

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES

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

The Royal Priesthood

Book Two

By J. Preston Eby

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Chapter 17

The Consecration Of The Priesthood

We have pointed out in this series that Aaron and his sons represent Christ and His body, the great High Priest and the members of the Royal Priesthood. Those elect saints of God who have received the call to sonship are in the process of being prepared and formed into a kingdom of priests. They are spiritual priests, they worship in a spiritual temple, they stand at a spiritual altar, they offer up spiritual sacrifices, they are clad in spiritual vestments, and they minister in a spiritual ministry. "Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God through Jesus Christ" (I Pet. 2:5). "By Him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to His name. But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased" (Heb. 13:15-16).

If one of the direct descendants of the house of Aaron were converted to Christ and apprehended to sonship, he would enter upon an entirely new character and ground of priestly service. And be it observed, that the passages just quoted present the two great classes of spiritual sacrifice which the spiritual priest is privileged to offer. There is the sacrifice of praise to God, and the sacrifice of blessing to man. There is a double stream continually going forth from the believer who is living in the realization of his priestly place a stream of worshipful praise ascending to the throne of God, and a stream of active blessing flowing forth to a needy world. The spiritual priest stands with one hand lifted up to God in the presentation of the incense of prayer and praise, and the other opened wide to minister, in an outflow of life and light and love to every form of human need.

The whole creation is in a sort of universal travail for such a priesthood to arise in the fullness of all that priesthood means. As we lift up our eyes in this dark hour, before us lies a world filled with billions of benighted souls bound by chains of evil, wrapped by cords of slavery, entangled by the ropes of sin, sorrow, disease, despair and death. Everywhere are slaves, slaves to habit, slaves to poverty, slaves to ignorance, slaves driven by the lash of want, urged on by the sting of deep physical and spiritual need. Millions of men and women are in bondage to age old customs and empty religious traditions which were decadent when Christ was born. Everywhere, world wide, we behold the same clanking chains that chain men to the power of darkness and the bondage of the devil. Thank God! He is preparing a priesthood, a company of deliverers, a race of holy sons of the Most High God to step forth in the fullness of the power and glory of God to break the bands asunder and set creation free. When this happens, the great problems which plague mankind will disappear. Poverty will go; sin will go; disease will go; war will go; sorrow and pain will go; death will go; bondage of every sort will fade away and the Kingdom of God will triumph in the earth. What a day! What a day! And the wonder of it all is that this day is even now breaking in the earth, personified in the "firstfruits" of His redemption! The crisis hour in the history of the world has come, and the sons of God are being perfected and prepared to bring deliverance to an entire world. As broad as Calvary, as deep as the Crimson Stream, as far reaching as the love of God,

so far, so deep, so broad, so towering shall be the ministry of God's Royal Priesthood, praise HIS wonderful name!

Having considered the beautiful purpose of God in the Royal Priesthood, and the qualifications for that priesthood, we now approach the subject of THE CONSECRATION OF THE PRIESTHOOD. We shall proceed to examine the contents of the twenty-ninth chapter of the book of Exodus. To consecrate the priests is to hallow them to act as priests unto the Lord. God said to Moses, "And this is the thing that thou shalt do unto them to HALLOW them, to minister unto Me in the priest's office...thou shalt CONSECRATE Aaron and his sons" (Ex. 29:1, 9). This word, consecrate, is translated from a word with a strange meaning, literally: to fill the hand. Thus, this consecration means more than just our being consecrated and dedicated and the giving of ourselves wholly to God. It bespeaks of God accepting our consecration, receiving us and imparting and inworking into our lives all that is needed to fulfill the ministry of priesthood. Ah, HE FILLS OUR HANDS, HE places within our hands that which is necessary to minister as His priests. No priest can appear before either God or man empty-handed, but there is a definite ability and power of God given to us that as priests we might have to minister both unto God and to men.

I do not hesitate to tell you that it is possible to go through forms of consecration to God but never have anything imparted or inworked within. Learn this, precious friend of mine, and you will know a great truth: Consecration is what God does, and not what we do! I hear so much today about "consecration services" where people promise to do something. The preacher forcefully points out some great need or lack in the world, or in the Church, or in the believer's life, followed by an "altar call" pressing the people to come to the front and "consecrate themselves" unto God and this or that work. I have been in these consecration services and have promised God big things in the past and have never quite made good. I do not like to think of that as being consecration. It is not what I promise Him. Moses did not say, "Lord, it has come to our attention that you need a priesthood down here, so we have appointed a committee and have decided to consecrate Aaron and his sons to you to be your priests." NO! The whole process was initiated by God, not man. It was God who said to Moses, "Thou shalt consecrate Aaron and his sons." And then all that was performed in that marvelous typical service of consecration REPRESENTS THINGS THAT GOD DOES, NOT what man can do!

True consecration is coming to God with empty hands, confessing our weakness, and our inability to do anything, then letting God do the rest. If you read the prayers of Moses, Elijah, David, and Samuel in the Old Testament, and Paul in the New Testament, you will find that these men never came to God on the basis of what they were, who they were, or what they promised God they would do. I have attended altar services for years. I have watched people pray and weep and make vows to God and then give a testimony about the things they were going to do for God. I have heard enough promises at these altar services to turn the world upside down for God. Unfortunately, many of those promises are never kept because God had not required the people to consecrate to that thing. HE did not initiate the consecration, therefore, He did not accept it; neither did He fill their hands and equip and empower them to do the work. It was a one-sided consecration, which, in truth, is no consecration at all. I may decide that God needs some apostles, so I come to God and say, "Lord, I give myself, I consecrate myself to you to be your apostle." But if God has not first called me to be an apostle, all my consecration is in vain. Nothing will happen. I can live on the altar in constant prayer and fasting and consecration, but the anointing will not come. The power will not come. The ministry will not develop. God

will not accept my consecration, and He will not fill my hands unless HE has initiated the consecration. Ah, we must hear a word directly from the throne of God and then come to Him with empty hands and wait before Him in holy yieldedness until HE FILLS THEM. That is consecration!

The majority of Christian people, nominal Christians, even including "Spirit-filled," "Pentecostal," and "Charismatic" Christians, know little about the consecration of the Royal Priesthood. Some have consecrated themselves to a sect or a movement, and have received a sectarian spirit of love for the sect or the movement, etc. Others have recognized one or more moral principles and have consecrated themselves never to violate those moralities: these receive the spirit of moralities, a self-satisfied spirit, a selfish spirit. Others have singled out some virtue, or some good works, which they worship and whose spirit they receive for instance, love or helping the needy and they are fully satisfied when they have shown some love and helped some needy. Others consecrate themselves to a "work" for Jesus and seem satisfied only when they are in a bustle of exciting activity; it matters little to them what kind the work is, so long as it is religious and there is plenty of it and they have a prominent place: it is not so much results they seek as work, and hence they are quite content to "beat the air," hoping that in the end they will find that they have earned some recognition from God and a place in heaven. For these to take time to wait in holy stillness before God and to ascertain the kind of workmen HE SEEKS, and the kind of work HE DESIRES to have done, would be to them a violation of their covenant of consecration for they consecrated themselves to work and are satisfied of heart only when they are in a fever of excitement.

Others more wise, but not truly wise either, consecrate themselves to a particular kind of service, for God and man the service which THEY think needs them most. If they consecrate to "missionary work," they receive the spirit of that work and have whatever blessing comes with it, or if they consecrate to sing in the choir, to be an usher, or to teach Sunday School, they get the spirit of these works and their blessings. This is in direct contradistinction to the consecrations which the Spirit works when HE draws us apart UNTO HIMSELF, out of the world, out of the flesh, out of the soulish, and into the deeper movings of His Spirit, until we are filled with His life, and ready to minister that life to all men.

All of these soulish consecrations, and the spirits or dispositions resulting, have both good and evil influences. Any of them is far better than a consecration to evil and its spirit of evil. Any of them is far better even than consecration to self and the spirit of selfishness accompanying it. Any of them is far better even than an aimless life consecrated to nothing. But none of these are true consecration, and none of these can compare in any sense to the consecration set forth in the Scriptures and exemplified in the Lord Jesus Christ, the Redeemer of the world, the High Priest of our profession. This, the true consecration, alone brings to the heart the Holy Spirit, the reality and life and power of God to stand and minister as His priesthood in the earth.

This true, proper consecration differs from all others. It has but the one shrine at which it bows: it bows to the Father's will, surrendering self and self-will a living sacrifice on the Lord's altar, a reasonable service. It makes no stipulations or reservations. The language of the Chief Priest is that of each member of the Royal Priesthood: "I came not to do My own will, but the will of Him that sent Me." "Lo I come (as in the volume of the book it is written of Me) to do THY WILL, O God." Such are made partakers of the fullness of the Spirit, their hands filled from heaven.

A friend in Christ has written: "Joshua 24:1-28 tells of how Joshua gathered all the heads of Israel, their elders, judges, officers, and they presented themselves before the Lord, as Joshua gave them his final exhortation to CHOOSE YE THIS DAY WHOM YE WILL SERVE. This has been repeated again and again as people have gathered in Conferences, Conventions, Camp Meetings, various consecration services, and there in the presence of the Lord been faced with the challenge of whether or not they would SERVE HIM. This all has its place, and we praise God for every level of man's personal consecration for service though we often find an element of 'I WILL' in this service. It is meant FOR the Lord, yes, but it is also done because I WILL find satisfaction, glory, excitement, etc. in doing these things. It is not with the intent of being caught in a 'web of semantics', or quibbling over the meaning of words, but we do see a depth of consecration TO the Lord wherein there is no longer any consideration of our own will it has been GIVEN OVER to the Lord, and thus ever become one in Him. HE would then direct us to do a certain thing and immediately we respond because of no contradiction within of our own will to His. No need to surrender to His will, because ALREADY WE ARE DELIGHTING THEREIN. Deut. 31:14 gives t o how Moses and Joshua presented themselves before the Lord, while Joshua received his commission. This was a very sacred moment, Joshua was GOD'S CHOICE to lead the people into their inheritance. We read these things with awe and wonderment, could God ever use us in this manner also? And then, if we are not careful, we present ourselves before the Lord FOR A MINISTRY, we come seeking a ministry, rather than seeking HIM, His will, and a giving of ourselves TO HIM. The gifts and callings are OF GOD, He chooses whom He wills, and when His hand is placed upon your life, you say, 'Yes, Lord.' But we all do well to present ourselves TO Him, not to crowd in for a ministry, but just to BECOME what He would have us BE, 'Only to be what He wants me to be, every moment of every day, yielded completely to Jesus' control every step of this pilgrim way...'"

Many who read these lines will bear witness to the truth I now write. In the past we have made many "consecrations" that we really did not mean. We have made many commitments to the Lord that we really had no power to perform. Actually, God caused us to make such consecrations and dedications and to not keep them in order to reveal to us that we cannot of ourselves do these things. Betimes we are caught up in the fervor of a meeting and make such commitments, but when we are away from the influence of the meeting all the old desires and weaknesses return. It becomes evident that it was not a true consecration, for while we promised God, there was no reciprocal action on His part, no impartation of divine enablement, NO FILLING OF THE HANDS.

Some have consecrated and reconsecrated, dedicated and rededicated so many times until the dear folk have worn out the carpet trotting back and forth to and from the altar, without any visible results. They remind me of the story I read. There was an evangelist who gave effective altar calls. Every night, when he gave the call, people came forward to receive from God. The first night one man came forward and prayed, "Jesus, fill me full, fill me full." That man came forward every night at every altar call and prayed the same prayer until finally on the last night when he prayed, "Lord, fill me full," the evangelist said, "Lord, don't do it, he leaks!"

In God's economy there is no such thing as "reconsecration." You will not find it in the Bible. God knows nothing about such a thing. Tell me, my brother, my sister, how you can "regive" something that has already been given? If you are "reconsecrating" your life to God you but reveal the sad fact that the first "consecration" was NO CONSECRATION at all you did not give, God did not accept, and your hands were not filled. No greater sin

can be committed by the people of God than the act of devoting a thing to God, and then taking it back again. Even among men there is no insult more keenly felt than that someone should make you a present, tell with what joy he devotes it to you, and then coolly come and take it back again. If a young lady's lover should give her a present, say a ring, and then come back and say, "I think, Maggie, I would like that ring back," how quickly she would say, "Oh, yes, take it back, and take yourself off, too!" There is not a woman with a spark of self-respect but would say that to a man who wanted back his devoted present. Apply the same thought to God. You devote something to God. You say you give it to God. Sacredly you vow and dedicate and consecrate it to God. Then you continue to reserve it for yourself, and again, and again, and again you re-consecrate it to God, but always reserve it to yourself. That is not consecration at all. It is a sham. It is a hypocrisy. It is a delusion. And God has nothing to do with it!

THE BASIS OF CONSECRATION

On what basis must the Royal Priesthood be consecrated to God? On what basis does God require us to consecrate ourselves unto Him? There must be a basis for whatever we do. For example, when we drive a new car home and use it for our work and pleasure, it is because we have paid a price and bought it. This purchasing is the legal basis upon which we drive it. Our God is the One who is most legal and who acts most logically. All His doings are reasonable and have a basis. God operates by divine law; He is a God of principle. He cannot demand something from us without a basis. When God, therefore, demands that the priesthood be consecrated unto Him, it cannot be without a basis. And what is His basis? It is His purchase. He has BOUGHT US and He can, therefore, demand that we consecrate ourselves to Him. I Cor. 6:20 says, "For ye are bought with a price: THEREFORE glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's." But concerning the Royal Priesthood the Word is even more specific: "And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for Thou wast slain, and hast REDEEMED (purchased) us to God by Thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us unto our God **KINGS AND PRIESTS**: and we shall reign on the earth" (Rev. 5:9-10).

Ah, our consecration as priests is based on this purchase of God. He is making us a kingdom of priests **BECAUSE HE PURCHASED US** for that purpose. You walk into a furniture store and you see a great many living room sets on display. But you cannot have any of them delivered to your house, because you have no basis for doing so. But if you pay \$1800.00 for one beautiful set, then you can demand that it be delivered to your house and turned over to you. This demanding is based upon your purchase. And what you do with it is entirely up to you because it belongs to you. The basis of consecration is exactly the same. God requires our all because He has purchased and paid for us!

We may further ask, From what did God buy us? Many people think that God purchased us from the rule of the devil, or that God purchased us from the captivity of sin, or that He bought us from the world, or from the power of death. While God's purchase of us does effect deliverance from all those things, none of them are really what He bought us from! From what, then, has God bought us? Gal. 4:4-5 holds the key: "But when the fullness of time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, **MADE UNDER THE LAW**, to **REDEEM** them that were **UNDER THE LAW**, that we might receive the adoption of sons." So, then, we see from these verses that God has redeemed us from **UNDER THE LAW**. If it were not a fact that He has bought us from under the law then neither could we

be delivered from the rule of Satan, from the bondage of sin, or from the power of death, for "the sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin IS THE LAW" (I Cor. 15:56).

Why is it that God has redeemed us from the law? The reason is that when man sinned he fell under God's law which said, "Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die" (Gen. 2:17; 3:3). Falling under this law, man was imprisoned, shut up, kept, held and retained under sin, Satan and death BY THE LAW. The fact that we were thus retained by the law of God is altogether righteous and legal. If God, therefore, wanted to release us from under His righteous law, He must pay the full price to satisfy the demand of His law. This price is the precious blood shed by His Son Jesus. "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed (purchased) with corruptible things, as silver and gold; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot" (I Pet. 1:18-19). Now, praise God, we are redeemed from under the law, bought out from under the law, released from the rule of the law, delivered from the authority of the law, so that NOW WE BELONG TO GOD! No longer do we serve rules and regulations, no more do we serve laws and commandments, now, praise His name! We SERVE THE LIVING GOD! The right of possession over us has been transferred from the law to the living God! And it is on the basis of this transfer of right that God can select His PRIESTHOOD COMPANY and demand that we consecrate ourselves to HIM!

In the world today, people get married when they feel like it and divorced when they feel like it. They choose a vocation and work and live and play and come and go as they please. They act according to their own wills and desires without recognizing any right of ownership, without seeking or consulting God at all. And it is not much better in the church system where men plan and organize and build and perform out of carnal reasoning and soulish zeal, consecrating themselves to whatever work THEY feel ought to be done. "Lord, I WILL do this, I WILL surrender all, I WILL go, I WILL say..." I WILL is a cover up for the self-life, its a guard, a fence to protect self. It is evident that when ever we say "I WILL" that "I" comes first. And how deeply HE must deal with us by the inworking of His cross, until we are truly surrendered to Him, and the "I will" is turned into "THY WILL be done." True consecration must sooner or later rest on the realization of God's right to us, and the wonderful fact that it is not something we do, but something HE DOES! True consecration, as I have pointed out, is coming to God with empty hands, confessing our weakness, and our inability to do anything, then letting God do the rest, trusting HIM to FILL OUR HANDS!

Many, however, find it difficult to rest in Him, trusting Him to do what He will, and would try to conjure up some form of self-effort, self-helps, as if by this they could help God finish His work within them, and they could seize the priesthood. Man would assume the responsibility for his salvation, become his own perfecter, and think that by his own efforts he will hasten his sonship. So they demand and command, confess this and claim that as if by these efforts they can work God into a corner, force His hand, and God would have to fulfill His promises, according to their timing irregardless of His own time purpose. All of this is futile, priesthood and kingship are not a "do it yourself kit." "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). Therefore we have "come to this settled and firm persuasion concerning this very thing, namely, that He who began in you a work which is good will bring it to a successful conclusion right up to the day of Christ Jesus" (Phil. 1:6, Wuest Expanded). THIS is the spirit of CONSECRATION!

FILLING THE HANDS

This is the hour when it is no longer enough to just know that we belong to God, or that we have consecrated ourselves and given ourselves wholly to the Lord. This is the hour when God is calling forth His elect saints to move into that place where God can impart and inwork into each member something of Himself that can be ministered both unto God and unto men. The question follows Has God "filled our hands"? Have we been so consecrated until God has witnessed that He has accepted us and has committed unto us at least a measure of Himself that we can minister to others? It begins with God, for He is the First Cause of all things, the initiator of this ministry, and the sufficiency whereby it is accomplished.

Let us illustrate it this way. When the children of Israel came out of Egypt, God gave to Moses the plans for the Tabernacle. Those plans contained the making of fine embroidery work, the work of the jeweler, beaten gold, precious metals and all the arts of the lapidaries working with gems and precious stones. There was fine linen to be made and worked upon. They had to know how to tan the skins of animals and many other skills in the line of carpentry etc. were required. Had Moses been an ordinary man of today, I do not doubt that we could hear him say, "Now Lord, do you expect me to take these plans down to this people, and do you expect them to do all this beautiful, meticulous, skillful and wonderful work that you have laid out here for us? You know, Lord, all I have down there is a bunch of brick makers. That is all they have ever done, all their lives in Egypt. Lord, their hands are all calloused and cracked and rough from working in the water, slime and straw. There is not one of them that knows how to beat gold. None of them are silversmiths. None of them are lapidaries. None of them are blacksmiths. None of them are weavers. They don't know how to produce fine linen or do embroidery, and all the other things you are talking about."

This was all true, of course, as there was no knowledge of these things in their numbers. But, do you know what God told Moses? He named two men and said He would PUT THE SKILL FOR THIS IN THEIR HANDS. "And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, See, I have called by name Bezaleel the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah: and I have filled him with the Spirit of God, in wisdom, and in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship, 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 of timber, to work in all manner of workmanship. And I, behold, I have given with him Aholiab, the son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan: and in the hearts of all that are wise hearted I HAVE PUT WISDOM, that they may make all that I have commanded thee" (Ex. 31:16). God said that He would go beyond that. He would give these men the ability to teach all these things to others. So, after so long a time, the Tabernacle appeared in the midst of Israel, as an evident sign of the wisdom and knowledge and power of God.

Ah it was GOD who called these men, and it was GOD who filled their hands! It was God who imparted to these men the wisdom, the skill, the ability and the power to accomplish His purpose. Does being a priest after the Order of Melchizedek seem too high for you? Do you wonder how you can attain unto such a thing? If you were consecrating yourself to such a calling it would be hopeless, indeed. But it is GOD HIMSELF who has sent a word unto His people in these last days, commanding that they should consecrate themselves unto Him to be a kingdom of priests unto Him and for the creation. Oh, the wonder of it! This priesthood is now presenting itself before the Lord. This priesthood is even now in preparation. Comprehend this scene! Taste the promise of eternal glory!

God is going to give His elect a set of blueprints, the plans, the skill, the knowledge, the wisdom, the love and the power to bring this whole creation of God into the perfection and glory He has decreed for it. GOD SHALL FILL THE HANDS OF HIS PRIESTS. He is doing it now by the deep dealings and processings in their lives. This is the LORD'S DOING, and it is marvelous in our eyes!

THE CONSECRATION OF THE PRIESTHOOD

It is always enlightening to study the typical rituals and ceremonies of the Old Testament, even though the rites have become obsolete, the altars deserted, and the dust of priest and devotee has long since mingled in the sand of the desert, or the green of the field. All were but shadows and types wonderfully portraying greater and grander realities to be experienced now on the higher plane of spiritual life. Through these examples and shadows the Holy Spirit has faithfully established the pattern of the order of the Kingdom of God. For this reason the Levitical ritual of the consecration of the priesthood is possessed of sublime importance for every candidate for the Royal Priesthood, and we are drawn to examine it with holy and reverent curiosity. There are so many beautiful and holy truths to be explored, and such a deep and vital work to be wrought upon mind and heart as we meet the immutable principles of priesthood consecration.

To consecrate the priests is to hallow and equip them to act as priests unto the Lord. The consecration of the priests involved a great deal of ritual which consisted of five chief parts: (1) ceremonial washing (2) robing (3) anointing (4) the offering of three sacrifices on behalf of the priests (5) causing them to perform a part of their office, in earnest and in token of the performance of the whole ministry to be fulfilled from that day forward.

The first three parts we will explore later in another connection. I am impressed at this time to draw your attention to the threefold sacrifice connected with the consecration of the priesthood. Each of the offerings had a separate meaning for the priests. The succession in which the sacrifices followed each other on this occasion, first the sin offering, then the burnt offering, and lastly the consecration offering, has its ground in the meaning of each sacrifice. The priest passed through a spiritual process. He had transgressed the law, and he needed the deliverance signified by the sin offering. If his offering had been made in truth and sincerity, he could then offer himself as an accepted person, forsaking all self interests, dying completely to self, yielding his all forever to God, as a sweet savor, in the burnt offering. And in consequence he could be quickened, strengthened, equipped, and empowered by God in the consecration offering. This is, therefore, an offering by degrees. A little fellow can come rushing down in a service of consecration and he says, "I give myself to the Lord!" But there are three orders or degrees of consecration, and he must pass through all three before he is the Lord's! There is the offering of a bullock as a sin offering; but as the offerings proceed there is the offering of a ram as a burnt offering and the offering of another ram as an offering of consecration. There is a wonderful progression here. And ALL who would be consecrated members of the Royal Priesthood must experientially pass through ALL that is here typified by these three offerings.

THE SIN OFFERING

"Thou shalt consecrate Aaron and his sons. And thou shalt cause a bullock to be brought before the tabernacle of the congregation: and Aaron and his sons shall put their hands upon the head of the bullock. And thou shalt kill the bullock before the Lord, by the door

of the tabernacle of the congregation. And thou shalt take of the blood of the bullock, and put it upon the horns of the altar with thy finger, and pour all the blood beside the bottom of the altar. And thou shalt take all the fat that covereth the inwards, and the caul that is above the liver, and the two kidneys, and the fat that is upon them, and burn them upon the altar. But the flesh of the bullock, and his skin, and his dung, shalt thou burn with fire without the camp: it is a sin offering" (Ex. 29:9-14)

The sin offering speaks of the death of Christ in terms of forgiveness, cleansing and victory over sin. The bullock was brought before the door of the tabernacle, where Aaron and his sons laid their hands upon the head of the beast, thus identifying the animal as theirs and their life with that of the animal. Always with the sin offering the person who brought the sacrifice had to lay his hand upon the head of the victim and feel the pulsating life and know the innocence of that animal when it was compelled to lay down its life for the sake of fallen man. The whole procedure was arranged so that each time a living creature was killed, its human offerer should realize exactly what he was doing, and should repent the sins and selfishness which had created the conditions in the fallen world which could only be met by the pouring out of the life of another. The innocent died on behalf of the guilty, thus giving, in type, HIS LIFE to the one who under the judgment of the law was a "dead man."

After the identification of the priests with the sacrificial bullock, Moses plunged a knife into its throat. There was no sound, no scream, no lowing, only a long out sigh as the life blood drained away from the helpless victim, as, too, with our Lord Jesus Christ, "...He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He openeth not His mouth" (Isa. 53:7). Some of the blood was put upon the horns of the altar, and the remainder dashed at the base of the altar, thus, the life of the animal and those identified with it were released unto God. The fat and the inward organs were burned upon the altar, and thus became a sweet savor unto God; but the flesh the skin and the dung were taken outside the camp and wholly burned. The New Testament commentary reads: "For the bodies of those beasts, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the High Priest for sin, are burned without the camp. Wherefore JESUS ALSO, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered without the gate" (Heb. 13:11) Ah, yes, the Lord Jesus Christ Himself IS OUR SIN OFFERING, but all that He did for us, on our behalf, must now be appropriated and wrought out in our own experience, to the praise of HIS glory.

This brings us to a most important point as I draw this article to a close. There is a beautiful statement in II Cor. 5:21 wherein Paul states, "For He hath made Him to be SIN for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." The popular, but careless, understanding of this verse is that the Christ was somehow "made sin," or actually "became sin" or "sinful," the sins of the whole world being imputed or imparted to Him as He hung and died upon the cross. For long centuries Christians have accepted this crude notion that makes Christ A SINNER IN OUR PLACE. I must speak a word against that. Nothing could be farther from the truth! If Christ was indeed "made sin" for us, then pray tell me HOW SIN CAN ATONE FOR SIN? How could He die FOR US if WHAT WE DO and WHAT WE ARE were imputed or imparted unto Him? The very idea is a contradiction an unmitigated absurdity. It simply cannot be done. SIN ATONES FOR NOTHING. There is no way under heaven that you can do away with sin by offering up sin! The primary requirement for the sin offering was that it be "without spot" and "without blemish" in every respect.

The words "to be" are not in the original. Literally it is, "He has made Him sin for us..." But what is meant by this? What is the exact idea that the Holy Spirit intended to convey? It cannot be that He was literally sin in the abstract, or sin as such. Nor can it mean that He was a sinner, for it is said in the same statement that "He knew no sin," and it is everywhere said that He was holy, harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners. Nor can it mean in any proper sense of the word that He was guilty, for then He deserved to die, and His death could have no more merit than that of any other guilty being; and if He were properly guilty, it would make no difference in this respect whether it was by His own fault or by imputation: a guilty being deserves to be punished; and where there is deserving of punishment there can be no merit in sufferings. All theories which try to make our pure, holy, spotless Redeemer to BE SIN, or sinful, or guilty, border on blasphemy and are abhorrent to all who know and love the truth. It is the cornerstone of the whole economy of redemption that the sin offering MUST BE PURE and therefore acceptable to God and efficacious for man. "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed by such corruptible things as silver and gold...but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb WITHOUT BLEMISH AND WITHOUT SPOT" (I Pet. 1:18-19). Not, my friend, a lamb MADE SIN, but a lamb WITHOUT BLEMISH. "How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself WITHOUT SPOT to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" (Heb. 9:14). Ah, He did not offer Himself AS SIN, but WITHOUT SPOT.

But if the declaration that He was made "sin" does not mean that He became the embodiment of imputed sin or the personification of sin itself, or sinful, or guilty, then what can it mean? The answer is simple once the Old Testament terminology relating to the sin offering is understood. There are many passages in the Old Testament where the word "sin" is used in the sense of "sin offering," or a sacrifice for sin. Hos. 4:8 says, "They eat up the sin of My people," a reference to the apostate priests who ate the sin offerings of the people, an act prohibited by law. These priests did not eat SIN they ate the SIN OFFERING. Often in the Hebrew language a noun may be omitted and the adjective used as the noun. For example, in the Tabernacle there was the Holy Place and the Most Holy Place. The word PLACE, however, does not appear in the Hebrew; it is simply the Holy and the Most Holy, and "place" is understood. So the priest did not go from the Outer Court into the Holy Place, he passed from the Outer Court into "The Holy".

The same principle is used with the terms "sin" and "sin offering". In numerous places in the Old Testament the single Hebrew word GHATTAH is used for either SIN or SIN OFFERING. In such cases the word for "offering" is not in the original at all, although it appears in the English versions. A careful study will show conclusively that in the Hebrew language the single word "sin" was frequently used for "sin offering" and the context alone determines whether sin as a trespass is meant, or an offering for sin. With the foregoing facts in mind it should be obvious to every reverent heart that Paul is not by any means trying to tell us that the pure, spotless, holy, unblemished and undefiled Lamb of God was MADE IMPURE, UNHOLY, DEFILED AND BLEMISHED SIN for us! The moment He became sin He would have been disqualified for being our sin-offering! Ah, the wonderful truth is that He who knew no sin thereby became the perfect, spotless, unblemished SIN OFFERING for us, that we might be MADE THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD IN HIM the altogether Holy One! I must insist most emphatically that the Christ was never MADE SIN. He was made a SIN OFFERING. What a difference! What a wonder! How much more logical! And how much more beautiful and blessed!

Under the law the sin offering provided only for acts of unconscious transgressions, mistakes, or unavoidable errors. It applied only to sins done through ignorance, passion, or weakness, in opposition to those done presumptuously, deliberately, or calculatedly. For sins done deliberately there was no atonement, but only "a certain looking for of judgment and fiery indignation." This point is extremely important, beloved, for it reveals the deep and wonderful work of the sin-offering. Sometimes it seems that we have not sinned. By the grace of the Lord, we have been kept through the entire day in His presence without any sins. It is possible. We do not sense that we have sinned, but we have a deeper feeling. It is quite strange. While we are saying, "Lord, I praise Thee, Thou hast kept me through the whole day; by Thy Spirit I have not sinned," we have a deeper feeling that within us is something sinful. We sense that deeply within is something more sinful than any acts we might have committed. Something that, were it not for His restraining grace, would sin. It is Sin, capitalized Sin. It is the power of Sin that dwells in my members. This is the Sin which is dealt with so extensively in Romans 5,6,7 and 8. Sin dwells within me. I am not speaking of sins outward actions. I speak of Sin capitalized, singular Sin. It is a force. It is a power. It is a nature. I hate it. I hate to do what I do. It is not I that do it, but Sin which dwells within me. There is an evil, but powerful living power within my members called Sin. It can drive me; it can defeat me; it can conquer me; it can cause me to do things I detest. It is a living nature; it is the nature of the evil one. It is the slithering serpent crawling about in the dust of the carnal mind, in the passions of my mortal body. Though we have been saved and have peace with God and one another, Sin can cause us to think and talk and act in ways that are abhorrent to our regenerated spirit. It is not cold, calculated, hostile, God defying, deliberate rebellion. No! It is something we have inherently from father Adam we did not choose it, we can't help it, we were born with it, and we are not to blame! It is in our blood! For this there is an offering the sin offering. Praise HIS name!

Many centuries ago the beloved John dwelt in spirit before the open doors of an open heaven as he walked about on the lonely, barren isle called Patmos. Time after time he saw in divine visions the glory of God, and of the Lamb, and of the Kingdom of Priests upon His throne, and of all the redeemed of the ages. The celestial scene filled John's heart with joy and praise, and impressed by what he saw and heard in the heavenlies, he cried out: "To Him who loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and hath made us kings and priests to Him be the glory and the power for ever and ever, Amen." Notice, dear ones, the fourfold action expressed in John's anthem of praise:

1. He loved us.
2. He washed us in His blood.
3. He has made us Kings and Priests.
4. Glory is ascribed to Him for ever for these things.

We know what "washing" means. We wash our bodies and our clothes to cleanse them from the least defilement that adheres to them. Now Sin is not merely an act we commit which casts us under guilt from which we must obtain forgiveness. Sin is a power, a passion, a life in our members. It is a pollution which cleaves to us. The sinning of Jesus procures more for us than forgiveness for our actions and pardon to assuage our guilt. It is in the deep, hidden, inner life of man that the power of HIS LIFE must be experienced. Sin has penetrated into the soul and body, and every member has become saturated with it. The blood too must penetrate; as deeply as the power of sin has gone, so deeply must the inner being be cleansed by the blood. We know that when some article of clothing is washed, the water with its cleansing power must soak in as deeply as the stain, if it is to

be removed. Even so must the blood of Jesus penetrate to the deepest roots of our being: our soul, and body, the entire personality must be reached by the cleansing power of HIS BLOOD. "The blood cleanses from all sin"; where sin has reached, there too the blood must follow it; where sin ruled, there the blood must rule: the entire heart must be cleansed by the blood. Every one who would know the power of the blood of Jesus must remember that "the life of the flesh is in the blood" (Lev. 17:11). We have, in our very blood, been saturated with nervous temperaments, diseases, lawlessness, weaknesses inherited from our parents which have been the direct cause of our transgressions. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and the life of the flesh is in the blood. Our flesh is wrong and our blood is corrupt, for it is old Adam's flesh and old Adam's blood. But Jesus came, the firstborn of the new creation of God. He was not 50% from Adam and 50% from God. He was not 50% from Mary and 50% from His Father. He was not a half breed, part Adam and part divine. He did not have one drop of Adam's blood in His veins. There was not one drop of Mary's blood in Him. If one drop of old Adam's blood was in him, if one gene of Mary was in Him, He was a sinner. The new creation means nothing until we can see that the man Christ Jesus was AN ENTIRELY NEW CREATION OF GOD, THE SECOND MAN, THE LAST ADAM, underived in any way from the first Adam, a unique creation of God, without descent, without earthly father, without earthly mother, as was the first Adam in the beginning. His blood was not Adam's blood, it was the blood of God. Not just spirit, but spirit in the manifestation of blood, a very real blood possessed of the life of God.

The blood of Jesus was pure. It was sinless blood. It was diseaseless blood. It was deathless blood. That is why Jesus could declare, "No man taketh My life from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again" (Jn. 10:18). He poured out His blood, His life. It ran into the earth, even the earth which we are. He did not die for us, that is, in our place. He did not die so that we would not die. NO! He died for us, that is, on our behalf. HE GAVE US HIS LIFE THAT WE MIGHT LIVE! This difference is sublimely important. If He died merely as a substitute, in my place, then He is dead, and I am alive with my same old Adam life. If He died that I might not die, then old Adam's life is preserved. But if He died TO GIVE ME HIS LIFE, then OLD ADAM MUST DIE and it is no longer I that live but Christ who liveth in me! He did not die to keep me from dying. I must die even though He died. "I am crucified with Christ." "Ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God." "For he that is dead is freed from sin. Now...we be dead with Christ." Oh, my friend, let me say it again: He did not die to keep me from dying; He gave me His life that I might live! He did not die merely as my substitute, He poured out His life that I might eat and drink of it and live. "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you" (Jn. 6:53).

The power of the blood! What a mighty power is working within us! HIS BLOOD! Sinless blood. Pure blood. Diseaseless blood. Deathless blood. Incorruptible blood. Divine blood. Celestial blood. And it is His Royal Blood that now flows in our veins! Can we not see by this that when this precious blood has finished its work there will be a complete redemption, spirit, soul and body. All is cleansed by His pure blood. All is quickened by His incorruptible blood. Sin and death flee away before His holy and life giving blood. Oh, the wonder of it!

I stand in amazement and wonder, marveling at such a mighty and glorious work as this. It is the sin offering. It is the consecration of the priesthood. It is a hallowing of those who minister as the priests of the Lord. It is the inworking of the power of an incorruptible life, the glory and strength of the Melchizedekian Order. Of our great High Priest it is written,

"For such an High Priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens" (Heb. 7: 26). This is not only how He was, it is how He IS. So, too, must be all who share that glorious priesthood after the Order of Melchizedek. For this very purpose, for this cleansing, this transformation, God has called us to the CONSECRATION OF THE PRIESTHOOD, to the mighty inworking in our lives of the sin offering, to the destruction of sin and death, to the effectual cleansing and quickening of HIS LIFE. Hallelujah!

Chapter 18

The Consecration Of The Priesthood

(continued)

Having considered the beautiful purpose of God in the Royal Priesthood, and the qualifications for that priesthood, we now approach the subject of THE CONSECRATION OF THE PRIESTHOOD. We shall proceed to examine the contents of the twenty ninth chapter of the book of Exodus. To consecrate the priests is to hallow them to act as priests unto the Lord. God said to Moses, "And this is the thing that thou shalt do unto them to HALLOW them, to minister unto Me in the priest's office...thou shalt CONSECRATE Aaron and his sons" (Ex. 29:1,9).

It is always enlightening to study the typical rituals and ceremonies of the Old Testament, even though the rites have become obsolete, the altars deserted, and the dust of priest and devotee has long since mingled in the sand of the desert, or the green of the field. All were but shadows and types wonderfully portraying greater and grander realities to be experienced now on the higher plane of spiritual life. Through these examples and shadows the Holy Spirit has faithfully established the pattern of the order of the Kingdom of God. For this reason the Levitical ritual of the consecration of the priesthood is possessed of sublime importance for every candidate for the Royal Priesthood, and we are drawn to examine it with holy and reverent curiosity. There are so many beautiful and holy truths to be explored, and such a deep and vital work to be wrought upon mind and heart as we meet the immutable principles of priesthood consecration.

To consecrate the priests is to hallow and equip them to act as priests unto the Lord. The consecration of the priests involved a great deal of ritual which consisted of five chief parts: (1) ceremonial washing (2) robing (3) anointing (4) the offering of three sacrifices on behalf of the priests (5) causing them to perform a part of their office, in earnest and in token of the performance of the whole ministry to be fulfilled from that day forward.

The first three parts we will explore later in another connection. I am impressed at this time to draw your attention to the threefold sacrifice connected with the consecration of the priesthood. Each of the offerings had a separate meaning for the priests. The succession in which the sacrifices followed each other on this occasion, first the sin offering, then the burnt offering, and lastly the consecration offering, has its ground in the meaning of each sacrifice. The priest passed through a spiritual process. He had transgressed the law, and he needed the deliverance signified by the sin-offering. If his offering had been made in truth and sincerity, he could then offer himself as an accepted person, forsaking all self-interests, dying completely to self, yielding his all forever to God, as a sweet savor, in the burnt offering. And in consequence he could be quickened, strengthened, equipped, and empowered by God in the consecration offering. This is, therefore, an offering by degrees. A little fellow can come rushing down in a service of consecration and he says, "I give myself to the Lord" But there are three orders or

degrees of consecration, and he must pass through all three before he is the Lord's! There is the offering of a bullock as a sin offering; but as the offerings proceed there is the offering of a ram as a burnt offering and the offering of another ram as an offering of consecration. There is a wonderful progression here. And ALL who would be consecrated members of the Royal Priesthood must experientially pass through ALL that is here typified by these three offerings.

THE BURNT OFFERING

In the last Study we dealt with the first of these offerings, the sin offering. This brings us to the second, the burnt offering. The Lord commanded Moses, "Thou shalt also take one ram; and Aaron and his sons shall put their hands upon the head of the ram. And thou shalt slay the ram, and thou shalt take his blood, and sprinkle it round about upon the altar. And thou shalt cut the ram in pieces, and wash the inwards of him, and his legs, and put them unto his pieces, and unto his head. And thou shalt burn the whole ram upon the altar: it is a burnt offering unto the Lord: it is a sweet savor, an offering made by fire unto the Lord" (Ex. 29:15-18).

