but it possessed no power to give them life! It was a word of God, but it was the letter of the word. It was a word without life. It was merely a type, a shadow, a symbol of reality.

THE TREE OF THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOOD AND EVIL IS THE LAW! By the law, Paul says, we know sin. The knowledge of good and evil is the letter of the word! All the preachers who are out there telling men what great sinners they are, and how they need to stop sinning, threatening them with damnation if they don't stop sinning, are feeding their hearers from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. This letter of the word killeth, but it's still a word of the Lord! It is the word of the Lord on a lower level, stripped of its life and power. But the other side of this tree, this word, is the WORD OF LIFE! THE TREE OF LIFE IS CHRIST, THE

LIVING WORD! There are two words, yet they are the very same word on different levels. One is shadow, the other is substance. One is outward symbol, the other in inward life. There are two trees, yet they are but two sides of the same tree! Adam's sin and fall consisted in his choosing to live a carnal life on the earthly plane, even a religious life, subject to the restraint and regulation of the external law of a carnal commandment, instead of living the spiritual life on the heavenly plane by the Living Word of God!

Another precious insight was shared in a letter to me from a friend of many years, Connie Asbill. She wrote, "Several years ago, I was sitting in the back yard of my house when suddenly a tree that I had looked at numberless times burst alive with a truth. During its formation, the tree had split so that it was growing in two different directions. For me, that split tree became the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. In it, I saw the tree of life struck by lightning and split right down the middle to make the tree of life the tree of knowledge of good and evil. Why struck by lightning? Well, I would have been at a loss myself to explain why that impression had formed in my inner eye if it had not been plainly followed by the words of Jesus when He said, 'I saw Satan fall as lightning from heaven.'

"As I contemplated this, I saw the word and the life split: the word turned in one direction, the life turned in another. This, to me, became a picture of the beginning of the 'double minded man who is unstable in all his ways,' and, again, of that condition lamented by David, in spirit, when he prayed, 'Help, Lord, for they speak with a double heart.' At this point there came a breach in the spirit of man — a breach that I think we can see portrayed in the parable of the prodigal son. There were two sons: one which remained with the Father, that is, never left home; the other which took what was his through the Father and turned it downward toward the animal side of life. Now, of course, we have heard this story used from the pulpits to call sinners home to God and to give recognition to those faithful few who remained unsullied in the church. And there is that application, for some among us do remain unsullied from the seamy side of

life while others among us do wallow in the pigpen of human degradation and deprivation.

"I am convinced, however, that the deeper meaning refers to that which occurs inside all of us, for there is a part of all of us, I think, that has remained with the Father and there is a part of all of us that has split away to flow in the opposite direction — to feed upon the dust of the earth, to identify with the instincts and emotions of the body, and thus to bring the word that is transmitted from the Father's house, where the other part of us has remained, down into the earth with us. We feed on the husks (forms) of truth when that part of our spirit that has turned downward toward the animal nature filters the word through ego, through unrestrained desires, through fear, through carnal expectations, all of which imprison it in externals. This gives rise to the law of carnal commandment, which is nothing in the world but the truth of God changed into a lie (Rom. 1:25) because even without realizing it we are worshipping and serving the creature more than the creator.

"I am convinced there is a part of us that never left God. We have always been there, which is why the kingdom has always been at hand. And I am convinced that it is only as we expand our understanding until we can see how that can be that we can begin to woo the heart back to the true meaning of that Word which has always existed in the heavens. The prodigal son is that portion of the spirit that was split away when lightning struck the tree in the midst of the garden of the soul. What fell in the fall, of course, was the understanding. When Jesus talked about salvation, He used the Greek word *sozo* which means to make whole. As I see it, the saving of the soul is the healing of the soul through a healing of the spiritual breach. The soul, of course, is the battle ground of conflicting thought, conflicting desire, conflicting emotion, where Jacob the deceiver (the prodigal son) wrestles it out with the angel of the Lord (the word of God) to make peace with his brother (the son that never left the Father's house)" — end quote.

This "split" has happened to all of us, and that is why we need to be RE-conciled, RE-newed, RE-generated, RE-surrected. Think about it! The lost, sin-blighted, unbelieving world lives a spiritual life not unlike the lowly caterpillar. Caterpillars do not live very exciting lives. They are, indeed, to be pitied! They never travel very far and when they do tremendous exertions are required. After all, what sights do they see down there groveling in the dirt? Ah — caterpillars live very limited, morbid lives! The story is told of two caterpillars, however, making their way laboriously across the muddy earth, when one of them looked up and spied a butterfly fluttering by. As he watched this butterfly dipping and flitting around in the sky, and being picked up by the breeze and carried off into the ethereal blue, he turned to his companion in the mud and said, "You'd never get me up in one of those things!" Yet — right within that caterpillar was the very life which would one day bring a metamorphosis and carry him into the heavens. But he didn't know it!

At the fall of man, we lost our identity. We are all here by choice, and have forgotten why we came! In Christ God is now giving us back our true identity, and we are waking up to our true nature. "Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light" (Eph. 5:14). We do not awaken all at once, however. Most who read these lines have been being awakened to the glorious and eternal realities in the Spirit little by little through manifold experiences over the course of many years. And now I understand, as the words of the chorus describe it, that

From out of eternity, before time began,
In the bosom of the Father, while the morning stars sang
I shouted for joy while beholding His great plan,
God's purpose on earth, His election in man!