All the offerings speak of Christ, and all speak of Christ in union with His body; but as we know, God's truth is many faceted in its beauty, and therefore many types and symbols are required to adequately portray the whole truth. And even then they are but types and shadows of the reality which is experienced only on the spiritual plane. What does the term "burnt offering" mean? What is an offering? The Scripture shows us that whenever a thing is set apart from its original position and usage and is laid upon God's altar, specifically for Him, this thing is then an offering. In the Old Testament men offered bullocks and rams and many other things as offerings. The principle is this: The ram originally lived in a sheepfold and was used for wool and for breeding. Now it is taken from the sheepfold and brought to the gate of the Tabernacle. There is a change in its position. Then it is killed, placed on the altar, and consumed by fire to be a sweet smelling savor unto God. This is a change in its usage, and in its state of being, too. Thus, this ram becomes an offering. An offering, therefore, as it relates to the animal sacrifice, is none other than a thing which is set apart for God and laid on the altar, with a change in position and a change in usage and in state of being. Once it is offered as a sacrifice, it leaves the hands of the offerer and can no longer be used for his own advantage and enjoyment. All the sacrifices on the altar BELONG TO GOD and are for HIS usage and enjoyment. To put it simply, to be an offering means to be sacrificed to God for HIS USE. In the burnt offering Aaron and his sons laid their hands upon the head of the ram, thus identifying with the ram. While they were identified with the ram, a sharp knife severed his carotid artery, causing the powerful, struggling animal to pump his blood out of his own body. Then the carcass was cut in pieces, washed, laid upon the altar, and the entire ram was wholly burned: the flesh, the inward parts, the skin, the fat, the dung, the head, all of it. Nothing was reserved. No part of it was used for any purpose. None of it was eaten. Nothing was thrown away. It was consumed upon the altar in totality. The offerer identified with the animal and said in effect, "Lord God, as I offer this animal to be wholly given and burned before Thee, reserving nothing unto myself, so do I give myself to Thee to be Thine, to do Thy will, to fulfill Thy purpose, reserving nothing unto myself; all that I am, all that I have, I surrender to Thee, Lord, to be Thine, and for Thy use, and Thine alone." In the burnt offering the offerer surrendered himself completely in response to a special call from God. He yielded his life and pledged himself to do what God was asking of him, cost what it might.

The great example of making a burnt offering is that of Jesus yielding Himself to God, coming in the flesh, perfectly living out His Father's will on the earth plane, and dying finally upon the cross. And so the burnt offering would speak of Christ in total obedience to the Father's will, which eventuates in the sufferings of the cross, and which ascends unto God as a sweet smelling savor. Ah, HE IS THE EXAMPLE! We see that wondrous life of the Lord Jesus when He walked on earth. We see Him born as a babe in Bethlehem's manger. We see Him when He was twelve years of age, in the temple, about His Father's business. We see Him as a carpenter in that poor town of Nazareth. We see how He acted when He came forth in His ministry for God, how He spoke the Father's words, how He did the Father's will, how He performed the Father's works, how He conducted Himself before men and how He treated them so kindly, so gently, so humbly, and so holy. He lived and died wholly unto God, claiming no rights, reserving nothing for Himself. He lived and died as a burnt offering for God's satisfaction, a sweet savor unto His Father in heaven. This is all very glorious and we can fully appreciate the burnt offering once we understand the great truth that it has absolutely nothing to do with sin. It was not a sin offering, nor was it a trespass offering nor yet a peace offering. It was the offering that must follow the sin offering, it was what every priest must do after being forgiven and cleansed from all sin. It has to do with our whole being, being given over to God in a practical way. Jesus was not a sinner, He never sinned, He was pure, holy, harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners. But though He was a Son, He yet possessed A WILL OF HIS OWN which had to be continually YIELDED UP to His Father's will. If Jesus did not have a will other than God's will, His own will as a man, He would never have prayed, "O My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me: nevertheless, NOT MY WILL, but THINE, be done" (Mat. 26:39; Lk. 22:42).

This is the kind of consecration Paul speaks about when he says, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service" (Rom. 12:1). Before we are consecrated to God as a living sacrifice, we are like a wild ram living in the mountain wilds; we act completely by our own will. Only when we become a living sacrifice to God do we cease from our own activities in order to await God's commands. Once the sacrificial animal in the Old Testament became a sacrifice, it was killed and then burned completely. We may say that it was a dead sacrifice. However, in our case, after we consecrate ourselves, we are still alive; we are a living sacrifice. "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live" (Gal. 2:20). The difference is that in the past we lived for SELF, but now we live for God. Before, we sought after our own benefit; now we seek His pleasure. Formerly, we were interested in our own affairs; now our concern is about the Father's business.

Ah, Jesus was the first priest to be so fully consecrated to God, but it should not be difficult for us to understand that in the same way He lived as a burnt offering every member of the Royal Priesthood must live, too. Not only did Aaron (the High Priest) lay his hands upon the head of the dying ram, but his sons (the priesthood) laid their hands upon it also. It was killed and Moses cut the ram into pieces, and washed the inwards and legs in water, and placed every piece upon the altar WITH THE HEAD, and burnt the head and the pieces and the fat. Thus, during the Church age, Jesus and His body, the great High Priest and the members of the Royal Priesthood, are being presented, member by member, before God on the altar of consecration, yet all are counted TOGETHER as ONE SACRIFICE. The Head was laid on the altar first, and since then all who are "crucified with Him," as in the type, are laid with the Head upon the same altar.

The burning of the offering on the altar shows how God accepts the entire sacrifice, as "a sweet smelling savor."

Ray Prinzing has so aptly written, "The root thought in sacrifice is TABLE-BOND between the worshipper and his God. In general, sacrifice is an offering made to God with the design of expressing, securing, or promoting friendly or normal relations with Him, based on the belief that the worshipper and God are capable of holding personal relations which can become closer, or more hostile. Thus Israel had its various offerings. There was a 'sin offering' that was made, and this offering was to signify a covering over of their sin, so that they might have a communion with God over the table, fellowship with out the condemnation and guilt consciousness of their sin. So they had this TABLEBOND with its various offerings; thank offerings, freewill offerings, etc. And especially the Passover illustrates the table-bond, for they ate of the lamb, after its blood was applied to the doorposts, etc. Then we note the peace offering, for it had three parts. The Lord's part, that which was burnt upon the altar, was the fat which covered the inward parts, the tail entire, the two kidneys, etc., and the blood sprinkled around the altar. The priests had their share, consisting of the right shoulder and breast. And then the worshipper's portion consisted of all that was left. To sit down and feast before the Lord a table-bond, a time of communion and fellowship in the presence of his God, a sense of peace that all was well between them and their God.

"But there is an altar which goes beyond all this self-indulgence, lays bare the secrets before God, and deals with the inner spirit of man. Heb. 13:10 says, 'Our altar is one of which the worshipper's HAVE NO RIGHT TO EAT' (Moffatt translation). Thus implying a realm beyond where we satisfy ourselves, while we offer our sacrifice. It is totally and completely unto HIM, for His pleasure alone. To declare, 'Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless His holy name' (Ps. 103:1). Nothing withheld, no reservations for self, it is all given over to Him. For His pleasure alone, a table for His delight without our personal gratification involved. Certainly, once we have given Him our all, He will also bless us with the fullness of Himself, but our inner motivation, in ministry to the Lord, is that of total abandonment to Him FOR HIM, without a thought of what shall be received in return. While we have eaten of Him, partaken of Him, received of Him, now we would give ourselves to be totally His, for His satisfaction. They who are to be SONS OF THE HIGHEST, priests of the Most High, are those who come near to Him, to stand before Him, to minister unto Him" end quote. Glory to God!

BURNING THE SACRIFICE

The Hebrew word translated "burnt" offering is OLAH and signifies "a step; stairs; ascending, as 'going up' in smoke; to go up." Every shade of meaning of the word denotes "ascending" unto God and points out alike the mode of the sacrifice and its meaning.

Our usual thought of fire has been that it is a purely negative force, working only destruction and loss. But our GOD IS A CONSUMING FIRE and, I would remind you, the very same God IS CREATOR and IS LIFE and IS LOVE. A recurring word throughout the Scriptures is, "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is ONE LORD" (Deut. 6:4). What does it mean that God is ONE? It means infinitely more than that God is merely one person, for one in the numerology of Scripture means UNITY, UNITED, UNFRAGMENTED, UNDIVIDED. It means that every aspect of God's being and nature is moving in harmony; His justice is not warring against His mercy, His judgment is not pitted against His grace,

His wrath is not striving with His love. Every part of the plan, purpose, will and nature of God is ONE unified, united, harmonious, in perfect accord and agreement, all moving toward the same end, the one complementing the other. The God of love and the God of judgment is the same God and both His love and His judgment are unified to accomplish the same purpose. This is why the Scriptures declare that God is both the "Saviour of ALL" and the "Judge of ALL". He is not the Saviour of some and the Judge of others. The very same God who is the Judge of ALL is also the Saviour of ALL. He JUDGES ALL and He SAVES ALL! Can we not see by this that His judgment and His salvation are unified and harmonious, working TOGETHER to effect: the same end the restoration of all into God. His judgments are thus UNTO SALVATION. There is no conflict. God is ONE!

"Our God is a consuming fire" (Heb. 12:29). This relates specifically to the principle of the burnt offering. In the institution of the Aaronic priestly ceremonies, God sent fire OUT FROM HIMSELF to consume the first offering (Lev. 9:24) to show His acceptance. This same fire, divine fire, was to be kept burning continually (Lev. 6:9), so that every burnt offering was consumed by the very fire of God. That is why it was such an abomination when Nabab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, lit a fire by their own hands and offered "strange fire" before the Lord so that He destroyed them. Thus, it is GOD HIMSELF who consumes the sacrifice! "And thou shalt burn the whole ram upon the altar: it is a burnt offering unto the Lord: it is a sweet savor, an offering made by FIRE unto the Lord.'

To consume does not mean to annihilate, for there is no such thing as annihilation in the absolute sense. It has been stated, in a scientific writing, that FIRE RESTORES ALL THINGS TO ITS ORIGINAL STATE. When fire consumes a log in your fireplace it does not destroy any of the elements within the log, it merely CHANGES THEIR FORM. Combustion is the process by which chemicals combine to form new chemicals. For example: a tree might be cut down, sawed into fire wood, and burned. When the wood is burning the heat causes the chemicals of which the wood is composed to vaporize, mixing with the oxygen in the air to form new chemicals, including water and the gas carbon dioxide. So what was formerly a tree is no longer identified as the form of a tree, but the substance thereof is now simply CHANGED into a DIFFERENT FORM and exists in its new form within the atmosphere as water, carbon dioxide, etc. Thus, to burn, means to CHANGE. Furthermore, it is interesting to note that fire does not burn down; it always burns up; it seeks the highest level. And all that it consumes "goes UP in smoke," to exist in a new form in a higher dimension. Even if you take a pan of water and place it over a fire, before long the water will take on the property of the fire and will begin to go UP in steam. To burn means to CHANGE, and the change is always UPWARD in its motion.

FIRE is the heat and light that you feel and see when something burns. It takes heat to start a fire, but once the fire is started it produces heat that keeps the process going. Thus, fire is really HEAT and LIGHT producing a CHANGE UPWARD! This we rejoice in, and how we desire to be identified in that energy force which is restoring all into its original state, and developing it to its highest potential in God's purpose. As one has written, "In the study of fire itself, we find that fire works through combustion, which is a PROCESS ACCOMPANIED BY THE EVOLUTION OF LIGHT AND HEAT. Praise God, this easily relates to the spiritual process whereof we speak. In our present state, subject to the bondage of vanity, on this grossly material plane, we are moving on a very low vibratory level. But as the fire of God works in us, it raises us to higher degrees and planes of light, that we may 'walk in the light, as He is in the light.' Wherein then is the loss? We only lose our carnal mind, that we might possess HIS MIND, and we exchange the realm of darkness for the realm of light.

"The most familiar of all the processes of fire, is when the oxygen of the atmosphere combines with the combustible material. Oxygen is a beautiful type of the Spirit. Introduce the SPIRIT OF GOD into any given situation, and He will burn out all the dross and restore back into pure spirit form again. Now, sometimes we pray for the Lord to hasten His work within us, but let it be remembered, the more rapid the combustion, the greater the heat! We would like to be changed into His image, but we don't like all the intense heat of the tremendous fiery transition. 'Who among us shall dwell with the devouring (consuming) fire? Who among us shall dwell with everlasting (age abiding) burning?' (Isa. 33:14). 'For every one shall be salted (seasoned) with fire' (Mk. 9:49). Or as the Moffatt translation gives, 'Everyone has to be consecrated by the fire of discipline.' That which has been thoroughly processed by the fire, need fear the fire no more, for once the dross is gone, only the form is changed to higher degrees. Solids become fluid, liquids become vapor, and as we go through the fiery trials, it is only to bring us into a higher SPIRITUALIZED STATE OF BEING, where we shall redound to the praise and glory of God" end quote.

Now, all the consecration of the Royal Priesthood is connected with fire, for all three sacrifices were accompanied with fire, and perfection is promised through fire. O my brother! My sister! I am afraid there is a great deal of comfortable Christianity that wants to be saved, converted, delivered, Spirit-filled, blessed, prospered, healed, and continually made happy; but it is not the Christianity of Christ. Many Christians who love the blessings, the gifts and the thrills would like to receive the baptism in the Holy Spirit without the baptism of FIRE. But what God has joined cannot be surrendered. "He will baptize you with the Holy Ghost and FIRE" (Mat. 3:11); there is the promise what will you do with it? There is only one preposition in the original, not two as in the English, to show the identity of the two baptisms, or rather that there is but ONE. The Holy Spirit and the Fire are not two items, they are one, for our God IS a consuming Fire. Wherever the Spirit descends He brings FIRE in His train. "There appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost" (Acts 2:3-4). Fire is a symbol of purification and transformation. It consumes the dross and tin of self, the wood, hay and stubble of ignorance and folly. "The fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is." Everyone shall be salted with fire, baptized in fire and in the Holy Spirit. Hence the Spirit came upon the disciples in a fiery form because they needed purification, purging, change and transformation. Those baptized with this baptism will know not only the glory and blessing and power of God, but the subduing, melting, abasing, refining, transforming, elevating effects of the SPIRIT'S FIRE. Therefore, to present our bodies and our lives a living sacrifice unto God, is offering ourselves as a burnt offering unto Him. Then the fire from heaven can come down and consume that which we have presented unto Him and set it aflame and make us a fiery minister of God (Heb. 12:29). Our God is a consuming fire! If we faithfully present ourselves unto Him upon the altar as a continual sacrifice, God will consume the whole life and make us an able minister to manifest HIS LIFE unto the world. "He makes His ministers a flame of fire" (Heb. 1:7).

To be HIS PRIESTS we must be changed from our carnality and selfhood into HIS DIVINE NATURE. No divine change can be wrought on God's elect, saving by "passing through the waters and through the fires" which are appointed for us, waters and fires as real, though not of this world, as those which moved in the laver of the Tabernacle, or burnt on the altar of old. Our Lord can no more spare our nature than the ram was spared by Moses. This is that "spirit of judgment and burning," promised by the prophet, with

which the Lord shall "purify the sons of Levi as gold and silver are purged, that they may offer to the Lord an offering in righteousness" (Mal. 3:3).

The statement concerning the burnt offering wherein the Lord says, "It is a sweet savor, an offering made by fire unto the Lord," is most meaningful. When the rams were killed and offered to God as burnt offerings, it was first necessary for God to do His thorough work upon them, that is, to consume (change) them by fire, if they were to be pleasing and acceptable unto Him. If the sacrifice were not consumed (changed) by fire, it would remain raw and would rot and become foul smelling and could never be acceptable or pleasing to God. The consecration of the Royal Priesthood today is just like that. We have heard His voice, we have responded and have offered ourselves, yet if we do not allow God to work first by fire, but go out to minister unto Him and work for Him and serve Him, that ministry and that work and that service will be raw flesh, untempered, corruptible and foul smelling. It will be the raw flesh of self-effort and soulish zeal, the foul smelling corruption of dead works and man made promotion and program. How much of that there is upon God's altar today! It can never be accepted by God, let alone satisfy Him.

The areas where these sacrifices were offered must have carried many odors: the odors of the animal itself, the blood, the burning wood, the burning flesh, the smoke from the sacrifice. Surely one could be almost overcome and overwhelmed by all these odors. Then think of what all this means in the spiritual sense, for all of them spoke of the change which takes place in our lives as God works upon us by fire, transforming from carnal to spiritual, from our will to His, from our mind to the mind of Christ. Ah the transformation is to Him a sweet smelling odor, a heavenly fragrance, a spiritual aroma! Oh, the wonder of it! A pall of smoke must have hung over the place like the Shekinah glory over the ark and the mercy seat. This is significant, for when one does draw nigh unto God through the rent Vail of His flesh, into the Holy of Holies, then the Shekinah glory of His presence will commune with him from above the mercy seat of his surrendered, obedient heart. What a transformation! Think of the precious things which chemistry brings out of refuse of the flavors, scents, and colors which are every day being extracted from what appears worthless. Who can tell what may yet be wrought by fire? Fire can free and transform what water cannot touch. ALL THINGS shall be dissolved (changed) by fire (II Pet. 3:12). And the smoke (expression, manifestation) of this change is a SWEET SMELLING SAVOR to God! All is spiritualized and ascends to Him, made acceptable and well pleasing by fire.

When a ram was taken for sacrifice and offered upon the altar, he was immediately cut off from all his previous relationships. He was severed from his master, his companions and his sheepfold. After he was consumed by fire, he even lost his original form and stature. All his choicest parts were changed to a sweet smelling savor to God, and all his former hopes, dreams, ambitions, will, purpose, strength and glory were reduced to a heap of ashes. Everything was cut off, and everything was finished. This was the result of the ram being offered as a burnt offering to God. Since our consecration as priests involves the outworking of the burnt offering in our lives, the result must be the same. There must be the giving up of everything to be burned to ashes by God to the point where all is finished. Today, wherever we lay ourselves, our ego, our pride, our will, our ambition, our way, our talents, our works, our strength upon the spiritual altar and sacrifice it through the consuming fires of God all will be burned to ashes. But we ourselves will be CHANGED, SPIRITUALIZED, RAISED UP to know God and to minister and work and serve in the high and heavenly realm of HIS SPIRIT, a sweet fragrance to

God. OUR WILL will lie as ashes, but HIS WILL WROUGHT OUT IN US will be the sweet smelling fragrance of the new life ascending to the higher plane. If your consecration brings you into the fierce heat of the fiery trial, and the fires burn on the altar all night, until you feel that everything you are and have has turned to ashes, there is still only one course of action to take, STAY ON THE ALTAR, for when the morning comes, He shall say, "Gather My saints together unto Me; those that have made a covenant with Me by sacrifice" (Ps. 50:6), and then shall we be found unto honor and glory and praise before Him, the Royal Priesthood consecrated unto God.

THE THREE DEATHS OF CHRIST

There was never a time when it was more necessary than it is now that all who are consecrated as priests should see to it that we "be dead with Him," and all that we have and are should be offered to Him upon the altar of burnt offering, that He may change and accept us and make use of us unto the praise of His glory. Especially is this a matter of concern to those who understand by the Spirit that very soon all the members of the BODY will be accepted with the HEAD, a sweet savor to God; and that the work of sacrifice being then finished, the glorious work of the Royal Priesthood of blessing all nations and restoring all things will begin.

The popular notion is that the death of Christ was His cruel death upon the cross of Calvary. The truth is far greater than that, for the Christ in fact died three times, or shall we say that His death was threefold, having three dimensions. We read in Isa. 53:9, "And He made His grave with the wicked, and with the rich in His death." It is interesting to note that in the Hebrew the word death is plural "deaths". Is that not rather curious? "In His deaths!" Did Christ die more than one death? Yes! The plural, "deaths," intensifies the force; as of Adam it is said, in the Hebrew, that "dying thou shalt die" (Gen. 2:17), that is, Adam would enter into a DEATH PROCESS in which he would pass from one realm of death to another and die and die and continue to die until the process was completed and he was totally dead in every aspect, spirit, soul and body; so the Christ experienced a reverse PROCESS OF DEATH that led Him from death to death until He had died to all the negative in every realm and could only live unto God forevermore. Isa. 53:9 would not be true if it referred only to His physical death, for He did not make His grave with the wicked in His physical death. He was buried in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathaea, who was a "good man and a just", "who also himself waited for the kingdom of God", and was one of Jesus' disciples (Lk. 23:50-51; Mat. 27:57). Yet He made His grave with the wicked and with the rich in His DEATHS. Let us see how this is so.

Paul clearly sets forth the sacrifice of Christ when he says, "Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich" (II Cor. 8:9). This passage positively teaches the preexistence of Christ and clearly sets forth His sacrifice. The sacrifice He made did not happen AFTER His incarnation, but BEFORE. He left the "GLORY that He had with the Father BEFORE THE WORLD WAS" and His boundless "RICHEs in glory" and entered into this fallen world, being "made in all points like unto His brethren." Ah before ever the babe appeared in Bethlehem's manger, the Christ had DIED TO ALL THAT HE WAS AS GOD in order to become a man! When Jesus came and was numbered with the transgressors, He cut every tie binding Him to heaven. He burned every bridge behind in His course of action. With this in mind we can appreciate the magnitude of His sacrifice set forth in these words: "Let this same attitude and purpose and humble mind be in you which was in Christ Jesus. Let Him be your example in humility who, although being

essentially one with God and in the form of God (possessing the fullness of the attributes which make God God), did not think this equality with God was a thing to be eagerly grasped or retained; but STRIPPED HIMSELF of all privileges and rightful dignity so as to assume the guise of a servant (slave), in that He became like men and was born as a human being. And after He had appeared in human form He abased and humbled Himself STILL FURTHER and carried His obedience to the extreme of death, even the death of the cross!" (Phil. 2:5-8, Amplified).

We cannot believe otherwise than that Jesus had a physical body, that He entered this world with no previous memory whatsoever of His previous existence as God. He had no teaching, words, thoughts, powers or anything else when He was a babe in the manger that other babies do not have. He did not have any capacities or attributes belonging to essential Deity which are not, or which may not, by the grace of God and the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit also be possessed by man. Since "His brethren" are men who have been born of the Father, begotten sons of God, but are not on this physical plane endowed with omnipotence, omniscience and omnipresence, we are led to believe that Jesus DID NOT HAVE THESE EITHER. Jesus plainly said, "I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and My judgment is just; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent Me" (Jn. 5:30).

The connection which Jesus had with the Father was retained by FAITH. It was a perfect, complete FAITH CONNECTION. Jesus was limited to operating solely by faith and to tally dependent upon the Father even as sons today are so limited. Truly, He DIED TO ALL THAT HE WAS AS ALMIGHTY GOD, He emptied Himself, that He might become man the Son of God! THAT WAS HIS FIRST DEATH. When He laid down His preexistent life and entered into the charnel house of this fallen world, "He made His grave with the wicked," and when He died physically, He was laid in the tomb of the wealthy Arimathaeon and thus made His grave "with the rich." And all was as a burnt offering unto God.

And now we are prepared to consider another interesting feature in the life of Christ, one that will further show the scope of His death and the depth of His consecration upon the altar of burnt sacrifice. When Jesus left the glory and riches of His preexistent state and "was made flesh," what sort of a condition did He enter into? Jesus came as the Head of an entirely new creation. In fact He Himself, though emptied of His deity, WAS A NEW CREATURE, different from any that had ever been. I want to make it very plain that Jesus was in no way derived from the first Adam, either by flesh or by blood. If He had even one drop of the first Adam's blood flowing through His veins, then He Himself NEEDED A SAVIOUR. Hear now what Paul says of the Christ: "The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit. Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual. The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven" (I Cor. 15:45-47). Jesus was not fifty percent the first Adam and fifty percent the last Adam. He was one hundred percent the last Adam! He was not fifty percent the first man, and fifty percent the second man. He was not fifty percent the man of the earth, and fifty percent the Lord from heaven. The second man IS (100%) THE LORD FROM HEAVEN. To be the last Adam He could in no way contain any part of the first Adam. To be the man from heaven He must not be a descendant of the man of the earth. He must be an entirely NEW KIND OF MAN, a special creation of God, as was the first man in the day when he was created. The first Adam was truly without father, without mother, without descent he was not derived from the life of any other man who had ever lived. So the last Adam! Though He

was conceived IN the womb of Mary, He was not OF Mary. He was not formed from a union of the sperm of God with the ovum of Mary. His genes were not half from Mary and half from His heavenly Father. "That holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called THE SON OF GOD," declared the angel to Mary. He was as truly man, as truly flesh as was the first man, but He was also as truly a UNIQUE CREATION OF GOD as was the first man in Eden. Oh, the mystery of it! Jesus the Christ was THE WORD MAN, He was NOT old Adam's flesh imbued with God's life. He is the SECOND MAN, the Man from heaven, the Godman, Head of a new SPECIES OF MEN, a NEW CREATION of God in the earth, each member of which is a SON OR DAUGHTER OF THE MOST HIGH! He stood in all the dignity and splendor and wisdom and power and dominion given to man in the beginning ere sin and limitation and death came upon him. What a man! Sinless man. Perfect man. Diseaseless man. Unlimited man. Anointed man. Crowned man. Man in the image of God. Man in blessed fellowship with his Creator. Man the revelation of God to creation. Deathless man. What a specimen! What a man! This man was THE SON OF GOD.

When Jesus came to earth He died to all that He was as God to become a man. But when He came to the Jordan He DIED TO ALL THAT HE WAS AS A MAN to be the Son of God. When He went down into the watery grave of John's baptism to "fulfill all righteousness," He offered there all the capabilities, potentials, ambitions, desires, and talents He possessed AS A MAN, laying all upon the altar, completely surrendered to God, reserving nothing for Himself, a burnt offering, a sweet smelling savor unto God.

Can we imagine what Jesus might have accomplished had He elected to use the wisdom and knowledge and power resident in His PERFECT MANHOOD for His own ends? He could have used His power for wealth and become the richest man in the world. He could have used His talents for power, usurped the thrones of the rulers of this world and become Emperor of the mighty Roman Empire. He might have used His powers for sensual gratification, attracting the fairest women of the world to Him, and building the largest and most beautiful harem ever possessed by a man. He could have become the world's greatest general, or the most famous artist, or the most acclaimed orator, or the most accomplished musician, or the most brilliant scientist, or the most articulate philosopher, or the most important, distinguished, eminent, exalted, renowned, or noble of a thousand different vocations and positions. But He didn't! He could have rallied the masses and marshaled an army before which the name of Alexander the Great would pale into oblivion. He could have built great hospitals and gold domed cathedrals. He could have initiated wonderful programs to better society and save the world from disease, poverty and trouble. But He didn't! He said, simply, "When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am He, and that I can do nothing of Myself; but as My Father hath taught Me, I speak these things...for I do always those things that PLEASE HIM" (Jn. 8:28-29). Yes, dear ones, He DIED TO ALL THAT HE WAS AS A MAN that He might do only and always the will of His Father. And that will led Him to Calvary and the tomb and down into hell.

We shall measure and appreciate the burnt offering of the firstborn Son just in proportion as we realize the depths to which Jesus descended to redeem us. How fitting and comforting it was of the Father that when Jesus came to Jordan to be baptized, symbolically and actually burying there His perfect manhood with all its prerogatives and powers, He should bear witness by a voice from heaven to His perfect satisfaction and pleasure in Him! "And Jesus, when He was baptized, went up straightway out of the water, and lo, the heavens were opened unto Him, and He saw the Spirit of God

descending like a dove, and lighting upon Him; and lo, a voice from heaven, saying, This is My Son, the Beloved! (N.V.) in whom I am well pleased." A sweet smelling savor! Jesus is the true David of whom the Psalms and other Scriptures speak so often. David means BELOVED; hence the Father says, "This is My Son, the BELOVED!" My Son because manifesting MY nature, love; the Beloved because He is the great antitype, the true David, the MAN AFTER GOD'S OWN HEART, doing all His will, of whom the shepherd king of Israel was only a shadow. And let it be remembered, too, that in all this Christ was our FORERUNNER, our LEADER, and CAPTAIN. Those who will follow in His footsteps will also come "in due time" to the "perfect man", God's beloved because they are surrendered completely to Him to live HIS LIFE and to do HIS WILL, reserving nothing unto themselves. They, too, shall at last come to opened heavens, the dovelike Spirit and the approving voice. The way to life and perfection is through humiliation, suffering, self crucifixion and death by way of the altar of BURNT OFFERING.

Oh that men today would come to the altar of burnt offering! The prevailing idea in the churches today is: God is doing big things. So we must think big...talk big... preach big...act big...initiate bigger and bigger programs...build bigger and bigger buildings...raise bigger and bigger offerings to get on bigger and bigger radio and television stations to see greater and greater things accomplished for God. I do not hesitate to say, however, that in many cases those who seek to do the "big things" often usurp the power of God and use it for their own profit, power and fame as they lodge in the most expensive hotels, eat the finest food, wear the most costly apparel, drive the most luxurious cars, live in the most elegant homes, own the most lavish beach properties, build multimillion dollar enterprises, gather multitudes of followers unto themselves and control other men's lives, often with money extracted from widows and orphans and the poor and meek of the earth. Oh! How God must lament over His people today as He lamented over Israel of old.

The following words by George Warnock are pregnant with meaning for all who receive the call to the altar of burnt offering. "How God longs for those people who will take everything that they have ever received from God, yes everything: their doctrines, their fellowships, their churches large or small; their gifts and ministries; their plans and schemes for enlargement; their programs for world evangelism and world outreach; and lay them all like Isaac on the Altar of Burnt Offering, on one of the mountains that God would show them. But God hasn't shown me any such mountain, I hear someone say. Nor will He do so, until you walk with God from altar to altar...until you fervently desire to do God's will...until you learn HIS WAY and earnestly desire to walk in HIS WAY...until the will of God becomes to you your highest prize and your daily bread...and until you are prepared to recognize that as the heavens are high above the earth, so are God's ways higher than your ways, and God's thoughts higher than your thoughts.

"When Jesus spoke of union with the Father, the people said He blasphemed, because He was making Himself equal with God. But in fact He was NOT. 'My Father is greater than I,' He said; and again, 'I can of mine own self do nothing...' In this realm God is truly glorified; for in this realm we must decrease, that HE might increase. In this realm we can do NOTHING, that He alone might do ALL THINGS. In this realm we have no righteousness of our own, no ministry of our own, no life of our own. All this we must lay down. All selfish purposes and ambitions must be laid aside. All talents, gifts, and enablements must be laid on the Altar of Burnt Offering the Altar of total sacrifice. Remember, Ishmael must be cast out, but Isaac the Beloved had to be laid on the Altar of Burnt Offering. Henceforth we must walk only in His Life, in His Truth, in His

Righteousness. His purpose in our lives is all that we pursue, and doing His will becomes our highest prize. Henceforth we must live and work and minister in TOTAL UNION WITH HIM" end quote.

Ah "If any man will come after Me," Jesus said, "let him deny himself..." We thought it meant deny the liquor store, deny the theatre, deny the pool hall, deny the miniskirt, deny communism, deny Castro and the Antichrist. But ME? Sweet, precious little ME? Deny MYSELF? We would rather deny the liquor store and the Antichrist than to deny OURSELVES! We all know how the world naturally attracts us and offers us a place, a position, a name in it. But even the so called Christian world often holds an attraction to us and offers a hope of a future in it with certain benefits for OURSELVES. Many folk, after being saved and filled with the Spirit, have hopes of success among men of becoming such and such a person, or such and such a ministry, with all the recognition and prestige and glory that comes with it. There are some who hope to be famous preachers, some to be world wide evangelists, some to obtain a doctor of divinity, and some to be the leader of the Bible study or prayer group, or to be recognized as an elder, a preacher, or a prophet.

All these are hopes in which, if not laid upon the altar and consumed by the holy fires of God, are hidden many elements which are for the building up of OURSELVES. When we see the prosperity of others, we become envious. When we see the ministry of others, we covet the same. When we see the blessing of others, our heart is moved. We want to be a blessing, but at the same time we enjoy the position, the attention, the power. All this proves that we still have hopes in OUR future. All these hopes, however, never exist in a consecrated person. A truly consecrated man is a man who has given up HIS FUTURE. He abandons not only his future in the world, but also his so called spiritual future. He no longer has hopes for himself in anything; all his hope is in God. He lives purely and simply in the hand of God. He has no ministry or program to perpetuate, he is what God wants him to be and does what God wants him to do. God can change the order at any time and he will change with it. He clings to nothing, for God Himself is his only hope, his only motivation. Whatever the outcome may be, he does not know and does not care. He only knows that he is a sacrifice, wholly belonging to God. The altar is forever the place where he stands, and a heap of ashes is forever the result. His own will, his own way and his future have been utterly abandoned and do not enter into consideration at all.

This giving up of the future is not a reluctant act after something has already happened to wreck your future hopes; it is a willing surrender before such an event. It is not waiting till you have lost or failed in your business and then giving up. It is not waiting till you fail to obtain a Ph.D.degree, and then give up. It is not waiting till you fall flat on your face in the ministry you desired, and then say, "Thy will, Lord." It is not running out to do something for God and when it doesn't work out, giving up. When we speak of giving up the future, of denying ourselves, we mean that when a profitable business opportunity comes along, when an excellent job awaits you, when a Ph. D. degree is within your grasp, when some spiritual ministry or opportunity for Christian service opens before you, you willingly give it all up for the Lord's sake. This is truly called the giving up of the future. Even if the entire glory of Egypt is placed before you, you can say to it, "Goodbye, I must go to Canaan."

I do not mean that you must not own a business, or have a job, or receive a degree, or fulfill a ministry. I mean that whatever you do you will not do because there is something in it for you. Whatever you do WILL BE THE LORD'S DOING, not yours. And if He says to you, "Go plow," you will just as joyfully crawl onto the tractor as you would stand

behind the pulpit. And if He changes your orders and bids you lay down and forsake all that you are doing and all that you have attained to, you respond without hesitation and without even asking, "Why?" As one has said, "You mean God told me to start this big Church and get involved in this extensive outreach, and now I am supposed to drop it all? You mean God called me into the ministry, and now asks me to lay it down and go to work in a factory or sawmill, or get involved in some monotonous routine job on an assembly line? God called me to higher things than that! You mean God called the apostle Paul to the high and holy calling of apostleship to the Gentiles, and then shut him up in prison to waste away his days in a prison cell? And so the call of God to higher heights in Him is not heard because we have not identified with HIS WAYS, and therefore we do not really appreciate the thoughts and the intents of His heart" end quote.

The wonder, the meaning, the glory of the burnt offering is beautifully summed up in these words penned by George Warnock: "Once the story of Joseph was just that, a beautiful story. But now it means more, because in small measure at least we have been able to identify. He had a vision...and we have a vision. He would like to see it fulfilled, but he soon learned that only God Himself can fulfill the vision that He has given. He does not give us the vision as an incentive to work on, but as a seed of truth to embrace and allow it to fulfill God's purpose in our lives. We wonder how a Word so sweet can become an experience so bitter. As Joseph cherished the vision the fulfillment of it became more and more distant and more and more impossible. Finally he discovers himself in a foreign land, completely cut off from the family that he saw in the vision a prisoner and a slave rather than a king and a ruler. To try and figure out what might have gone wrong would only lead to further frustration, so he simply tries to forget it all. (Eventually when his first son is born he will call him, 'God has caused me to forget...'). He cannot deny what God showed him, but he will just lay it aside...or put it in a bottle, seal it, and cast it upon the waters. And yet, in and through it all, God was consistent" and without any intermission working out all the intricate details in Joseph's life that would eventuate in the vision being gloriously fulfilled, only on a much higher and loftier plane than Joseph ever imagined as a young lad who dreamed the dream. Gone were the thoughts of greatness. Gone the thought that some day I'm going to be somebody great, and all you boys are going to have to recognize it. Here was a man of the Way who in walking with God became a stranger in his own home, a byword among his own brothers, a dreamer whose dreams soon vanished when he was sold to the Ishmaelites and became a stranger in a foreign land. And so the vision of greatness was fulfilled in the perfection of God's order; but it was only fulfilled as Joseph found grace to identify with GOD'S WAY; and in so doing the dream itself was utterly transformed until it became a transforming experience in Joseph's own heart; and a vision of mercy, of deliverance, and of compassion for those who had mistreated him. The man of the Way, whose feet were hurt in fetters of brass, and whose soul was laid in iron, was recognized for what he was: the elect of God, marked with the mark of God and destined to become Zaphnathpeaneah...a name which signifies a 'Revealer of Secrets' to the Hebrews, but to Pharaoh and the Egyptians it meant: 'Saviour of the World'" end quote.

If our pursuit of sonship and kingship and priesthood contains any element of desire for a future, for greatness, for a name, for recognition, for power, for SELF we have not yet come to the altar of burnt offering, nor have passed through the consuming fire of God. O Father! Draw us to Thy Tabernacle door. Help us to offer there our offering, ourselves. Thou whose love is a fire, burn up and destroy all that hinders or refuses the triumph of Thy love. Consume the sacrifice and convert it into its own heavenly light nature, transform our beings into flames of love!

Chapter 19

The Consecration Of The Priesthood

(continued)

To consecrate the Royal Priesthood is to hallow and equip each member to act as a priest unto the Lord. The consecration the ministry committed into the hands of God's priests, and performed by them, is all UNTO HIM, and not unto the Lord for a moment, a day or a year, but we abide in His presence continually to serve Him in all that He gives to us. Then Moses took the wave offering off their hands (the priests did not lay it down), God's acceptance being shown by fire. Thus, this consecration means more than just our being consecrated and dedicated and the giving of ourselves wholly to God. It bespeaks of God accepting our consecration, receiving us and imparting and inworking into our lives all that is needed to fulfill the ministry of priesthood. Ah, HE FILLS OUR HANDS, places within our hands that which is necessary to minister as His priests. No priest can appear before either God or man empty handed, but there is a definite ability and power of God given to us that as priests we might have to minister both unto God and to men.

This is the hour when it is no longer enough to just know that we belong to God, or that we have consecrated ourselves and given ourselves wholly to the Lord. This is the hour when God is calling forth His elect saints to move into that place where God can impart and inwork into each member something of Himself that can be ministered both unto God and unto men. The question follows Has God "filled our hands"? Have we been so consecrated until God has witnessed that He has accepted us and has committed unto us at least a measure of Himself that we can minister to others? It begins with God, for He is the First Cause of all things, the initiator of this ministry, and the sufficiency whereby it is accomplished.

THE BLOOD AND THE OIL

"And thou shalt take the other ram; and Aaron and his sons shall put their hands upon the head of the ram. Then shalt thou kill the ram, and take of his blood, and put it upon the tip of the right ear of Aaron, and upon the tip of the right ear of his sons, and upon the thumb of their right hand, and upon the great toe of their right foot, and sprinkle the blood upon the altar round about. And thou shalt take of the blood that is upon the altar, and of the anointing oil, and sprinkle it upon Aaron, and upon his garments, and upon his sons, and upon the garments of his sons with him: and he shall be hallowed, and his garments, and his sons, and his sons' garments with him" (Ex. 29:19 21).