A story I once read illustrates the truth of our journey back into the fullness of Christ. It concerns a peculiar case of creeping paralysis recorded in medical records about a hundred years ago. The man afflicted lost his eyesight to begin with. Then hearing left him. Then followed by slow

degrees the loss of the sense of taste, of smelling, and of feeling. Finally he lost all power of motion. He was perfectly helpless. All avenues of approach to his mind were entirely blocked. He could breathe and even speak to the world. But the world could not speak to him, for there was no open avenue of communication. He was dead to the world apparently. But one day it was accidentally discovered that there was one spot on his cheek which was capable of feeling. By tracing letters on that spot his friends could at last speak to him, and thus a connection was established between his little world and the great world without. But that was merely a beginning! A most strange phenomenon took place. Slowly, ever so slowly, by stimulating this one spot of sensitivity, an awakening and process of rehabilitation was begun and the day came when the man was fully restored. Oh, yes! God has come to us by His Spirit and has touched our spirit in that small susceptible spot of divine life where we yearn after Him and, like the prodigal in the pigpen, we have begun to come to ourselves!

It is doubtful that in all the scripture any subject is more prominent and yet surrounded with such mystery as the truth concerning the spirit in man. Now let me share with you a further truth concerning the life, or that spirit which was breathed into each of us. Many scripture passages, and the parables of our Lord, call it a "seed." The Bible uses the illustration of a seed to tell us who we really are! You see, to tell a person in a darkened state of mind, bound in sin-consciousness, in their present weak and frail human condition that they are the manifestation of God on the earth, would be absolutely impossible for them to fathom. If they did understand such a concept, they would receive it into their carnal minds, become puffed up and egotistical, distort, misapply, misuse, and abuse it, becoming even a worse devil than they are.

The seed of God is in every man, and the life of that seed is the spirit of man. But you meet the drunk on the street, you see your unconverted, worldly-minded neighbor, you rub shoulders with the people of the world, you watch the evening television news, and you don't see God in anybody!

That is because God in every man is a seed. A seed doesn't do anything. It just is. It can lie on the shelf for fifty years and never express a thing! You see no action, no manifestation of the life within; all you see is the outer shell which reveals nothing. Seeds have been found in the tombs of Egypt that are more than three thousand years old, and they look today just as they did when they were placed there, but they have never produced a harvest. You see, my beloved, just as the seed (sperm) of a man and the seed (egg) of a woman must conceive in order to change, grow, be born, and express and accomplish, so must the seed of the vegetable kingdom be germinated in order to be productive. The life is hid in the seed, but it is covered by the outer shell and abides in a state of dormancy, inactivity, or death. It must be planted in the earth, then subjected to two things: heat and moisture. The rain falls upon it, the sun shines upon it, and suddenly there is effected a mighty release! There is a stirring of that life that is restrained on the inside, the shell that conceals that life bursts open, and the life within springs forth, puts down roots, and grows upward; it breaks through the earth and is "born" into a new world, a new realm, a new expression, a new form, a new ability, a new reality. It rises high enough to draw its life from new dimensions.

Can we not see by this that the spirit of man is indeed the seed of God but it is buried in, encased by, the outer man of flesh, the carnal understanding, and the natural consciousness. Just as a credit card or a cell phone must be activated, the spirit of man must be activated! Until it is activated it is not a living, pulsating, energizing, ruling, growing power in man. It must be germinated, quickened by the power of the invigorating rain of God's Word and the warm sunshine of God's Spirit! Once our spirit is quickened by God's Spirit, it springs forth into new birth. And that which is born of the Spirit is spirit — it doesn't become spirit when it is born, it already was spirit before it was "born" just as a flesh and blood baby already is flesh and blood before it is born! If the seed of God in man were not spirit, the offspring of God, it would not be quickened into God-like-ness by the act of re-generation!

Let there be no doubt in the mind of any reader of these lines that WE DID NOT BECOME SEED BY REBIRTH — WE WERE SEED AND THEREFORE WERE REBORN, FOR ONLY THAT CAN BE RE-BORN, RE-NEUED, RE-GENERATED, RE-SURRECTED, AND RE-STORED WHICH ALREADY EXISTS. It is not simply that sin has made a necessity for God to do something new, but rather that sin had diminished and darkened something old, which needs to be restored. The recreative and reconstructive work of the Holy Spirit is grounded on the primordial nature of the spiritual life in man. Men are made to be divinely inhabited, to live in eternal inspiration and conscious union with God. To be "in the spirit" is the heritage of every man, his original and normal condition, his light, his strength, his glory. Because we are seed is the reason we can be quickened! In non-seed there is nothing to quicken! And it is not the flesh that is being quickened, but the inner man of spirit!