The bullock of the sin offering represented the dealing with the power of sin in our lives. The first ram of the burnt offering bespoke of our complete and total surrender to the Lord and to His will, reserving nothing to ourselves, becoming a sweet smelling savor to God. The second ram, the "ram of consecration", showed how God receives our sacrifice and fills our hands, imparting something of Himself that can be ministered to those about. When the priests were consecrated to their ministry, Aaron and his sons laid their hands upon the head of the ram of consecration, showing thus that it represented them. And

Moses slew it and took its blood (life) and put it upon each separately, thus revealing that our consecration is an INDIVIDUAL work. The blood was placed upon the tip of the right ear, on the thumb of the right hand, and on the big toe of the right foot. Possession was taken of the entire man for God; all his powers were quickened and sanctified. Our ear is quickened to listen to, and for, God; by our consecration we are enabled to have "an ear to hear," and to appreciate the High Calling of God as none but the consecrated can. Our hand is quickened and sanctified to work by, and for, God. Our foot is quickened and sanctified to walk with God, and to walk out the revelation of God, so that henceforth we "walk not as other Gentiles" but "walk in newness of life," "walk by faith," "walk in the Spirit," "walk in the light," and even "as we have received Christ, so walk in Him." In the life of each member of the Royal Priesthood, the precious blood of Christ, will exercise authority over every power, to sanctify it for the ministry of the Lord. The priest who was marked by blood on the ear, hand, and foot, so that all the activities of these members might be sanctified, had to recognize that he had been separated UNTO GOD, and to His service, and empowered to fulfill it.

This blood is not a cleansing from sin. It has nothing to do with sin. The blood that cleanses from sin is the blood of the sin offering. This is the blood of consecration, the LIFE of God quickening and sanctifying the ministry of priesthood in the apprehended ones. None but the priests ever knew the power of the blood of the ram of consecration. And there is a very interesting order here. The blood was first put upon the ear, hand, and foot, and then some of the blood was taken from the altar and, with the holy anointing oil, was sprinkled upon the whole person of the priest. A very close relationship exists between the applying of the blood and the anointing with the oil. Blood means LIFE, for "the life of the flesh is in the blood" (Lev. 17:11). The purpose of the blood is to quicken, that we may be alive unto God in every faculty of our being. The purpose of the oil is to empower "Ye shall receive POWER, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto Me" (Acts 1:8). The Holy Spirit is POWER from on high the POWER of Almighty God! Notice how often the word "power" is used in connection with the Holy Spirit: "...the Holy Spirit shall come upon thee, and the POWER of the Highest shall overshadow thee..." (Lk. 1:35). "For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of POWER, and of love, and of a sound mind" (II Tim. 1:7). "Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the POWER of the Holy Spirit" (Rom. 15:13). "But truly I am full of POWER by the Spirit of the Lord, and of judgment, and of might" (Micah 3:8).

First we have the applying of the blood; then God's holy ointment anoints us with God Himself. Therefore, to experience the anointing we must first have the blood; to experience the empowering of God to do the work of a priest we must first be quickened unto God in every faculty of the New Creation Man. When Moses intended to sprinkle the anointing oil upon the priest, the blood must first be applied. The oil was placed UPON THE BLOOD. It is a great sin against God if we should apply the ointment before the blood. Because the ointment prefigures the mighty manifestation of the power of the Holy Spirit through us, it must never be applied to one who has not been quickened and made thoroughly alive unto God by the blood. God cannot entrust His power to the carnal man, He cannot commit His power into the hands of flesh; only the New Creature can receive of the power of God! Therefore, if we wish to experience the FULLNESS of the anointing of power, we must first experience the fullness of the quickening of His life. Christians have often had to complain about a lack of power. Oh, how many who have received the call to sonship still have so little power! I do not hesitate to tell you that it is because we have not yet been fully QUICKENED UNTO GOD. There is still so much deadness,

dullness, earthiness, blindness, carnality, limitation and immaturity. Until the blood has completely done its work, the anointing cannot be fully manifest. The more we apply the blood and allow it to make us alive unto God and His mind, and will, and purpose, the more we will experience the anointing and know the mighty working of HIS POWER in and through us. Hallelujah!

THE BLOOD ON THE EAR

I am reminded of the story of the two old Dutchmen, sitting on a park bench. The night had come and the moon started to shine. Not far from the bench where they sat, a river flowed, and from the river came the chorus of the crickets. Pete, the first old gentleman, listened to the crickets and said, "Crickets sure do sing." John, sitting next to him agreed, saying, "Yep, they sure know how to sing." Just then he heard the voices of the choir coming from the nearby church and remarked, "Beautiful music, isn't it?" Pete said, "Yeah, and to think they do it just by rubbing their legs together!"

Each heard a different music one was listening to the crickets and one was listening to the choir. What you hear depends on where you're coming from and what you're tuned in to. When the disciples asked Jesus why He spoke to the multitudes in parables, He answered by saying, "This is why I speak to them in parables, because seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand." He then reminded them of Isaiah's prophecy which said, "You shall indeed hear, but never understand, and you shall indeed see but never perceive." It almost seems that Jesus was acting vindictively, but He was not, for He also explains why those who saw Him failed to understand. "For this nation's heart has grown gross fat and dull; and their ears heavy and difficult of hearing, and their eyes THEY have tightly closed, lest they see and perceive with their eyes, and hear and comprehend the sense with their ears, and grasp and understand with their heart, and turn and I should heal them" (Mat. 13:15, Amplified). Had they wanted to hear, they could have, but they chose not to see or understand. Eight times in the book of Revelation the Lord Jesus says, "He that hath an ear, LET HIM HEAR!"

In our day Bibles can be bought in the dime store and sermons can be heard any hour of the day or night, but practically no one, the preachers in particular, is HEARING the Word of God. Many read the words of the Bible and do not "hear" them. Intellect may grasp what is written there...but that is not a hearing. Hearing the Word of God will work transformation in a man. A true hearing of the Word will bring obedience to the Word, the obedience of faith and things will begin to happen. Taken by the Spirit to the Valley of Dry Bones, Ezekiel was asked, "Son of man, can these bones live?" "O Lord God," was the prophets response, "Thou knowest." He was then told to prophesy to them: "O dry bones, HEAR THE WORD OF THE LORD!" The prophet obeyed, and as he declared to them the WORD of the Lord, they came together, bone to its bone. Covered first with sinews, then with flesh, these lifeless bodies were also quickened by the breath of divine life which entered into them (Eze. 37:1-10). The quickening of the dry bones was effected by their response to the Lord's Word. As they KEPT HEARING what He was saying to them, the Holy Spirit kept working in them until they were made alive by His breath and stood up, an exceeding great army.

It is not my purpose here to explore the present condition of the church system, but when Jesus sent His message to the wealthy church of Laodicea, which boasted that she was rich and increased with goods and had need of nothing, He portrayed Himself as one standing OUTSIDE and knocking at the door. He was not within, as He should have

been, but on the outside. Behind the doors that were locked against Him they were preaching about Him, and singing about Him, and working and building for Him, but He Himself they had left outside. The membership of the church of Laodicea is large and prestigious, its seats all engaged, its income assured, its organization perfected. Men of good business judgment manage its affairs, in the same shrewd way that they manage their business affairs. The services are made impressive with eloquence and music and well appointed ritual. Its Sunday School prides itself on its thorough, update organization and large attendance. It may support some missionaries in the foreign field, for that is the modern thing to do.

Never in the history of the world has there been so much preaching and so much human effort, or so many multimillion dollar church buildings, crystal cathedrals, Christian amusement parks, concerts, or so much church membership, or so many programs to convert the world, but Christ, locked out of their grandiose schemes, STANDS OUTSIDE! The whole church system of our day is built on the programs and efforts of the flesh rather than the glory of the Holy Spirit. In spite of all the glib mention of His name, the truth is that Christ is outside the church system and His Spirit is not in its works. The thundering message of Christ to the Laodicean church will not even penetrate in to fall upon the already occupied ears of the masses who assemble there, but will be heard only by individual believers. Notice what He says, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock: IF ANY hear My voice, and open the door, I will come IN TO HIM, and will sup with HIM, and HE with Me" (Rev. 3:20). "If ANY MAN will hear!" "If any man WILL HEAR!"

You meet one that is religious, awed by the crowds, the buildings, the great meetings, the charismatic speakers, the beautiful television programs, the music, and the wonderful works supposedly being done. They feel they are "rich and increased with goods, and have need of nothing." They can talk much of the milk of the Word, their spiritual gifts and religious toys. But they know nothing of the present truth of His gathering to Himself a remnant to bring them into His perfections. They are well versed in the traditional doctrines about the antichrist and the so called rapture, but they know naught of the mighty move of God in the earth today preparing a firstfruit company of Kings and Priests to ascend the throne and reign over the nations. You cannot begin to speak of the deep mysteries of the Kingdom, or of these divine quickenings which the Holy Spirit of truth has whispered into your being, for they have no ears to hear them. Were you to declare them in the churches of our day, there would be a revolution. Their eyes are closed against the bright vision of that which lies before at the manifestation of the sons of God and the consummation of God's great plan of the ages. They are dull to the keen edge of the Spirit's working in this hour. But, blessed be God, there is a people whose ears have been touched by blood, a holy race of priests who are being quickened to hear the voice of the High Priest who speaks from the MELCHIZEDEKIAN REALM. Only the priest with the anointed ear can enter in to receive instructions from that High and Holy Order!

Shortly after becoming king in Israel, Solomon traveled to Gibeon to offer a sacrifice to the Lord. Here the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Ask what I shall give you." Though grateful to the Lord for having chosen him to succeed his father David, Solomon was keenly aware of his inadequacy to govern the people without divine help. "Give Thy servant therefore," he implored, "an understanding heart to govern Thy people, that I may discern between good and evil." Pleased by such a request, the Lord replied, "Because you have asked this, and have not asked for long life, or for riches, or for the life of your enemies, but have asked for yourself understanding to recognize what is just and right, behold...I have also given you what you have not asked, both riches and honor; so that

there shall not be any among the kings equal to you all your days" (I Kings 3:11-13). The expression "an understanding heart" is in the Hebrew text A HEARING HEART. And in Isaiah 50:4-5 we read of the inner discipline which Jesus and all the elect sons experience. "Morning by morning He (the Father) wakens, HE WAKENS MY EAR TO HEAR as those that are willing to be taught. The Lord God has opened my ear, and I was not rebellious, I turned not backward."

A friend has so aptly written: "'My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me: He goeth before them, and the sheep follow Him: for they know His voice. And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers' (Jn. 10:27, 4-5). My sheep hear the Greek word for 'hear' used here is AKOUO and while there is included in its meaning the thought of 'to give ear' because you discern a sound, it also includes the meaning of TO HEARKEN, a responsive action to one's hearing. This goes beyond the outward hearing of the natural ear, when Jesus said, 'My sheep hear My voice!' There is a LISTENING to hear the sound thereof, a receptivity within, and a responsiveness to follow in obedience.

"'He goes before His sheep, and they follow Him, for they KNOW His voice.' Now we have another Greek word for 'know', this one being OIDA, absolute knowledge. Praise God, we are to have absolute knowledge of His voice without doubts or questionings. The sheep the mature ones, shall come to a place where they unmistakably know His voice. And they know that they know that they know! It is a precious walk, a communion that sustains and enriches them day by day. But as for STRANGERS they will not follow, but they will flee from him, for they know not the voice of strangers.

"And now we have an allegory, with the shepherd, and the stranger, and there is a sense in which we have them both within us. The Shepherd is the VOICE OF THE SPIRIT OF GOD, the stranger is the voice of the carnal mind. I dare say, our spiritual maturity is evidenced by the 'voice' which we hearken to, and follow. God is SPIRIT, and He contacts us through our spirit. 'There is a spirit in man: and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding' (Job 32:8). It is interesting to watch a gathering of various levels of spiritual growth. When the Spirit of God is moving deep into the hearts of those who HEAR HIS VOICE, others seem to withdraw and almost appear bored with the service. Then if another voice begins to speak appealing to the soulish realm, they suddenly come alive and respond accordingly with their manifestations. And finally, as another voice simply speaks that it is time for the 'potluck lunch to be served' there are those who endured all the service thus far, now they begin to respond. Each has heard a 'voice', whether of The Shepherd, the stranger, or just the flesh. As for the physical, earth realm, obviously there is a time and place for its voice and message, HE placed us in this realm for a purpose, to be exercised and trained thereby. The natural is not 'sinful' until it becomes perverted and out of place. But there are those, as Paul wrote, 'many walk...whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things' (Phil. 3:18-19). When we hear the physical voice for a drink of water, some food, some sleep and the needs are met, the voice remains silent. But when the voice keeps on, LUSTING AFTER MORE, then it has certainly entered into the realm of the unholy stranger; may God help us to flee from it, and not know it.

"There is something upsetting about the voice of the stranger, once you have determined before God to follow only the VOICE OF THE SPIRIT. Yet, uniquely enough, oftentimes you cannot tell others that the voice being heard IS TO YOU the voice of a stranger for in their response to that voice they are blessed in some degree and manner. And we would

make it clear, we praise God for ALL that HE is doing on any level, and through whomever, and whatever means He has purposed to work. However, our personal experience is such that we find more and more the voice of the 'charismatic move' has become to us the voice of a stranger. The projection of human personality, even though clothed with its charisma and religiosity, rings shallow and strange when one has heard the call of God into the depths and heights of the vision that leads to the realm beyond.

"'The inspiration (inbreathing) of the Almighty giveth understanding.' How we yearn for more and more of that DIVINE INBREATHING. For far too long we have relied on the proper atmospheres for our breath. The singing had to be just right, the praise service, the favorite preacher or teacher, and when conditions were just right to form that particular atmosphere, we breathed deeply and enjoyed it. But there is a dimension wherein one does not rely on the outward atmosphere, for they live by the CHRIST WITHIN, and they hear HIS VOICE, and become, as Paul so aptly stated it, 'I have come to learn, in the circumstances in which I am placed, to be independent of these and self-sufficient' (Phil. 4:11, Wuest Expanded). '...with my spirit within me will I seek Thee early' (Isa. 26:9). 'I commune with mine own heart: and my spirit made diligent search' (Ps. 77:6)" end quote.

A. B. Simpson was a man of deep spiritual experience. I quote the following from his article LISTENING. "A score of years ago a friend placed in my hand a book called TRUE PEACE. It was an old medieval message and it had but one thought THAT GOD WAS WAITING IN THE DEPTHS OF MY BEING TO TALK TO ME IF I WOULD ONLY GET STILL ENOUGH TO HEAR HIS VOICE. I thought this would be a very easy matter and so began to get still. I had no sooner commenced than a perfect pandemonium of voices reached my ears, a thousand clamoring notes from without and within, until I could hear nothing but their noise and din. Some were my own voices, my own questions; some were my very prayers. Others were suggestions of the tempter and the voices from the world of turmoil. In every direction I was pulled and pushed and greeted with noisy acclamations and unspeakable unrest. It seemed necessary for me to listen to some of them and to answer some of them; but God said, 'BE STILL AND KNOW THAT I AM GOD.'

"Then came the conflict of thoughts for tomorrow and its duties and cares; but God said, 'BE STILL.' And as I listened and slowly learned to obey and shut my ears to every sound, I found after a while that, when other voices ceased, (or I ceased to hear them), there was a still small voice in the depths of my being that began to speak with an inexpressible tenderness and power and comfort. As I listened, it became to me the voice of prayer, the voice of wisdom, the voice of duty, and I did not need to think so hard or pray so hard or trust so hard. That still, small voice of the Holy Spirit in my heart was God speaking in my secret soul; was God's answer to all knowledge and all prayer and all blessings, for it was the living God Himself as my life, my all.

"It is thus that our spirits drink of the life of the risen Lord and we go forth to life's conflicts and duties like a flower that has drunk in through the shades of night the cool and crystal drops of dew. But, as dew never falls on a stormy night, so the dew of His grace never comes to a restless soul. Oh, the calm! The rest! The peace which comes as we wait in His presence until we HEAR FROM HIM!" end quote.

Be still! Just now be still!
There comes a presence very mild and sweet;

White are the sandals on His noiseless feet.
It is the Comforter whom Jesus sent
To teach thee what the words He uttered meant
The willing, waiting spirit He doth fill;
If thou would'st hear His message, DEAR SOUL, BE STILL!

THE BLOOD ON THE HAND

The hand is always the symbol for service, serving, or ministry. Many years ago amidst a great moving of the Spirit of God the revelation of sonship fell with wonder upon our ears and burst with glory within our hearts. We sat enraptured for hours, day after day, and were taught by the Spirit about the Father and His purposes and about that elect company He has called and chosen and apprehended to be his sons, ordained of God to rule with Him in His Kingdom and restore all things to God. We learned that these sons would have power unlimited power over everything. Power over sin, power over sickness, power over the elements, power over demons, power over all the power of the enemy, power over Satan, and power over death. We were going to rule and reign in power, and our eyes sparkled like diamonds in the light and our hearts swelled with joy in expectation of the wonderful position and authority we would soon have in the Kingdom. We could think and talk of nothing else but the power we would have, and in our glorying we tried to usurp and demonstrate this power. We were intoxicated with illusions of grandeur as we pressed our way into the Kingdom and the exalted position of sitting on the throne with Jesus and ruling the world and the vastnesses of infinity forever.

It is true the sons are destined to sit on the throne with the Lord, they are going to rule over the nations, and they are going to have power beyond our wildest dreams; power to deliver the whole creation from the bondage of the corruption of the base material realm into the liberty and glory of the spirit realm. But there was a truth that was withheld from us in the beginning, and later revealed by the Spirit, the truth that as the Son of man was made a PRIEST after the order of Melchizedek, and as the Son reigns as a PRIEST upon His throne, so the sons must also be. It is not the kings who reign, but the priests. It is the fact of the priest being given ruling authority that makes the priest to also be a king. He is not a king who becomes a priest, but a priest who is given rule. "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be PRIESTS of God and of Christ, and shall REIGN with Him a thousand years" (Rev. 20:6). Ah, it is the PRIESTS that reign! A king without a priestly nature is no king at all merely a despot. We have a dual role to fill in the Kingdom; we are not only to be kings, we are also to be priests. It is a lofty position to which we are called, and for which we are being prepared. Sonship, yes. Kings and priests, yes. But why equipped with such power and glory? TO SERVE! For it is written, "Ye are My witnesses, saith the Lord, AND MY SERVANT, whom I have chosen" (Isa. 43:10). As kings we reign, as priests we serve, for the ministry of the priest is that of a servant, and we REIGN BY SERVING!

Little did we understand in those early days that the way UP is DOWN. The carnal mind would have us believe that the way UP is UP. Thus we have pressed our way into ministry, pressed our way into the Kingdom, "stood on the promises," demanded of God our "rights," and sought to seize the throne. It is true, children of God, that God wants to take us UP high into the realms of God UP to the throne but God would have us know that the way UP is always DOWN! Remember what Jesus said to His disciples when they aspired to greatness in the Kingdom? "Now an eager contention arose among them, which of them was considered and reputed to be the greatest. But Jesus said to them,

The kings of the Gentiles are deified by them and exercise lordship, ruling as emperor gods over them; and those in authority over them are called benefactors and well-doers. But this is not to be so with you; and on the contrary let him who is the greatest among you become as the youngest, and he who is the chief and leader as one who SERVES. For which is the greater, he who reclines at table (the master), or he who serves? Is it not he who reclines at table? BUT I AM IN YOUR MIDST AS ONE WHO SERVES" (Lk. 22:24-27, Amplified). The one who serves the people well as a priest is the one who will also reign well as a king. "They shall be PRIESTS...and they shall REIGN." Though He is calling us to become kings with authority over all, yet our inner attitude must be that of a servant, that we might freely minister, loving, touching, doing good, healing, reconciling, restoring with mercy and love. The problem with many people is that they have never learned to live for anything other than themselves, or maybe their immediate family, their wife or husband, their daughter Sue, their son John, those four, no more.

In God's Kingdom kingship isn't a place of lordship, but is the place of the lowly servant. God brings preparation into our lives to teach us the attitude of a servant. Pride shows that person has failed to grasp that rulership is rooted in God and not in ourselves, thus freeing him to serve. Jesus was the most humble and lowly of all men. He was not a super duper elite country club Son of God. Phil. 2:6-8 says of Jesus, "Although He existed in the form of God, He did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a BONDSERVANT, and was made in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross."

Jesus was so secure in who He was He didn't need to exalt Himself or usurp control over other men's lives. Jn. 13:3-5 makes this very clear: "Jesus, KNOWING that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He had come forth from God, and was going back to God, rose from supper, and laid aside His garments; and taking a towel, girded Himself about. Then He poured water into the basin and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel with which He was girded."

Washing feet was one of the basest tasks in the culture of Jesus' day. It was a job usually done by a house slave. Just as we offer a visitor hospitality, so in Jesus' time they customarily washed a visitor's feet. Washing feet was an undesirable responsibility: the roads were dusty well enough. But the filth of the road was more than dust. The transportation of that day was the camel, the donkey, the horse and the mule. It takes little imagination to understand that the streets and roads were littered with their manure. The traveler's feet would be covered with this as well as being caked with dust. The washing of feet was assigned to the lowliest slave because it meant handling the filth of the streets. This job was thought to be below the dignity of the "good man of the house." Yet it was this task to which the Lord of Glory stooped! The violent protests of the disciples are quite easy to understand.

How could Jesus have done this? How could the Master and the King of the universe wash dung from His disciple's feet? He could do it because HE WAS SECURE IN WHO HE WAS. He KNEW that the Father had given all things into His hands. He KNEW that He had come from the Father and that He was the Son of God and promised Messiah. He KNEW that He was going back to the Father after He defeated sin, sickness, death, the grave and hell. He didn't have to prove anything to Himself or to anyone else. His life had already proven who He was to those who had eyes to see. And He didn't stoop so low to become a tyrant, to rule over this world by force. He came to heal and bless and

deliver, to REIGN BY SERVING! Ah, yes, precious friend of mine, once we thoroughly KNOW who we are there is no need to proclaim it, no need to sound a trumpet, no need to wear a badge, to remind people of who we are. Once we KNOW that we are the sons of God WE ARE FREED TO SERVE. Oh, Father! Apply the blood to our hands, quicken and sanctify the power of service, anoint with Thy holy oil, fill to the full our hands that we may have wherewith to bless Thy creation!

THE BLOOD ON THE FOOT

As the hands speak of service, so the feet speak of walk and conduct. There comes to mind the curious events of the first chapter of the book of Judges. We read, "After the death of Joshua the Israelites asked the Lord, Who shall go up first for us against the Canaanites, to fight against them? And the Lord said, Judah shall go up; behold, I have delivered the land into his hand. And Judah (the tribe) said to (the tribe of) Simeon his brother, Come up with me into my allotment, that we may fight against the Canaanites; and I likewise will go with you into your territory. So Simeon went with him. Then Judah went up, and the Lord delivered the Canaanites and the Perizzites into their hand; and they smote 10,000 of them in Bezek. And they found Adonizek in Bezek, and fought against him, and they smote the Canaanites and the Perizzites. Adonibezek fled; but they pursued him, and caught him, and cut off his thumbs and his big toes. Adonibezek said, Seventy kings with their thumbs and big toes cut off had to gather their food under my table. As I have done, so God has repaid me. And they brought him to Jerusalem, and there he died. And the men of Judah fought against Jerusalem, and took it, and smote it with the edge of the sword, and set the city on fire" (Judges 1:1-8, Amplified).

In the path of Israel's conquest of the land of Palestine, there were six great and powerful nations. These nations are named as the Hittite, Amorite, Canaanite, Jebusite, Perizzite and Hivite peoples. Among the reigning monarchs of these six nations was a crafty and able king whose name was Adonibezek, a man famed in his day not only for political craft but for military genius. He was king of the city of Bezek in the territory of the Canaanites. He had successively made war against and conquered seventy city states and captured all seventy of their kings. After Joshua died, when the tribe of Judah was ready to go up and fight against the Canaanites and possess their inheritance in the land of Canaan, this strong and formidable city of Bezek was next in their line of march. The tribe of Simeon joined Judah in this venture and together they went up and attacked Bezek. The Lord was with them and delivered the city into their hands and ten thousand of the men of Bezek were slain in the battle. King Adonibezek fled from the defeat, but the men of Judah pursued him and found him. Upon being captured a curious thing was done to him by the Judahite soldiers, his thumbs and his big toes were cut off, whereupon he made this cryptic remark, "Seventy kings with their thumbs and big toes cut off had to gather their food under my table. As I have done, so God has repaid me."

How strange! Why would they sever the thumbs and big toes of conquered kings? Because it was a sign of conquest. You see, in those days the king often led his soldiers into battle. They fought with swords, spears, and with bows and arrows. The ultimate shame and punishment for a mighty warrior was for his thumbs and big toes to be cut off, for while his life and being was preserved, by this one simple procedure he was forever disfitted for fighting. He could serve as a slave, but never again could he proudly lead his army in battle because the severing of his thumbs incapacitated his hand from using the bow, or the spear, or the sword; and the absence of the big toes rendered his gait uncertain; he was unable to run in battle. What a great man this Adonibezek had been!

What desolation he had made among his neighbors: he had wholly subdued and debilitated the hands and feet of seventy kings, yet now himself a prisoner and reduced to the extremity of meanness and disgrace.

In the act of consecration of the priesthood, by anointing these particular members with blood we have a picture which is the reverse. Instead of being incapacitated by amputation, these priests were to have each member QUICKENED BY CONSECRATION. The ear was anointed to be sensitive to the voice of the Spirit and to hear the cries of humanity. The thumb was anointed that it might do the bidding of God, fight the good fight of faith, and touch and minister to creation's need. The big toe was anointed that it might walk in the ways of God and WALK OUT the mind, nature, character, glory and power of God upon the earth. Oh, how God's priests need to have their walk anointed!

From time to time I meet these folk who call themselves sons of God. They can discern what God is doing in this hour, they see beautiful revelation truths. They can thrill your heart with the message they preach. They understand the deep mysteries of the Kingdom of God. But their feet have never been anointed. They cannot walk in what they see. They see it, they talk it, but they can't WALK IT. There is a weakness in their ability to follow in the footsteps of Jesus. They cannot walk out the wisdom, nature, power or will of God on the earth plane. They can talk about being overcomers and rattle on endlessly about the victorious life, sonship, kingship and priesthood, but they cannot demonstrate a life of victory under pressure or in the nittygritty of everyday living. Their head knowledge is powerful, but their walk is weak and a reproach to the Kingdom of God. What a reproach it is to have people who can preach the sonship message, teach the glories of the Melchizedek Order, know the Scriptures well, have beautiful revelations, and ability to influence people with the truth, and yet cannot WALK IT OUT!

The one who preaches and teaches, but does not partake of what he gives forth; who testifies to one thing and lives another, has little or no influence when he attempts to share with others the life of Christ. None judge our relationship with God by our knowledge of the Bible, by our revelations, experiences or our testimonies. The Christ life must be WALKED OUT in our lives, and manifested in our daily walk in the home, on our block, at the job, and before those who see us the most.

In the Song of Solomon the king says to the Shulamite, "How beautiful are thy feet with shoes, O prince's daughter!" The word for feet is in the Hebrew PAAMAH which means not only feet but also steps or footsteps. It comes from the word PAAM meaning "to impel or agitate; to move." Ferrar Fenton translates, "How fine your steps are in your slippers!" Goodspeed renders, "How beautiful are your steps in sandals, O rapturous maiden!" Another translation says, "How beautiful your steps have become in your sandals, O willing daughter!" "Steps" indicate action which is taking place. It is not a matter of the beauty of her feet, but of her steps, or her walk. This is the beauty of her action and her move. Praise God, He is beautifying the steps of His chosen ones as He enables them more and more to walk out in the external realm the Word that He has planted deep within the inner man. It requires the application of the blood and the oil the quickening and sanctifying power of HIS LIFE WITHIN, and the enduement of the Holy Spirit to enable us to BE OUR MESSAGE, our whole life given to manifest that message, a state of being that proclaims the truth AS WE WALK whether we ever utter a word or not. We praise God for the preaching and teaching of the Word by faithful ministries, this is indeed a vital part of the whole, but remember, dear ones, the blood was not put on the tongue,

but on the ear, the hand, and the foot, to teach us the great truth that we are not to just talk about Him, but to live and give our whole life unto Him until we are filled and possessed by Him, so that every action, every word, every deed, every expression, all that WE ARE is a declaration of HIM, manifesting HIM, revealing HIM.

A thousand, yea, tens of thousands, a mighty army must be touched by the blood from off the altar of God. A great Kingdom of Priests must be set ablaze with the life and love and power of God that will cause the nations of the world to turn to the living God in these crisis days. Too long have men occupied themselves in religious efforts to embalm the spirit of yesterday's revivals, wrapping it in the grave clothes of ecclesiastical systems and securing it in sepulchers that speak only of the past. Even now, a move of God of worldwide dimensions is in the making. It is being formed IN A PEOPLE, a PRIESTHOOD COMPANY that is BECOMING the embodiment and personification of all HE IS. Ah, this will not be a revival of evangelistic crusades, television programs, concerts, bus ministries, or the building of church buildings, but the overflow of divine passion and power from a people who have been so consecrated to God that their hearts and their hands have been filled with HIMSELF. Already bright clouds are gathering on the horizon, clouds of a multitude of witnesses to the deep and vital work God is doing in the lives of His apprehended ones in preparation for the long awaited manifestation of the sons of God. The sky rivers are running full, and great glory is about to break forth upon the earth. This is the time to gird up your loins, like Elijah of old, and run before the chariots. In due time the clouds shall burst and empty themselves upon the earth. Let your heart be lifted high, for God is on the move, and this can be YOUR HOUR OF MANIFESTATION! Only that will erupt and overflow from God's people which has first been INWORKED by the Father's hand. Do not belittle or depreciate this day when it may seem so little is happening in your midst. The accent of the Spirit is not on the external works and gifts and manifestations in this hour; His concern is with the inner development of the Christ, the in working of all His is, our BECOMING the essence and substance of His nature and character. Right now the greatest service we can give to others, is to die out to all our own ego self, that the living of HIS LIFE becomes its own declaration of the typical priests in the Old Testament involved a great deal of ritual which consisted of five chief parts: (1) ceremonial washing (2) robing (3) anointing (4) the offering of three sacrifices on behalf of the priests (5) causing them to perform a part of their office, in earnest and in token of the performance of the whole ministry to be fulfilled from that day forward.

I am impressed at this time to draw your attention to the threefold sacrifice connected with the consecration of the priesthood. Each of the offerings had a separate meaning for the priests. The succession in which the sacrifices followed each other on this occasion, first the sin offering, then the burnt offering, and lastly the consecration offering, has its ground in the meaning of each sacrifice. The priest passed through a spiritual process. He had transgressed the law, and he needed the deliverance signified by the sin offering. If his offering had been made in truth and sincerity, he could then offer himself as an accepted person, forsaking all self interests, dying completely to self, yielding his all forever to God, as a sweet savor, in the burning. And in consequence he could be quickened, strengthened, equipped, and empowered by God in the consecration offering. This is, therefore, an offering by degrees. There are three orders or degrees of consecration, and the priest must pass through all three before he is the Lord's and before he is equipped to minister as His priest. There is the offering of a bullock as a sin offering; but as the offerings proceed there is the offering of a ram as a burnt offering and the offering of another ram as an offering of consecration. There IS a wonderful

progression here. And ALL who would be consecrated members of the Royal Priesthood must experientially pass through ALL that is here typified by these three offerings.

Chapter 20

The Anointing Of The Priesthood

Rees Howells, the mighty intercessor of another generation, once stated that "no event in history, even though prophesied beforehand in the Scriptures, comes to pass unless God finds human channels of faith and obedience. Prophecies must be believed into manifestation as well as foretold." As the nations are being prepared everywhere for the appearance of God's Royal Priesthood, we are now in the place where God is choosing, just as surely as He chose Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Jacob, Moses, Joshua, Samuel, David, Elijah, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, John the Baptist or, finally, the greatest of all, Jesus Christ, the Redeemer of the world. Just as surely as God chose Martin Luther, John Calvin, John Wesley, John Alexander Dowie, Billy Sunday, Billy Graham, William Branham, Oral Roberts and others years and centuries ago to be used by Him specially, we are in a new hour of Divine Choice; just as surely as God chose Paul and Peter, Andrew and James and John, God is now again CHOOSING MEN.

Today, God is again choosing His people, His channel, His instrument. He is choosing the final members of His Royal Priesthood company. Many are called, but few are chosen. We are not choosing Him, He is choosing us. God is making choice of those through whom there will come the complete, the full, the total revelation and manifestation of Jesus Christ, in all of its glory, all of its wisdom, all of its power, all of its authority, all of its might, and all of its salvation, so that all flesh can see the salvation of God and all the ends of the earth the glory of God!

God has been using people in every generation and in every nation and place to whatever degree He has prepared the vessel as a revelation of Himself. There has been that unfolding of His purpose, that flowing of His life, that manifestation of Himself. Great and wonderful beyond description has been the moving of God from age to age and from generation to generation. God has been using preachers and people in every denomination everywhere to whatever degree He has prepared that vessel for that revelation. But there shall come the ultimate, and total, and complete revelation of Jesus Christ - not a narrow, limited thing, not to get a number of people saved and blessed and healed and filled with the Spirit and used, but the Kingdom of God coming with power and with glory, as an expression and a manifestation of God in its total capacity with no limitations, with all the glory, all the power, all the might, all the majesty, all the authority, so that nations will be swept into the Kingdom of God, and the whole creation delivered.

Jesus said: "Go and declare that the Kingdom of God is come nigh and when you come to a town, heal the sick that are therein, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, and cast out devils." We have made such qualifications as "being ready to be healed", and it was necessary in the past, but now such an expression of God is coming that God will send you into a city to heal everybody, saint and sinner, good and bad, to raise the dead and cast out the devils. When the Kingdom net is thrust out, it pulls in fishes good and bad, it brings-in everything. After that it is up to God to screen the draught, the good is taken in the vessels and the bad cast aside to serve another purpose. But first they are all

apprehended. I believe that the Kingdom of God must come with power, the glory of God commanding men everywhere to repent. O Father! Let there be that demonstration of the fullness of power.

Who can God use in such a measure? Who is God preparing to use at such a time? Anyone who has anything to lose or anything to gain, either reputation, name, friends, money, security, power, place or position, God cannot use in this full revelation. Oh, He uses them to the full ability that He can use them in the dimension in which He desires, and they are being prepared for this and we give God thanks for the "in part" ministry, but this has not been sufficient. God must have a people, scattered over the earth, through whom the full revelation of His wisdom will be made manifest, where the full capacity of His strength can be made perfect and displayed. God is preparing a people through whom there will come such a revelation of Himself that it will be said: "God is in you of a truth," and God will be glorified in them. There will be the recognition by the ditch digger, by the bag lady, by the Mayor and by the President that GOD IS IN THE MIDST OF HIS PEOPLE. That people must come to a place of total nothingness, that God may become ALL IN ALL!

It is my conviction that all who prize the beautiful hope of sonship will agree that the manifestation of the sons of God, the next great move of God in the earth, must be ONE HUNDRED PERCENT THE WORK OF GOD. But it cannot be one hundred percent God's work when there is still ninety percent of us, or eighty, forty, ten, one percent of us. If the expression of God that is coming will be "Jesus and me", then you will also give the glory to "Jesus and me." But if it is Jesus alone, I may be the vessel, you may be the vessel, but the manifestation and the excellency of the power shall be of God and not of us. So much manifestation has been "God and us." Our drive, our holiness, our spirituality, our faith, our commitment, our dedication, our prayer, our fasting, our ability, our wisdom, our strength, has been mingled with SELF. But today the Spirit is saying: "We have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power, the glory, the authority and the majesty may be of God" - Christ in us become the totality of wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, redemption, power and glory - and not of us. How can it be of us, when we have become nothing? God shall now be glorified in and through us, by Jesus Christ. Let us ask the Holy Spirit to enable us to make the ultimate commitment to be totally nothing, that HIS FULLNESS be found in us.

The Spirit has been poured out in the denominations for a number of years now, but it cannot last much longer. Everything is coming to a climax, culminating. The ending of the age is upon us. What more does God need to tell us? Not that there will not be a fresh opening up of the Word, not that the spirit of revelation will not increase, but is it not time that that expression and manifestation of the fullness of God's glory that we have so long looked forward to, should come? I feel it in my spirit and we are seeking God and praying, crying out mightily unto Him, and waiting on God until that full manifestation of all that God has purposed will come. All over the world there are people who are seeking God like this. Many have been drawn away and separated from all their former involvements and religious exercises, the church system, and the old ways of doing things, to wait for His NEW ORDERS. God is making choice among us and among the nations of the world, among the churches of the world, reaching down in this hour and choosing those whom He has brought to weakness, predestined for this hour.

Ah, He does not have to use us. We have heard His call and now present ourselves before Him for His choosing. But let us leave the choosing to God. And if God is pleased

to choose us, we will give Him all the glory. And if He is pleased to bypass us and choose others, there will be no recrimination in our spirit. We will say, "Lord, Thou art altogether righteous in all things." In previous moves of the Spirit God picked me up and used me and He said, "I am not using you because of anything in yourself, but out of sovereign choice." I saw other people that were more ready to be used than I was, not used, and I asked God why, and He answered, "Out of My sovereign purposes I am not using them." That is why I do not criticize anybody who was not in the previous visitations, or in the word God is giving us today. I know it was God who kept many people out, who shut them up and hedged them in to a lesser thing in God, and God brought other people in. God's thoughts are higher than our thoughts. But He is going to use people. People like you and me. This is not daydreaming or wishful thinking, neither are we deluded. God is ready to manifest Himself through all the earth, so let us say: "Lord, let us be among those. We are available."

TAKE NOT THIS HONOR UNTO YOURSELF

Under the typical arrangement of the Old Testament the first divine essential for priesthood was DIVINE APPOINTMENT. The honor of being priest was not open to man's ambition. No man could take it for himself. No man could volunteer for the office, or assume it out of his own fancy or self-will. The priest ministers in such holy matters that only God can appoint him. Thus it was that Aaron was called of God to this task. He did not take it to himself; nor did Moses make him High Priest. God called him to this work, and no one else could have done so. And so we read, "And no man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron. So also Christ glorified not Himself to be made an High Priest; but He that said unto Him, Thou art My Son, to day have I begotten Thee...Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek" (Heb. 5:4-6).

And what was true of Aaron was also true of his sons, they also were "taken" or called unto the priesthood. And what is true of Christ as the High Priest, is also true of His priestly house - they are called of God. "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. 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" (Rom. 8:28-30). "Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus" (Heb. 63:1). "THOU...HAST MADE US unto our God kings and priests..." (Rev. 5:9-10).

A brother in Christ has written: "There is a widespread tradition among Christians that is freighted with fatal error. How often we have been told that God is looking for VOLUNTEERS for His service. I wish to inform you that this is one of the biggest lies that ever sprang from the deceptive mind of Satan. GOD DOES NOT WANT VOLUNTEERS. God ONLY ACCEPTS CONSCRIPTS. Search the Scripture from cover to cover and you will find without one exception that every ministry from Genesis to Revelation was CALLED AND CHOSEN of God and conscripted to do God's bidding, and we may further add, that many of these men were chosen against their own will and in spite of their own protestations and objections. Did Moses volunteer for service? Certainly not! He argued that he was not able to speak, that the people would not listen; but he was conscripted. Did Gideon volunteer for service? No. He was conscripted, too. Can you not hear

Jeremiah saying, 'Ah, Lord God, I cannot speak, for I am a child' (Jer. 1:6). Did any of the apostles volunteer for service? Not one! They were all especially called and conscripted by Jesus Himself. Did Saul of Tarsus volunteer for service when he was on his way to Damascus to persecute the Christians? This was the last thing in his mind; but Jesus said, 'He is a CHOSEN VESSEL unto Me to bear My name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel: for I will show him how great things he must suffer for My name's sake.'