Hold this carefully in mind. Now take the next step. To redeem means to buy back. It restores to the original owner and state. Jesus, by His death, the shed blood, BOUGHT BACK HIS OWN. He bought back every son and daughter out of His loins. You never were anything but a son of God! You never were a pig or a dog or a devil or a mere human animal. That is impossible, for every kind of life produces the same kind and there is no change of specie. As we came out of the loins of God into this existence on earth, there had to come a day when we would hear His voice, and hearing that voice become aware of our Father calling us, and recognize that we are the sons of God. We heard His voice and we cried out, as did the prodigal son, "Save me, oh, my Father! I am returning to Thee." The Father's promise is sure, as Linda Musgrove has articulated in her beautiful song (available on cassette or CD from Stacy and Linda Musgrove, P. O. Box 111, Cunningham, Texas 75434-0111. Cassette albums are \$10 postpaid, CD's are \$15 postpaid):

I'll take you back to where you were in me
Before the fall of man;
I'll restore your soul, I'll reconcile your heart,
I'll give you back your true identity!

I'm removing the veil from your eyes
So that you can clearly see;
You will be with me in Paradise,
On this earth you'll walk with me!

A son of God can go a long time before he is awakened to the fact of his sonship. In fact a lot of God's children are like the story of the baby eagle that was hatched out under a hen. You know that the eagle is a type of the sons of God who live and soar in the high places of the Spirit. Well, a farmer took an egg from an eagle's nest and he placed it under a hen. In due time all the eggs under the hen hatched out. The baby chicks got along fine with the mother hen but that little eagle could not figure out the clucking and scratching for food in the manure pile. He managed to make a living but he was pretty confused about it all. But one day, from way up in the air the mother eagle that had laid the egg spied that little eagle on the ground. She swooped down with tremendous speed and screamed at the top of her voice for him to fly up to meet her. He had never heard an eagle cry, but when he heard that first scream something in him stirred and he longed to launch out toward it. But he was afraid to try. Again that mother screamed for him to arise in the wind and follow her. He screamed back that he was afraid. Once more she called out, screaming that he try. Beating his wings he hurled himself into the air, and answering the cry of his mother, he soared off into the blue skies. You see, he always was an eagle! He acted like a chicken for a little while but he could not be satisfied. But when he heard the call of the great eagle he came to his own place. And once a son of God hears the cry of the Spirit by the Word, he too, will realize who he is and run to the great eagle who begat him to be seated in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus. We are "being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever" (I Pet. 1:23). We are born again when we hear the living word of God speaking to us, calling us to arise and be all that God has ordained for us!

I freely confess that I believe in the reconciliation and restoration of all men to God. I have to believe it, because if

the seed of God is in every man, every man must hear the voice of the Son of God and live. "Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming when all that are in the graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth...verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live" (Jn. 5:25,28).

The seed of Christ is in every man, but God has an appointed time for that life to be revealed. And how is it revealed? You take that seed, you plant it in the earth, and in the appointed time God sends two elements that will produce a revelation of Christ out of that person, in his time. I don't care who the man is; there's a time, an appointed hour. God sends the sun of His illumination, and the rain of His quickening life, He rains upon that seed and shines upon that seed, and there is a stirring of that life on the inside, and suddenly the shell which concealed the life begins to burst. The revelation of the life that is in the seed comes by the removal of the outer part of the seed. The inner life is released. The genetic code is intact. Everything that plant will ever be is right there in the seed! When the life springs forth all that hindered is broken asunder. Every step of the revelation of Christ is an unveiling! God removes the outer, and when it is gone we behold the power, beauty, and glory of the inner life. Some of us were in churches, in denominations, and God began to stir us. The life of sonship was already there. All God did was break open the cocoon that we were in, so that the thing He had planted in us could come forth, stretch its wings, and fly away into the heavens of God's Spirit. Oh, the wonder of it!

CHOSEN BEFORE THE WORLD BEGAN

Some years ago I received a tape from Bob and Charlotte Torango which spoke powerfully in my spirit. Charlotte was talking about what she termed our "congenital condition." "Congenital" simply means "that which is from birth." I had never known the meaning of that word until 1995 when the doctors diagnosed me with a "congenital anomaly." I thought, "My God, what's that?" The more common term is

"birth defect." You see, I had a bone up around my first vertebra that did not fuse from birth. Of course, it originated before that! It was already there as a pre-existing condition at the time of my birth.

There was no history of this in my family, but it happened. Very gradually over nearly sixty years, that bone kept moving by microscopic measures toward the center. Finally it began to compress my spinal cord, at the base of the brain stem. Symptoms appeared which I contributed to age and arthritis. Eventually, overnight, I developed very serious symptoms. I awoke one morning with pain and weakness in all my extremities, coupled with involuntary movements of both arms and legs. I could barely walk, and at times collapsed. An MRI showed that my spinal cord had been compressed to the thickness of a ribbon. The neurosurgeon told me that if the damage had not been done so very, very slowly over many years, I would have already been either dead or quadriplegic, but my body had kept compensating for the damage until finally it could compensate no more.