"Perhaps the greatest single curse of the centuries has been the presumptions tradition that men and women should VOLUNTEER for the ministry of the Lord. Nothing could be farther from the truth, and nothing can be more detrimental to the true work of God than to have the Church cluttered up with men and women who have themselves chosen the ministry as a vocation. They are not tried. They are not tested. They have not God's burden upon their hearts. They have no real love for the flock; and worst of all, they have NO COMMISSION from God. Therefore, they lack His blessing and anointing. Well did the Holy Ghost say by Jeremiah the prophet, 'In the latter days ye shall consider it perfectly. I HAVE NOT SENT THESE PROPHETS, yet they ran: I have not spoken to them, YET THEY PROPHESED. But if they had stood in My counsel, and had caused My people to hear My words, then they should have turned them from the evil of their doings' (Jer. 23:20-22). If you are thinking of entering the ministry, FORGET IT and just go right on picking cotton, or whatever your hand finds to do, until He comes and conscripts you. It will be THIS VOLUNTEER CROWD who will come at the last, saying, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy name, and in Thy name cast out devils, and in Thy name done many wonderful works.' And it will be to them that the Lord will say, 'I never knew you; depart from Me ye that work iniquity (rebellion).' God does not know nor accept the ministry of anybody except those whom He calls and commissions Himself" - The Page.

To the above counsel I would add this word of admonition: No one has to strive to make himself one of the priestly calling, for this calling was determined before the foundation of the world when the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy. It is not a matter of trying to press your way into something, but of yielding to the sovereign dealings and the divine inworkings of the Father and fitting by HIS CHOICE into His glorious scheme. We are priests by the same oath that made our blessed Forerunner a priest forever after the Order of Melchizedek. The process has been long the dealings have been severe, the disciplining has been rigorous, but soon, O soon shall the day for the showing dawn in all its glory and the Royal Priesthood shall be set in order with the great manifestation of HIS LIFE flowing in them, through them and out of them!

There are no counterfeits in this realm, when God manifests reality. When the Royal Priesthood arises to bless the nations either you will "have it" or you won't "have it". As long as we remain in the preparatory stage, experiencing the deep INWARD processings of the Lord, while this condition remains, I say, there is opportunity for men to proclaim themselves, to jump on the bandwagon, to mouth all the right words, to use the same terminology the Spirit has inspired among the apprehended ones, and appear as those chosen to priesthood. These "clouds without water" (Jude 12) "profess themselves to be wise" (Rom. 1:22), and some even lay claim to already being manifested as the fulfillment of their message. Carried about by every wind of doctrine, presumptuously claiming that which they do not possess, they make their boasts, and many are deceived by their "great swelling words of vanity" (II Pet. 2:18).

But the day of manifestation approaches! There is a priestly people, a remnant in whom the Spirit of God is working a transformation. In due time God shall manifest this priesthood and their NEW STATE OF BEING shall utterly silence all the false claims of carnal men. Conformed to HIS IMAGE, filled with His Spirit, the embodiment and personification of His wisdom, nature, grace and power - no man will be able to counterfeit the reality of this new state of being, and these shall redound to the glory of God. Obviously "no man taketh this honor unto himself, but he that is called of God." It is an inworking transformation that is GOD-WROUGHT, for God starts it, God works it out, and God brings it to its conclusion, it is ALL OF HIM and that is why the flesh cannot duplicate such glorious, divine handiwork.

The vision of priesthood is not fulfilled through self-effort. Many people try to place themselves in certain positions, claiming to be this son, that angel, or the other prophet, etc. In this century "Elijah" has appeared on the scene at least three or four times, I have personally seen two of these Elijahs, and have a photograph of the third, complete with his ceremonial robes. The "two witnesses" have manifested on more than one occasion, I met them, a man and his wife, in Las Cruces, New Mexico in the year 1972. The other set of "witnesses" has now split up, the first witness excommunicated the second witness from his church, and the dismissed witness has now founded his own organization. Incidentally, neither is clothed with sackcloth, they both wear the finest clothes, eat the finest food and fly around the country in their own jet airplanes!

In 1962 I visited a home where John the Revelator had taken up residence upon his return to earth, and with him was king David and a few other of the sons of God who had already "by-passed the grave", they had their glorified bodies and were shortly to take over the world. In 1966 I passed through their area again and it occurred to me to stop and see how the "kingdom" was progressing. I discovered that the immortal king David had died, the sons had dispersed, and king David's wife whispered furtively in my ear that the lady in the other room was "a devil". One sister I know, who previously had a beautiful ministry, and with whom we had precious fellowship, tried to take the honor to herself, declared herself a High Priestess, clothed herself in robes and expensive furs and diamonds, fell into even grosser delusions and became in the end another cheap religious racketeer. What a contrast to the Christ who glorified not Himself - but "made Himself of no reputation...He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him..." (Phil. 2:7-9). It was by that direct oath of God that He was exalted and lifted up to fill this place -for, He that said unto Him, Thou art My Son, this day have I begotten Thee, the same said also unto Him, Thou art a priest forever after the Order of Melchizedek.

As one has written: "In many of its aspects 'haste' is a mark of immaturity. To those who are now becoming spiritually mature, there is an undergirding of knowledge that 'to every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose...' (Eccl. 3:1), and they desire to only move in GOD'S TIMING, not to rush ahead in a final outburst of 'self-promotion' to claim to be this, or that. When the vision seems to tarry, we can well afford to 'wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry' (Hab. 2:3). At the Father's appointed time He will fully manifest His own - placing them in the position for which He has been preparing them. Yes, in the making of kings and priests through whom God shall administer the affairs of His Kingdom, HE has carefully selected His vessels, and is now processing them by means that stagger the imagination with their intensity and scope. But God shall not be satisfied with an 'inferior product,' hence the transformation must penetrate into

every fiber of our being until the whole becomes A NEW CREATION in Christ Jesus" - end quote.

In any ministry, to receive a divine call is a matter of first importance. If such a calling was necessary for the carnal priesthood of the old order and if Christ was called of God, how much more should the ministry of this age and that of the ages to come assure themselves that they are there because of a divine call. The great apostle Paul said, "For I take no special pride in the fact that I preach the gospel. I feel compelled to do so; I should be utterly miserable if I failed to preach it. If I do this work because I choose to do so then I am entitled to a reward. But if it is no choice of mine, but a sacred responsibility put upon me, what can I expect in a way of reward?" (I Cor. 9:16-18, Phillips). It becomes clear, Paul did not volunteer his services of his own free will, so he was not entitled to any reward as such for preaching. He had no choice, he was conscripted by God and given the responsibility from above. Let it be known in this day of Babylon's religious institutions and hirelings - God does not use volunteers in the work of His Kingdom. Ministry is not something one chooses as a vocation, a profession, an easy way to earn a living. All such are HIRELINGS, and hirelings are the ministers of Babylon, and will fall with the system.

Many years ago, when I was but a boy preacher, an old bishop in the denomination with which I was affiliated gave wise counsel to the young candidates for ordination, and his words have remained imbedded deep within my spirit through all these years. He said that entering the ministry can be likened to getting married. Stay single as long as you can. But when you fall so completely, so totally, so fiercely, so hopelessly in love until you are PERFECTLY MISERABLE and cannot stand for one day longer to be apart -then get married! GOD CHOOSES WHOM HE WILLS, AND SO LAYS THE CALL ON YOU THAT YOU ARE MISERABLE UNTIL YOU GIVE OBEDIENCE. Those who take it upon themselves, verily they have their reward - they can build reputations, receive the praise of men, make a name for themselves, gain power and prestige, earn good salaries, and enjoy all the amenities THIS WORLD has to offer, but it becomes merely an earthly call, and they miss forever the HEAVENLY CALL.

I do not hesitate to add that only those who receive the call, who come to realize that they ARE, beyond any shadow of doubt, apprehended to the Melchizedekian Order, will be FULLY PROCESSED AND POSITIONED AND BIRTHED INTO THE ORDER OF THE NEW AGE. Many come to this realization through a personal encounter with the Lord. Each son must receive the call and each must KNOW HIM for themselves. In order to be a king-priest after the Order of Melchizedek our existence must spring from our heavenly origin and not from our earthly one. The New Creation Life we have in Him becomes a super-charged power that lifts us above the law of sin and death into the power of HIS ENDLESS LIFE.

THE ANOINTING OF THE PRIESTHOOD

There is a vivid illustration in the Old Testament of men who sought to grasp the ministry of the priesthood for themselves. This was the rebellion of Korah, Dathan and Abiram. These men rose up against Moses and Aaron along with two hundred and fifty princes of the congregation and protested their leadership, saying, "Ye take too much upon you, seeing all the congregation are holy, everyone of them, and the Lord is among them: wherefore then lift ye up yourselves above the congregation of the Lord?" Moses and Aaron were the GOD-APPOINTED leadership of Israel, therefore, the rebellion of this

mutinous mob was a sin against God's divine order. In their rebellion, Korah, Dathan and Abiram sought to enter into the office of the priesthood (Num. 16:10), and this intrusion into the priest" office is that which "no man taketh...unto himself." There is neither time nor space to recount the entire story of this rebellion, but their end was tragic, the judgment of God swift and sure, and "the earth opened its mouth, and swallowed them and their households, and Korah and all his men, and all their possessions. They and all that belonged to them, went down alive into Sheol, and the earth closed upon them; and they perished from among the assembly. And fire came forth from the Lord and devoured the 250 men who offered incense (as priests)" (Num. 16:32-33,35, Amplified).

There were three entrances into the Tabernacle in the wilderness, the realm of priestly ministry: the gate into the Outer Court, the door into the Holy Place, and the veil into the Holiest of All. But these were more than entrances, they were also barriers preventing one from entering in without approval into the fullness of God and priestly ministry. Only the chosen ones were permitted entrance, and only the anointed High Priest into the Holiest Place. Ah, many have been made partakers of the eternal life provided by Christ at the Tabernacle gate who will never be priests, in all that priesthood means. The truth is, there are multitudes that are saved by grace, but will never be priests. They are neither called nor chosen to this ministry, nor do they aspire to meet its qualifications. There would be no point in pressing on, going on to perfection, growing up into the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, laying down our lives, yielding unto God, being dealt with, purged, pruned, processed, disciplined, changed and transformed into HIS LIKENESS if the man who has a good time, ignores God, dissipates his life, repents on his death bed and dies and goes to heaven, saved by grace, then receives the same as you.

After the rebellion of Korah, Dathan and Abiram, seeing that the people had questioned the authority of Aaron, the Lord instructed Moses to take a rod for each of the twelve princes of Israel, including Aaron for the house of Levi, and were told to lay them up in the Ark of the Covenant with their names thereon. The next day, Moses went into the Tabernacle and saw that Aaron's rod had budded and brought forth blossoms and almonds, but none of the other rods had budded. All the rods were then brought out for the people to witness, and Aaron's rod was later returned to the Ark of the Covenant where it remained. Thus, the rebellion against Aaron's priesthood was answered, and Aaron's calling established by the Lord "by reason of the anointing" (Num. 18:8). Henceforth, the priesthood was to remain within the house of Levi. This example also shows that the New Covenant ministry of priesthood is to be executed by only those chosen of the Lord "BY REASON OF THE ANOINTING", and not through devious political-religious craftiness or the will of the people. Aaron's rod that budded has been within the Ark of the Covenant all through Israel's history as a MEMORIAL to the fact that God alone chooses His priesthood and ANOINTS WHOM HE WILL for the propagation of His Kingdom in the earth. And those whom the Lord calls are blessed with THE LIFE OF HIS SPIRIT as illustrated by the budding rod of Aaron in contrast with the rods of the other eleven princes of Israel whose rods did not bring forth.

This brings us to the anointing of the priesthood. "And Aaron and his sons thou shalt bring unto the door of the Tabernacle of the Congregation...then shalt thou take the anointing oil, and pour it upon his head, and anoint him. And thou shalt anoint Aaron and his sons, and consecrate them, that they may minister unto Me in the priest's office" (Ex. 29:4,7; 30:30).

Under the law, the anointing was the ceremony by which the priests were installed in their service. They were anointed to their office with a peculiar ointment, called the "Holy Anointing Oil". Of old, three classes were anointed with the Holy Anointing Oil -prophets, priests and kings. With it Moses anointed Aaron and his sons and all the priests who came after them. With it Samuel anointed Saul to be the leader in Israel, and David to be their king. In fact, David was anointed three times, first in the midst of his brethren in the hidden obscurity of his home in Bethlehem (I Sam. 16:3,13), then by the men of Judah, over the house of Judah (II Sam. 2:4,7), and, seven years and six months later, over all Israel, by the elders of Israel (II Sam. 5:3,17). The classic example of the anointing of a prophet is Elisha, who received a double portion of Elijah's spirit (anointing) when he was parted from him in a chariot of fire.

Because of being anointed with the Holy Anointing Oil, the High Priest was called "the anointed" (Lev. 4:3,5,16; 6:22), the same as later for the anointed kings of Israel (I Sam. 24:6,10; 26:9-11; Lam. 4:20). Christ (meaning "the anointed") was anointed with the Holy Spirit and power (Acts 10:38) and fulfills all three functions. He is the prophet like unto Moses. He is the promised Son of David, the King of Israel. He is a High Priest for the ages according to the Order of Melchizedek.

When Jesus was baptized in Jordan, we read that the heavens were opened unto Him. All power and authority of the whole heavenly realm came upon Him. To me that was one of the main purposes of His baptism, to not only open the heavens to Him, but also TO REVEAL WHO HE WAS. This was not His anointing as our great High Priest, but His anointing as the Son of God with power - the Messiah. In the synagogue in Nazareth, He stood up to read, and read from the prophet Isaiah, saying, "The Spirit of the Lord IS upon Me because He HATH anointed Me to preach the gospel..." Then He sat down, and looked around, and made the simple yet almost incomprehensible statement, "THIS DAY is this Scripture fulfilled in your hearing." What a wonderful statement! The word "day" does not refer to a twenty-four hour day or to that particular day of the week. It bespeaks of the DAY OF THE ANOINTING, the manifestation of His power and glory on the earth realm, three years and a half of glorious sonship ministry, and, of course, Jesus was the first of the New Creation to experience such a thing. It is not as though Jesus had just that day received His anointing, for He said that God had already anointed Him. We must also be a sharer of this. Actually, the anointing is what joined Jesus to the Father, and it must be so in us. APART FROM THE ANOINTING WE CAN DO NOTHING. The Holy Anointing Oil typifies the Holy Spirit of adoption whereby we, the Royal Priesthood, are sealed as sons of God. Only the consecrated ones, the priests, are to ever be thus anointed.

THE ANOINTING! We are told in Judges 9:8-9 that the olive oil is used to honor God and honor man. "One time the trees went forth to anoint a king over them, and they said to the olive tree, Reign over us. But the olive tree said to them, Should I leave my fatness (oil), by which God and man are honored, and go to wave over the trees?" If we would honor God or man, we must do it by the olive oil. This simply means that if we would fulfill the will of God and the ministry of God, if we would honor God and touch and bless men, we must do it by the Holy Spirit. We must be a man filled with the Spirit, an olive tree, a son of oil. We can never minister as the Lord's priest apart from the life of the Holy Spirit. The soundest advise I can give anyone is: MAKE SURE YOU ARE ANOINTED! You will never stand and speak with authority in the name of Jesus, or do the works of God, unless you are anointed. Men rant and rave and stomp and clap and shout and dance and say that that is the anointing. Not so! The anointing has nothing whatever to do with

physical motions or volume. It has to do with authority by the presence of God in our lives. There is a great difference between noise and the power of God. We can put on an empty clap, sing an empty song, march the Jericho March, and go through endless religious exercises, and never be touched by the anointing. Many do these things thinking they will bring the blessing. Believe me, precious friend of mine, THEY WON'T! Oh, yes, there is a place for shouting, for music, for dancing, for making a joyful noise or a noise full of joy - but THIS IS NOT THE ANOINTING. We must never forget that!

Let us look even deeper into what this anointing means. The oil was **POURED** upon the head of the High Priest. I Jn. 2:27 says, "The anointing which ye have received of Him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man should teach you: but...the same anointing teacheth you all things, and is truth..." In this passage the anointing in the Greek is not a noun, but a verb pertaining to a certain kind of motion. It does not bespeak an oil in a motionless state, inactive, passive, standing still; but an oil **IN A STATE OF MOTION AND ACTIVITY**. If you only have the oil in a vessel you do not have "the anointing"; but when the oil is **POURED OUT** and **APPLIED** it then **BECOMES** "the anointing". In the vessel it is merely oil; poured out it is anointing and separates and sanctifies and quickens that upon which it is poured! Thus, in this day of reality, the anointing is not the Holy Spirit, but the **MOVEMENT AND ENERGIZING AND ACTION** of the Holy Spirit within us! You say, "I have the Holy Spirit, therefore I have the anointing." Not so! The Holy Spirit in the vessel **IS NOT THE ANOINTING** - only as the Spirit **MOVES** and **ACTS** upon, within, and through you do you have the anointing. The Spirit must not be motionless within us, He must be active and energizing - speaking, stirring, dealing, quickening, changing, transforming, acting, manifesting the glory of God in our lives.

When the firstborn Son received the Holy Spirit at His baptism, from that moment the Spirit **MOVED THROUGH HIM**, His whole life became the revelation of His Father as the nature mind, wisdom, will, words, power and glory of God were manifested through Him, climaxing with His triumphant resurrection from the dead. And now - a company of "many brethren" are receiving of that same anointing, so that **MANY SONS** may be brought to the same glory in which the Christ now dwells. Yes, beloved, we also are called to be separated ones, anointed ones, that the name of the Father may be called upon us, creating this bond of union between the High Priest and the priests, transforming into His image, that as He is, **SO ARE WE IN THIS WORLD**. God is **ANOINTING - MOVING IN US** - to accomplish this divine work, blessed be His wonderful name!

It would be strange to speak about the anointing without referring to Ps. 133, which is such a beautiful Psalm. "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that **RAN DOWN** upon the beard, even Aaron's beard: that went down to the skirts of his garments, like the dew of Herman, and like the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion; for there the Lord commanded the blessing, even life forevermore." How wonderful and sure are these words proceeding from the Psalmist's heart. Obviously, Moses was very generous with the oil as this passage declares that it ran down his beard and down the full extent of his robe. You will find in studying the various instances of the anointing of kings and so forth that at such times they poured the oil from a horn or vial or similar vessel. It is not that the amount of oil would be so significant, but it is a type of the Spirit or anointing which flows, moves, enveloping the whole person, quickening every faculty, effecting a total and complete revelation of **HIS LIFE**. It is to be observed that the oil was not poured over the entire body, but upon the head alone. From thence it **FLOWED DOWN** over the body, covering the whole. The anointing of the Melchizedek Priesthood was first upon the

Head, the great High Priest, Jesus Christ, and from Him to the members of His body as the Scripture affirms: "The anointing which ye have received OF (from) HIM abideth in you."

Let the fact be imprinted indelibly on our minds that the priestly anointing is not to be equated with the anointing our blessed Lord received when the Spirit descended as a dove upon Him at Jordan and the Voice from heaven witnessed, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Wonderful and glorious as was that anointing, it is not to even be compared with the glory that the Christ has now received as the great High Priest of the heavens. Shortly after being anointed with the Holy Spirit Jesus performed His first miracle at Cana of Galilee when He turned the vessels of pure water into the finest of wine. John tells us, "This beginning of miracles did Jesus at Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth HIS GLORY; and His disciples believed on Him" (Jn. 2:1). The glory of Jesus Christ when He walked on earth was marvelous beyond description, as He went about doing good, healing all who were oppressed of the devil, casting out devils, controlling the elements, speaking as never man spake, and raising even the dead to life again. Yet in my heart I know for certain that the glory of Christ on earth was only a flickering shadow of that glory He has now as the exalted and glorified High Priest of the Melchizedekian Order. Marvelous as was His ministry and the glory of it, when He came to the end of that order He prayed to His Father in heaven, saying, "I have glorified Thee on the earth: I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do. And now, O Father, glorify Thou Me WITH THINE OWN SELF with the GLORY WHICH I HAD WITH THEE BEFORE THE WORLD WAS" (Jn. 17:4-5).

It should not be difficult in the least for us to understand that Jesus was not a priest prior to His death, resurrection and ascension. Jesus was not the High Priest of the Melchizedekian Order at any time during His thirty-three and a half years on earth. He could not at that time have been a priest after the Order of Melchizedek because HE WAS NOT YET THE AUTHOR OF ETERNAL SALVATION. This is made very plain in Heb. 5:9-10. "And having been MADE PERFECT, He BECAME to all those who obey Him the source of eternal salvation; BEING DESIGNATED by God as a High Priest according to the Order of Melchizedek." His designation as High Priest coincides with His becoming the author of eternal salvation, and it could not be otherwise, for His priesthood unto salvation is rooted in the accomplishment of His death and resurrection.

Again, Jesus Christ could not have been a High Priest after the Order of Melchizedek during His life in the flesh because HE WAS NOT YET LIVING IN THE POWER OF AN INDESTRUCTIBLE LIFE. "And this becomes more plainly evident when another Priest arises Who bears the likeness of Melchizedek, Who has been constituted a Priest, not on the basis of...His physical ancestry, but on the basis of an endless and indestructible Life. For it is witnessed of Him, You are a Priest forever after the Order of Melchizedek" (Heb. 7:15-17, Amplified). It goes without saying that before He died His life was not indestructible! In Rev. 1:18 Jesus says, "I am...the Living One; I WAS DEAD, and behold, I AM ALIVE FOREVERMORE." If He is a priest forever (through all ages), then He CANNOT DIE! It should be clear - He did not begin His Melchizedekian Priesthood until AFTER His death and resurrection!

Furthermore, Jesus was not a High Priest of the Melchizedekian Order before His sacrifice at Calvary because HE HAD NOTHING TO OFFER AS A PRIEST beyond the

same blood of bulls and goats offered by the Levitical priesthood. "For every High Priest is appointed to offer both gifts and sacrifices; hence it is necessary that this High Priest also HAVE SOMETHING TO OFFER" (Heb. 8:3). During Jesus' earthly ministry He lacked a very essential item necessary for the priesthood: HE HAD NO BLOOD! He had not yet become the sacrifice, had not yet shed His blood as an offering for sin. Heb. 9:12 says, "Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but BY HIS OWN BLOOD He entered in once into the Holy Place, HAVING OBTAINED eternal redemption for us." He did not enter that Holy Place to function as a High Priest except with His OWN BLOOD. But He did not have any of His own blood to offer until He had died and shed it for the remission of sins. Heb. 9:22 tells us that only SHED blood is acceptable, that is, blood that indicated the DEATH of its source. "And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without the SHEDDING OF BLOOD is no remission." Can we not see by this that He could only use His blood AFTER HE HAD DIED!

In addition to all this, Jesus could not have been a High Priest after the Order of Melchizedek while on earth because HE WAS NOT YET SITTING AT THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD. Notice Ps. 110:1 and 4: "The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit Thou at My right hand until I make Thine enemies Thy footstool. The Lord hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the Order of Melchizedek." Jesus is not declared a priest after the Order of Melchizedek until after the invitation to sit at the right hand of God. This divine arrangement is confirmed by the writer to the Hebrews: "Now of the things we have spoken this is the sum: We have such a High Priest, WHO IS SET AT THE RIGHT HAND of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens; a minister of the sanctuary, and of the TRUE TABERNACLE, which the Lord pitched, and not man."

The word "Christ" means "anointed" and Jesus became the ANOINTED HIGH PRIEST after His ascension into the celestial realm. He was "Christ" or "the anointed" Son of God while He walked among men, but I must emphasize most emphatically that He was not then the ANOINTED HIGH PRIEST, neither was He the ANOINTED KING. The two-fold anointing of King-Priest was conferred upon Him after His resurrection and ascension into heaven as Peter shows: "Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, He would RAISE UP CHRIST TO SIT UPON HIS THRONE; this Jesus hath God RAISED UP, whereof we all are witnesses. For David is not ascended into the heavens: but he saith himself, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit Thou on My right hand, until I make Thy foes Thy footstool. Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God HATH MADE that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, BOTH LORD AND CHRIST" (Acts 2:30,32,34-36). The message is clear - Jesus was MADE CHRIST - He was MADE the ANOINTED KING-PRIEST WHEN HE ASCENDED THE THRONE OF HIS FATHER! He is now and forevermore a priest upon His throne, bless His name!

The Royal Priesthood, of which Christ is the Head, receive their priestly anointing from the High Priest upon the throne. "Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, He hath shed forth this which ye now see and hear" (Acts 2:33).

Under the Old Covenant Moses was commissioned by God to anoint the priests. "Moreover the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Take thou also unto thee principal spices, of pure myrrh five hundred shekels, and of sweet cinnamon half so much, even two hundred and fifty shekels, and of sweet calamus two hundred and fifty shekels, and of cassia five hundred shekels...and of oil olive and bin: and thou shalt make it an oil of holy

ointment, an ointment compound after the art of the apothecary: it shall be a holy anointing oil. And thou shalt anoint Aaron and his sons, and consecrate them, that they may minister unto Me in the priest's office" (Ex. 30:22-25,30). Moses anointed Aaron and his sons. Moses was the mediator of the Old Covenant (Gal. 3:19). The mediator of the New Covenant is Jesus, so when you read of all that Moses performed on behalf of the Levitical priests in the books of Exodus and Leviticus, put Jesus in Moses' place and you will receive understanding of what Jesus is doing in our lives to bring us to the Melchizedek Priesthood. It was Moses who anointed the priests of the Old Covenant, and it is Jesus who anoints the priests of the New Covenant!

In order that we may be clearer concerning the divine process of the anointing of the Royal Priesthood, we will now consider three steps of God's work in bringing about this anointing. His first step was that of the Word becoming flesh. The Word was God (Jn. 1:1), and flesh denotes man; therefore, when the Word became flesh, it means that God became man and joined Himself with man (Jn. 1:14). The incarnated Jesus of Nazareth is the first and master product in this universe of God being mingled with man. When He was born on this earth, God obtained in this universe a specimen and model of His union with man - the first GOD-MAN. From this time forth, God intended to mingle Himself with humanity according to and by Jesus Christ, producing a species of beings which are God manifested in the flesh and man in the image of God - GOD-MEN.

The second step which achieved God's purpose was the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus. The Lord's death released Him from the flesh, and His resurrection transferred Him into the Holy Spirit. Therefore, the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus made it possible for Him to have another form, namely, the Holy Spirit. Before the incarnation, in eternity, He was the Father ~ Jehovah (Isa. 64:8; 63:16; 9:6). When He was incarnated on this earth and lived among men, He was the Son (Mat. 1:23; Isa. 9:6). After He passed through death and resurrection, ascended to heaven, descended to earth again and entered into man, He is the Spirit (Jn. 14:16-18; II Cor. 3:17). As the Father expressed Himself in the Son through the incarnation, so the Son expressed Himself as the Spirit through death and resurrection and ascension. "He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, THAT HE MIGHT FILL ALL THINGS" (Eph. 4:10). The Father came unto men as the Son, and the Son entered into man as the Spirit. This is the God that mingles Himself with man through the anointing.

The third step which God used to achieve the anointing was the entering of the Holy Spirit into man. When the Holy Spirit enters into man, the Son enters into him, and the Father also enters into him. "Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love Me, he will keep My words: and My Father will love him, and WE will come unto him, and make OUR abode with him" (Jn. 14:23). Both the Father and the Son enter into us by the Holy Spirit. Therefore, the Holy Spirit entering into man is the same as Christ entering into man, and the same as God entering into man. The Bible gives several references concerning this matter. Rom. 8:9-11 mentions that the Spirit which dwells in us is the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and Christ Himself. When we put these various expressions together, we see that the Spirit of God being in us means that both Christ and God are in us. Another reference is I Jn. 4:13, "Hereby we know that...HE (dwells) in us, because He hath given us of HIS SPIRIT." This shows that for the Holy Spirit to be in us means that God is in us.

When God came into us by the Holy Spirit, He became mingled with us, He in us, and we in Him. However, the work of God to mingle and unite Himself with man is not an instantaneous process. Since we were regenerated and the life of God entered into us,

our spirit quickened by His Spirit, this mingling has been going on continuously. The process is ever from glory to glory, from measure to measure, from experience to experience, until there is that perfect unity, union, and mingling - so co-mingled that you cannot tell where God ends and we begin, or where we end and God begins. This is the NEW CREATION - MAN IN THE IMAGE OF GOD, and GOD INCARNATED IN MAN. Those who, with our blessed Lord, are next to arrive at this wonderful stature are the sons of God, the firstfruits of His redemption, kings and priests upon HIS THRONE.

The anointing which we have received of Him at this present time is not the FULL ANOINTING, merely a foretaste, the down payment, the pledge and token of greater glory still to come. "And not only the creation, but we ourselves too, who have and enjoy the FIRSTFRUITS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT - a foretaste of the blissful things to come - groan inwardly as we wait for the redemption of our bodies from sensuality and the grave, which will reveal our adoption, our manifestation as God's sons" (Rom. 8:23, Amplified).

I would not for one moment minimize this foretaste, this firstfruit of the Holy Spirit which we have received in the baptism in the Spirit. I would not for one moment depreciate the great outpouring of the Spirit which began at the turn of the century, in which millions came to Christ and were transformed. Neither do I belittle in the least the glorious moving of the Holy Spirit which swept across the land and around the world beginning in 1948. I do not speak in derogatory terms of the speaking in tongues, prophecy, gifts of healing, laying on of hands, five-fold ministry and the mighty manifestations that accompanied the restoration of these gifts and ministries to the body of Christ. I myself have been a glad partaker of its glory. I would not deny it in life or in death. Since the day the Holy Spirit swept with indescribable bliss and glory into my life at the altar of a Pentecostal Camp Meeting, at the tender age of twelve, I have seen hundreds, yea, thousands, receive the power of the Spirit. Yet in my heart I know for certain that all the glory we have seen is but a faint shadow of the glory that shall be revealed at the manifestation of the sons of God, for which all creation has groaned for six thousand years. Then the glory of the Lord will fill the whole body of the Royal Priesthood in the fullness thus far known only by our glorious Forerunner and Head. His glory shall flow and flow and fill the earth. Then shall be fulfilled the words of the Saviour, "The works that I do shall ye do also, and GREATER WORKS THAN THESE SHALL YE DO." The power of God shall at last conquer the nations, and sin, and sorrow and death shall be swallowed up in victory. The coming of the Lord in power and great glory is at hand. The Royal House of King-Priests is about to be revealed. In that day the lame man shall leap as the hart, and the tongue of the dumb shall sing. The eyes of the blind shall be opened, the ears of the deaf unstopped. The desert and the solitary place shall blossom as the rose. Men will learn war no more. Heaven and earth shall kiss and all things shall be reconciled unto God. It will be the time of the manifestation of the manifested sons of God when the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.

Chapter 21

The Anointing Of The Priesthood

(continued)

"And Aaron and his sons thou shalt bring unto the door of the Tabernacle of the congregation...then shalt thou take the ANOINTING OIL, and pour it upon his head, and ANOINT HIM. And thou shalt ANOINT AARON AND HIS SONS, and consecrate them, that they may minister unto Me in the priest's office" (Ex. 29:4,7; 30:30).

Under the law, the anointing was the ceremony by which the priests were installed in their service. They were anointed to their office with a peculiar ointment, called the "Holy Anointing Oil". Of old, three classes were anointed with the Holy Anointing Oil -prophets, priests and kings. With it Moses anointed Aaron and his sons and all the priests who came after them. With it Samuel anointed Saul to be the leader in Israel, and David to be their king. In fact, David was anointed three times, first in the midst of his brethren in the hidden obscurity of his home in Bethlehem (I Sam. 16:3,13), then by the men of Judah, over the house of Judah (II Sam. 2:4,7), and seven years and six months later, over all Israel, by the elders of Israel (II Sam. 5:3,17). The classic example of the anointing of a prophet is Elisha, who received a double portion of Elijah's spirit (anointing) when he was parted from him in a chariot of fire.

Because of being anointed with the Holy Anointing Oil, the High Priest was called "the anointed" (Lev. 4:3,5,16; 6:22), the same as later for the anointed kings of Israel (I Sam. 24:6,10; 2:69-11; Lam. 4:20). Christ (meaning "the anointed") was anointed with the Holy Spirit and power (Acts 10:38) and fulfills all three functions. He is the prophet like unto Moses. He is the promised son of David, the King of Israel. He is a High Priest for the ages according to the Order of Melchizedek.

If we would honor God or man, we must do it by the anointing. This simply means that if we would fulfill the will of God and the ministry of God, if we would minister unto God and touch and bless men, we must do it by the Holy Spirit. We must be a man filled with the Spirit, an olive tree, a son of oil. We can never minister as the Lord's priest apart from the life of the Holy Spirit. The soundest advice I can give anyone desiring the priesthood is: MAKE SURE YOU ARE ANOINTED! You will never stand and speak with authority in the name of Jesus, or do the works of God, unless you are anointed. Men rant and rave and stomp and clap and shout and dance about and say that that is the anointing. Not so! The anointing has nothing whatever to do with physical motions or volume. It has to do with authority by the presence of God in our lives. There is a great difference between noise and the power of God. We can put on a soulish clap, sing an empty song, march the Jericho March, and go through endless religious exercises, and never be touched by the anointing. Many do these things thinking they will bring the blessing. Believe me when I say - THEY WON'T! Oh, yes, there is a place for shouting, for music, for dancing, for

making a joyful noise or a noise full of joy - but THIS IS NOT THE ANOINTING. We must never forget that!

Moses anointed Aaron and his sons. Moses was the mediator of the Old Covenant (Gal. 3:19). The mediator of the New Covenant is Jesus, so when you read of all that Moses performed on behalf of the Levitical priests in the books of Exodus and Leviticus, put Jesus in Moses' place and you will receive understanding of what Jesus is doing in our lives to bring us to the Melchizedek Priesthood. It was Moses who anointed the priests of the Old Covenant, and it is Jesus who anoints the priests of the New Covenant!

THE ART OF THE APOTHECARY

"Moreover the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Take thou also unto thee principle spices, of pure myrrh five hundred shekels, and of sweet cinnamon half so much, even two hundred and fifty shekels, and of sweet calamus two hundred and fifty shekels, and of cassia five hundred shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary, and of oil olive an hin: and thou shalt make it an oil of holy ointment, an ointment compound after THE ART OF THE APOTHECARY: it shall be a holy ANOINTING OIL. And thou shalt anoint Aaron and his sons, and consecrate them, that they may minister unto Me in the priest's office" (Ex. 30:22-30).

The term "apothecary" means a druggist, pharmacist or perfumer. The art of compounding medicines and perfumes traces its origin to the beginning of civilization. The first apothecaries were busy preparing fragrances for the gods of their various cultures and often these heathen priests were also the druggists. In addition they acted as physicians, using their ointments and herbal compounds to heal the sick. The most ancient empire known to history was the Egyptian Empire. The science of perfumery and medicine is traceable to the world of the Egyptians. When the tomb of King Tutankhamen was opened, the fragrance of the incense pervaded the room from the vases buried with the king, though the liquid contents had evaporated long millenniums before. Like many other customs familiar to the culture of the West, the art of perfumery and medicine was adopted by us from the East. The art of compounding unguents and fragrant ointments originated in the Orient where sweet-scented spices and herbs were extensively used, not only in temple ritual, but in common every-day life as well. The breast of the Sphinx of Egypt carries an inlaid tablet depicting a Pharaoh, probably of a dynasty contemporary with the time of Moses, offering incense and oil. By that time the priests had become the official perfumers and the formulas were kept a well-guarded secret. The Scriptures describe a number of the ointments used in the ancient world and most of the ingredients enumerated therein have been discovered by scientific analysis of mummies and relics found in ancient tombs. Skilled artisans from the various nations of the East had developed the science of compounding spices in various ways, sometimes crushing them beneath the wheels of a heavy cart or chariot, in order to produce the fine fragrant powders.

To be an apothecary was considered a high honor and was indeed a prestigious occupation. Blending the incenses and anointing oils and medicines would require materials from the uttermost parts of the earth. But more than that, it required the rare skill of one highly trained, with unique apparatus, to prepare the powders and blend the oils so as to obtain just the right fragrance to please the nostrils of a king, or to be acceptable to the gods; or the precise formula to heal the sicknesses of the people. The art of the apothecary was not an easy one. Moses was learned in all the arts of the

Egyptians and through his knowledge others came to know these secrets as well. In the instructions for preparing the Holy Anointing Oil, however, none of the Egyptian formulas were used. Moses did not employ the wisdom of Egypt, but received the formula from the Lord Himself who is the revealer of secrets. From the prophet Isaiah we learn that the Almighty is wonderful in counsel, and excellent in working and wisdom cometh from the Lord of Hosts (Isa. 28:29,

"And the Lord spoke unto Moses, saying, See, I have called by name Bezaleel the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah: and I have filled him with the Spirit of God, in wisdom, and in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship. And I, behold, I have given with him Aholiab, the son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan: and in the hearts of all that are wise hearted I have put wisdom, that they may make all that I have commanded thee... the cloths of service, and the holy garments for Aaron the priest, and the garments of his sons, to minister in the priest's office, and the ANOINTING OIL, and sweet incense for the Holy Place: according to all that I have commanded thee shall they do" (Ex. 31:1-6, 10-11).

To men like Bezaleel and Aholiab, and every wise-hearted man in whom the Lord had put wisdom and understanding, was given the ability to perform all manner of work to build the Tabernacle with all its furnishings, to make the priest's garments for beauty and glory, to compound the incense for use on the altars and the anointing oil for the priests. The equipment as well as the methods and ingredients had to conform to God's standards. A specific rod of the right shape and weight was to be used to pound the spices into powder. The proportioning of the various ingredients also had to be exact, both by weight and by measure. The oil they were to use could not be just any oil at hand; it must be pure olive oil. The formula had to be followed precisely, and, beside all this, use of the finished product was limited to the purposes designated by the Lord. Those privileged ones who would be anointed therewith would be holy, dedicated to the service of the Lord, sacred persons, a people with a purpose, priests of the Most High God! What a high value God places upon the anointing! How wonderful it is! Keeping the Holy Anointing Oil sealed up in a container was not in God's plan. The anointing oil must be **POURED PROFUSELY UPON AARON AND HIS SONS!** The fragrance must be spread abroad by the Royal Priesthood! Under the New Covenant the sons of God are being formed into the heavenly priesthood after the Order of Melchizedek, and what a thrill it is to be the means of spreading the fragrance of Christ throughout the world! "But thanks be unto God, who in Christ always leads us in triumph, and **THROUGH US SPREADS THE FRAGRANCE** of...HIM everywhere!" (II Cor. 2:14, RSV).

THE FRAGRANCE OF THE HOLY OINTMENT

"Ye have an UNCTION from the Holy One and ye know all things." "The ANOINTING which ye have received of Him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same ANOINTING teacheth you of all things and is truth and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in Him" (I Jn. 2:20,27).

The meaning of UNCTION (and its Greek original CHARISMA) is smoothness, oiliness, lubrication. From custom the word carried with it also the thought of fragrance, perfume. How beautifully and forcefully this word represents the nature and characteristics of those who come under this antitypical anointing - holiness, gentleness, patience, goodness, knowledge, wisdom, joy, peace, kindness, power, - love! What a sweet, pure perfume does this anointing of the Holy Spirit of God bring with it to all who receive it! However

ungainly or coarse or crude or ignorant the outer man, the earthen vessel, how speedily it partakes of the sweetening and purifying influence of the treasure of the new heart, the new mind, the new will, the new spirit, the new man within - anointed with the Holy Spirit and brought into harmony with the DIVINE NATURE.

As the precious ointment was lavishly poured upon the head of the priest, it ran down upon his beard and then on to his garments, even down to the very skirts of the garment. Thus the garment would be laden with the rich odor of the ointment so that wherever the anointed one went, the fragrance would follow along with him. God gave perfume a wonderful place in the ministry of the priesthood! All the perfume in the Holy Anointing Oil pointed to the Spirit of Jesus Christ. That oil, which could not be put upon human flesh, neither could they make any like unto it, showed forth the graces and glory of Jesus Christ as the only perfume in heaven above or in earth beneath. It pointed to Christ as the only One acceptable unto God. That oil, which was made of aromatic spices beaten small, symbolized the fragrance of God's firstborn Son, the anointed One, in whom He was always well pleased. He is the source and fountain of all the fragrance in heaven and upon earth.

It was Mary of Bethany who sat at the feet of the Lord, and she it was who broke the alabaster box to pour the fragrant ointment upon His head and feet; and when her ointment was outpoured upon Him, the whole house and all that was therein basked in the fragrance of the Christ's anointing. A Penny represented the wages of a day when Jesus was on earth, but Mary lavished three hundred pennies' worth of ointment upon Him, the labor of a whole year poured upon His blessed head, first because she loved Him for who she knew Him to be and, secondly, to anoint Him for the burial her spirit perceived was soon to come. And He said, "She hath done what she could; she hath anointed My body beforehand for My burial." Thus it was when the alabaster box of His body, which contained this precious perfume of heaven's nature, was broken; the oil and fragrance flowed out, filling heaven and earth. It was when His body was broken, when His flesh was rent, that heaven's perfume was released to fill the universe of God. He opened up a new and living way into the Most Holy Place, pouring out His fragrant life on behalf of Adam's race; and the fragrance from the redemption which He brought to mankind, still flows and flows and flows. When He shed His blood, when He rose again, when He ascended on High, when He became High Priest of the Melchizedekian Order, when He rushed down from the throne of the Father in mighty spirit power on the day of Pentecost we hear Him say to the members of the Royal Priesthood, "Mine oils are thine; and I would have this fragrance ever upon thee that others, through thee, may know that Mine oils have a goodly fragrance. My garments smell of myrrh, aloes and cassia, and I would have all thy garments smell of myrrh, aloes and cassia."

When the High Priest, who, with the Holy Anointing Oil upon him, had been ministering before God in the Most Holy Place, came out and passed among the congregation of Israel, the fragrance of that holy oil enveloped him. No oil like unto this could be made by any man or be put upon any flesh; it could be only upon those who ministered before God, and only upon them did this holy perfume linger and ascend before God. So with those who enter in to the Holiest of all, who dwell in union with the High Priest of their profession and minister before the presence of God; His oils are upon them, His likeness and fragrance surround and emanate from them; and all who come near know that they have been abiding in the presence of the Lord. Do you long to be fragrant, dear child of God? Hasten to Him whose oils have a goodly fragrance; call upon Him whose Name is as oil poured forth; put off all the attributes and weaknesses of self, and put Him on. Put

Him on! Draw away from the spirit of this world and separate yourself from the multitude of things that would occupy your time, contaminate your mind, fray your nerves, agitate your emotions, and sap your strength. Clothe thyself in Him, let God forevermore hide thee away in Him. Then shall those about thee smell such fragrance as has never before been discerned upon thee; and they shall know that HIS OILS have a goodly fragrance, and that HIS OILS are upon thee!

We are commanded to put on Jesus Christ; and as He becomes our garment, as He clothes us more and more, His anointing will be more and more perceptible to those about us. How fragrant the priests were! Their garments and their bodies were perfumed with the costly spices and oil, so that the air about them was laden with delicate fragrance like the odors of a thousand flowers. Even the least movement of one whose person was thus perfumed, sent out sweet odors; and he walked in a cloud of perfumed air. Oh, what God is teaching us! The mystery of it! So should it be with us! Our walk and carriage, our appearance and manner of speech, our attitudes and expressions, the least movement in our lives, should be surrounded and permeated with the precious spiritual perfume of HIS NATURE AND CHARACTER, HIS GLORY AND POWER, HIS WISDOM, WILL, AND WAYS. Oh, how our hearts long for that, even in our most common movements and actions, in the nitty-gritty of everyday living, under the pressures and problems of job, family, and relationships, the Christlife shall be discerned. As we put Him on, and His garments, and His oils, we are hidden away in this divine priestly garment, under this holy anointing of His priestly life, and we emit the fragrance of Christ, praise His name. IT IS THE ANOINTING THAT MAKES US PRIESTS!

THE PRICE OF THE ANOINTING

All who desire to be prepared for the coming manifestation of the sons of God must realize that such preparation is costly and expensive. In a day when we have become accustomed to discounts and cut-rate sales, we must accept the fact that the oil of God IS NOT CHEAP. Some time ago I read an article about the perfume industry of Gras, France where flowers grow in abundance. All genuine perfume is taken from thousands of flowers. In December and January the roses bloom there and they make perfume, not from synthetic concoctions but from real flowers. Large tracts of land are given altogether to the raising of flowers. Rose buds are collected early in the morning while the dew is still on them. Once the flower opens some of the perfume evaporates, so they want the bud. The oil for the perfume is extracted from the petals by one of two methods, distillation and effleurage. In distillation the petals are boiled in water, turning the essential oil into a gas. This gas is caught in another container and cooled, when it again becomes a liquid. In effleurage, the petals are placed on glass trays and covered with fat, which absorbs the essential oil. To recover the oil from the fat, it is mixed with alcohol and heated. The essential oil dissolves in the alcohol and rises to the top of the container, where it can be skimmed off. Extracting essential oils is a very tricky and delicate job, and it cannot be done on a mass-production basis. THIS IS THE PRINCIPLE REASON FOR THE VERY HIGH COST OF FINE PERFUMES. Essence of perfume! How few people know anything about it.

You can buy perfume in the 5 & 10 store for a dollar a bottle. But that is a cheap concoction. Real perfume is something else. You say in France, "How much is this bottle of perfume?" The lady may say, "One hundred dollars." What's the difference? Its real. It costs something! It takes 9,000 rosebuds to make one pound of Essence of Roses. The rose pickers must go out early in the morning and pick the buds. The dew must still be on

the roses. They get the greatest yield of perfume from roses picked before sunrise. Think of it.

When the Lord explained to Moses the plans for the Tabernacle, He went into much detail about what was to be involved in making the special Holy Anointing Oil for use by the priests. Needless to say, this anointing oil was not in what you would call an affordable price range. In fact, if we were to calculate in American dollars the cost of mixing such a mixture, we would find it to be priceless. And this oil was never in danger of being devalued - the price was set "according to the shekel of the sanctuary." Monetary values fluctuate every day across the globe, BUT THE PRICE OF GOD'S ANOINTING WILL NEVER CHANGE. What, then, is the price we must pay for this oil? And where must we go to get it?

The priestly anointing, the graces and glories of HIS DIVINE NATURE, the wonderful mind of Christ, the superior wisdom, the incorruptible life, the great spiritual power and all the other equipping that is necessary to carry out God's purposes in these last days cannot be purchased with money. There is not a currency on earth that will buy it - nor is there enough gold or silver locked in the bank vaults or buried beneath the earth. It is a priceless commodity that can be secured only by the man or woman who is willing to spend all of his or her life - all his time, his energy, his devotion - in seeking after God. All who treasure the beautiful hope of sonship must ask themselves these questions: Is seeking God the most valuable and rewarding thing in all my life? Is my most prized ambition to lay hold on Him, no matter what energy I must expend in doing so? Can I say with the Psalmist, "As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after Thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God...my soul followeth hard after Thee" (Ps. 42:1-2; 63:8).

Oh, His presence! Do you smell it? The rose pickers must go out early in the morning to pick the buds. The dew must still be on the roses. They get the greatest yield of perfume from roses picked before sunrise. Furthermore, the higher the altitude in which the roses grow, the greater the yield of perfume. Ah, beloved, let us arise early with the pickers and go out with them. Let us rise before the dawn and climb the heights of the mountain of God to gather the precious oil. A new day of life and light and love is soon to break upon the face of the whole earth, the sun of righteousness shall arise with healing in His wings, and the desire of all nations shall come as the holy King Priests of Melchizedek's Order arise in the earth to take the reins of government, bringing an end to the long and dreadful night of misrule, sin, sorrow, ignorance, bondage and death. Of our Lord and Leader it was written, "And a great while before day He arose and went out into a mountain to pray." And I do not hesitate to tell you that in this dark hour, just before the dawn of that more glorious age of the manifestation of the sons of God, there is a remnant who is arising early in the morning before sunrise while the whole world and the church are still fast asleep, to gather the costly ingredients for the NEW ANOINTING that shall break the yoke and bring blessed deliverance to the countless billions of captives held prisoners by sin, Satan and death.

Seeking God is expensive because He is the most valuable thing in the universe. In the end it will cost you every thing you have. And all that you are. Oh, that I may KNOW HIM! Not just in a measure, but in His fullness. Have you counted the cost to so know Him, dear one? The price we might pay to so know Him by spending hours in prayer, or hours in His Word, or hours lying prostrate at His blessed feet is nothing compared to the glory that is to be revealed in us when we are filled with His fullness. It is as we seek Him and

tarry long in His presence that He pours the flask of oil upon our heads in abundance, and all the character, wisdom, power and glory we need to change our world. It is as we gaze into His face in the light that the Spirit brings, that His presence comes to rest upon us in fullest measure, so that all about can see His glory. Is there any price too great to pay to seek and find the riches of the glory and the power hidden in His presence? Dare we not spend all that we have to buy this treasure? If we truly want to be prepared for the next great move of God in the earth - the manifestation of the sons of God - we must put aside every other interest and every other desire that would try to lure us away from undistracted devotion to Him.

Ah - it is not the great things in our lives that cause us to miss the mark the most. When we are faced with something formidable, we know that it must be overcome; and we draw upon the grace and power, which are in the Lord, to do this. It is the little things that we do not think amount to anything which are going to stop us from arriving at the measure of the stature of the fullness of the Christ. It may be along the lines of habits, words, attitudes, emotions, old natural ways, which have been with us for years and are at variance with the priestly nature; and which are so a part of ourselves that we are hardly conscious that they are there. We must take these little foxes, seize them and hold them fast, and exercise dominion over them until they are brought to death and eradicated out of our lives once for all.

The apostle admonishes, "But now ye also PUT OFF these; anger, wrath, malice, filthy communication out of your mouth" (Col. 3:8). PUT OFF - meaning lay aside, put away, seize hold of and put off - these instructions were not written to the ungodly, but to those who are believers, following on to know the Lord in deeper measures. The more obvious sins were dealt with long ago, and no one teaches SONS that they must not murder, rape, rob banks, get drunk, visit massage parlors, bow down to idols, etc. By regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost we have been washed and made partakers of the divine nature and as the inner Christ-life takes hold of our being there is no inclination to practice these grosser sins of the flesh. But now, what about the more subtle defilements - little resentments, inner agitations, ill-feelings, bitterness, criticisms, hurt because people will not receive your revelation or message, because they disagree with you, shun you, spread false rumors about you, disappoint you. All these are UNPRIESTLY attributes. Oh, yes! God is making ready a people for the FULL AND TOTAL AND COMPLETE MANIFESTATION OF HIMSELF, and the plowshares of the Spirit are probing deeper and deeper, and tearing up and exposing more and more stones and roots and clods than we ever thought heretofore.

One might soar high on the sweet wine of revelation and understand all mysteries of how the saints of the Most High shall take the Kingdom, how they shall conquer death, how they shall judge the world and angels in that blest age to come, how they shall rule and reign upon His throne and deliver the groaning creation, and this is all truth, for it is a pure vision which shall be fulfilled. But I cannot be too forceful in my effort to show you that long before man is ever to be a participator in such marvelous realities, he will have been thoroughly dealt with by the hand of God, the self-life being abased before the Lord, every rock of pride and every root of self-ascendancy purged out, so that our only desire will be to see the LORD glorified. Before ever we share His throne we will have learned quite well what the Spirit meant when He inspired the man of wisdom to pen these words: "He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city" (Prov. 16:32).

Yes, there is a PRICE on the PRIESTHOOD ANOINTING! If we find that our minds are set on thoughts of pleasure, on certain selfish ambitions, or on worldly interests, we must be honest and admit that we have not esteemed and valued God above all else. That should immediately arrest us with concern, and bring us to repentance. We can then chase away the little foxes, and get on with our whole-hearted pursuit of God. Jesus told a parable that vividly warns us about placing value on other things above Himself and His Kingdom: "A certain man was giving a big dinner, and he invited many; and at the dinner hour he sent his slave to say to those who had been invited, 'Come, for everything is ready now.' But they all alike began to make excuses. The first one said to him, 'I have bought a piece of land and I need to go out and look at it; please consider me excused.' And another one said, 'I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I am going to try them out; please consider me excused.' And another one said, 'I have married a wife and for that reason I cannot come'" (Lk. 14:16-20).

The parable goes on to say that, because of the guests' excuses, the host became angry and said, "...NONE OF THOSE MEN WHO WERE INVITED SHALL TASTE OF MY DINNER!" (vs. 24). Will this be the case when the heavens are opened and the glory of God's Royal Priesthood breaks out upon the world? Will many saints be excluded from the glory and blessing of that hour because they placed personal interests and the things of this world above that of seeking and desiring to KNOW GOD? Notice that two of the three who gave excuses had PURCHASED SOMETHING. They placed more value on those things than on being in His presence. If we are not diligent to heed Jesus' warning, the CARES OF THIS LIFE can exclude us from being used by God in the coming manifestation of His power. THIS IS THE PRICE OF THE PRIESTLY ANOINTING!

THE INGREDIENTS OF THE ANOINTING

"Moreover the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Take thou also unto thee principle spices, of pure myrrh...and of sweet cinnamon...and of sweet calamus...and of cassia... and of olive oil...and thou shalt make it an oil of holy ointment, an ointment compound after the art of the apothecary: it shall be a holy anointing oil" (Ex. 30:22-25).

The apothecary listens very carefully to the instructions given by Moses. The formula must not vary. For the Holy Oil the apothecary begins with five hundred shekels more than two gallons of pure myrrh of the finest quality obtainable. The myrrh that the Ishmaelite caravan carried down into Egypt (Gen. 37:25) was a gum, much like maple sap, which came from the stem of a low, thorny, ragged tree, that grows in Arabia and Eastern Africa. Myrrh is not only fragrant, but it is bitter; the bitterness is an emblem of suffering. And never forget, precious friend of mine, JESUS IS THE PRIEST WHO IS GOING TO MIX THIS THING IN YOU! Fragrant and bitter - you will never be anointed unless you know some bitterness. The "faith" crowd, the "word" crowd, the "prosperity" crowd who want only the blessings will never be anointed priests of the Lord. The fragrant and bitter myrrh sets forth our participation with Him in the bitterness of partaking with Him in His death; through which bitterness we put on the fragrance of His life and attributes. The purest form of this precious spice is obtained by piercing the bark of the tree or shrub, and from these wounds flow the resinous gum that is so fragrant and costly. In Christ's humiliation upon earth, and when He was pierced upon the cross, the myrrh of His eternal work flowed forth. From five bleeding wounds flowed the fragrant, bitter myrrh that fills heaven and earth. All the spices on earth would fail to set forth a faint shadow of the perfume that the Christ gathered while upon earth, and carried with Him up to the Father.

The first ingredient in the anointing is the fragrant but BITTER myrrh. Ah, we thought the anointing was all glory, billows of joy and power like gigantic ocean waves sweeping through our souls, producing spiritual exuberance and power to preach like Peter and do exploits like Paul. The failure to understand this first principle of the anointing must be laid at the door of those blind leaders of the blind who have foolishly taught God's precious people that, after a sinner comes to Christ, all will be sunshine and rose from that day forward. Henceforth he will walk the glory road, asking for anything he wants and receiving it immediately, forever free from pain and sickness and problems and needs, and should he die at any moment he will stride right through the pearly gates into his mansion in heaven. Let all who think that the Christian life is peace, power and plenty, be warned that anyone who imagines that he can be a victorious son of God without fighting fierce and bloody battles, is unlearned and ignorant of the ways of God to say the least.

All across the land today, alas, we hear the radio and television preachers convincing vast multitudes of naive and gullible babes in Christ that the saints of God should have the best of everything. They should have instant healing, the most lucrative businesses, the finest homes, the most prestigious positions, the most expensive cars, the finest clothes and freedom from want of any kind. Why, they will even bless our billfolds for ten dollars and assure us that, if we will give them one hundred dollars, we will get one thousand in return. Then, wonder of wonders, after these highly favored saints have lived their lives in ease and luxury, they will fly away to heaven at last with nothing to do and all eternity to do it in. And if the great and terrible tribulation should come while they are still on earth, they will be immediately evacuated by way of rapture to spend seven years sitting on a cloud with Jesus eating pork chops or some other such foolishness. Let all who teach these fairy tales and preposterous absurdities hear the voice of the eternal Spirit of Truth ringing clear above all other voices, saying, "In the world ye SHALL HAVE TRIBULATION: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." I hear Him warn His beloved saints in these awesome words, "Yea, and A-L-L that live godly in Christ Jesus SHALL SUFFER PERSECUTION." To all who would reign with Him upon His throne He says, "IF WE SUFFER, we shall also reign with Him." To those who seek the glory and power of the Kingdom of God He declares, "We must through MUCH TRIBULATION enter into the Kingdom of God." And again, "And not only so, but we GLORY IN TRIBULATIONS also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience..."

One well-known television preacher was recently bombarding the air waves with the tearful complaint that he was being "persecuted" by the press. And what was the cause of his persecution? Why bless your heart, the press had discovered that while pleading a financial emergency and making impassioned appeals on his show for millions of dollars to keep his work from collapsing, he was, at the same time, secretly purchasing an elaborate beach house in California and Rolls Royce and Mercedes automobiles for his personal use at a cost of almost a half million dollars, not to mention the expensive furs and diamonds accumulated by his Jezebel wife. Persecution indeed! I am making no mistake when I tell you that this man was not being persecuted for righteousness' sake, nor for the Kingdom of God - rather, he was being persecuted for foolishness' sake, and that is stating it kindly. Such know nothing at all about the conformation to the image of Christ that comes only by the correcting and transforming ministry of suffering, persecution, tribulation, trial and testing.

The shallow Christians and the hireling ministry of the apostate church system know absolutely nothing about the divine principle of the refining, purifying fires of suffering. As long as men's eyes are blinded to the great and glorious purposes of God for His sons in

the ages to come, they will always remain ignorant of the supernal blessings of their sufferings with Christ. If Christians are deluded by the popular but erroneous notion that they have been saved to escape this old sin-cursed world and spend eternity shouting and dancing up and down Hallelujah Boulevard to the rapturous music of harps and the fluttering of angel's wings, then indeed there would be little purpose in suffering during this present time at all, for even if saints were no worse off for their suffering, they would be no better either. But when the Father through His matchless grace reveals to the child of God that it is His Master Plan for the ages to come to effect a universal reconciliation, restitution and restoration through the agency of a royal race of kings and priests who through trial, suffering, and fierce tribulation have come to the image of Jesus Christ, to reign and work with Him in the plenitude of His wisdom, the fullness of His understanding, the perfection of His holiness, the infiniteness of His love, the beauty of His justice and the omnipotence of His power, every son having the mind of God, discerning all things, knowing all things and having the perfect nature, character and ability to carry out the intricate and infinite will of God, then all our tribulation is freighted with vital significance. Among that perfect, omnipotent Royal Priesthood there will be no carnal minds, no fleshly actions, no selfish desires, no self-serving, no weakness, no limitation, no flaws of character, no mistakes, no dissensions, no disobedience; but with justice and wisdom and righteousness and love and power shall they rule the nations, and ultimately the vastnesses of the unbounded heavens until all things everywhere are subdued unto Christ and Christ shall present a perfect Kingdom to the Father.

Now since such glories are in store for the Royal Priesthood, can any man longer question why our all-wise heavenly Father should take such pains to bring His sons to perfection? None knows better than He exactly what is needed to transform His sons from corrupt and carnal creatures of the dust to beings of divine understanding and heavenly glory. I have often said that I have strong confidence in the ability of my heavenly Father to bring me to perfection and maturity as a son of God. My Father is a great son-raiser. He was a colossal success with His firstborn! Anyone who can raise a son like Jesus Christ knows exactly what He is doing and can surely handle you and me, my precious brother and sister. "...we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor; that He by the grace of God should taste death for every man. For it became Him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect THROUGH SUFFERINGS...wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth" (Heb. 2:9-10; Phil. 2:9-10).

Beholding the glory of Jesus Christ we can understand why the Lord takes such infinite care to bring all His sons to perfection. Would you dare to imagine that any of the presidents, prime ministers, senators or members of the parliaments of this present world system would be found fit candidates to straighten out the mess this world is in, bringing an end to crime, poverty, ignorance, fear, deceit, greed, war, broken homes and hearts, sickness, pain and death, restoring all into God again? Ah - the ages to come will be given into the hands of God's choicest sons - saints fully developed, perfected through suffering, matured through trial, proven through testing, far beyond the reach of corruption and decay, far above the realm of greed and selfishness, or any such thing.

One of the fundamental laws of creation is that an OPPOSING FORCE is necessary for growth, and to produce strength, stamina, and endurance. Any living thing that grows up

without any opposition is weak and powerless. God's NEW CREATION must be strong and powerful, and any thing that desires to be strong, or anyone, must wrestle with a force that is contrary to them. Any man who wants to develop muscular power to be strong, must spend weeks and months and years in vigorous training doing heavy exercises, lifting heavy weights, using the opposing force of gravity to develop his strength. A man who wants to be a great wrestler, doesn't just wrestle when he is in the ring. At his training center he has his wrestling partners with whom he wrestles by the hour. If he didn't do this he would be weak and powerless in the ring.

A boxer has his punching bags and sparring partners, with whom he spends hours every day. Those opposing forces are indispensable to develop strength. A plant that grows in a greenhouse sheltered from the winds and rains, pampered day after day, may grow large, but is inherently weak, and if suddenly exposed to the elements will wither and die. But a plant that is constantly exposed to the fierce winds and pounding rains, burning heat and chilling cold, is strong and not easily destroyed.

So it is with us as human beings. One who grows up in a sheltered environment, who is pampered all his life, grows up a weak, spineless individual. ADVERSITY builds strength of character. If we were never exposed to trials and tribulation, we would grow up weak indeed! The more we are exposed to ADVERSE circumstances, the more we have to wrestle with our environment, the more we are CHALLENGED by the world around us, the stronger we become. Those pitiful Christians who want to be raptured away before the big bad Antichrist shows up know nothing of this. And I prophesy that they will be among the first to collapse when real trouble comes. Saints, IF WE WOULD BE THE SONS OF THE MOST HIGH we must be STRONG in the Lord and in the power of His might! Our Father wants us to be strong, so He has wisely given us wrestling partners to wrestle with, so we will become strong. There are opposing forces (thank God for them!) that we must constantly battle against. Some of these adverse things are the principalities and powers in the heavenlies. "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in heavenly places" (Eph. 6:12). Could a beast-government, a mark of the beast, or an Antichrist be any more of a fierce foe than these? The prosperity and blessing folk are always talking about a POSITIVE message, the power of POSITIVE thinking, or POSITIVE faith, or possibility thinking, or some such idea. Haven't they heard that to have even enough power in a battery to run an automobile you must have BOTH A POSITIVE AND A NEGATIVE? Positive without negative produces no power at all! There is a great and magnificent future ahead for the sons of God, and a great work our Father has for us to do in the ages to come, and He is preparing us and making us ready for the high and holy place He has for us. Can we not see that ALL THE OPPOSING FORCES WE NOW ENCOUNTER are working together for our good - to develop the strength, character, wisdom, and power we must acquire? Through the valley of death into the realm of life and joy is God's way to sonship, and the secret of "glorying in tribulation" is to UNDERSTAND the eternal purpose of trial and the grand and glorious end.

Oh - blessed myrrh! Beautiful anointing! The time will come when the sweet fragrance of the Spirit of Christ will be everywhere in the reconciled universe. No selfishness left, no hatred, no variance, no warring, no emulation, no back-biting, no SIN! Every one and everything in the universe of bliss will come under the anointing. What pleasure for God! What peace and love and unity throughout the whole vast scene pervaded by the perfume of the holy anointing!

We should direct our thoughts to yet another consideration. The fragrance of the Holy Anointing Oil improved with age. The nature of the oil didn't improve, but the fragrance did. As we surrender our all to the Lord, submitting to His dealing hand, absorbing into our lives all the choicest elements of His sanctifying grace, when our product has aged, fully ripened, matured and carefully blended, it is an ointment fit for the head of a priest of the Most High God.

Myrrh has the word "pure" attached to it in the formula for the oil. The word here rendered "pure," is literally, "free-flowing," a term which is explained by the fact that the best myrrh is said to flow out spontaneously, or freely from the bark, while that of inferior quality oozes out only when the bark is marked with deep incisions. Pure or free-flowing myrrh means that when bitter, cutting experiences come your way, in spite of all the pain and pressure you are flowing freely, emitting the fragrance of Jesus. Myrrh is bitterness, the bitterness of suffering and death, but it speaks just as eloquently of the spontaneous flow of HIS LIFE. Can you still flow even though you pass through the valley of the shadow of death? Can you still flow when all hell breaks loose, your whole world is turned upside down, and naught but tragedy, sorrow and bitterness stalk your path? If you can, then YOU'RE ANOINTED. Anointed with HIS grace and glory! Anointed with the fragrance of HIS life!

Once the myrrh is gathered only as it is crushed and pierced, does its fragrance go forth; and it is not easy to yield to the crushing and the piercing process. This, truly, is bitter, though it yields fragrance in the peaceable fruits of righteousness. As we meet Him in this hidden place, He reveals to us that the slain Lamb must have a slain body; and we hear His voice calling us to join that redeemed company who follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth. We hear Him calling us to be willing to suffer the loss of all things that we may know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and become conformed to His death. Herein lies the folly of those who preach temporal blessings and financial prosperity and "something GOOD is going to happen to you" all the time. They want the OLIVE OIL (holy Spirit) without the MYRRH! They seek the CROWN without the CROSS! They want to REIGN without first having been perfected through suffering. They have a PARTIAL ANOINTING that may do in the shallows of the Charismatic move, but it will never in a million years produce the ROYAL PRIESTHOOD.

Chapter 22

The Anointing Of The Priesthood

(continued)

"Moreover the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Take thou also unto thee principle spices, of pure myrrh five hundred shekels, and of sweet cinnamon half so much, even two hundred and fifty shekels, and of sweet calamus two hundred and fifty shekels, and of cassia five hundred shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary, and of oil olive an bin: and thou shalt make it an oil of holy ointment, an ointment compound after the art of the apothecary: it shall be a holy ANOINTING OIL. And thou shalt anoint Aaron and his sons, and consecrate them, that they may minister unto Me in the priest's office" (Ex. 30:22-30).

Under Old Testament economy, the anointing was the ceremony by which the priests were installed in their service. They were anointed to their office with a peculiar ointment, called the "Holy Anointing Oil". Of old, three classes were anointed with the Holy anointing Oil - prophets, priests and kings. With it Moses anointed Aaron and his sons and all the priests who came after them. Because of being anointed with the Holy Anointing Oil, the High Priest was called "the anointed" (Lev. 4:3,5,16; 6:22), the same as later for the anointed kings of Israel. Christ (meaning "the anointed") was anointed with the Holy Spirit and power (Acts 10:38) and fulfills all three functions. He is the prophet like unto Moses. He is the promised son of David, the King of Israel. He is a High Priest for the ages according to the Order of Melchizedek.

The oil used in the Holy Anointing Oil could not be just any oil; it must be pure olive oil. The formula had to be followed precisely, and, beside all this, use of the finished product was limited to the purposes designated by the Lord. Those privileged ones who would be anointed therewith would be holy, dedicated to the service of the Lord, sacred persons, a people with a purpose, priests of the Most High God! What a high value God places on the anointing! How wonderful it is! Keeping the Holy Anointing Oil sealed up in a container was not in God's plan. The anointing oil must be **POURED PROFUSELY UPON AARON AND HIS SONS!** The fragrance must be spread abroad by the Royal Priesthood! Under the New Covenant the sons of God are being formed into the heavenly priesthood after the Order of Melchizedek, and what a thrill it is to be the means of spreading the fragrance of Christ throughout the world! "But thanks be unto God, who in Christ always leads us in triumph, and **THROUGH US SPREADS THE FRAGRANCE of...HIM everywhere!**" (II Cor. 2:14)

THE INGREDIENTS OF THE ANOINTING

The Holy Anointing Oil was the final product of the perfumer. The spices of which the anointing oil was made, are called "principle," standing at the head of the most esteemed perfumes. The oil was to be skillfully mingled with them; a holy ointment; an ointment compound after the art of the apothecary; a holy anointing oil. The fragrance of the spices was to be evenly diffused through the whole bin of olive oil, so that no one perfume took

precedence above another; but the oil sent forth the fragrance of all alike. As kings and priests, we too, are to be anointed with the Holy Anointing Oil to be able to serve the Lord acceptably. When we enter into His presence we are perfumed with ointment blended together with the ingredients of HIS ATTRIBUTES that have been inworked into our lives. These are the qualities that are acceptable to God of which myrrh, sweet calamus, cinnamon, cassia and olive oil speak, gathered through months and years of walking with the Lord.

This surpassingly precious perfume presents to us the unmeasured and unmeasurable perfections of Christ inwrought in our lives. So mixed and mingled are these that the attributes and graces that dwell in the Christ, the beauties and excellencies that are concentrated in His adorable Person, and fulfilled now in the elect members of His body, are without limit. Naught save the infinite mind of our Father could scan the infinite perfections of the Royal Priesthood filled with all the fullness of Christ; and as the ages roll along their course toward the ultimate consummation of God's wonderful purpose, those glorious perfections will ever be unfolding themselves in the view of the whole creation from the lowest hell unto the highest heaven. Ever and anon, as some fresh beam of light shall burst forth from that corporate Son of divine glory, the courts of heaven above, and the wide fields of creation beneath, shall resound with thrilling Alleluias to Him who was, who is, and who ever shall be beautiful in His appearing, wonderful in all His ways, marvelous in His salvation - the glorious Creator, Redeemer and King of all!

THE MYRRH

The apothecary listened very carefully to the instructions given by Moses. The formula must not vary. For the Holy Oil the apothecary began with five hundred shekels more than two gallons - of pure myrrh of the finest quality obtainable. Myrrh is not only fragrant, but it is bitter; the bitterness is an emblem of suffering. Ah - we thought the anointing was all glory, billows of joy and power like gigantic ocean waves sweeping through our souls, bringing spiritual ecstasy and power to preach like Peter and do exploits like Paul. Fragrant and bitter - you will never be anointed unless you know some bitterness. The "faith" crowd, the "word" crowd, the "prosperity" crowd who want only the blessings will never be anointed priests of the Lord. The fragrant and bitter myrrh sets forth our death; through participation with Him in the bitterness of partaking with Him in His bitterness we put on the fragrance of His life and attributes.

Myrrh is ever the symbol for death. Closely connected with Christ's life, death and burial, are the precious oils and costly, fragrant spices. He alone received gifts of fragrant oil and spices. The anointings He received at the hands of the women who loved Him with a surpassing love, appeared to have been more precious to Him than all else that was done for Him while He was on earth. The odor of the costly spikenard, with which Mary of Bethany anointed Him, filled the whole house; and no doubt, remained upon Him until He lay in the tomb; for the perfume of those rare and precious oils was most penetrating, and lingered for years. As He was led away to the judgment hall, the fragrance of this oil, which had been poured upon Him unto His burial, sent forth from His person clouds like incense. I wonder if that odor reminded the priests of the continual incense. How blind they were that they did not perceive that He who stood before them was the Heavenly Incense of God!

Sons of God, how is it with you and me? Do we have the fragrance of the anointing upon us when we stand in man's judgment hall? Does this unearthly perfume linger upon us when we are ridiculed and persecuted? When God brings to us a cross upon which we may put away some unworthy thing, does our perfume go forth, or do we repine? When we take up our cross and go up to the place of death, have we been anointed for the burial? Does this anointing go forth in a cloud of perfume that hides the cross and our suffering from all who behold us? After the death of Jesus, the women, who had loved and followed Him on earth, brought one hundred pounds of myrrh and aloes to the tomb. With what grief did they take that precious body and wind about it the white linen cloths! With what untold tenderness did they lay it way in the bed of fragrant spices! Identified with HIS DEATH! Ah, this is what it means to be the anointed priest of God.

In the Song of Solomon the King, beautiful type of God's corporate Son, Head and body, exclaims, "Until the day break, and the shadows flee away, I will get me up to the mountain of myrrh, and to the hill of frankincense" (S. of S. 4:6). The "Mountain of Myrrh" is a figure of the death of the Son of God, while the "Hill of Frankincense" bespeaks of His resurrection life, for frankincense was uniquely the fragrance of the Most Holy Place, the incorruptible realm of God. Beloved, THE CROSS IS THE MOUNTAIN OF MYRRH. Do you desire to walk before God and men as the anointed priest? Then you must go up to the Mountain of Myrrh, the cross, and offer your body a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, and take up your cross and so partake in the death of Christ, that your whole life is filled with His manifested attributes. God would have us remember that the cross is a MOUNTAIN OF MYRRH. It is not just a small amount of myrrh, but a great and eternal mountain of this costly perfume. How many times we go up to the cross with our self-life as if it were mountains of grief and regret, of suffering and sighing, of ruin and loss, and not a sweet and priceless fragrance unto God. How often when we take up our cross to go after Jesus, we follow Him moaning and repining at every step. All the fragrance of this precious hill is lost when we go up reluctantly and grudgingly, or withholding something from death. Oh! let us go up with joy unspeakable and full of glory, exulting that we have been counted worthy to suffer and to follow in His footsteps, and that to us it has been granted to die to the vain spirit of this world, to the carnality, childishness and abomination of the wretched religious systems, and to our own fleshly minds, ambitions, desires and ways, to be made gloriously alive unto God and exquisitely conformed to the image of His beloved Son.

It is not enough to make an occasional trip up to the cross, for death must become a mountain to us, we must go there to stay until the day breaks and the shadows all flee away. It bespeaks a STATE OF BEING. To BE DEAD is a STATE OF BEING. We must abide in the Lord's death. Today, many zealous Christians have the wrong concept. They believe they must fast, weep, pray, and wait on the Lord in order to die. That is all good, but it is not death. To tarry at an altar is easy; to pray for a week is easy; even to fast for a month is easy; but to stay at the Mountain of Myrrh for a lifetime is not easy. We could all fast and pray for a long time without any sleep, but to stay in the Lord's death means that we so absolutely DIE to the flesh, the world and the devil that we simply ARE DEAD. It is only then that the day breaks eternal and the shadows of this earthly realm forever flee away. Let us open ourselves before the Lord. I do believe that we all have the sense that our Day is not yet fully broken. We all realize that there are still some haunting shadows of limitation, fear, lack of understanding and fleshliness about us. No matter how much we say that we are the elect sons of God, sons of Light, sons of the Day, kings and priests of the Most High, there is still the sense that we are not clearly in the Day. As long as we have such a realization we will spontaneously say, "UNTIL the day break, and

the shadows flee away, I will get me up to the Mountain of Myrrh, and to the Hill of Frankincense."

The more one abides in the light, the more one recognizes darkness. The more perfect one is, the more conscious one becomes of imperfections. So likewise, the more mature a saint becomes, the more he will sense his immaturity. The more alive unto God a believer becomes, the more aware he will be of death that remains. The further one walks onward in God, the greater seems to be the need for cleansing, purging, and purifying. The more he receives praise of the Lord, the more he feels the sky of spiritual life has not yet come into fullest glow. Many who have come forth from the dank tombs of religion to follow on to know the Lord, feel as if they are wandering in somewhat of a wilderness. What then are these to do?. Before the perfect light of the fullness of sonship to God can dawn and all shadows flee away, we must go to the Mountain of Myrrh and to the Hill of Frankincense and THERE ABIDE UNTIL the day breaks and the shadows flee away. But one is always reluctant to leave the present ground of attainment and reach out further for still higher things. But we must hasten to the Mountain of Myrrh and the Hill of Frankincense and literally steep ourselves in these rich odors. We must abide until all the old life, the old religiousness and the old self-hood has been so renounced and so completely yielded to Him that He will find nothing of the old creation. Then! the Day will break, there will spring up within HIS RESURRECTION LIFE, a transcendent overcoming power, a perfected degree of spiritual perception, vital union between soul and spirit and the fresh and abundant out-flowing of His life as rivers of living water. Until the Day break! We all have such a longing deep within. This is a turn, and this is the Lords moving and working within us. So we must learn to abide in the Lord's death and in His resurrection until the Day breaks and all the shadows flee away.

SWEET CINNAMON

Cinnamon for the Holy Oil had to be the choicest that the merchants could offer. Only the superior product from faraway Ceylon, or its equal, was acceptable. It must be sweet, with not a trace of bitterness. For the oil must be from the inner bark of cinnamon trees, carefully selected, dried in the sun, then beaten into a fine powder, two hundred and fifty shekel's worth, almost nine pounds. This product was the delight of kings and of the beautiful ladies of the court, so the selective buyer might well have waited for weeks and even months for cinnamon of the right quality to become available. It is interesting to note that sweet cinnamon was used only as a perfume. Praise God, this is fulfilled IN US as the apostle has said, "But thanks be to God, Who in Christ always leads us in triumph - as trophies of Christ's victory - and through us spreads and makes evident the fragrance of the knowledge of God everywhere. For we are the sweet fragrance of Christ which exhales unto God, discernible alike among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing" (II Cor. 2:14-15, Amplified).

There is a beautiful mystery here, however. The sweetness of the sweet cinnamon came from the bark of a small evergreen which had flowers with a disagreeable odor. Sweetness - in the midst of disagreeableness! Sweetness in the presence of unpleasantness, distastefulness, offensiveness and nastiness! The question follows - Can you stay sweet in the midst of trouble, affliction, adversity, pain, frustration, persecution and suffering? Suffering is the dealings and processings of God whereby sons are brought to perfection. "For it became Him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings. Though He were a Son, yet learned He obedience through the

things which He suffered; and being made perfect, He became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey Him" (Heb. 2:10; 5:8-9).

Ah, to be sweet IN THE PROCESS! God told Ezekiel to breathe upon the dry bones that they might live, but I've met some people who have halitosis in the spirit. Bad breath! Dog breath. Swamp breath. Dragon mouth. God sent something their way custom-designed to help them, and they reacted instead of acting; rather than yielding under the dealing hand of God and responding in meekness, they became upset and angry, pouted and sat under a miff-bush. Perhaps you say' "You don't know what a place I am in, what people are doing to me, my husband is unsaved, and I have all these problems and trials." No wonder! With the kind of Lord you're demonstrating, I don't blame your husband one bit! Oh - for sweetness in the midst of distastefulness and disagreeableness. It is my conviction that the sweet cinnamon is the Holy Spirit of Love of which Paul so eloquently writes, saying, "Love endures long and is patient and kind; love never is envious nor boils over with jealousy; is not boastful or vainglorious, does not display itself haughtily. It is not conceited - arrogant and inflated with pride; it is not rude, and does not act unbecomingly. Love does not insist on its own rights or its own way, for it is not self-seeking; it is not touchy or fretful or resentful; it takes no account of the evil done to it - pays no attention to a suffered wrong. It does not rejoice at injustice and unrighteousness, but rejoices when right and truth prevail. Love bears up under anything and everything that comes, is ever ready to believe the best of every person, its hopes are faceless under all circumstances and it endures everything without weakening" (1Cor. 13:4-7, Amplified).