A brain surgeon performed the surgery, going trans-orally (through the roof of my mouth) into the area of the brain stem and cutting away the bone, releasing the pressure from the spinal cord. The doctor informed me that I should at least partially recover from the near-paralysis and other symptoms, but that he could guarantee no progress beyond one year. Well, let me tell you something. There's a seed in my earth! You see, at the time of my illness I earnestly sought the Lord for healing. We have experienced the power of God in healing and miracles! In my early ministry, in the days of the great healing revivals, the Lord performed mighty signs and wonders through my word. This time, however, the Lord spoke right out of my spirit and plainly said, "I'm not going to heal this. You will have the surgery!" When I received that word from the Father, He also gave a peace, peace that passes understanding, peace so deep that it cannot be fathomed. When I was wheeled in for a surgery that was the equivalent of brain surgery, there was no fear nor apprehension whatsoever, I wasn't even nervous. I was able to laugh and joke with the nurses until I passed out.

And, my friends, I have continued to experience progress in my physical condition far beyond what the doctors promised — progress every year since 1995! And while I don't put a great premium on this physical, earthly realm, I will not be at all surprised when my change comes and all the effects of the spinal cord injury and the surgery disappear!

Now, why do I relate this? Because what I had was a congenital anomaly. It was a condition I had from birth, from before birth, even from before conception, hidden away somewhere in the seed (genetic make-up) of my parents who conceived me. You see, we are prone to look at our whole carnal, human state as a congenital condition. We think we are like we are because we were born that way! We say, "I was born in sin. I was born alienated from God. I was born dead. I was born Irish, and I do have a temper! I was born an alcoholic, I was born homosexual, I was born lustful and over-sexed, I was born prideful, I was born with my foot in my mouth." That's how we see ourselves if we look from the earthlies, with a carnal mind!

When you look from the heavenlies, however, you see something else! You came into this world out of the bosom of the Father! Before the Creator formed you, He knew you. He didn't know you in your present physical form as Joe Smith or Sally Brown, but He knew you as spirit. God spoke to you about His plan for your life before ever you were formed as an embryo in the womb of your mother. Paul states it so clearly when he says, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: according as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love" (Eph. 1:3-4). The Amplified Bible reads, "Even as He chose us (actually picked us out for Himself as His own) in Christ before the foundation of the world."

Never doubt this reality for a moment — the only way God could have loved you, chose you in Christ, and picked you out for His own before the foundation of the world is that you truly existed in and with Him before the appearing of the

worlds. Nothing can be plainer than that! Yet we have supposed that we were just recently, in this life, apprehended of God to sonship. I thought the work of God began in my life sixty years ago. Now I find that the thing God is doing with humanity began in eternity! It didn't begin in time. It began before the ages were framed! God loved me, chose me, knew me, counseled with me, and picked me out for His unique purpose before the foundation of the world. My origin was in God! God begat me of Himself as spirit before He exhaled me as spirit into a very unique body upon earth. **THUS, I WAS BORN INTO THIS WORLD WITH THAT CONGENITAL CONDITION — A SPIRITUAL BEING HAVING AN EARTHLY EXPERIENCE!** And so were you, precious friend of mine, and so was every man who has walked planet earth. We were born this way. We were born with a spirit, as well as a soul and a body. We came into this world with a God-ward side, with the instinct to seek after God, with a yearning after Him.

Each of us was born into a mortal, physical body and into a world of darkness, sin, and death. But this was according to God's plan! Paul says that we are "in hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began" (Titus 1:2). This is indeed wonderful! We were born into this world with a promise from God — the promise of eternal life! That was our congenital condition — born with a promise. But this hope of salvation was not promised us when we came into the world, or after we were born into this life — it was promised us before the world began! How could God make such a promise to us if we were not there with Him before the worlds appeared? Not only was salvation promised, the kingdom was promised also. "Then shall the King (Jesus) say to them on His right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world" (Mat. 25:34).

The kingdom message deals with the conformity, maturity, and inheritance of the sons of God. This great plan was conceived and initiated in eternity, before time began. "For whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the

firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom He did predestinate, them He also called: and whom He called, them He also justified: and whom He justified, them He also glorified. What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?" (Rom. 8:28-31). Now notice! These five verbs — foreknow, predestinate, called, justified, glorified — are all in the aorist tense. This denotes action at a given point in the past. All these things happened to us "before" the ages began! Some have stumbled over the fact that Paul says that those whom the Father foreknew, predestinated, called, and justified, He also GLORIFIED. They have questioned the meaning of "glorification," wondering how they could already be glorified in their present imperfect, mortal state. Let us understand — ALL of this is in the past! God foreknew us in the past — before the world began. That is also when He predestinated us, called us, justified us, and glorified us. Jesus, the firstborn of this company of sons selected before the world began, reveals the deep mystery of this when He prays, "And now, O Father, glorify Thou me with Thine own self with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was" (Jn. 17:5). Ah, that is when we were glorified! It is not something happening now, though it shall be manifested now, but it was given us in Christ in that long ago before the world began. "For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them" (Eph. 2:10). Aren't you glad!

We should always be keenly aware of the great reason and purpose God had in mind for sending His spirit-sons through this earthly experience. Have you considered the truth that lies hidden in this inspired statement: "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose" (Rom. 8:28). It is significant that this passage is found in that great sonship chapter where the Holy Spirit speaks explicitly of our calling, choosing, and predestination before the foundation of the world! When we were with the Father as His spirit-sons we were pure, perfect, and holy — but innocent and unproven. We were holy but did not know why we were holy, never

having experienced the opposite. Job was a perfect man, the Lord said, but he was untested, and thus all that befell him was for his testing and proving.

We could have remained hidden in God in that bright glory world of spirit and borne the image of our heavenly Father, but without knowledge, choice, or experience. We would never have been holy because we understood why we should be holy, we would simply have been what we were without understanding. We would never have been holy because we chose to be holy! We would never have understood why the wages of sin are death, why pride goeth before destruction, why sin is a reproach, why the tree of the knowledge of good and evil is dangerous, delusive, and disastrous, why the ways of the Lord are perfect and right altogether. We would never have understood the why of anything, and thus would ever have remained innocent, void of discernment and vulnerable. We would have been like an over-protected child in this world who is innocent of much that goes on about him, and therefore unable to cope when exposed to temptation, pressure, and problems. Our all-wise Father wanted sons who become sons indeed through experience, having encountered the opposites of life, holiness, wisdom, power, and glory. Oh, yes! God wanted sons who were processed, tested, proven, learning to overcome all things and be made strong and victorious through experience — not naive, ignorant, undisciplined sons rich through inheritance but with no nobility of character to handle what they receive. This is why we had to come this route, and believe me, before God would turn the universe over to us WE HAD TO COME THIS WAY! Earth, with all its sin, darkness, sickness, sorrow, fear, delusion, hatred, death, and demons is the divine "Boot Camp" for all of God's spirit-sons!

When man fell, and I do believe man fell, he was lowered into a state which the scripture calls death or sleep in which he became unaware, unconscious, unresponsive to the dimension of the life of God in his spirit. A yearning after God was there, but no certain knowledge of life in the spirit. Through the flesh, the natural consciousness of the physical

world and the carnal mind, and through sin, man became captivated by the power of death. This has been the state of Adam, bound within the prison bars of mistaken identity, because of his unresponsiveness to God. Now let me tell you something about death, that which we call "spiritual death." Death is not non-existence! When a man dies and you put him in a coffin, is he non-existent? I'm speaking of the physical body that you see there in the coffin. You walk up to the coffin and say, "There lies uncle Joe. Doesn't he look natural? Oh, he looks so peaceful! Didn't the mortician do a beautiful job? He looks so good in his favorite suit. Oh, uncle Joe!" We pat uncle Joe on the forehead, kiss his cheeks, and say our goodbyes. You see — uncle Joe is not non-existent because you see him there! You touch him, even talk to him.

Now hear what I'm saying! To be dead does not mean that you cease to exist. It means that you cease to be responsive by the expression of life. You can stand there beside the casket, you can flatter uncle Joe, you can rehearse all the nice things he ever did and enumerate all his wonderful ways. You can eulogize him right into heaven even if, in fact, he was a scoundrel. While you speak all these nice things poor old uncle Joe doesn't puff up with pride. He gets no smile on his face, no sparkle in his eyes. His ear doesn't begin to twitch. Oh, no! Uncle Joe is there, alright, but he is unresponsive. He is unconscious of the world around him, or of his own existence in it. It is the same as if he were sleeping — and that is why death and sleep are often used interchangeably in the scriptures. A sleeping man is not non-existent, but he is unaware and unresponsive!

On the other hand, you can stand there and "cuss him out," ridicule him, slap his face and tell him what dog and a devil he was and how much you hate him. Uncle Joe will not strike back! He will not turn red in the face with rage. He will not jump out of that casket and grab you, because he's unconscious and unresponsive to the world he's in. THAT IS DEATH! We came into this world with a loss through Adam of the life of God in our spirit and the bright world of spirit. Therefore we are dead in trespasses and sins. But, is the

spirit-life in man non-existent? Not at all! It is not non-existent, just unresponsive. We were born without the capacity to express the spiritual life because we lost the consciousness of who we are in the true world we pertain to. That is why Jesus came. He came to save us from this condition, He came to awaken us, to resurrect us, to reconcile our heart, to restore us to God and heaven. Through His blood He quickens our spirit, awakens our consciousness, and restores the reality of being.

Oh, yes! You were with the Father before the foundation of the world. But — do you remember? Can you remember when you were there with your Father? Can you remember what was said, what you knew, what you had when you were with the Father? Do you remember the wonderful plan devised at that time, and your agreement with it? Do you remember being chosen in Christ, promised eternal life, predestined unto placement as a son of God, before the foundation of the world? Do you remember the beginning of your journey?

Do you remember? YOU ARE REMEMBERING! Do you know how you're remembering? The answer is simple — all revelation is but a remembering! Someone says, "Oh, brother Eby, the Lord showed me such and such — I've had a revelation and I see thus and thus." Yes, you had a revelation! The reality is, however, that what you perceived as a revelation was simply God reminding you; He woke you up!

We should always be fervently aware that a revelation is an unveiling. That is the meaning in Greek. To have something revealed means to have it unveiled. There have been masterpieces of art and sculpture that have had a day of unveiling. Michelangelo was famous for the unveiling of some of his great works. But you see, my friend, the unveiling is not the creation of the thing unveiled! The unveiling is simply the revelation of something which already exists! Spiritual revelation is the uncovering of the secret knowledge of God within our spirit. Revelation is a remembering. The whole purpose of the Holy Spirit's moving

upon us in our journey in God in this life in the flesh is to cause us to remember the realm from whence we came, who we are, what our purpose is — that we might complete the journey and fulfill that purpose! That is the mystery.