SWEET CALAMUS

Sweet Calamus was an easy ingredient to find for the Holy Oil. It came from ginger grass that grew in abundance in Egypt. The women would pull up huge quantities of it to obtain the roots, which they would weave into screens for their windows and verandas. When the grass was thoroughly dried by the hot desert sun, its fragrance seemed to improve, producing a pleasant and sweet aroma. Beaten into small particles and mixed with an equal part of cinnamon, it produced a perfectly balanced, fragrant blend.

Calamus is from a Hebrew word meaning TO STAND UPRIGHT. It is translated "stalk" in Gen. 41:5,22; as "branch" (of the candlestick) in Ex. 25:31-36; as "reed" in I Kings 14: 15; as "balance" in Isa. 46:6; and as "a measuring rod" in Eze. 40:3. This reed scents the air while it is growing and when it is cut down, dried, and powdered, it is used as an ingredient in one of the richest perfumes. Standing upright speaks of righteousness. There is a beauty, a fragrance about a life which is lived out in the righteousness of God! Many highly acclaimed ministries have gone down the tubes during the last thirty years because they sought the POWER of the Kingdom of God apart from the RIGHTEOUSNESS of the Kingdom. "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God, and His righteousness..." They were great preachers, great orators, great pulpiteers, had powerful gifts of God operating in their lives, with charisma dripping off their fingertips. Hundreds and thousands of followers thronged to their meetings wherever they were. I have seen these same men "sell" prophecies for \$20.00 and sell prayer cloths for \$100.00. I have seen them fall into adultery, and the uncleanness of "free love" and wife-swapping. I have beheld them lifted up in the vanity of worldly pride, flashing expensive diamonds and boasting about their expensive suits, cars and homes. I have even heard them swear and curse from the pulpit. I have known them to be bound by alcoholism and sunken into the filthiness of homosexuality. I witnessed them bilk audiences out of thousands of dollars in

one night's meeting by the use of brazen lies and every sordid trick. I have seen their lives fall apart and their ministries self-destruct.

You ask, "How can such things be?" I will tell you! Men have asked for and have graciously received an anointing of Kingdom power, and have gone forth to do exploits in His name. But in the great majority of cases they neither asked for, nor sought for, nor did they receive, the corresponding righteousness of the Kingdom. To possess power without righteousness is a blueprint for tragedy. It means that men will do the works of God, but cannot live the life of God. They possess power without character. Such will honor God for a season with their mighty works, but just as surely as the pig will return to his wallowing, and the dog to his vomit, just that certain is it that these will ultimately bring shame and reproach upon the name of the Lord by their unrighteous conduct.

But those whom God anoints as members of the Royal Priesthood are anointed with the exhilarating fragrance of sweet calamus - that which STANDS UPRIGHT in the righteousness of God. These priests will not go out with power to heal the sick, cast out devils, and do signs and wonders, but with no power to be honest,- pure, and holy. You won't have to worry about them swindling you out of your money, or seducing your wife, or being caught in some homosexual act, or lying, cheating, deceiving, or swelling up with pride and pompousness like a frog, or building another Tower of Babel around their ministry. God won't do it that way this time! These son-priests are anointed with calamus and exude the precious fragrance of the purity and holiness of the nature of God. Praise His name!

CASSIA

The perfumer required five hundred shekels of cassia. This was a very popular product of merchants from Tyrus (Eze. 27:19). The oriental women and men would perfume their garments with cassia, so that the air about them was laden with the delicate fragrance. Like cinnamon, it came from the bark of a tree, a tropical evergreen tree which grew in abundance in many areas of the then known world. Long incisions were made in the tree trunk or branches. As the bark dried it would peel off from the tree and roll itself into tubes of varying lengths and diameters. Huge bundles of these tubes were piled upon the backs of the camels in every caravan that passed through the land of Palestine. The cassia tubes were then beaten to a fine powder to blend well with the other ingredients of the ointment. When Aaron and his sons were installed into the priestly office, they were anointed with the holy fragrance of cassia and the perfume permeated their priestly garments. This perfume was ever upon him and his sons. Even the least movement of a priest whose garments were thus anointed, sent out sweet odors; and he walked in a cloud of perfumed air. But God had something far more glorious in mind than merely creating an exquisite aroma to delight the nostrils of men.

Cassia grows at high altitudes and has purple flowers, typifying royalty or the kingly nature. How significant, therefore, that the perfume of this plant was worn upon the GARMENTS! A person's position or state of being can often be told by his clothing. A white uniform indicates a nurse, the blue uniform identifies the policeman on his beat, the black robe identifies the judge in the court room, filthy or torn garments are a sign of poverty, and royal robes are a sign of royal estate. The first occurrence of the word robe in the Bible is in Ex. 28:4 and 31. "And these are the garments which they shall make; a breastplate, and an ephod, and a ROBE, and a broided coat, and a mitre, and a girdle: and they shall make holy garments for Aaron thy brother, and his sons, that he may

minister unto Me in the priest's office...and thou shalt make the ROBE OF THE EPHOD all of blue." The Hebrew word is subsequently translated "robe" in I Sam. 24:4, I Chron. 15:27, Job 29:14, and Eze. 26:16, in which cases it specifies a garment worn by a prince or a king. From all these uses of the word it can be seen that the robe of the ephod was a garment of special dignity - A ROBE OF OFFICE - which gave a KINGLY CHARACTER to the High Priest. No material was specified for the High Priest's robe, but the color only, blue. It was the work of a weaver, Bazaleel and Aholiab having been filled with wisdom of heart to execute the fabric. This robe embodied the color of the heavens; it was all of blue. All the priests, the sons of Aaron, wore white linen garments, representing the manifested righteousness of God. The High Priest also wore the white linen garment when he entered into the Most Holy Place to make atonement on the day of atonement. But upon finishing that work, He then adorned himself with the garments of glory and beauty, these garments of glory and beauty typifying the glory, honor and incorruption of His resurrection life and power. Chief among the garments of glory and beauty is the robe. It represents the princely glory of our resurrected and exalted High Priest, who is typified by Aaron and pre-figured by Melchizedek, whose name means KING OF RIGHTEOUSNESS.

There is an interesting passage in Isa. 61:10. "I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for He hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, He hath covered me with a ROBE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments..." A message is filling my heart today and with it there is an unspeakable longing that the heart of every saint of God be turned to seek earnestly to be covered completely with the robe of righteousness of the Son of God. I speak the truth when I tell you that there is a great difference between a garment and a robe. The garment of salvation is that which the Lord has already purchased for us and is freely bestowed as we turn to Him in faith as Saviour; but the robe of righteousness is set before us to be diligently sought after and seized as a prize.

The priestly robe is a garment of POSITION, DIGNITY, HONOR AND SPLENDOR. It identifies the priest and reveals the one with the priestly nature. Jesus Christ is vested with this robe and its glory, and so we read of Him: "Being designated and recognized and saluted by God as High Priest after the Order of Melchizedek" (Heb. 5:10, Amplified). The dazzling glory of this great truth is that the Melchizedekian Priesthood is the priesthood of THE KING OF RIGHTEOUSNESS. King of Righteousness - means HIS RULERSHIP in our lives, as His will replaces our will, His thoughts replace our thoughts, His ways replace our ways, His nature replaces our nature, and HIS LIFE becomes the sphere of all our living and moving and being, filling up our life with His dominion, His throne established in us, where He rules and reigns in righteousness within His temple, which temple we are.

The robe of righteousness is worn by the King of righteousness, Head and body. It is uniquely the garment of the Melchizedekian Order. It is the garment of the Royal Priesthood. It bespeaks the kingly nature which is also priestly, and the priestly nature which is likewise kingly. How appropriate, then, that this garment is anointed with cassia! Cassia is from a Hebrew word meaning "to stoop, bend, or bow low." It bears the purple blossoms of royalty and kingship, but stoops ever so low to touch the earth. Phil. 2:6-8 says of Jesus: "Although He existed in the form of God, He did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a BOND-SERVANT, and was made in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross."

Jesus was the most humble of all men. He was no super-duper, elite, holier-than -thou, country club Son of God! He came from the heart of God and STOOPEd SO LOW that He touched the lowest hell with the grace and redeeming power of the Father.

As I have pointed out earlier in this series, we have a dual roll to fill in the Kingdom; we are not only to be kings, we are also to be priests. We are not only to bear purple blossoms, but we are to perfume the garments of priesthood. It is a lofty position to which we are called, and for which we are being prepared. Sonship, yes. Kings and priests, yes. But why equipped with such power and glory? TO SERVE! For it is written, "Ye are My witnesses, saith the Lord, and MY SERVANT, whom I have chosen" (Isa. 43:10). As kings we reign, as priests we serve, and we REIGN BY SERVING! The one who serves the people well as a priest is the one who will also reign well as a king. "They shall be PRIESTS...and they shall REIGN." Though we are called to become His kings with authority over all, yet our inner attitude must be that of a servant, that we might freely minister, loving, touching, doing good, healing, reconciling, restoring with mercy and love. Not only must we stand in the regal splendor of the purple blossoms of kingly authority, but we must be willing to be cut down and ground into powder to become the FRAGRANCE OF PRIESTLY BLESSING.

As I have studied and meditated upon this, I have received a new vision and apprehension of all there is in Him, hence all there is for us. We are commanded to put on Jesus Christ; and as He becomes our garment, as He clothes us more and more, His perfumes will be more and more perceptible to those about us. We hardly realize how ill-smelling our own attributes are, and how many flies have gotten into the oil which the great Perfumer has commenced to put within us, until we have drawn close enough to Him to discern the fragrance of His pure oils. It is when we smell the goodly fragrance of His humility, that we begin to detect the offensive odor of our pride. It is when the sweetness of His purity and holiness, His submission to God's will, His love and longsuffering, breaks in upon us, that we smell the vile odors of our flesh, our stiffneckedness and willfulness, our lack of love and our shortsuffering. It is when we smell the perfume of His patience and forgiveness toward us, that we get the real offensive odor of our impatience and unforgiving spirit toward one another. It is always the odor of His attributes that we need the most, which smells the sweetest, and which we desire the most ardently; those that are the opposite of our weak places. If we are beset with pride, no attribute of Jesus appears so beautiful as His humility. We think it is the loveliest and most desirable because we need it the most. And so it is with every other need in our lives.

THE OLIVE OIL

One by one the various ingredients, each with its special fragrance, were brought together. All were now ready to be blended with pure olive oil that had been carefully kept in jars sealed with beeswax. The oil was obtained from the best of the fully ripened olives that had been beaten (Ex. 27:20-21), then strained through a finely woven basket and allowed to settle until the oil could be decanted off in absolutely pure form to be stored in earthen containers. Oil was used in food and in ointments, but its primary use was for illumination and thus was considered to be a type of the Holy Spirit. The same olive oil, pure and beaten, that gave light to the lamp in the Holy Place of the Tabernacle, was used in the Holy Anointing Oil poured upon the head of Aaron and his sons!

Just as the oil was needed to light the lamp, so we need the Holy Spirit to enlighten our minds in the Word of God. Without the Spirit our minds are carnal and dead, and the Word does not shine. One writer tells us that to light the lamp means to cause the lamp to rise up. This is quite significant, for many times when we read the written Word the words rise up and give light to the understanding!

How does the Word give illumination to the mind and heart? It is only by the Spirit, the oil. And the oil today is in our spirit. Whenever we come apart to read or study the Word, we must exercise our spirit. Then, in our spirit the pure olive oil will supply an energy, effecting an internal combustion that will cause the Word to rise up and give us light. This is inward light, inner illumination which springs from the depth of the spirit, giving enlightenment to the mind. When we read the Word by exercising only our mentality and natural reasoning and understanding, it does not give light. The carnal mind is a great and horrible darkness. Reading the Word by exercising our carnal mentality will lead to every kind of law, bondage, tradition, ritual, ceremony, static creed, and all the external forms of the Babylonian religious systems. But if we exercise our spirit to contact the Word, immediately we sense that inner action of divine enlightenment and spiritual perception rising up within from our spirit. In that instant we are enabled to see beyond the literal statements of the dead letter of the outer form of the Word and the Word becomes the living Word within us by the Spirit. It is through the indwelling Spirit as the pure olive oil that we have the light. The Word will be enlightened in a spiritual dimension and will give us LIGHT!

Ah, it is the beaten and pure olive oil that gives the light. Is not the Holy Spirit pure? The Holy Spirit is most certainly pure, but our spirit is not so pure! You say, "But in my regenerated spirit I am pure; it is my soul which is still mixed and defiled." What, then, does Paul mean when he exhorts the saints in Corinth, "Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all FILTHINESS OF THE FLESH A-N-D S-P-I-R-I-T, perfecting holiness in the fear of God" (II Cor. 7:1). The spirit realm is not a pure realm, for there are foul and wicked spirits as well as holy and righteous spirits, both in the heavenlies and the earthlies. Although our spirit has been quickened, made alive unto God, there is still a PROCESS OF PERFECTION in the area of our spirit in order to PERFECT HOLINESS in the fear of God. The Bible speaks of those among God's people who have a sad spirit, a hasty spirit, a wounded spirit, a haughty spirit, an erring spirit, etc. And we all know what unspeakable havoc has at times been wrought by immature spirits - babes in Christ - spiritual childishness! The Church systems are today filled and overflowing with these! Yes, precious friend of mine, our spirit has to be beaten and purified, as with the pure olive oil. This is the work of the cross. In typology, Christ is the olive. When He was beaten and pressed on the cross, the pure oil, that is, the Holy Spirit poured out of Him. "Though He were a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered; and being MADE PERFECT, He became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey Him; called of God an High Priest after the Order of Melchizedek" (Heb. 5:8-10).

It is the same with every member of the Royal Priesthood. You and I need to be purified; we need to be beaten and pressed. Many times when we read a passage of Scripture our understanding is unfruitful, it speaks nothing to us, there is simply no light. There is no light until one day God places His hand of dealing upon us and so orders our circumstances that we are brought under a certain kind of pressure. Under this pressure we turn to the same Word and suddenly it gives the light. We need to be purified, and we must be beaten and pressed. How we need the pressures, the trials and the testings! Oh,

we must have the dealing hand of God! Under pressure and bruising we turn to the Lord in a deeper, more intense way, and the Spirit moves mightily on our behalf to guide, comfort, encourage, rebuke, teach, correct, counsel, reveal, instruct, develop, strengthen and perfect. In all this the Spirit operates and we are enlightened; the lamp is lit for us under its enlightening. Under this enlightening, we will have the utterance to express something which issues out of Christ as the sweet incense unto God. There will come the expression of His grace and glory and power in our walk. Then not only will we be blessed, but God will be satisfied, and men will be touched by God. THIS IS THE PRIESTLY ANOINTING.

UPON NO FLESH

"Upon man's FLESH shall it not be poured, neither shall ye make any other like it, after the composition of it: it is holy, and it shall be holy unto you" (Ex. 30:32).

This Holy Anointing Oil was not to be poured upon man's flesh. It was poured on Aaron's HEAD after the mitre and holy crown had been placed on him. Although the Aaronic priesthood was in reality a priesthood in the flesh, for Aaron was "taken from among men," yet there is a mysterious intimation of another priesthood given in this precept, which was not to be in the flesh, but in the reality of the Spirit and after the power of an endless life. Flesh, human flesh, is sinful and corrupt beyond explanation. There can be no congeniality between it and the graces of the Holy Spirit. The flesh must ever war against the Spirit and the Spirit against the flesh, they cannot agree together. And as the Word of God says, "Ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you" (Rom. 8:9). In the flesh there dwelleth no good thing. No one therefore can have the Holy Spirit, unless he be born of the Spirit, a new creature in Christ Jesus. It is only as connected with the New Man, as being part of the New Creation, that we can know anything of the nature and power of the Holy Ghost.

The holy anointing cannot be connected with man or man's works in the flesh. It is the Spirit of another Man, the last Adam, the High Priest of the Melchizedekian Order, the Man at God's right hand. It is not given to add something to man after the flesh to improve him, but on the ground that that man is entirely set aside. It is not given to bless or to quicken or to increase or to glorify or to sanctify or to make holy the actions or works of men after the flesh. God will not, and cannot, ANOINT FLESH! It is so easy to miss this point! We see in the Bible that before the apostle Paul was converted, he served God with zeal. "I am verily a man which am a Jew, and taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers, and was zealous toward God, as ye all are this day" (Acts 22:3). At that time, though within him he had not received the life of God, he could serve God outwardly by his own soulish excitement and fleshly strength in a very zealous manner. This shows us that zealously serving God is WHOLLY UNRELATED TO THE ANOINTING. Feverish religious activity does not indicate one iota the call of God or the condition of a person's spiritual life. Oh, brethren! how we need to watch this. All that is not of the Spirit IS OF THE FLESH.

I can tell you of a truth that most of the "power" in the modern "revival meeting" is nothing at all but soul power - flesh! Have you not noticed yourself that in many revival meetings and church services a kind of atmosphere is first created to make the people feel warm and excited? A chorus is repeated again and again to warm up the audience. The people are urged to "get into the spirit" of the-meeting. Some stirring testimonies are given. Special music is sung. When the atmosphere is thoroughly heated up, the preacher will

then stand up and preach. He has various strategies ready to stimulate and maneuver the people. If he does his job skillfully he can anticipate a large "altar call". These are methods and tactics, but they are not the power of the Holy Spirit! Many preachers today think they have power; but they are merely employing psychological soul power to influence people. Many have become self-made experts on the use of psychology in manipulating people. Babylon's Bible Schools offer a course for ministerial students called homiletics. Homiletics is the art of writing and preaching sermons. The sad truth is that the vast majority of religious activities are just that - an "art". You can go to school and LEARN HOW TO DO IT! How to prepare sermons. How to stand behind the pulpit. How to speak persuasively. How to use gestures. How to tell jokes. How to build the sermon. How to bring it to a climax. How to stir the people and skillfully bring them to the point of response. This all seems so desirable - so GOOD! But I do not hesitate to tell you that you can master these very same psychological techniques, apply them in the business world, and sell VACUUM CLEANERS! The fact is, most all salesmen use these same proven procedures of presentation, sentimentalism and pressure to sell insurance, automobiles, real estate and thousands of other items daily! No "anointing" is connected with what they do. All that is required is some good human personality mixed with proven sales techniques and one can persuade people to buy almost anything! These are means and methods, but they are not the power nor work of the Holy Spirit. In the Kingdom of God they are F-L-E-S-H! How prone we are to consider a person possessing unusual talent, dynamic personality, and great natural ability, reasoning with the carnal mind that with such talent and qualities, why, if God could just get hold of him and USE ALL THIS ABILITY in the service of the Lord, what mighty things he could accomplish for the Kingdom of God! Oh, yes, we can always locate some good flesh for God to anoint! And in our haste to pour God's Holy Anointing Oil upon man's flesh, we forget that "Not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: but God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things that are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to naught things that are: that NO FLESH SHOULD GLORY IN HIS PRESENCE" (1 Cor. 1:26-28).

A brother shared the following experience which is so familiar to many who read these lines. "I remember visiting a Church which allowed the visiting ministries to take up their own offerings. On this particular occasion a servant of God and his wife were conducting the special meetings. There was no denying that the hand of God was resting upon the brother. He was quiet, deep and had a heavily anointed prophetic ministry. However, his wife's anointing was somewhat different. Very different. She was loud-voiced and boisterous. The worship, praise, singing, prayers and prophecy seemed to be anointed, during her ministry. Then suddenly she announced, 'Now we are going to take up the offering.' Apparently she noticed the look on the faces of the people. Perhaps they resented this intrusion into the worship of the Lord. She then said, 'You say, Why are we doing this in the midst of the anointing? Well, we can turn that on any time we want to.' Need I say more? This is a favorite trick. Get the people 'high' on the Lord, or all worked up with the leader's self-anointing, and then while the tide is high make a plea for money. God in the past has allowed man to go on in his own way. The days are coming however, when He will no longer tolerate those who try to manipulate His Spirit for their own profit. Sooner for some, and later for others, but they will be judged severely" - end quote. Such practices are abomination to God because He has commanded that His Holy Anointing Oil not be "poured upon MAN'S FLESH."

Then there is a solemn warning against compounding any oil like unto the Holy Anointing Oil. No imitation was to be made of it, "neither shall ye make any other like it, after the composition of it: it is holy, and it shall be holy unto you. Whosoever compoundeth any like it, shall be cut off from his people" (Ex. 30:32-33). I am afraid there is a great deal which is simply an imitation of the Spirit of Christ - man in the flesh restrained and cultivated, and led to adopt manners and deportment which look very like the fruit of the Spirit of Christ. There are all kinds of imitations of the heavenly perfumes and precious attributes of Christ; but all that anybody puts on which are imitation of the real Christ, will never look nor smell like Him. We may put on the human humility but it is no more like the humility of Jesus Christ than anything else that is human is like God. We may put on longsuffering unto stoicism, but it is no more like the longsuffering of Christ than any human attribute is like an attribute of God. We may put on human sweetness and attractiveness, which may seem fragrant to those who cannot discern the difference; but none of these are any more like the fragrance of Christ than the odor of ill-smelling weeds is like the pure fragrance of the lily of the valley.

The finest fruits that ever grew in nature's fields, in their highest state of cultivation - the most amiable traits which the natural man can exhibit - must be utterly disowned in the sanctuary of God. There must be no counterfeit in the Spirit's work; all must be of the Spirit - wholly, really of the Spirit. Moreover, that which is of the Spirit must not be attributed to man. What a great danger there is among even God's elect saints, of assuming to be guided by and acting under the power and direction of the Holy Spirit, when they are only indulging their own self-will or self-conceit. How glibly we hear the statement repeated again and again, "The LORD told me...GOD said to me... The SPIRIT said..." this and that and the other. And it is remarkable how often the Lord changes His mind. Many times brethren tell me how the Lord has told them to do this or that, or to go here or there, and before the week is past the Lord has revised His plans and has now directed them in another path. Nonsense! We should not profess to be prompted or led by the Lord, my brethren, unless we have indeed received a clear and true and settled word from Him. Methinks that a lot of folk think they have a hot-line to heaven, and don't know that someone else has tapped in on their line!

Some time ago I was in a meeting where the saints have an "open pulpit" with liberty for each member of the body to move in ministry as moved by the Spirit. A young and zealous Pentecostal evangelist was present, and, taking advantage of the open pulpit, got up and ministered his highly emotion message, at the conclusion of which he pressed the people to come forward for him to minister to their needs. One dear sister, with a physical condition, went forward and presented herself to the young evangelist, whereupon he immediately motioned for one of the brothers to come and stand behind her. He proceeded to pray for her, shaking his finger sharply in her face three times, shouting each time, "In JESUS' name!" Then he forcefully slapped her on the forehead, jerking her body backward, whereupon she at once "fell out" under the "power". She lay on the floor for a couple minutes, then arose and returned to her seat. I saw at once what was happening! This was not the Spirit nor the power of God in operation! It was pure mesmerism, a psychologically induced experience. It came from human exercise, not an endowment of power from God. It was an IMITATION of the Holy Anointing Oil!

As soon as the next person went forward to be ministered to, I stood and quickly walked to the front to help minister. When the evangelist shook his finger in this brother's face and jolted him backward with a slap on the forehead, I had already placed my hand on the small of his back, gently exerting enough pressure to stabilize him. I continued this

procedure through the rest of the personal ministry and, needless to say, NO ONE ELSE FELL! If the Holy Spirit would have been knocking those people down there would not have been enough strength in my body to keep them from falling! I have witnessed this fleshly technique, with variations, time and time again in Pentecostal and Charismatic meetings. It is a very old trick. You see, most Spirit-filled Christians DESIRE supernatural experiences. This is natural, and not necessarily to be despised. However, when you know that people are actually WANTING and LONGING to experience the sensational, in this case "falling under the power," the first step in making them fall by the use of hypnotic suggestion is to CALL SOMEONE UP TO STAND BEHIND THEM while you pray for them. This gives the people the sense that if they should fall, someone is there to catch them and break the fall. Furthermore, by deliberately positioning the person behind them you have now psychologically SUGGESTED to their mind that they WILL FALL, so that they are either consciously or subconsciously, EXPECTING to fall! All that is needed at this point is the INCENTIVE to fall. The young evangelist supplied the incentive when he shook his finger in her face, repeatedly shouting, "in JESUS' name!" and then slapping her on the forehead, shoving her backward - and she reacted exactly as she had been CONDITIONED to react - she FELL! We had a word of wisdom in the old-time Pentecostal movement and it is still just as true today as it was then. We said that if someone fell prostrate under the power of God he would NOT get hurt; and if he fell, but not under the power of God, then HE OUGHT TO GET HURT. Its very simple, beloved; remove the carpet and don't supply anyone to catch them, and you will soon learn how many are anointed, and how many have MIXED THEIR OWN OIL!

How we praise God today for the Royal Priesthood which HE is preparing in the earth, whom HE is teaching HIS precepts and HIS ways; purging, processing and refining, perfecting and anointing, to exhibit the precious effects of His grace and glory. May my reader experience the power of this anointing! May he know the value of having "an unction from the Holy One," and of being "sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise." Nothing is of any value in the divine estimation save that which connects itself immediately with the great High Priest of the heavens, and whosoever is so connected can receive the Holy Anointing.

Chapter 23

The Cleansing And Sanctification Of The Priesthood

"And this is the thing that thou shalt do unto them to hallow them, to minister unto Me in the priest's office...Aaron and his sons thou shalt bring unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and shalt wash them with water. And thou shalt take the garments, and thou shalt put them upon Aaron thy brother, and his sons with him; and thou shalt anoint them, and consecrate them and sanctify them, that they may minister unto Me in the priest's office" (Ex. 29:1,4,5; 28:41).

The setting apart of the priests for the service of God involved a great deal of ritual which typifies the preparation of the Royal Priesthood in this hour at the end of the age. There were some basic principles which are of sublime importance. The ceremonies of washing, cleansing, investiture, anointing and offering the special sacrifices were performed to show the inward dealing, qualification, development and processing of the spiritual priesthood in the Kingdom of God. The first step in the process involved bringing the priests to the door of the Tabernacle for the ceremonial washing away of all that was unclean. We do not have here types of how a sinner can be cleansed from sin so as to be found amongst the people of God as forgiven and justified. We are reading of how PRIESTS are hallowed, sanctified and consecrated to the priestly ministry.

The first step is cleansing and sanctification. To sanctify means TO SET APART or TO SEPARATE. The word is applied to people, places and things as Sinai among the mountains; the Sabbath among the days of the week; the Temple among all buildings; the city of Jerusalem among the cities of Palestine; the Priesthood among Israel; and Israel among the nations of the earth. For example, the Lord Jesus in Mat. 23:17-19 shows us that gold, if used for the Temple, as a gift, when placed on the altar, becomes "sanctified" or holy. All the gold in this world is for human use and is therefore common; however, if a portion is separated and placed in the Temple for God's use, it becomes sanctified. Again, if an ox or a sheep are among the herd, they are for human use and are common. When chosen and placed upon the altar, however, they become an offering unto God, being separated unto holiness. It is altogether a matter of whether they are for human use or whether they are separated and belong to God. Before they are separated, they are common; after they are separated, they become holy. Simply speaking, holiness means all that pertains to God, and all that is of God, unto God, and for God!

That which is taken out of its surroundings, by Gods command, and is set aside or separated as His own possession and for His service that is holy. This does not mean separation from sin only, but from all that is in the world, even from what may be permissible. Thus God sanctified the seventh day. The other days were not unclean, for God saw all that He had made and "beheld that it was very good." But that day alone was holy, which God had taken possession of by His own special act. In the same way God

had separated Israel from other nations, and in Israel had separated the priests, to be holy unto Him. This separation unto SANCTIFICATION is always God's own work, and so the electing grace of God is often closely connected with SANCTIFICATION. "Ye shall be holy unto Me...I have separated you...that ye should be Mine" (Lev. 20:26). "The man whom the Lord shall choose shall be holy" (Num. 16:7). "Thou art a holy people unto the Lord, the Lord thy God hath chosen thee" (Deut. 7:6). God cannot take part with other lords. He must be the sole possessor, and ruler, of those to whom He reveals and imparts HIS HOLINESS.

But beyond this there is a deeper thought. Why were people, places and things set apart? Was it not because GOD WAS THERE? He came down in might and glory on Sinai; therefore they needed to set bounds around its base. He chose to rest on the seventh day from all His work; therefore it was hallowed and sanctified. He selected Israel to be His peculiar people, and the house of Aaron to be His priests; therefore they were isolated from all other. He appeared to Moses in the bush, glowing with the light of the Shekinah; therefore the spot was holy ground, and the shepherd needed to bare his feet. In other words, it is the presence of God that makes holy. There is only one Being in all the universe who is intrinsically holy. Holiness is the attribute of His nature, and of His nature only. He is by nature, wisdom, power and being set apart from all beside. So we can never be holy apart from God; but when God enters the spirit of man, He brings the quality of holiness with Him. Thus the presence of God in Man IS HOLINESS.

In the ancient world all the major religions of the gods of Babylon, Greece and Rome joined pagan worshippers to demons through sexual intercourse with religious (temple) prostitutes and sodomites. History reveals that such vile creatures, because they were in the service of demons, under their will, and actually indwelt by demon deities, were called by the ancients, "holy ones." They were "sanctified" by the will, presence and nature of evil spirits. Christians who had once engaged in those shameful practices before being delivered from the adversary's clutches by faith in the Lord Jesus and the washing of regeneration knew that the practical result of their sanctification was abstinence from fornication (I Thes. 4:4). The indwelling Christ, who of God is made unto us "wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption," enables each to "know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honor, not in the lust of sensuality even as the pagans who know not God." We know that our bodies are the "temple of the Holy Spirit," and that fornication (physical or spiritual) is a formal act of turning ourselves over to the control of an alien power. Uncleaness is actually "HOLINESS UNTO THE DEVIL" separation unto the flesh and the demonic! The calling of the believer, therefore, is to purity of life that he might be wholly sanctified in attitude and action, in body and spirit, even as he is wholly sanctified in his position before the Sanctifier.

Andrew Murray wrote, "God's holiness is often spoken of as though it consisted in His hatred of, and hostility to sin; but this gives no explanation of what holiness actually is. It is a merely negative statement that God's holiness cannot bear sin. Holiness is that attribute of God because of which He always IS, and WILLS, and DOES what is supremely good; because of which also He desires what is supremely good in His creatures, and bestows it upon them. God is called "The Holy One" in Scripture, not because He punishes sin, but because He is the REDEEMER of His people. It is His holiness, which ever wills what is good for all, that moved Him to redeem sinners. Both the WRATH of God which punishes sin, and LOVE of God which redeems the sinner, spring from the same source His holiness. Holiness is the perfection of God's nature. Holiness in man is a disposition in entire agreement with that of God; which chooses in all

things to will as God wills: as it is written: 'as He is holy, so be ye holy' (I Pet. 1:15). Holiness in us is nothing else than ONENESS WITH GOD. The sanctification of God's people is effected by the communication to them of the holiness of God. There is no other way of obtaining SANCTIFICATION, save by the Holy God bestowing what He alone possesses. He alone is the HOLY ONE. He is the Lord who sanctifies" end quote.

To the superficial observer it might seem that there is little difference between cleansing and sanctification, that the two words mean about the same thing; but the difference is grand and important. Cleansing has to do chiefly with separation FROM something the old life of selfhood which must be removed; while sanctification concerns a separation UNTO something the new life in union with God with its fulfilling of His nature, plan, will and purpose. The distinction between these two things is clearly marked in the Word of God. Paul reminds us that "Christ gave Himself for the church, that He might SANCTIFY it, having CLEANSED it" (Eph. 5:25, R.V.). Having first CLEANSED it, He then SANCTIFIES it. In his letter to the youthful Timothy he wrote, "If a man therefore PURGE himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, SANCTIFIED, and meet for the Master's use" (II Tim. 2:21). Sanctification is a work which succeeds, and surpasses cleansing. This important truth is also strikingly illustrated by the ordinances connected with the consecration of the Priests, the sons of Aaron, compared with that of the Levites. In the case of the Levites, who took a lower position than the Priests in the service of the Sanctuary, no mention is made of SANCTIFICATION; but the word CLEANSING is used five times (Num. 8). In the consecration of the Priests, on the other hand, the term "to SANCTIFY," is often used; for the Priests stood in a closer relationship to God than the Levites (Ex. 29; Lev. 3).

Sanctification is not merely an effort on the part of Christians to live a better Christian life. In fact, sanctification is not really the effort of man at all; sanctification is the work of God! It is God that sanctifies. Salvation is of God, whether it be justification in the past tense, or sanctification in the present tense, or glorification in the future when the final vestiges of sin and death are overcome, swallowed up into HIS VICTORY. Salvation is wholly of God. The High Calling is wholly of God. The Priesthood is wholly of God. AND IT IS GOD THAT SANCTIFIES. "Ye shall therefore be holy for I AM HOLY" (Lev. 11:45) is a statement of fact, rather than a call to become a "good" person in word and deed. It was because Jehovah had determined to be the God of Israel, and had Himself "set apart" the offspring of Jacob for Himself, and had willed to dwell in their midst in the cloud of the Presence, that the people whom He had delivered from Egyptian bondage were "holy" and "sanctified" unto Him. They were His people because He had called and chosen and delivered them by His own presence and power, and not because of their own good works!

The work of God within us in cleansing and sanctification does, however, involve an action on our part. If the separation unto the Royal Priesthood is to be of value, something more must take place. The apprehended one must surrender himself willingly, and heartily, to this separation. Sanctification of the priests includes personal consecration to the Lord to fulfill His high and holy purposes. Priestly sanctification can become ours only when it sends down its roots into, and takes abode in the depths of our personal life; in our will, in our love. God sanctifies no man against his will, therefore the personal, hearty, response to God is an indispensable part of sanctification. It is for this reason that the Scriptures not only speak of GOD sanctifying us, but they say often, that WE must sanctify ourselves!

The priesthood of Aaron was brought and SURRENDERED unto the Lord at the door of the Tabernacle. And so it is with those who are the apprehended ones, the redeemed of the Lord, His King Priests of Melchizedek's order. Ah God does not FORCE you to surrender yourself to Him; He says, "My son, GIVE Me thine heart." It is not slave labor that He demands; that would be valueless: A WILLING OFFERING is what He loves. What a balance there is between the sovereignty of God and the yielded up will of man! In this we may see the explanation of Pharaoh's prompt and dogged resistance to God's call that he should free Israel. Egypt was then the chief of the nations in wisdom, wealth, power and glory. To the proud sovereign of this haughty people a message comes from a God who claims to be the Lord of heaven and earth, the eternal One, Jehovah. The Egyptians though by that time worshipping many gods, still owned that above all there was the great original Deity. From this overlord of heaven and earth the mandate comes to Pharaoh, "Thus saith the Lord, Israel is My son, My FIRSTBORN" (Ex. 4:22). Small wonder if the monarch starts at the words! To him they mean nothing less than that Egypt's supremacy among the nations is to pass to this race of miserable slaves. Imagine, these cursed Israelites the FIRSTBORN SON of the Most High God over the nations! Greater humiliation could not be: it were worse than the national foe, the Hittites, wresting this glory from him in fair fight: and the foolish king will dare anything rather than consent.

God claimed as specially His own all the firstborn males of Israel. These were in the highest sense HIS FIRSTBORN. But then God substituted in their place the tribe of Levi, the priestly tribe, so that this entire tribe became especially His firstborn son. They were to grow up to be educated, disciplined and trained to live and serve the peculiar property of the living God, separated from all others by the very hand of God, hallowed unto Him, sanctified as His ministers on behalf of all to whom He would show His mercy and power. The Levites were in fact the TITHE AND THE OFFERING of the people unto God. Aaron was to "offer the Levites for an OFFERING of the children of Israel" and thus they were "wholly GIVEN" unto the Lord. Ah, if you are a priest, dear one, then YOU MUST BE WHOLLY THE LORD'S. As we look upon the average Christian today how far is this carried out? Many are ready enough to give unto God an hour a week, or perchance an hour a day, a few spare dollars, and a sentimental kind of religionism, which consists of feelings and emotions and activities; but anything like a practical surrender of themselves to the leadership of the Spirit alone, to follow on to know HIM in His perfections, to know His voice and obey His will as He reveals it, yielding body and soul, all they have, and are, and will be, to the Lord alone, is put on one side as an extravagant idea, not to be entertained by soberminded people, who have to get on in the world. Oh, are you one of these? Are you a servant of religion and tradition, rather than the Lord? YOU ARE ROBBING GOD! "But ye say, Wherein have we robbed Thee? IN TITHES AND OFFERINGS" (Mal. 3:8). You are withholding that which belongs to Him. You profess to be the Lord's; then how much of you is His? The priesthood is the tithe and offering of the people unto God. Having received the call to priesthood, do you not belong entirely to Him? Then how can you, how dare you refuse Him THE WHOLE of that heart, that life which He has claimed as uniquely His? Let the words, "WHOLLY GIVEN UNTO THE LORD," be henceforward our motto, the stamp and superscription on all we have, and are, and let each day and each hour witness, by God's grace, a renewed, willing, and hearty surrender of ourselves, body, soul, and spirit, unto Him whose we are, and whom we desire to serve as HIS PRIESTHOOD upon the earth. God grant that we may yield it!

Jesus is the firstborn among many brethren, but the entire house of sons is called the "Church of the Firstborn" the body of that firstborn son who is become the Head of the

Order of the Firstborn. Jesus was the firstborn and as such received the inheritance of the firstborn. But by His graciousness and love and purpose we share with Him, counted as heirs of God and **JOINT HEIRS WITH CHRIST**, in the inheritance of the firstborn.

Let us use this illustration. At the performance of an opera, the first part of the evening is given over to the playing of the overture. As we understand it, the overture is made up of, or contains, parts of all the main numbers of the whole opera. The overture is an overall preview, or glimpse of the opera throughout until the end. But following the overture, the action goes back again to the beginning, and the whole opera is performed in its detail unto the finish. Thus the overture presents the plot in portions and points to the end, so that one who has never heard it, will have a view of the action and the climax of it. But, as we pointed out, following the overture the action returns to the beginning and the detail of the whole plot is played out. However, both the overture and the detailed action come to a common end or result.

Let all who read these lines grasp the great truth that **THE MANIFESTED SONS OF GOD ARE THE OVERTURE OF GOD'S WHOLE GREAT DRAMA OF SIN AND REDEMPTION**. Jesus is the overture for the sons, while the sons are the overture for all creation. The working out of redemption and restoration into the image of God is revealed in **THE MAN CHRIST JESUS**. He is the first and so far, **THE ONLY PERFECTED MAN**. This gives us knowledge of two wonderful things. Through Jesus we have the knowledge of the **END** of God's great drama of sin and redemption

MAN IN THE IMAGE OF GOD! But we also have the knowledge of the dealings and processings by which man is brought to that end. And **WE ARE THE OVERTURE**, the preview, the firstfruit, the demonstration of all God's creative and redemptive plan, presenting upon the cosmic stage of the universe the final end that God has in mind for His whole vast creation, praise His wonderful name!

OTHERS MAY, YOU CANNOT!

So, then, dear brothers and sisters in Christ, in the cleansing and sanctification of the Aaronic Priesthood is the type of your own separation unto God and the High Calling of sonship. You belong wholly and entirely unto Him who has called you. You are the exclusive property of Him who has chosen you; and being set apart unto Him, neither the world, the flesh, the devil, nor your own desires, plans or ambitions have any longer the slightest claim on you. A priest could never return to the position of an ordinary Israelite. You are one of a "peculiar people," a "royal priesthood," the **FIRSTBORN SONS** of the Most High (Heb. 12:23). You may, alas! betimes forget your wondrous position, and walk unworthily of Him who has "called you unto His kingdom and glory," but thanks be unto God, the same that said, "I sanctified them for Myself," said also, "Mine **THEY SHALL BE**. I am Jehovah" (Num. 3:13).