I know what it means to awaken naturally. The deepest sleep I have ever been in was at the time of my surgery. I remember when the doctor woke me up! I will never forget the first words he said, "Do you feel like a Mack truck has run over you?" My first thought was, "I'm alive!" I was just so glad to be alive, I didn't care about the Mack truck, it was simply wonderful to know God had brought me through. Yes, I was alive, but I had never been dead — just unconscious. I did not know who or where I was. The world I awoke to seemed distant and confused. The nurse wheeled me into my room and someone turned on the television. I'll always know where I was that day, just as most people remember exactly where they were the day President Kennedy was shot. When I received the news that Kennedy had been assassinated I was at the airport in La Paz, Baja California, Mexico on my way back to the mainland from a Convention with some brethren in La Paz. I'll never forget that! We were told that the President had been killed, and that when Vice President Lyndon Johnson received the news he died of a heart attack. We flew all the way to Los Mochis in a state of shock thinking that was the truth. In like manner, I will always remember where I was at the time of my surgery on April 19, 1995, because while I was on the surgeon's table Tim McVeigh exploded a truck bomb at the Alfred P. Murray Federal Office Building in Oklahoma City.

As I awoke, all this news was on the television about this bombing and that 168 innocent people had died, among whom were nineteen children, most of whom attended the day care on the second floor of the building, with all the chaos, tragedy, and sorrow of that event. I was lying there on my bed full of morphine, awake enough to hear what was being said, but not alert enough to comprehend the immensity of the event or the meaning of it. I was trying to sort the thing out in the dream world of a semi-conscious state. It was strange indeed! But over days my mind cleared.

My consciousness returned. I began to comprehend. And today I know all about it! Spiritually, my beloved, that is what God is doing in this hour. HE IS AWAKENING US! When we first begin to awaken to our true identity in the spirit world the reality seems rather fuzzy. Our first thought, at the moment of regeneration, is, "I'm alive!" We are just glad to know that we are spiritually alive! But that is not the beginning of our spiritual life, it is merely our first remembrance of who we are and where we came from. Most Christians never get beyond that! They spend all their lives in that salvation realm, rejoicing that they have been made alive in Christ. But as our walk in the spirit progresses things become clearer and clearer! Now we are tuning in to the realm of the Spirit. We're hearing the voice of our Father. Little by little we're remembering the realm from whence we came, and the great purpose for which we were born. We call this "revelation," but revelation is merely a "remembering." It is not new information, it is recovered reality!

Once a man or woman is filled with the Holy Spirit, the Holy Ghost begins each day to bring to his or her "remembrance" everything that God spoke over them and about them in that long ago before the foundation of the world. By and through the Spirit we have begun to "recall" His voice and "re-collect" our predestined inheritance! What comes to us as "new revelation" is actually the RENEWING OF OUR MINDS! You can only re-new something that you had before. Never forget this truth: Revelation is Remembrance. We are being transformed by this renewing of our minds! The truth that we knew before is making us free. He is quickening the Father's decree over you from the beginning.

Clarity is coming to the sons of God. Understanding, perception, consciousness, expression, purpose, destiny, God is awakening all of this in us. He is awakening within us that reality we knew with the Father from before the foundation of the world. You are here by divine appointment. All your steps are ordered of the Lord. The body you were born with, the family you were born into, your parents, the town you were raised in, the school you attended, the friends you acquired, the mate you chose, the job you held, the life

you've lived, the experiences you've had, the joys and sorrows, the tragedies and triumphs, the apparent mistakes and the victories, all that has taken place in your experience was mapped out in the council of God on that glorious day when the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy.

Every son of Adam has a time to be awakened. Some — the forerunners, the firstfruits — are being awakened here and now. Many will be awakened at another time, under different circumstances. "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive, but every man in his own order..." (I Cor. 15:22-23). Some who read these lines remember the great move of the Spirit of God called Latter Rain which came to the Lord's people in 1948. Many were not in that visitation and have only heard reports of the glory that came and the mighty manifestations of God's power. As the Lord restored the gifts of the Spirit to the church at that time, there came into manifestation what was termed "confirmation services." The confirmation service was taken scripturally from the passage which says, "And when they had preached the gospel to that city, and had taught many, they returned again to Lystra, and to Iconium, and Antioch, confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them..." (Acts 14:21-22). The way the Spirit revealed this was that every child of God was to be confirmed in the body of Christ by prophecy with the laying on of hands. The presbytery, the ministry of the apostles, prophets, and elders would lay hands on the saints as the Spirit directed, and by prophecy their call, appointment, and place in the body of Christ would be revealed and confirmed, gifts of the Spirit imparted, and the saints established and set into their function as members of the living organism of Christ's body. It was a wonderful day for me when hands were laid on me in Toledo, Ohio. I'll never forget the words that came out of the mouth of one of the prophets: "Yea, thou shalt be a teacher of the kingdom of God!" At that moment I didn't even know what the kingdom of God was! It was also said that I would prophesy. When the prophets had finished, one of them said to me, "Brother Eby, the Spirit has said that you have the gift of prophecy.