One more and more comes to know what it means to be a priest as he follows on into deeper and deeper measures of His dealings and further separations unto His purposes. As we become **ONE WITH GOD** the world does not understand what has happened; but they know that a separation has taken place between us and them which is more than bodily separation. Although we are living and moving among them, and they see us at our earthly tasks and daily living, they realize that we have mounted up beyond them and their understanding. In this connection a brother in Christ recently sent out these meaningful words: "Yes, this is a holy calling and it involves much separation, often from

our friends, religious realms, and everything and everybody that would hinder the upward climb into the hill of the Lord, that we might stand in His holy place. The flesh will cringe at the 'aloneness' of the walk. The mind will question as to why it must be so. But the spirit within will continue to draw us onward without the camp, bearing His reproach, while we also are loosed from so many hindrances and infirmities. IT IS A DAY OF REVELATION and little did we know what things were hindering our spiritual progress until suddenly we found that God was stripping something from us, and though we wept at the time, and would have retained it if we could, nevertheless being yielded to the will of God, we relinquished our grasp, and found to our amazement that we received a new measure of freedom. Ah, how many things we hold so dear, but they are actually a weight upon us, rather than a help."

Many times, it is most grievous and perplexing to those who do not know the Lord, as well as to those Christians bound in the religious systems, who cannot understand the workings and separating processes of the Spirit of God, to have one who is near and dear to them in the flesh, separated from them in the Spirit. Though the body with its personality, is still in the home, office, or business, it is as though the loved one were not there. In such cases, how often do they who are watching the lives of those who are following hard after the Lord, entreat them that they will return; that they will again be unto them as they were once. When an apprehended one has entered into this experience, he has counted all things but loss, and suffered the loss of all things that he might WIN CHRIST. Truly, HIS DRAWING leaves us no choice but to FOLLOW ON that we might KNOW HIM in all His glorious and eternal reality! As we follow on to know the Lord, earth and friends and religious things fade away in the exceeding brightness of our vision of Christ.

Our eyes are fixed with a steadfast gaze upon Him who has gone before us, opening up the way into that fuller glory which lies BEYOND THE VEIL. Those apprehended to be conformed to the image of the Son of God have been caught away in the Spirit and set in the ranks of the chariots of the Lord, even among the company of the overcomers who shall come forth in the Name of the Lord to rule and reign and conquer and bless until all things have been subjected unto God.

"I am the true vine, and My Father is the husbandman. Every branch in Me that beareth not fruit He taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, He purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit" (Jn. 15:1-2). Every branch that BEARETH FRUIT He PURGES it! The purpose of purging, or pruning, is to effect a concentration of the life. When all the branches of the vine are permitted to grow unrestricted there is a resulting debilitating or weakening of the life. The nourishment and vitality of the vine are sapped by all the multitudinous branches, shoots and tendrils, and utilized to keep them alive and bearing abundance of foliage rather than being channeled into producing fruit. Thus, when the excess branches and shoots are cut away, the life becomes more concentrated and stronger in those remaining, and the clusters of grapes become more rich and full. In like manner it is necessary that our natural tendencies and actions and desires must be cut away, that the virtues of our Lord be wrought and manifested in us.

It has been my experience, moreover, that God not only prunes away the sins and works of the flesh, but a great deal of religiousness and RELIGIOUS ACTIVITIES AND THOSE INVOLVED THEREIN as well. There was a time when we made the circuit, speaking for the Full Gospel Business Men's Fellowship and various Churches in the Pentecostal and Charismatic circles. Our desire was pure to share the present truth of sonship and the

deeper life of the Christ within, to inspire and bless and challenge any and all possible. Here and there we found an elect few who had ears to hear, but for the most part it became evident that we were "spinning our wheels." Then, one day it dawned on me! Our word was not producing fruit in those places. Oh, they were delighted to have Bro. Eby come by and share his testimony, even minister a revelatory word, and prophesy over some people, momentarily satiating the intense craving in a few hearts for a richer diet of spiritual fare. But after I left, nothing changed. There was no fruit. There was no heightened vision, no going ON in God. These merely took the word we ministered, diluted it with their own shallow church program, and used it to further their own kingdom. Ah, they enjoyed drawing life from us so long as it didn't require them to bear Kingdom fruit. As long as our ministry could be "used" to increase their branches and put on many beautiful leaves the manifestation of life without fruit we were welcome in their midst. But what they were doing was "sapping" the life out of us to enhance and embellish and strengthen their own babylonish system! Suddenly the voice of the Spirit thundered authoritatively in my ear, "Enough!" And the celestial husbandman did a work of pruning. He pruned from my life a RELIGIOUS REALM that will draw life but will not bear fruit of that life. God does, indeed, prune people from us! "Every branch in Me that beareth not fruit He TAKETH AWAY: and every branch that beareth fruit, He purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit." The doom of the unfruitful is: They are TAKEN AWAY. There are multitudes today who loudly profess to be in Christ who yet do not bear fruit of the Christ life. Though they are branches, God will cut off their life supply that they may be seen to be dry ones.

Those called to this High Calling are being separated from all that binds them to a lower order that they may enter into Evilness. Many people find it a lot easier to be "one" with the Babylonian religious systems, where the crowds are, then to become separated and go out BEYOND, leading the way for others to follow. How I rejoice that God is now calling a people, sanctified priests separated ones to a realm BEYOND the norm of religious activity, beyond the programs and promotions, beyond the sensationalism and hand clapping, beyond the revivals and crowd assemblings, into the new and seemingly strange paths of HIS LEADING. The prunings are not easy, friends and loved ones and brethren do not readily understand, especially the preachers and organizations who try to hold you within their pews and coffers. True, many of these programs are being used by the Lord on some level, in spite of the methods and techniques and fleshliness, to enrich many lives with salvation, healings, infilling of the Spirit, etc. etc. We praise God for His blessing on every plane where He chooses to work, but when the call comes, FOLLOW ME, wait upon ME in deep separation and holy brokenness for the greater glory soon to be revealed, those "sanctified to be priests" come aside to make ready for the next great move of the Spirit!

The message is clear there are things that others can do, but which you cannot do, when you are cleansed and sanctified as the Lord's priest. Religion today has become big business. It is one of the biggest and most lucrative businesses in the whole world. More than one preacher, supposing that gain is godliness, has become a millionaire over the past couple decades, not because he was anointed by God, but because he was a TERRIFIC PROMOTER. Through clever speech and cunning craftiness whereby they lie in wait to deceive they have beguiled innocent people, pretending that they were the great power of God. By craftiness they obtain the names of tens of thousands of the Lord's precious people to whom they monthly send their high-pressure pleas for financial help to further grandiose programs which are not the plan of God at all, but merely the product of an imaginative, scheming, grasping and greedy mind. Untold millions of dollars

have been extracted from innocent, humble saints to build huge cathedrals, church buildings, office complexes, world headquarters, refuges for the time of tribulation, and to support radio and television and missionary programs which are more of a curse than a blessing. Recently David Wilkerson was asked, "What do you think about American religious broadcasting, especially Christian television?" His reply: "They should shut it down. Turn off all the cameras. Release all these men from the pressures we have put them under. They should be stripped of their heroic robes, all of their glamour, and be taken outside from all the lights. Then they should go back to the 'mountain' and be broken before God. Let God bring them back, as He chooses, in a purified form. It's all become flesh, absolute flesh" end quote. Some months ago I received in the mail a computerized letter from one of the prominent religious racketeers which read as follows:

Dear J. Preston,

READ THIS LETTER CAREFULLY...for the past few days the Lord has been speaking to me about you; TODAY He directed me to write this letter to you. Even as you read this I know that God is going to touch you in a special way...READ ON!

The Lord spoke to me that RIGHT NOW you are carrying a great burden...I saw you in the Spirit with your head bowed down as if you were weeping. As I saw this VISION I heard you pray: "LORD, I WANT TO BE FREE!" The Lord showed me that Satan has come against you even in the last month trying to TIE YOU UP WITH THE PROBLEMS OF LIFE! Have you felt the devil trying to DEFEAT you? Trying to ROB YOU of your JOY and PEACE? Well, J. Preston, YOU ARE ABOUT TO RECEIVE GODS TOTAL VICTORY! As the Lord was dealing with me about writing this to you He spoke this to me: "David, I want you to CONSECRATE 7 DAYS unto Me; during this time I want you to pray for J. Preston to receive TOTAL FREEDOM and LIBERTY of My Spirit. As you pray I shall destroy the YOKE OF BONDAGE that the enemy has brought against J. Preston! Obey Me David, and I shall manifest My POWER in a great ways saith the Lord!" I don't have to tell you how happy I was when the Lord spoke this to me for YOU!

I want you to write your 7 MOST IMPORTANT PRAYER REQUESTS on the prayer sheet that I've sent along with this letter; let me know how: Satan has attacked you,; even during the past month, trying to BURDEN YOU DOWN with the problems of this life. As you write your PRAYER REQUESTS I want to THANK GOD IN ADVANCE for your FREEDOM and LIBERTY!

After you've written your prayer requests, put your prayer sheet in the return envelope and get it-ready for the mail. As you do this I want you to take a - STEP OF FAITH...the Lord spoke this to me: "David, challenge J. Preston to give unto my kingdom so that I will open the WINDOWS OF HEAVEN...have I not said in My Word that no man can please Me without FAITH? Speak unto J. Preston to give a DOUBLE PORTION FAITH OFFERING of \$14.00 as a STEP OF FAITH...I am not slack concerning My Promises, saith God! J. Preston, I want you to obey what the Lord has spoken. If you will take this STEP OF FAITH to help spread the Gospel by radio and T.V. you will be using your KEY OF FAITH to unlock the RICHES of God's Kingdom...OBEY THE SPIRIT! end quote.

I took the prayer request sheet and penned across it the following note: YOU LIED! You did NOT see a vision of me. I am NOT all tied up and burdened down with the problems of life, and the old devil hasn't been on my case for many years. I am walking in the faith,

peace, joy and triumph of the Christ. Please do NOT send me any more of your garbage. Take my name off of your mailing list!

All are not as blatantly perverse as this man, but, woe to them! for their plunder is conducted in the name of the Lord and they have made our Father's house a den of thieves. Many preachers are of the opinion that God cannot meet their needs apart from professional money raising letters and high pressure techniques. I do not hesitate to tell you that the very first sign of a ministry VOID OF FAITH is that they must regularly tell you about their needs and constantly urge you to give to them. If they have such mighty faith that heals the sick and raises the dead, why, then, can they not believe GOD for their finances? It is my conviction that one of the first marks of sonship will be seen in a man's life in the area of finances. The Kingdom of God is a Kingdom that functions by Divine Order. The principles or laws of the Kingdom Order are set forth in the Sermon on the Mount. The greatest man of faith and power ever to grace this earth laid down the house law for the sons of God respecting finance. He said, "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and ALL THESE THINGS SHALL BE ADDED UNTO YOU. But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret SHALL REWARD THEE OPENLY" (Mat. 6:33,6).

On a day when the money was all gone, the bills were piling up, and he was thousands of miles from home, a man of faith looked up and said with total belief, "God's work, done in God's way will never lack God's supply." And you know, the great missionary, Hudson Taylor, was right! Not only was this a Kingdom principle then in far away China, it is a principle of the Kingdom HERE AND NOW. Sons are not about their own business, we are about OUR FATHER'S business. And since it is HIS business, it is up to Him to finance it. If He is not financing it, then it obviously is not His business, but somebody else's. Ah God indeed uses PEOPLE in the supply, but HE moves upon those who know HIS voice to give according to HIS direction, not according to how much we can squeeze out of them with a high powered newsletter. During the past decade untold hundreds of thousands of articles and booklets have been sent out from this office FREE OF CHARGE all around the world. Though the expenses each month are large and increase every week, yet no bill has gone unpaid. For this we are most grateful to God and thankful to all the dear ones who have, under the Holy Spirit's prompting, helped us spread the good tidings that prepare the hearts of God's elect for the glory that shall be revealed. As you probably know, we never solicit anyone for support. NEVER in fifteen years of publishing the Kingdom Bible Studies have we had to send out any letter or go to any meeting and ASK or BEG FOR MONEY. The fact that without begging or even asking, HE SUPPLIES, is an indication to our hearts that it is indeed HIS WORK, not ours! In this way, by our gracious Father miraculously moving upon the hearts of His obedient people, His work is sustained week by week and month by month. I never cease to be awed by the fact that the Holy Spirit moves upon precious folk we have never seen nor met, to send amounts small and large to meet every need as it arises. To GOD be the glory! We have observed through the years that the Father rarely sends surpluses of finances, but supplies day by day all that is needed as we look steadfastly unto HIM as our source. That is the way of the Kingdom! And should there be a lack, you, precious friend, will never be told about it. Father will hear about it in our prayer closet, a confidential message for His ears alone. We can say to the glory of God that the principles of His Kingdom work, really work. Others may trumpet abroad their needs, and employ methods and techniques to evoke a response from their hearers and readers but PRIESTS cannot. Indeed, others may but WE CANNOT!

I am sure that many who read these lines can make an infinite number of personal applications of this principle in your lives. Oft times we see fellow Christians doing things, going places, living in a certain manner, and they appear to be getting by with it, God seems to be blessing and prospering them. So we cry out God, if they can do it, why can't we? The answer rings loud and clear, others may, but you cannot because you are God's chosen to be the manifestation of HIMSELF in the earth, not to follow the pack, but to SET THE STANDARD and LEAD THE WAY into the Kingdom realm of God. The members of the Royal Priesthood are not selected to be followers, just part of the crowd, these are chosen to be the light of the world! So, others may but YOU CANNOT!

THE WASHING AT THE LAVER

"And Aaron and his sons thou shalt bring unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and shalt WASH THEM WITH WATER" (Ex. 29:4). This is the only time when Aaron and his sons were washed by another with water. Other washings they had constantly to observe, such as washing their hands and feet, but on this occasion they were washed all thorough and complete cleansing, praise God. This cleansing took place at the door of the Tabernacle of the Congregation not at the gate of the Outer Court, but before the entrance into the Holy Place. The Tabernacle of the Congregation would better be translated "the tent of meeting". It is called the tent of meeting, because it was the appointed place of meeting with God on the part of the High Priest, and also on that of every stated assembly of the people on solemn occasions. "At the door of the tent" means in the area between the Brazen Laver and the door of the Tabernacle. At the time when this direction was carried into execution, the Laver had been constructed and placed between the Brazen Altar and the door of the Tabernacle.

The washing with water is one of the figures for cleansing or sanctification and relates to the priesthood. Therefore this washing has nothing to do with salvation. An unregenerated man would never be called to the High Calling of priesthood. It is good always to remember that the washing which brings cleansing from sin is in the blood, not in water, water being a type of the Word and the Spirit of God. "Now ye are clean through the Word which I have spoken unto you" (Jn. 15:3), and "Christ loved the church, and gave Himself for it; that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the Word" (Eph. 5:25-26). Anyone who treasures the beautiful hope of sonship should become immersed into the Word of God for his cleansing and sanctification. When we truly realize that we are sanctified by GOD'S WORD OF TRUTH, then we will endeavor to rid ourselves of all of Babylon's error, and seek the Lord for His truth by which we are made clean. There is vital cleansing, purifying power in the Word of God anointed by the Holy Spirit within. The truth by which we are cleansed is not the Word of Scripture, not the dead letter, but the Word of God quickened by the Spirit, revealed as truth to our hearts and imparted to us as THE LIVING CHRIST. HE IS THE TRUTH and it is vitally important that we receive ALL TRUTH at this significant time of the end of the age.

The Laver speaks, as I have pointed out, of the Word of God, the anointed, revealed Word, used by God in the power of the Spirit upon His elect for their sanctification. It is interesting to note that there are NO MEASUREMENTS given for the Laver. We are not told that it was so high, or so large in circumference. This is very significant. You may ask, Why? The Altar had measurements, the Tabernacle itself had measurements, and almost all things associated therewith. Each of these bespeak a certain accomplishment of God measured and wrought out in our life. But when we come to the Laver, we have to do with the work of the Word of God upon His people, therefore the UNMEASURED

Laver is as eloquent as the measured Altar. Where, if I may so put it, where is the child of God who has measured that Laver? Where is the one who can say, "I know the depths of the Word of God, and the claims and demands and power and the inward working of the Word of God, and have fully experienced them?" No, dear friends, the very omission of measurements in connection with the Laver, would rebuke any such thought as any saint of God saying, "I have done all that has been commanded me to do; I have done all that ever shall be commanded me to do; the Word has completely done its work; I am perfectly sanctified." When anyone claims that he knows it all or has experienced it all I see a man who would measure the Laver, and a man who has deceived himself, that he has the presumption to say that he has perfectly met the measure of that Laver. I have met a few self-deluded ones who have claimed to have met the measure of the Laver, purporting to be mature, perfect, reigning sons of God. Some have even claimed to have their glorified body. But none have been able to demonstrate the wisdom, love, glory or power to back up their boasts. We cannot know the depth or the height or the length or the breadth of God's dealings and purging and transformations except as they are revealed by the Spirit. Nor can any man know the utter and total depravity and deceitfulness of his own carnal mind and evil heart except as it is uncovered by the Word of truth and the Spirit of revelation. How often we have thought that we had almost attained, were nearly perfected, were on the very brink of total victory, only to have the Spirit plumb the depths and lay before our astonished eyes some undisciplined attribute of flesh, some hidden root of bitterness, some latent lust, some lurking fear, some masked pride, some cloaked unbelief, some concealed Babylonish garment of which we were completely unaware! And so the Laver is unmeasured, for the processing of the Word of truth is an ongoing work in our lives carrying us daily from faith to faith, from experience to experience, as we are "constantly being transfigured into His very own image in ever increasing splendor and from one degree of glory to another" (II Cor. 3:18, Amplified).

The Laver was made of brass, and how suggestive it is that there were women whose contributions to the Tabernacle were their mirrors brazen plates of polished brass and these mirrors were used in the making of the Laver. The Epistle of James speaks of a mirror (James 1:23-24), of the man that comes to the Word of God and just reads it and goes away and forgets he says, "He is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass, for he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was." Has it ever struck you how telling that is? There are some of us who have been looking at our faces for nearly half a century, and we cannot remember them, while memory recalls those of hosts of our friends. I don't know how it is with you, but if I had the gift of an artist I could not paint my own face from memory, nor even make a respectable attempt at it, yet I could paint the faces of my friends. This is just like God's Word and our hearts. We go to that Word of God, we get a faithful portrayal of what we are, and have been humbled thereby, but it soon passes away. Alas! how many look into this Word and forget what manner of men they are. The Word of God is like a mirror, and to see ourselves aright, we need to stay before it continually. In the splendid Temple built by Solomon the Brazen Sea took the place of the Laver (II Chron. 4:1-5). In Rev. 4:6 we read of a "sea of glass like unto crystal" before the Throne. It is not, as in the Temple, a sea of water, for there is no defilement to cleanse, but it is a sea of glass, to reveal perfection, the perfection of Christ's work IN as well as UPON His glorified people. This great sea of the sons of God is calm and serene, tranquil and quiet, the bestial spirit and nature have been fully dealt with and these abide in the peace and joy and righteousness and power of the Kingdom of God for evermore. THIS IS THE PRIESTHOOD THAT HAS BEEN PERFECTLY CLEANSED AND SANCTIFIED!

Chapter 24

The Melchizedek Connection

One of the most intriguing descriptions of the unique character of the High Priesthood of Jesus is found in Heb. 7:17 wherein it is stated, "Thou art a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek." This one grand statement shows that Jesus is not like any of the other priests who the people of Israel knew so much about. The entire seventh chapter of Hebrews is about THE MELCHIZEDEK CONNECTION, that is, it is about the way Jesus Christ, and thus, His body, the Royal Priesthood, is related to a strange man named Melchizedek. And the connection between Jesus Christ and Melchizedek is worth exploring. Let's take a look at the Melchizedek Connection.

The whole place Melchizedek occupies in sacred history is one of the most remarkable proofs of the inspiration and the unity of Scripture, as written under the direct supernatural guidance of the Holy Spirit. In the Book of Genesis all we know of him is told in three short, very simple verses. A thousand years later we find a Psalm with just one single verse, in which God Himself is introduced, swearing to His Son that He is to be a High Priest after the Order of Melchizedek. Another thousand years pass, and that single verse becomes the seed of the wondrous exposition, in the Epistle to the Hebrews, of the whole work of redemption in Christ Jesus. All its most remarkable characteristics are found enveloped in this wondrous type. The more we study it the more we exclaim: THIS IS THE LORD'S DOING; IT IS MARVELOUS IN OUR EYES.

In Genesis, chapter fourteen, we have one of the most intriguing stories in the Bible, that of Abram's encounter with Melchizedek, king of Salem, and "the priest of the Most High God." In the Genesis story Melchizedek is a strange and mysterious figure. He flashes across the scene like a meteor. There is no heralding of his appearance, nor any mention of its results. He arrives out of the blue; there is no account of his family; there is nothing about his birth, his descent, his life, his work, or his death. He simply arrives. We learn only that he was king of Salem and priest of the Most High God. During the time of Abraham there were no large nations. Instead, there were small cities where families lived or around which a tribe of nomadic people settled. The population of these cities was probably not more than a few hundred - at most a few thousand. Each city was presided over by a king. Often, these city-states were at war with one another. Sometimes cities would form alliances with other cities and form large armies that would then make war upon yet another city or alliance of cities. Such became the case in the lower Jordan where Lot, Abram's nephew, and his family settled. An alliance of Mesopotamian cities drove Lot out of the Canaanite city of Sodom where he lived and took him captive.

When Abram heard of Lot's capture, he rallied his forces to pursue Lot's captors and was victorious. When Abram was returning from his victory over Chedorlaomer and the kings that fought with him, suddenly, out on the plains of battle comes one, a king all glorious, a priest effulgent with the radiant light of the sun, and this Melchizedek met him with bread and wine. The priest blessed the patriarch, and blessed the Most High God, and received from Abram a tithe of all the spoils of battle. Then he vanished from the stage of history with the same unexplained suddenness as he arrived upon it. He was not forgotten,

however, for this fascinating individual is referred to nearly a thousand years later by king David (Ps. 110:4) and one thousand years later than that by the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews, where he is mentioned by name no less than nine times!

That mysterious historic figure Melchizedek - who was he? Some things are certain. He was not a Hebrew. He was not an Israelite. He was not a Levite. He was not a Jew. Certain questions suggest themselves. How was it that a man like Melchizedek could become king of a city in a land settled by idolatrous descendants of Canaan, and how could he come to be recognized as the priest of the one true God? If Salem, his city, is actually the same as Jerusalem, as most scholars are convinced, then both the Bible and archaeology indicate it to have been inhabited at this time by the Jebusites, one of the Canaanite tribes from whom it was eventually taken by David (II Sam. 5:7). There is no reason to suppose the Jebusites were different in their paganism from the other Canaanites; so it hardly seems likely that Melchizedek could have been a Jebusite. Furthermore how did he come to be recognized as the priest of the Most High God, especially by Abram. Abram had been called to go to Canaan to establish a new nation that would serve the Lord Abram recognized Melchizedek as his spiritual superior, giving a tithe to him; so why was not Melchizedek himself chosen to establish such a nation? The priesthood which he represented was later acclaimed as superior to the Aaronic priesthood established in Abram. Melchizedek also recognized himself as superior to Abram, because he gave him his blessing, though he recognized also that God had already blessed Abram in giving him a miraculous victory.

Such questions as these do not seem to be answered by the usual interpretation that Melchizedek was simply a local chieftain who was chosen, because of his dramatic appearance in the Genesis narrative at this point, to be a type of Christ. Ah, but he is more than that! The Levitical priests were "after the order of Aaron." Aaron was thus not a mere type, he represented an ORDER OF PRIESTHOOD. The mystery is intensified when we find the Holy Spirit, almost a millennium later, through king David, speaking of "my Lord" (Hebrew ADONAI) as "a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek" (Ps. 110:1,4). Melchizedek was not alone as a non-Levitical; there was an "order" of Melchizedek, and this Order was an ages-enduring Order!

There have been a few other interpretations, which are even more unrealistic. One idea is that Melchizedek was an "unfallen Adam" from some other planet, sent to this planet to observe the progress of God's work of redemption for the fallen race of our Adam. Another is that Melchizedek was actually an angel, or possibly a specially created being of some kind. Comment upon such ideas hardly seems necessary, but there have actually been serious advocates of each of these views. Others have assumed that Melchizedek was actually the patriarch Shem, still alive during Abram's day. Assuming there are no gaps in the genealogies of Genesis 11, Shem would have lived until thirty-five years after Abram's death, so that this would be possible. The prevalent hypothesis among the Jews has been that Melchizedek was none other than Shem, the son of Noah. The Rabbinical writers allude to this on numerous occasions. This view, widely accepted by both Evangelical and Pentecostal authorities, and embraced by some "sonship" brethren as well, does not have a shred of historical or biblical evidence to support it. It is, without doubt, just another of the many religious traditions unspiritual theologians accept and purport without any established foundation. Furthermore, it appears to be of those "traditions of the elders" and "Jewish fables" of which both Jesus and Paul warned us to beware!

There are several reasons why I cannot accept Shem as being Melchizedek. First of all, no sufficient reason can be given why Moses, who had in the first thirteen chapters of Genesis spoken of Shem under his own proper name, should here veil his identity under a different one. Second, it is inconsistent with what we know of Shem that he should be said to be by the apostle "without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life," since his genealogy is clearly given in the Scriptures, and the line of his progenitors can be traced right back to Adam. The strangest thing of all that could be said about Shem would be that he had "no end of days," when the Scripture states plainly that he lived to be exactly six hundred years old! (Gen. 11: 10-11). Third, it is in the highest degree improbable that he should be a reigning king in the land of Canaan, which was in the possession of his brother's son; nor is it easy to perceive how Abram could be said to "sojourn there as in a strange land," if his distinguished ancestor Shem were at that time a prominent and powerful figure there. Fourth, on this theory the priesthood of Melchizedek, i.e. of Shem, would not be of a different order than Levi's; directly contrary to the assertion of the apostle in Heb. 7:6, and to the whole thrust of his argument. For if Melchizedek were Shem, Levi was at that time in HIS loins as well as in the loins of Abram, from which it follows, that while he paid tithes in the loins of one of his ancestors he received them in another, that is, paid them to himself - which is absurd! And finally, as I said before, there is not a shred of historical or biblical evidence to indicate that Shem was Melchizedek, or a priest, for that matter, or even a spiritual man!

The fact is that Shem passed through the flood and stepped into the new age riding on Noah's coat-tail! Nowhere does the Scripture reveal Shem as a man of faith or righteousness. Read the great "honor-roll" of faith in Hebrews 11 - Shem's name does not appear! Ah, but his father Noah's name is there. "By faith NOAH, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, prepared an ark TO THE SAVING OF HIS HOUSE by the which HE condemned the world and became heir of the RIGHTEOUSNESS which is by faith" (Heb. 11:7). Shem's faith had nothing whatever to do with the building of the ark or with deliverance from the flood waters. Interesting, too, that Melchizedek's name means "King of Righteousness" (Heb. 7:2), and the only two men in Shem's era who are spoken of as being "righteous" were Noah and Abraham. Righteousness is nowhere attributed to Shem, but Abraham was a righteous man and Melchizedek was the "King of Righteousness". Shem fades quietly from the biblical record, with no special works ascribed to him, nor is he used as a type of Christ or any spiritual grace anywhere in the New Testament.

THE GREATNESS OF MELCHIZEDEK

"Now consider HOW GREAT THIS MAN WAS, unto whom even the patriarch Abraham gave the tenth of the spoils. And verily they that are of the sons of Levi, who receive the office of the priesthood, have a commandment to take tithes of the people according to the law, that is, of their brethren, though they come out of the loins of Abraham: but he whose descent is not counted from them received tithes of Abraham, and blessed him that had the promises. And without all contradiction THE LESS IS BLESSED OF THE BETTER. And here men that die receive tithes; but there he receiveth them, of whom it is witnessed that he liveth. And as I may so say, Levi also, who received tithes, paid tithes in Abraham. For he was yet in the loins of his father, when Melchizedek met him" (Heb. 7:4-10).

NOW CONSIDER HOW GREAT THIS MAN WAS. Have you ever considered how great Melchizedek really was? Concerning no other man are we told, CONSIDER HOW

GREAT THIS MAN WAS! For it is not the custom of the Holy Spirit to set forth the greatness of man - but the contrary. Man is less than nothing, and vanity. Yet Melchizedek is pronounced "great"; Abram recognized his greatness; we are told to "consider" it. Melchizedek did not bless just anyone, but he blessed him that had the PROMISES. How great were the promises given to Abraham! These included so many facets of life and truth and glory, and Abraham believed what was spoken to him and walked accordingly. It was promised that through his seed all the families of the earth would be blessed. It was through his seed that the great family of sons was to come that would arise as saviors upon Mount Zion. Many and varied are the promises given this man of faith. Then comes Melchizedek with a special blessing for the holder of the promises. Although he was blessed by God with the promises Abraham acknowledged himself as being less than Melchizedek when he bowed beneath Melchizedek's blessing. Abraham was right, for Abraham was not the king-priest, Melchizedek was; Abraham was not the royal-priestly tribe of Jesus, Melchizedek was. All the greatness of Abraham remains; by his very greatness he shows just HOW GREAT Melchizedek really is! Three times the Bible tells us that Abraham was "the friend of God." God had special conversations with Abraham and had destined him to be the fountain-head of all His redemptive purposes. And here is someone who is in a higher relationship with God than even "the friend of God" and the holder of the promises! Of Shem we read nowhere of special dealings of God as in the case of Abraham. The lesser was blessed by the greater and Abraham was blessed by Melchizedek.

NOW CONSIDER HOW GREAT THIS MAN WAS. If we rightly apprehend the greatness of Melchizedek, it will help us to understand the greatness of Christ, our High Priest, and the realm to which the sons of God are called. The Hebrews gloried in Abraham, as the father of the chosen people; in Aaron, who as High Priest was the representative of God and His worship; and in the law as given from heaven, in token of God's covenant with His people. In all these respects the superiority of Melchizedek is proved. He is greater than Abraham (Heb. 7:4-10), greater than Aaron (Heb. 7:11-14), and greater than the law (Heb. 7: 11-19). Melchizedek is greater than Abraham; of this a double proof is given. Abraham gives tithes to Melchizedek; Melchizedek blessed Abraham. According to the law the priests received tithes from their brethren, but here a stranger receives them from the father of the whole people! The Levitical priests received tithes from the people. But, so to speak, Levi, from whom they were all descended, paid tithes to Melchizedek while he was in the loins of his progenitor Abraham. In this way the Levitical priesthood paid tribute to the priesthood of Melchizedek, and recognized its superiority. All was so ordered of God as a hidden prophecy, to be unfolded in due time, of the greatness of Christ our High Priest and the glory of the heavenly calling unto which the sons of God are called. If you can comprehend something of that ORDER OF MELCHIZEDEK which lies beyond the veil, and the majesty of the Christ who reigns from that realm, and the glory of the manifested sons of God, then CONSIDER HOW GREAT THIS MAN WAS !

There is a second proof of his greatness; Melchizedek blessed Abraham. BUT WITHOUT ANY DISPUTE THE LESS IS BLESSED OF THE BETTER. Abraham had already been blessed of God Himself (Gen. 12:2). He here accepts a blessing from Melchizedek, acknowledging his own inferiority, unconsciously subordinating himself and the whole priesthood that was to come from him, to this PRIEST OF THE MOST HIGH GOD. Thus, the Levitical priesthood never would have come into existence, and it never would have been in operation, it never would have amounted to anything, IF THE MELCHIZEDEK PRIESTHOOD HAD NOT BEEN BROUGHT IN BEFORE. In other words, it was the ministry of Melchizedek that BLESSED THE LEVITICAL PRIESTHOOD in Abraham,

bringing the Levitical priesthood into operation. The only reason the Levitical priesthood could minister and function, was because the Melchizedek priesthood was first on a higher plane ministering the things of God, beginning with Abraham. The Levitical priesthood, and the Tabernacle in which they served, were but the "shadow of heavenly things," the earthly representation of that higher MELCHIZEDEKIAN PRIESTHOOD THAT MINISTERS FROM THE JERUSALEM WHICH IS A-B-O-V-E - from a HIGHER REALM!

HE LIVES!

"For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the Most High God...first being by interpretation King of righteousness, and after that also King of Salem, which is, King of peace; without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life; but made like unto the Son of God; ABIDETH A PRIEST CONTINUALLY.. and here men that die receive tithes; but there he receiveth them, of whom it is witnessed that H-E L-I-V-E-T-H" (Heb. 7:1-3,8).

There are eight distinct features about Melchizedek recorded here. (1) King of righteousness (2) king of peace (3) without father or mother (4) without descent (5) having neither beginning of days nor end of life (6) made like unto the Son of God (7) abideth a priest continually (8) he liveth. We shall consider all of these wonderful statements in due time, but I would now draw your attention to the terms "without father, without mother, without descent." The biblical account of Melchizedek appears to leave him as a very mysterious person, yet there are keys in the Scriptures that shed precious light upon him. One of these keys is to be found in the phrase - WITHOUT DESCENT. A casual consideration of this phrase could leave one under the impression that he had no descent, no genealogy, no father, no mother, and no posterity - at least, no recorded one - which is what many Bible teachers have proclaimed. The orthodox teaching has been that the Holy Spirit simply "omitted" Melchizedek's genealogy from the biblical record so that he would "appear" as being without father, without mother, and without descent, indicating thereby a different type of priesthood from the Levitical, in which genealogy was of prime importance - no man might exercise priestly functions who was not of the lineage of Aaron. But beyond all the theorizing of theologians and explanations of men there has to be illumination of the Spirit to give us true understanding. If we are of this Melchizedek Priesthood, then there has to be light that we might know our calling and be able to enter into our position for this time leading into the Kingdom.

The words WITHOUT DESCENT are from the single Greek word AGENEALOGETOS. In the Greek language the letter A or ALPHA placed before a word negates that word or makes it a negative or just the opposite of the original. The same Greek word minus the A or ALPHA (GENEALOGETOS) is used in Heb. 7:6 referring to Melchizedek, "But he whose DESCENT is not counted from them (Levi) received tithes from Abraham." There it infers that he did have a DESCENT, but it was not reckoned from Levi. It should be clear to all that have eyes to see that Melchizedek did, without doubt, have a DESCENT. Thus the two quotations seem to be contradictory - seem to be, but really are not. As I have pointed out the A or ALPHA in the original of the phrase WITHOUT DESCENT makes the word DESCENT a negative - NO DESCENT. But there cannot be a negation of a thing unless that thing exists to negate. For example, you cannot use the negative term "uncircumcised" unless there is in the world the fact of circumcision. It is only in having the reality of descent that it could be prefixed by the ALPHA and made a negative. Thus it is with all those elect saints who are apprehended to the Order of Melchizedek,

their descent or genealogy becomes prefixed with the ALPHA. He who IS the ALPHA and the Omega prefixes, preempts, negates, abrogates, annuls, rescinds, revokes, neutralizes and cancels out their natural genealogy! It does not do away with it, mind you, but it does LIFT THEIR DESCENT INTO A HIGHER REALM...

The Greek for WITHOUT FATHER is APATOR; PATOR means FATHER, but here it is prefixed with the A or ALPHA. The Alpha before father makes it un-fathered or fatherless. Now this Melchizedek was unfathered, unmothered, and undescended so far as THIS WORLD was concerned. Search how we may, I think we must conclude that there is really only one man who ever lived on earth who fits that description naturally, and he is the FIRST MAN ADAM. But this Melchizedek was more than that - much, much more! Adam sinned, but this Melchizedek was King of Righteousness and King of Peace, he was made like unto the Son of God, and he abides a priest continually. Adam died, but of Melchizedek it is witnessed that HE LIVETH.

Check your Old Testament and you will see that practically every Israelite ever mentioned, from the least to the greatest, is given a genealogy. Every time someone's name is mentioned it is stated that he was the son of so and so, the son of so and so, the son of so and so, and soon you tire of reading it. But you see for Melchizedek, no genealogy is presented for him. The apostle explains to us that purpose in the New Testament. He shows that Melchizedek ORIGINATED FROM A REALM in which he had neither earthly father, nor earthly mother, nor beginning of days, nor end of life, but is made like unto the Son of God and abides a priest continually, or perpetually. Now since Jesus Christ is a priest after the Order of Melchizedek, and the Scriptures reveal that you and I are IN HIM, we need to meditate upon and imbibe deeply of this truth. We're IN HIM! And He is the priest after the Order of Melchizedek.

Therefore, Jesus, as He now is in the heavenlies, ascended into the glory of the Father, has no father or mother, for He is ETERNAL, timeless, changeless, unborn, underived, without beginning of days, without end of life, and He is a King-Priest over all. Now when He was here on earth, He had an earthly mother. But now, praise God, He is exalted to a realm where He is over Mary, and she is not over Him anymore. She is not the mother of what He now is. Nothing of His present position, power, glory, nature, ministry or being was birthed out of her. What Jesus is today as High Priest after the order of Melchizedek never laid in Bethlehem's manger, never walked the shores of Galilee, never hung on Calvary's cross. As He abides now in the realm of resurrection and exaltation, He has neither father nor mother, and He is eternal, neither does He have beginning nor end of days. He abideth a priest from age to age after the Order of Melchizedek.

Now let's bring this thing down to you and me. We are in Him. He and Melchizedek are not the only ones that have neither father nor mother, nor beginning nor end of days, because you and I don't have an earthly father nor mother anymore. For we've had a supernatural birthing from above. And we've been conceived by the Holy Ghost, not in the womb of an earthly mother, but in the womb of the Jerusalem which is above, which is the mother of us all (Gal. 4:26); and from that realm we have no beginning of days, being chosen in Him from BEFORE THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD, and no end of life, for death is now swallowed up into HIS VICTORY. Like Melchizedek and like Jesus, we also have neither father nor mother. The Word says that He is eternal, and the Bible says we are in Him, and the Scriptures declare that we have received of His life and as He is, so are we in this world. Therefore, we have neither beginning nor end of days either, but we abide as priests forever after the Order of Melchizedek. It remains,

however, that the fullness of this Melchizedekian Priesthood is yet to be manifested in the Royal Priesthood.

To those who can receive it the following words of the apostle will give help and light, but let us not try to evade their true meaning just to make them acceptable to our old theology. Let us rather change our theology to suit the clear teaching of the Word of the Lord. Introducing his explanation of the priesthood of Melchizedek, the apostle said, "And here men that die receive tithes; but there he (Melchizedek) receiveth them, of whom it is witnessed that HE LIVETH" (Heb. 7:8). Before beginning this article I checked this passage in all the Bible Commentaries I have in my study, and almost without exception they contradicted this plain, simple statement of truth. The Scripture testifies that Melchizedek is STILL ALIVE. "...of whom it is witnessed that HE LIVETH." "Ah," the commentators said, "it doesn't mean that he is still living, it means that he did live and there is no record of his death. Therefore Melchizedek is presented to us simply in the power of life, and not in death, in order to be a type of Christ." To which I say, "Babylonish rubbish!"