Now — prophesy!" That nearly scared me out of my skin. But within seconds the spirit of prophecy came upon me and prophetic words began to flow out of my mouth. The things declared that day have come to pass in a remarkable way.

I believe in confirmation. I believe in impartation. There's a reality there. But I'll tell you something. I have seen by the Spirit another confirmation meeting that happened so many eons ago that I could never calculate them, on a glorious day when the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy. There never has been since nor shall there ever be again such a meeting! Everything that would ever happen in this time-space world happened in that meeting. The works of God were finished in that meeting (Heb. 4:3). Your destiny and mine were pre-arranged in that meeting (Eph. 1:3-5; I Cor. 2:9-10; Is. 46:10). The Lamb was slain in that meeting (I Pet. 1:18-20; Rev. 13:8). Our names were written in the book of life in that meeting (Rev. 13:8). And you and I were there...in Him!

Before any human being ever set foot upon this planet, the purpose of God in each and every one was confirmed in that meeting! There was spoken into my spirit, and into yours, out of the heart of God, out of the mind of the Father, His great and wise plan of the ages. There was imparted and impregnated into us a destiny, a purpose to be fulfilled upon earth. Therefore I say unto you, if you missed the 1948 confirmation meeting you didn't miss anything because you were in the one eons before that! The words of a little chorus we sing express it so well:

The throne room looks the same
As I ascend back to whence I came;
There's the scepter that was mine
Before I left there;
And there I sit with all the sages
I was enthroned with before the ages,
But most of all, my Father
Out of whom I came!
There is Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob,
And Sarah involved in my makeup;

And all the others who are in my family tree...
And down the corridors of eternity
God controls my destiny,
For back into Him I can trace my pedigree!

THE GOLD MINE

The natural resources of this earth are mind-boggling, yet in the midst of all the riches of this marvelous planet there are literally billions of people living in poverty. They live in squalor, disease, ignorance, limitation, bondage, and servitude, yet the earth is abundant in wealth. There are untold trillions of dollars of natural resources, of gold and silver and precious stones and others too numerous to mention, but most of them are controlled by governments or owned by wealthy and powerful corporations. There is gold in the vast oceans of the earth, but it's so diluted that it's unusable by the average person. There are treasures that are buried in the ocean, but there have been only a few of earth's inhabitants that have been able to bring up those stout Spanish galleons with their marvelous treasures and recover them. There is gold on strange planets in distant galaxies, but nature is too intractable, the distances so vast, and the human life-span so short that men are unable to go and secure it.

How different things would be if only we had gold mines that were very close to us, that were near at hand, that were accessible to us, and convenient. How differently things would be for some of us if we knew that we had a gold mine in our back yard, concealed behind the rose bushes, unknown to our neighbors and unknown to the government! How secure we would feel if on a summer evening we could chat with our neighbors over the fence, water our lawn, and play ball with our children knowing that when the sun sank below the horizon we could sneak out under the cover of night and mine a little bit of the gold out of our private gold mine at the back of our house, behind the rose bushes.

Wouldn't it be wonderful when income tax time came, if we didn't have to worry about anything? Just slip out in our mine and get a few nuggets the size of walnuts. Or when tragedy

struck, or an unexpected expense occurred, we could just get a few bags of gold dust out of our mine and pay those bills. Or perhaps we want to travel, but we don't have a rich uncle and we haven't won the lottery, so we sneak out again and get some gold out of our gold mine and we're able to fly away wherever we want to go, travel the earth, see the sights, stay at five-star resorts, live like a king, with no lack or limitations whatsoever. Oh, how delightful that would be!

I write these words today to tell you, my beloved, that you have a gold mine! It's not behind your house. It's not under the rose bushes. IT'S IN YOUR SPIRIT! You've got a gold mine. Each one who now reads these lines has a gold mine and it's closer to you than the air that you breathe. It's closer to you even than the blood that courses through your veins. The gold mine that you possess is all the riches and the glory and the wisdom and the knowledge and the righteousness and the joy and the peace and the understanding and the power and the omnipotence of God in your spirit! God is in your spirit! Isn't it wonderful! You are the sons and daughters of the Most High God. The very life of God is within you today. In that life there is no limitation at all. All the wealth of divinity, all the riches of the mind of the Father, all the abundance of joy, peace, love, and power that are in Jesus Christ, all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge that are hidden in Him are in you today, in the Spirit of the living God which is in your spirit, that spirit which you are upon this earth!

The Indian mystic, Sadhu Sundar Singh, said in one of his teachings, "Many there are that are like a hunter who, while wandering in the jungle, picked up some pretty stones on the bank of a stream. Unaware of their value he used them one by one in his sling to shoot at the birds perched on the trees near the river, and so one by one they fell into the water and were lost. With one still in his hand he returned to the city, and as he passed along the bazaar a jeweler caught sight of it, and told the silly fellow that it was a valuable diamond for which he could get thousands of rupees. When the man heard this he began to bewail himself and say, 'Woe is me! I didn't know their value, and have been using many of these

diamonds to shoot at birds by the riverside, and they have fallen into the river and are lost, otherwise I should have been a millionaire! Still I have saved this one, and that is something gained.”

The spirit of every man is like a precious diamond! Ah, yes, there lies buried within you the greatest of all treasures — the kingdom of God within your spirit. Discover that kingdom today, my friend, draw from its wealth, suck from its life, receive from its power and you will become a new creation, transformed into the image of God. All things are possible to him that believes this! All that is true in God lies within that kingdom, for it is the image of God created in man from the beginning, now buried deep beneath the debris of the carnal mind and fleshly life. It is there and it is yours, for the taking. Only the earth, the earthiness of your outer self, your own carnal consciousness, needs to be removed for the image of God to be seen. It is still there within you no matter how weak, sinful, or undone you may feel, or how miserably you may have failed. Your heavenly Father who sent you here to earth is this day calling you back to Himself, back to the wisdom and power of God inherited out of His life. As you "live in the spirit" and "walk after the spirit" you will be an overcomer in all things, eventually qualified to share your Father's throne!

When a man is truly yielded up to the inspiration of God in his spirit, then he is restored to the normal state from which he fell; made conscious again of God, knowing God as revealed in his inmost life, by a knowledge that is beyond the mind and senses, filled with the righteousness, peace, joy, love, and power of the kingdom of God. He begins to live as he was made to live — inspired, led, ennobled, empowered, a temple for the habitation of God. In his spiritual perfection his whole action is out of divine impulse. All sin, lack, sorrow, and death are drunk up or lost in the divine perfection. He celebrates a reign — not a reign in some far-off heaven somewhere, nor yet upon a throne in some earthly sphere, but within himself, in the more magnificent heaven and the more glorious throne of his own exalted powers and

thoughts and the glorified nature of his spirit. Man finds his paradise when he is imparadised with God!

Christ is within us as a seed! Within this Christ-Seed can be found all the divine attributes necessary to make us fully manifest sons of God — Christs like the original seed of the fullness of God in Christ. As each single cell of our body contains within it the genetic code that made us what we are physically, so the seed of God within our spirit has within it all the power of the life of God to transform us into the full image and likeness of our heavenly Father. As a literal, natural seed grows from a seed to become a blade, then to the ear stage, after that to the full corn in the ear, so the seed of God within grows progressively within us until He who is within makes us full grown sons of God — master of all the opposites! Having been tested, tried, and proven in all that is contrary to God, and having fully overcome in it, we are at last truly LIKE HIM, holy as He is holy, understanding why we must ever be holy, choosing once and for all and forever to abide in His holiness, knowing good and evil as God knows it, discerning, perceiving, and comprehending the folly of all the way that seems right unto a man, but whose end is the way of death. Now we, as our Father, are light, for He is the Father of lights and in us there is no darkness at all! Now in us, as in our Father, there is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.

THE SEED IN EVERY MAN HAS CONQUERED! Oh, the wonder of it!

About The Author

J. Preston Eby was born into a Mennonite family in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. While still a toddler his parents received the baptism in the Holy Spirit through the witness of some Pentecostal brethren in the area. They were led of the Lord to sell their business and move to Alabama to do missionary work. In his twelfth year Preston was filled with the Spirit – and in that same year the Holy Spirit sovereignly unfolded to his understanding the wonderful truth of the reconciliation of all things and all men unto God. No one else around him – in family or church associations – embraced this revelation. Through those early years he kept this truth to himself and pondered it in his heart. Later he came into contact with, and was touched by, a mighty move of the Spirit known as the "Latter Rain", with emphasis on the body of Christ, gifts of the Spirit, laying on of hands, impartation, five-fold ministry, prophetic ministry, spiritual worship, the kingdom of God, and going on to perfection, unto fullness of sonship to God.

The Lord pressed him into a deeper walk with Him, intensifying within his heart the truths of sonship and the kingdom of God, already planted within as seed through the visitation of the Lord as Latter Rain. Along the way he became associated with brother Gerald Derstine and The Gospel Crusade in Sarasota, Florida, serving as an associate minister with him for eight years, first co-pastoring and later pastoring the Revival Tabernacle in that city. His wife Lorain and he, with their family, were on the mission field in Latin America for a total of five years, with ministry in several other areas as well. For seven years, following this, he was an elder in a fellowship of believers in El Paso, Texas where they witnessed a precious move of the Spirit and a body of saints flowing together in the liberty and life of the Spirit.

Eventually the Lord changed even that order, and in 1976 led him into a full-time writing ministry directed to those who are called and chosen as elect of God to grow up into the full

stature of Jesus Christ as sons of God. The writing ministry includes a monthly message titled KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES as well as a number of booklets on various subjects. This ministry is greatly expanding throughout the world and our sincere hope and earnest prayer is that this course shall redound to HIS GLORY in encouragement, strengthening, edification and blessing to unnumbered thousands of God's elect sons everywhere – that creation may at last witness the true manifestation of the sons of God, setting all creation free from the bondage of corruption, restoring all things to God, and bringing to pass the glory of the kingdom of God throughout the whole earth and unto the unbounded heavens.

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES are sent free to anyone upon request. God's Word is always free to all. God's way is, "Freely you have received, freely give" (Mat. 10:8).