The usual interpretation the carnal-minded preachers put upon these amazing statements about Melchizedek is that they cannot possibly be literally true, that they refer to the fact that Melchizedek appears suddenly on the scene, and then disappears again as suddenly. There is no genealogy listed, no record of his parents or children, no record of birth or death. The theologians are quite sure that he was a very natural man, but that God merely hid his identity from us to make him a "type" of a higher realm. This is no doubt the naturalistic interpretation. But one who believes in verbal inspiration cannot help wondering why, in this case, the HOLY Spirit did not say that Melchizedek was "without a RECORD of father or mother, or of genealogy, or of birth or death." Could He not foresee that stating it in the way He did, leaving out the simple word "record," or some equivalent, would easily and naturally lead readers to a misunderstanding of Melchizedek's true nature? Instead of this, however, He seemed to aggravate the misunderstanding by saying, literally, that Melchizedek was "made like unto the Son of God" and that he "REMAINS a priest continually" (Heb. 7:3).

The Amplified Bible says it so well, "Furthermore, here in the Levitical priesthood tithes are received by men who are subject to death; while there in the case of Melchizedek, they are received by one of whom it is testified that he LIVES PERPETUALLY." And with this all Bible translations agree. The Greek is very condensed: ...being attested that HE LIVETH. The word "liveth" is in the Greek an active verb in the present tense, indicative mood. It can mean nothing else than that MELCHIZEDEK LIVES. Under the Mosaic law, dying men, men who were not only liable to death, mortal, but men who were actually seen to die from generation to generation, enjoyed the rights of priests. For such an order there is not only the contingency but the fact of succession. But Melchizedek is one to whom witness is borne that HE LIVETH.

How awesome, then, the words! "For this Melchizedek...without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life...ABIDETH A PRIEST CONTINUALLY." The word ABIDETH is in the present tense. No matter how you look at it this shows that Melchizedek continues as a priest. Melchizedek is still a priest and is ministering with the kingly authority. Consider how great this man is! The patriarch, a revered father, Abraham recognized the greatness of Melchizedek and gave him the tenth of all his spoils - consider how great this man was! He came from a different realm than the one Abraham was acquainted with. Abraham lived in a natural realm, and

through faith he experienced divine intervention into his natural realm on several occasions. The most notable example of this being the quickening of his body and the barrenness of Sarah's womb to conceive and bring forth that child of promise, Isaac. Abraham immediately recognized Melchizedek when returning from his great victory. Abraham was certainly thanking and praising the Lord and he was in enough spiritual frame of mind to recognize certain divine attributes and qualities about Melchizedek which he knew from previous experiences with God. That is why Abraham received Melchizedek's blessing, and why he in turn gave a tenth of all the spoils to him.

THE POWER OF AN ENDLESS LIFE

Many of those who read these lines have pondered the events that transpired in the Garden of Eden in that dim and distant past. Little by little fragments of truth have opened up, but the grand sum and total of it is not yet unfolded before us. In that Garden which the Lord God planted there were all manner of trees that were good for food, and Adam and Eve were to freely partake thereof with one exception - the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Now we know that eating a piece of fruit in itself was not the sin, but rather that tree represented something, and that fruit represented a reality.

At the beginning of man's existence on earth we are shown Adam in a relationship with **THREE KINDS OF TREES**. To understand God's plan, we must be completely clear about these three kinds of trees and what they represent. The three types of trees are set forth in Gen. 2:8-9,16-17. "And the Lord God planted a Garden eastward in Eden; and there He put the man whom He had formed. And out of the ground made the Lord God to grow **EVERY TREE** that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; **THE TREE OF LIFE ALSO** in the midst of the Garden, and **THE TREE OF THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOOD AND EVIL.**" Here are the three classes of trees which could be experienced by Adam and Eve: (1) all the trees of the Garden (2) the tree of life (3) the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

There is a clear distinction made between a **GROVE** composed of "every tree that is good for food" on the one hand, and the two trees which were in "the midst of the Garden" on the other hand - the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Thus, **ALL THE TREES OF THE GARDEN** (the grove) are distinct from either the tree of life or the tree of knowledge. The tree of life was not of the same nature as "all the trees of the Garden" and the tree of knowledge, likewise, was not the same as those trees. After God formed man He placed him before these three kinds of trees, and man's whole life was pictured as a matter of feasting upon one tree or the other. How man would live and walk depended entirely upon his relationship with these three kinds of trees. God told man plainly, "You may freely eat of **ALL THE TREES OF THE GARDEN.**" He also said, "But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it."

There is an enlightening passage of Scripture in Ezekiel chapter thirty-one. This chapter is addressed to Pharaoh and his host but then continues on about the Assyrian. Listen to these words: "Behold, the Assyrian was a cedar in Lebanon with fair branches, and with a shadowing shroud, and of a high stature; and his top was among the thick boughs. All the fowls of heaven made their nests in his boughs, and under his branches did all the beasts of the field bring forth their young, and under his shadow dwelt great nations. The **CEDARS IN THE GARDEN OF GOD** could not hide him: the fir trees were not like his boughs, and the chestnut trees were not like his branches; nor any **TREE** in **THE GARDEN OF GOD** was like unto him in his beauty. I have made him fair by the multitude

of his branches: so that ALL THE TREES OF EDEN, that WERE IN THE GARDEN OF GOD, envied him...to whom art thou thus like in glory and in greatness AMONG THE TREES OF EDEN?"

I have quoted but a portion of this chapter, but enough to show that in the symbolism of Scripture trees, even those in the Garden of Eden, represent people. Under the figure of "all the trees of the Garden" the Egyptian was there! The Assyrian was there! And in the midst, the Tree of Life was there! The wonderful Tree of Life in Eden was, as is said of Christ, "in the world" but "not of the world." The life-giving fruit of this Tree was accessible to man but had absolutely nothing to do with the realm of earthiness, for it was heaven's own divine life brought into man's world and made available to him. In the Tree of Life God invited man to find Him as the source and center of life, that in union with Him God would be at once both the indwelling power of life and the environment in which man would live, move, and have his being. By eating of 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 make men radiant with the resplendent glory of God as was Jesus, the last Adam, at the transfiguration, whose face shone as the sun and His raiment was as the light. The mighty power of this Tree would raise man up beyond any possibility of sin, corruption and death into the incorruptible divine life demonstrated by Jesus when He arose from the dead in a body of glorification. In this Tree of Life the effulgent perfumes of the heavenly realm would be fragrance and life to man's nostrils. He would taste spiritualities and touch spiritual 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 night. The heavens would be opened over his head and he would walk in the power and majesty of God Almighty.

This was the glory of the Tree of Life in Eden! This Tree of Life has to represent a wonderful person, with ENDLESS LIFE, DIVINE LIFE, CELESTIAL LIFE. It is written of Melchizedek that he had neither beginning of days nor ending of life, but abides a priest continually (Heb. 7:3). It states that "he liveth" (Heb. 7:8). And again it says that the Order of Melchizedek is "after the power of an endless life" (Heb. 7:16). Other Scriptures confirm these mentioned, but I point these out to emphasize the fact that LIFE is one of the chief signs of the Order of Melchizedek. Therefore, it is my deep conviction that the TREE OF LIFE in the Garden of Eden represented the MELCHIZEDEK PRIESTHOOD, and upon the disobedience of Adam and Eve they were banished from the Garden and Cherubim with a flaming sword which turned in every direction were stationed at Eden's gate to guard the way of the Tree of Life. In their unclean and corrupted condition they could not partake of that great Priesthood which ensured life eternal. And, thus it has been through long millenniums, the Melchizedek Priesthood has been guarded and kept secret and untouched until another Priest after the Order of Melchizedek, even the Saviour, should arise and clear the way for partaking of that glorious life. Of course, there are some qualifications and requirements, even then, for partaking fully of the life of that blessed realm. The Spirit saith, "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the TREE OF LIFE, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God" (Rev. 2:7). Not everyone eats of it, only those who overcome and are prepared to eat of it. The promise is unto the fullness of THE ORDER OF MELCHIZEDEK.

Hebrews 7:11-15 tells us that we cannot be perfected by the Levitical priesthood. In the order of Aaron there was a continual succession of priests, one dying and another taking his place. One by one they grew old and died: the eye, often filled with tears, was

closed; the heart stood still; the hands crossed meekly on the breast. Aaron died on Hor, and all his successors in mystic procession followed him. The office remained, but the occupants passed. That characterized the whole system; it bore the mark of change and weakness and death. It could not effect anything that was really abiding and permanent, much less anything that was eternal. The whole inner life of the worshipper was what the system was, subject to change and decay. Therefore another order of priesthood must arise. Jesus is the High Priest of this new order. Therefore, since the priesthood is changed, there is also of necessity a change of law. The Levitical priesthood was raised up for a time, by a commandment. It was part of the ministration of the law, of the Old Covenant. But the Melchizedek Order goes beyond just a commandment, it is by the OATH of the ever-living God. "And inasmuch as not without an oath He was made priest: for those priests (Levitical) were made without an oath; but this with an oath by Him that said unto Him, the Lord swore and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the Order of Melchizedek" (Heb. 7:19-20). The Melchizedek Order is of the New Testament, that full arrangement of God's new order, and it is not the fulfilling of a law, but the OUTFLOW OF A LIFE.

The glorious statement is made that another priest arises after the similitude of Melchizedek who is made "after the power of an endless life." In the RSV translation it says He has become a priest "not according to a legal requirement concerning bodily descent but by the power of an indestructible life." The Phillips translation reads, "From the power of indestructible life within." And the New English Bible states, "The new priest who arises is one like Melchizedek, owing His priesthood not to a system of earthbound rules but to the power of a life that cannot be destroyed." And the Amplified Bible renders, "He has been constituted a Priest, not on the basis of a bodily legal requirement - an externally imposed command concerning His physical ancestry - but on the basis of the power of an endless and indestructible Life." Praise God for life that cannot be destroyed!

This brings us to what is implied by the word "endless". This is the Greek word AKATALUTOS which means INDISSOLUBLE. As we have already seen, it was in the power of that INDISSOLUBLE LIFE that Jesus was constituted a priest after the Order of Melchizedek. On earth He was not a priest. On earth His life was dissoluble, or He could not have died. Now His life has become "indissoluble"; and now He cannot die. The mystery of the Melchizedekian Priesthood, which the Hebrews were not able to receive (Heb. 5:10-14), is the mystery of the RESURRECTION LIFE. He Himself is the Eternal One, who abideth Priest forever. His priesthood is unchangeable; the life, in the power of which He ministers, is a life that abides unchangeable too. His priesthood is an everlasting one, ever living, ever active. What a contrast to all the Levitical priests, on whose graves this epitaph may ever be inscribed, "Not suffered to continue by reason of death." How different is our High Priest, after the Order of Melchizedek! Death tried to master Him; but He could not be holden of it. "He continueth ever." "He ever liveth." "He is a priest forever." WHEREFORE HE ALSO IS ABLE TO SAVE COMPLETELY THEM THAT DRAW NEAR UNTO GOD BY HIM. It is by virtue of HIS EVER LIVING that He is able to start the work of redemption and also bring it to its completeness. Because He is of an endless life, He can bring all that He ministers unto into this same endless life.

Praise God, the Melchizedek Priesthood BRINGS PERFECTION. Jesus lives in the Spirit as High Priest in the power of an endless life. And Christ dwells within us in the power of an endless life. Each work He does within us He is able to do in the power of an endless life. He works it within us AS A LIFE, as our own life, so that it is our very nature to

radiate the glory of God. His priesthood acts as an inner life within us, lifting us up, not in thought, but in spirit and in truth, into a vital experiencing of God. He breathes His own life into us. And He works it in the power of an endless life, an indissoluble life, that must triumph over all the powers of sin and death.

What a glorious path is marked out for us! WE ARE A ROYAL PRIESTHOOD. The High Priest has run on before and entered the veil into the Holiest of All. And we are running also and are entering that veil. Something marvelous, amazing and stupendous is about to happen, beloved, as we press on into God. God shall surely and truly usher us into the fullness of the Order of Melchizedek. Through His flesh we too shall enter the unseen and eternal realm of God and learn of its mystery. Having entered this realm, we shall deliver creation from the bondage of corruption. Therefore I say that the great Melchizedekian Priesthood Ministry will be functioning to the full when the priests have fully put on immortality and incorruption (I Cor. 15:53). This will be the great manifestation of the sons of God that all creation "groaneth and travaileth in pain" for (Rom. 8:18-25).

The Lord seeks to bring His overcoming remnant into THE POWER OF AN ENDLESS LIFE. It is greater than Pentecostal power. Greater than power to speak in tongues, prophesy, heal the sick, cast out devils, and do signs and wonders. It is greater than witnessing power, and even greater than power to raise the dead. Soon, very soon, those powers will no longer be needed because the manifested sons of God shall arise in the power of the Melchizedekian Priesthood to deliver creation from the bondage of corruption. A world is coming where there is no limited measure of the Spirit, no "in part" manifestation of the "gift" realm. There will be no need to heal the sick, cast out devils, multiply bread and fish, or raise the dead - it is an eternal realm where everlasting life will flow fully and freely to all creation. Death is not the grave or the coffin. DEATH IS THIS WHOLE REALM IN WHICH WE HAVE EXISTED EVER SINCE THE TRANSGRESSION IN EDEN. Mankind groans to be delivered, not merely from sin and sickness and trouble and the grave, but out of death, out of the DEATH REALM altogether.

We can only speculate what it will be like to be in the full power and glory of eternal life. God is moving to bring His holy remnant into the power of an indissoluble life, even now. There will be a full and complete severing from the earth realm, from the carnal mind, from the death realm and all its claims. God wants a free, heavenly, celestial people, a body of sons totally detached from all that is earthly, limited, and temporal. It is possible to move into a resurrection realm that places us beyond time, beyond the thinking and power of the world, beyond the bondage of health, security, and death itself. Is that not the greatest power God can give to mankind - to make him an eternal SPIRITUAL BEING in the very glory of God?

But note, precious friend of mine, I did not say that God would make us SPIRITS -but SPIRITUAL BEINGS. In the vast storehouse of truth embraced by the holy Scriptures no part nor phase thereof is in any way more outstanding or clear than the truth that man was designed by his Creator to possess a body. Man is not designed to have his spirit flit about through eternity without a body. The apostle Paul echoes the sense of revulsion found in the heart of every man at the thought of being found "naked" or disembodied. Speaking of the earthly residence of the tabernacle of flesh, he writes, "For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven: if so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked. For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, not for

that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life. Now He that hath wrought us FOR THIS SELFSAME THING is God..." (II Cor. 5:1-5)

In the passage quoted above Paul makes it perfectly clear that he does not want to be unclothed, or put off this clay body by reason of death, but rather he wants to BE CLOTHED UPON with that house not made with hands, even the heavenly body, the house that is eternal in the heavens. From whence does this body come? How is it that it is in the heavens and yet belongs to us?

It should not be difficult in the least for us to understand the contrast between the two bodies spoken of in I Cor. 15:39-50. "All flesh is not the same flesh...there are also CELESTIAL BODIES and BODIES TERRESTRIAL: but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another...there is a NATURAL BODY, and there is a SPIRITUAL BODY. And so it is written, the FIRST MAN ADAM was made a living soul; the LAST ADAM was made a quickening spirit. The FIRST MAN is of the earth, earthy: the SECOND MAN is the Lord from heaven. As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy: and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly. And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly. Now this I say brethren, that FLESH AND BLOOD CANNOT INHERIT THE KINGDOM OF GOD; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption."

The contrast between these two bodies - the FIRST of flesh, the SECOND of spirit -is almost too much for our weak and earthbound minds to comprehend. The natural mind and natural understanding cannot grasp it. The Holy Spirit declares that "as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall ALSO bear the image of the heavenly." There are some who do not believe that Jesus Christ in His glory at the right hand of the Father now possesses a BODY. But let us pause and meditate briefly upon the words of Paul in Phil. 3:20-21: "For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall CHANGE OUR VILE BODY, that it may be fashioned like unto HIS GLORIOUS BODY, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself." The words "HIS GLORIOUS BODY" are more correctly translated "THE BODY OF HIS GLORY." If HE is fashioning US to have a BODY LIKE UNTO H-I-S B-O-D-Y OF GLORY, then HE MUST HAVE A B-O-D-Y, yes, a BODY OF GLORY! Christ is not only the Spirit of glory, or a glorious Spirit, but He has a BODY OF GLORY. And He is changing us and making us...not merely spirits...but redeemed beings, new creation men in spirit, soul, and body.

Hearken now to these meaningful words: "There is a NATURAL BODY and there is a SPIRITUAL BODY." It is plain to see that our present bodies are "natural bodies." The "spiritual body" supersedes the "natural body" and is called in the Greek a "spirit body," while the "natural body" is called in Greek a "soul-body." By SPIRIT-BODY we are not to understand some sort of ghost-like structure that has no substance. Every "force" in the universe must have a "motor," that is a machine adapted to its use. The motive force of the natural body is the SOUL, and the motive force of the spirit body is the SPIRIT. The First Adam was made a LIVING SOUL; the Last Adam was made a QUICKENING SPIRIT. From this we see that the motive force of the soul-body IS THE SOUL and the motive force of the spirit-body IS THE SPIRIT. The natural body and the spiritual body belong to two entirely different kingdoms. The first is of Adam, the second is of the Lord from heaven. The first is from earth, the second is from heaven. The first is terrestrial, the second is celestial. The first is temporal, the second is eternal. The first is visible, the second is invisible. The first is the body in which the dying Levitical priesthood ministered,

the second is the body in which the incorruptible MELCHIZEDEK PRIESTHOOD ministers! Glory!

There is another body, thank God! formed of the incorruptible life of the resurrected and glorified Christ of God and this marvelous body is from heaven even as my present body is of earth. I do not hesitate to declare to you that as a man PUTS ON CHRIST he puts on not only the spirit of Christ but also the RESURRECTION BODY of Christ, and this body IS OUR HOUSE FROM HEAVEN. Even as our earth-body has come from the FIRST MAN ADAM, and IS ADAM'S BODY, so our celestial-body comes from the SECOND MAN ADAM, and IS THE BODY OF CHRIST'S RESURRECTION. As the pure and holy life of the Son of God is formed within us God shall also give us bodies worthy of such divine life, bodies capable of expressing all the wisdom and nature and power of that blessed realm beyond sin and death, yea, beyond time and space and matter!

Now, if all our life is of this earthy realm - soulish - we need a body to manifest on that level. But the more our life is lifted up into the SPIRIT, and we have our manner of behavior directed and controlled by the Spirit of God, the more it will necessitate that we begin to be clothed upon with our house (body) which is from heaven, that we might possess a body in harmony with our heavenly life. So, while it means the denying and crucifixion of the flesh, there is a "knowing in yourselves that we have in heaven a better and an enduring substance...an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven (the Spirit-realm) for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time" (Heb. 10:34; I Pet. 1:4-5). Rather than clinging to this frail and vile body, this flesh man, the more our life is taken from the earth, and lifted up into the heavenlies, the more we find our satisfaction in CHRIST ALONE, and the things of earth become strangely dim in the light of HIS SURPASSING GLORY.

Glorious beyond description is the fact that here and now, even as I pen these words, in the inner realm of our spirit-being there is being constructed an incorruptible life, a BUILDING OF GOD, an house not made with hands, a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not of this creation, eternal in the heavens. Not a mansion in the sky, not a cabin in the corner, not a white nightgown and wings with which to flit about on golden streets, as the churches so ignorantly portray, but a new life, a new nature, a new garment, a new tabernacle, a new body, a body of life and light and glory and power, a body of CELESTIAL FLESH, a body of incorruption, a body of immortality raised up and constructed by the mighty working of THE INDWELLING POWER OF HIS RESURRECTION!

Ah - when this work has been fully completed we will know the fullness of that glorious realm where abides and ministers the PRIESTHOOD AFTER THE ORDER OF MELCHIZEDEK. The Most High shall dwell in and manifest the fullness of Himself through this Melchizedekian Order and everlasting life will flow fully and freely to all creation until all has been lifted into the sphere of HIS ENDLESS LIFE!

Chapter 25

The Melchizedek Connection

(continued)

One of the most intriguing descriptions of the unique character of the High Priesthood of Jesus is found in Heb. 7:17 wherein it is stated, "Thou art a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek." This one grand statement shows that Jesus is not like any of the other priests who the people of Israel knew so much about. The entire seventh chapter of Hebrews is about THE MELCHIZEDEK CONNECTION, that is, it is about the way Jesus Christ, and thus, His body, the Royal Priesthood, is related to a strange man named Melchizedek. And the connection between Jesus Christ and Melchizedek is worth exploring.

In the book of Genesis all we know of him is told in three short, very simple verses, wherein is related the story of Abram's encounter with Melchizedek, king of Salem, and "the priest of the Most High God." In the Genesis story Melchizedek is a strange and mysterious figure. He flashes across the scene like a meteor. There is no heralding his appearance, nor any mention of its results. He arrives out of the blue; there is no account of his family; there is nothing about his birth, his descent, his life, his work, or his death. He simply arrives. We learn only that he was king of Salem and priest of the Most High God. The priest blessed the patriarch Abram, and blessed the Most High God, and received from Abram a tithe of all the spoils of battle. Then he vanished from the stage of history with the same unexplained suddenness as he arrived upon it. He was not forgotten, however, for this fascinating individual is referred to nearly a thousand years later by King David (Ps. 110:4) and one thousand years later than that by the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews, where he is mentioned by name no less than nine times!

That mysterious historic figure Melchizedek - who was he? The biblical account of Melchizedek appears to leave him as a very mystical person, yet there are keys in the Scriptures that shed precious light upon him. Many of these keys are contained within a few short verses in Hebrews, chapter eight. "For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the Most High God...first being by interpretation King of righteousness, and after that also King of Salem, which is, King of peace; without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life; but made like unto the Son of God; abideth a priest continually...and here men that die receive tithes; but there he receiveth them, of whom it is witnessed that he liveth" (Heb. 7:1-3,8).

The usual interpretation the carnal-minded preachers put upon these amazing statements about Melchizedek is that they cannot possibly be literally true. There are eight distinct features about Melchizedek recorded here. (1) King of righteousness (2) king of peace (3) without father or mother (4) without descent (5) having neither beginning of days nor end of life (6) made like unto the Son of God (7) abideth a priest continually (8) he liveth. I was astounded when I read the various Commentaries I have in my library to discover that with one voice they categorically denied the truth of practically

all the above statements. They said that Melchizedek DID have a father and mother, but that they were merely left unrecorded. They stated that Melchizedek DID have a descent, but it was simply omitted from the Scriptures. They argued that he DID have a beginning of days and an end of life, but God hid it from us. They were quite sure that Melchizedek was not really made like unto the Son of God, but that he was actually a very natural man who, because he appeared suddenly on the scene and then disappeared again as suddenly, serves as a "type" of the Lord Jesus Christ. And they were absolutely positive that he does NOT abide a priest continually, nor does he now live. This is without doubt the naturalistic interpretation. I hope that none of you who call yourselves sons of God are guilty of adopting that interpretation. And if you are, that you will repent of it at once!

The amazing fact is that not one of these characteristics can be attributed to any mortal son of Adam. Meditate deeply upon these and you will see! Ah, my brother, my sister, consider how great this man Melchizedek was! He came from a different realm than the one Abraham was acquainted with. Abraham lived in a natural realm, and through faith he experienced divine intervention into a natural realm on several occasions, the most notable example of this being the quickening of his body and the barrenness of Sarah's womb to conceive and bring forth that child of promise, Isaac. Abraham immediately recognized Melchizedek when returning from his great victory. Abraham was certainly thanking and praising the Lord and he was in enough spiritual frame of mind to recognize certain divine attributes and qualities about Melchizedek which he knew from previous experiences with God. That is why Abraham received Melchizedek's blessing, and why he in turn gave a tenth of all the spoils to him.

THE LOGOS

In this study we shall examine the Melchizedek Connection in detail. At times it may appear that we have gone far afield from our subject, but if my reader will follow through to the conclusion I believe he will see the wonderful harmony between all the parts.

The Gospel of John opens with the statement, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (Jn. 1:1). The imagery is foreign to us. We hardly know what to make of it. But the Greek word LOGOS, or WORD in English, was common in New Testament days. John introduces the word with these three tremendous statements: (1) In the beginning was the Word (2) and the Word was with God (3) and the Word was God. This Word is presented as One "in the beginning." Note the contrast between "IN the beginning" and the expression "FROM the beginning," which is common in John's writings. Satan was a murderer "FROM the beginning," but the Logos was "IN the beginning." This beginning antedates the very first words in the Bible, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth," for of this One it is stated, "The same was (already) in the beginning with God" (Jn. 1:2).

That beginning - when God created the heavens and the earth - can be dated, although I do not believe that anyone can date it accurately - it is nonsense to say that it is 4004 B.C., as Ussher's dating has it. It probably goes back billions and billions of years. You see, you and I are dealing with the God of eternity who framed the ages of time. When you go back to creation He is already there, and that is exactly the way this is used - "in the beginning WAS the Word." Notice it is not IS the Word; it was not in the beginning that the Word started out or was begotten. WAS is known as a curative imperfect, meaning continued action. It means that the Word was in the beginning. What beginning? Just as far back as you want to go. The Bible says, "In the beginning God created the

heavens and the earth." Does that begin God? No, just keep on going back billions and trillions and "squillions" of years as man reckons time. I can think back to billions of years back of creation, maybe you can go back beyond that, but let's put down a point there, billions of years back of creation. The LOGOS already was; He comes out of eternity to meet us. He did not begin. "In the beginning was the Word" - He was already there when the beginning was. "Well," somebody says, "there has to be a beginning somewhere." All right, wherever you begin, He is there to meet you, He is already past tense. "In the beginning was the Word" - five words in the original language, and there is not a man on top side of this earth who can put a date on it or understand it or fathom it. This first tremendous statement starts us off in space, you see!

Like all other names, THE LOGOS has its own meaning - a meaning which does not appear in the English translation, "the Word". LOGOS carries with it the idea of a WORD SPOKEN, speech, eloquence, reason, thought and concept. It refers not only to the Word that is spoken, manifested, but also to the purpose, thought, intent and will of God behind that which is expressed. "For the Word of God is quick, and powerful" (Heb. 4:12). The Word of God is quick. That doesn't mean fast; rather the Word is LIVING! You see, a Word is the expression of a thought, a purpose, an intent, a will. In order to have a thought, you need a Thinker. The Father is a great Thinker. The Father thought, and then the Father spoke. And from the bosom of the Father, the Word came forth and that Word was LIVING and POWERFUL. That Word was, in fact, the LIVING CREATIVE ENERGY OF GOD. It was by God's Word that all things were done, for THE WORD flowed forth from the eternal wisdom by which God declared the purposes of His infinite mind. The Word flowed forth from divine omnipotence by which He brought all the starry heavens into existence. Consider the divisions of matter: energy, motion, phenomena. ENERGY: "In the beginning was the WORD, and the WORD was with God, and the WORD was God" - that's energy! How did this universe come into existence? God SPOKE! "And God SAID (the WORD), Let there be...and there was..."

Every rational person has to confront this problem of how this universe began. That is the reason evolution has been popular - it offers to the natural man an explanation for the origin of the universe. You must have an explanation for it, if you do any thinking at all. Where did it come from? Well, here is the answer, "In the beginning was the Word." God spoke. That is the first thing that happened. When God speaks, when the Word speaks, energy is translated into matter. What is atomic fission? It is matter translated back into energy - poof! it disappears. Creation began with energy. In the beginning was the Word. The Word was with God, the Word was God. The plane and purposes of God for the ages of the ages were conceived and spoken forth in an omnipotent decree by THE WORD, the LIVING, POWERFUL, SPEAKING, CREATIVE WORD that was with God in the beginning.

Creation having been brought forth, the Word then stood in unique relationship between God and His creation. LOGOS means not only the inward thought and purpose of God, but the utterance, expression or manifestation of that thought. The eminent Greek scholar, Dr. M. R. Vincent, comments on this word, "Logos therefore signifies both the OUTWARD FORM by which the inward thought is expressed, and the INWARD THOUGHT itself. The idea is of God, who is in His own nature hidden, revealing Himself in creation." Another Greek scholar, Kenneth Wuest, says, "Greek philosophers, in attempting to understand the relationship between God and the universe, spoke of an unknown mediator between God and the universe, naming this mediator, 'Logos.' John tells them that this mediator unknown to them is now our Lord, and he uses the same

name 'Logos.' Our Lord is the Logos of God in the sense that He is the total concept of God, Deity speaking through the Son of God, not in parts of speech as in a sentence composed of words, but in the human life of a divine Person. The definite article appears before 'Word.' He is not merely a concept of God among many others, for the heathen have many concepts of God. He is THE concept of God, the only true one, the unique one. He was in existence when things started to come into being through the creative act of God. He existed before all created things. Therefore, He is uncreated, and therefore eternal in His being, and therefore God" - end quote.

So we conclude that the "Word" was the visible expression of the invisible God - in other words, the invisible God embodied in visible form that could be seen, touched, handled, understood and comprehended on the earth plane. The Bible declares that "God is a Spirit" (Jn. 4:24) and since God is a Spirit, He is invisible and unknowable unless He chooses to manifest Himself in some form visible to man. God told Moses, "Thou canst not see My face: for there shall no man see Me, and live" (Ex. 33:20). "No man hath seen God at any time" (Jn. 1:18; I Jn. 4:12). Not only has no man ever seen God, but no man can see God (I Tim. 6:16). Several times the Bible describes God as invisible (Col. 1:15; I Tim. 1:17; Heb. 11:27). Although man can see God when He appears in various forms, no man can see directly the invisible Spirit of God. The physical eyes of man have never beheld a spirit; all he sees is the form that spirit manifests itself in. Since God is an invisible Spirit and is omnipresent, He does not have a body as we know it. Every time God wanted to talk personally to someone or manifest Himself, He had to borrow, as it were, a body to manifest Himself in. All through the Old Testament God revealed Himself and dealt with man on man's level through the use of what theology calls THEOPHANIES. A THEOPHANY is a visible manifestation of God, and we usually think of it as temporary in nature. As we have seen, God is invisible to man. To make Himself visible, to communicate Himself of the material plane, He manifested Himself in a physical form. Even though no one can see the Spirit of God, he can see a representation of God. The LOGOS, or the Christ, is God revealed. It is God in His Self-revealings. The Logos is God expressed, God uttering Himself, God's means of Self-disclosure.

God often appeared to men through the manifestation of "the angel (messenger; word) of the Lord" (Jud. 6:20; II Sam. 24:16; I Kings 19:5-7). The angel of the Lord appeared to Hagar, spoke as though he were God, and was called God by her (Gen. 16:7-13). The Bible says that the angel of the Lord appeared to Moses in the burning bush, but then says God Himself talked to Moses out of the bush (Ex. 3; Acts 7:30-38). The angel of the Lord appeared to Israel in Jud. 2:1-5 and spoke as God. Judges 6:11-24 describes the appearance of the angel of the Lord to Gideon and then says the Lord looked on Gideon. Again, the angel of the Lord appeared to Manoah and his wife, and they believed they had seen God (Jud. 13:2-23). The Deity of this unique "angel" is proved by the fact that He is (1) identified as God (Gen. 16:7-13; 18:2-13; 22:1-18; Ex. 3:2-18; Jud. 2:1-5; 6:11-16), (2) is recognized as God (Gen. 16:9-13; Jud. 6:22-24; 13:21-23; Gen. 32:24-30; Hos. 12:4), (3) is also described in terms befitting the Deity alone (Ex. 3:5-14; Josh. 5:15), (4) calls Himself God (Gen. 31:11-13; Ex. 3:2-14), (5) receives worship (Josh. 5:14; Jud. 2:4) and finally speaks with Divine authority (Jud. 2:1-5).

God appeared to Abraham as a smoking furnace and burning lamp, and as a man (Gen. 15:1,17; 18:1-33). In this last instance, God and two angels appeared in the form of three men (Gen. 18:2) and ate food provided by Abraham. The two angels left to go to Sodom while God remained to talk to Abraham (Gen. 18:22; 19:1). God appeared to Jacob in a

dream and as a man (Gen. 28:12-16; 32:24-32). On the latter occasion Jacob wrestled with the man and proclaimed, "I have seen God face to face." The Bible also describes this appearance as "the angel" (Hos. 12:4). God appeared to Moses and to all Israel as a cloud of glory and a pillar of fire and spoke to Moses "face to face" in the Tabernacle out of the cloud. "And the Lord went before them by day in a pillar of a cloud, to lead them the way; and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light; to go by day and night...and it came to pass, as Moses entered into the Tabernacle, the cloudy pillar descended, and stood at the door of the Tabernacle, and the Lord talked with Moses. And all the people saw the cloudy pillar stand at the Tabernacle door: and all the people rose up and worshipped, every man in his tent door" (Ex. 13:21; 33:9-10).

When God brought Israel out of Egypt and into the wilderness, they had one very distinctive sign. They had the cloudy pillar by day and the pillar of fire by night over the encampment. These told all of the surrounding nations that Israel belonged to Jehovah, that their God was in their midst in power and glory, and they were under God's protection day and night. The cloud and the fire were visible both day and night and no enemy could come into the camp even by night, for the fire made it as light as day. I do not believe that Christians today have any real conception of the marvelous and great work which God did in delivering the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt. We have seen pictures painted by some of the great artists supposedly to illustrate this, and we have seen Moses striking the rock with some half-dozen people around him drinking from a stream little larger than a finger, with a cow or two and a few sheep standing near. What a crude conception of the majesty and glory by which the mighty Jehovah delivered His people!

History tells us that at the time of the exodus from Egypt, the Egyptians numbered about six million people. Then in Ex. 1:9 we read that the Pharaoh told his people that the children of Israel WERE MORE AND MIGHTIER THAN THE EGYPTIANS. That being true, there must have been at least six or seven million Israelites when they left Egypt. God did a wonderful and mighty work in that exodus! It was not a little handful of people that left Egypt, but it was millions that God brought out. Little wonder that some of the people asked if God could set a table in the wilderness! For this was a great multitude and God was taking them into a desert where there was no food for man or beast. There was no water, and God had the Israelites take no supplies or provisions with them. GOD WAS THEIR SUPPLY, and OUT OF HIMSELF He would feed them.

Here we enter into the realm of the supernatural. Jehovah Himself appears now as a visible pillar of cloud, a conspicuous object that could be seen not only by the marshaled host but by strong nations afar off. THE LORD HIMSELF did for the Israelites by supernatural means that which armies were obliged to do for themselves by natural agents. The ancient Persians and Greeks carried a sacred fire in silver altars before their armies as signals in their marches. By this sign then of the pillar of cloud and fire, the Lord showed HIMSELF as their leader and general (Ex. 15:3,6). As the Lord now undertakes the miraculous guidance of the chosen nation, He manifests His presence by a majestic pillar of cloud, reaching from earth to sky. By night He appears as a bright fire, setting the whole heavens ablaze. He shielded the people from the heat of the sun by day, and became their light by night. In it the Lord Himself was present as the leader and protector of His people; and from it He spoke to Moses, and on one grand occasion to the assembled people themselves. He who thus manifests His presence to His people is also called "the angel of God" (Ex. 14:19). And God gave them this ocular demonstration of

His presence and power and this manifestation was THE WORD - God speaking, God revealed, God in manifestation!

God further manifested Himself in the sight of all Israel through thunder, lightnings, a voice of a trumpet, smoke, fire, and earthquakes (Ex. 19:11-19; Deut. 5:4-5,22-27). He also showed His glory and sent fire from His presence in the sight of all Israel (Lev. 9: 23-24; IO:1-2). Job saw God in a whirlwind (Job 38:1; 42:5). Various prophets saw visions of God. To Ezekiel He appeared in the form of a man, enveloped in fire. To Daniel He appeared as the Ancient of Days. Many other verses of Scripture tell us that God appeared to someone but do not describe in what manner He did so. For example, God APPEARED to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Samuel (Gen. 12:7; 17:1; 26:2,24; 35:9-15; I Sam. 3:21). Similarly, God descended on Mount Sinai and stood with Moses, revealed Himself to seventy-four elders of Israel, and came at night to Balaam, and met Balaam on two other occasions.

The Logos, or Word, was not a separate person or a separate god any more than a man's word is a separate person from him. Thus the Logos, the expression, manifestation and revelation of God appeared in many forms. The burning lamp, the burning bush, the earthquake, the fire, the tempest, the angel, the cloud, the pillar of fire, the form of a man - each had its ministry, all in turn served the one grand purpose; like the ray which is broken into many prismatic hues, each revealed something of the nature, power, wisdom, purpose, will and glory of God. We find that in the phrase "and the Word was with God..." that this word "with" the Greek PROS meaning TOWARD. All that the manifestation of the Word of God was, all that He said, all that He showed, all that He did, was pointing TOWARD THE FATHER. Hence He is rightly called THE WORD OF GOD. So the WORD revealed God, led Him forth into view and caused men to turn toward Him, to understand Him, to know Him.

THE WORD MADE FLESH

The apostle Paul frequently spoke of the vast mysteries of God and, in speaking of them, he left no shadow of doubt that naught but the revelation of the Lord could unfold those eternal mysteries. One of the grandest of those mysteries is set forth by the apostle John in these wonderful words: "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father), full of grace and truth" (Jn. 1:14). Concerning Jesus Christ, whom the Scripture discloses as "the Word MADE FLESH," it is written, "Who is the image of the invisible God" (Col. 1:15; II Cor. 4:4); "the EXPRESS image of His person" - R.V., "the VERY image of His substance" (Heb. 1:3). And we note that this word "person" is actually the Greek word HUPOSTASIS meaning THE SUBSTANCE, or the substratum, what lies under. All the character and inner nature of the Divine was expressed through our Lord Jesus Christ. All the motive, the purpose, the intent of God towards His creation was revealed to us through Jesus Christ, "to wit, that GOD was IN Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself" (II Cor. 5:19). The SEED of our new creation life is this same LOGOS, and thus through our union with Christ we are to be "as He is."

God no longer needs to "borrow" or produce a "body" in which to express and reveal Himself, no more does He send the burning bush, or the fire, or the cloud, or the angel or the form of a man. For the first time Jehovah has a permanent, eternal body in which to walk and talk with mankind - THE CHRIST, Head and body, the house of sons. In the Old Testament manifestations the revelation of Himself was in fragments. No one

manifestation could speak all truth, each was but one or two syllables in the mighty sentences of God's speech. At the best the view caught of God was partial and limited. But in Jesus there is nothing of this piece-meal revelation. "In Him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily." He has revealed the Father. Whosoever hath seen Him hath seen God; and to hear His words and behold His glory is to get the full-orbed revelation of the infinite.

THE "WORD" WAS M-A-D-E F-L-E-S-H! The language of God is His Word. God and His Word are inseparable. The same eternal Word that spoke the worlds into existence became flesh and dwelt among us. The Father spoke and from the bosom of the Father the Word came forth and was made flesh and tabernacled among men. GOD was manifest in the FLESH (I Tim 3:16). The Speech of God became the Son of God in human form. Here comes God out of eternity, He comes to Bethlehem, a little baby that made a woman cry. And notice now, "And we beheld His glory, the glory as of THE ONLY BEGOTTEN OF THE FATHER, full of grace and truth." Now He is saying something else. This Word made flesh IS THE ONLY BEGOTTEN OF THE FATHER - the Son of God - full of grace and truth. The word "full" means that you just could not have any more. He brought all the Deity with Him, and He was full of grace and full of truth when He came down here as THE SON OF GOD.

Man in his present state of carnality is completely incapable of understanding the things of God. In his rebellious pride he vainly imagines that his puny mind can comprehend the most spiritual things. Because of man's inability to comprehend even the simplest things of God, the Lord has confined Himself to merely stating facts. Seldom, if ever, does He offer an explanation. If we believe those facts, building on their foundation, we will come to the truth in the end, but if we ignore them, creating a foundation of our own, we will end in a quagmire of confusion as the present world and the professing church has undoubtedly done. The Word of God abounds with basic facts that need no explanation. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him; and without Him was not any thing made that was made. In Him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth" (Jn. 1:1-4,14). No explanation is made. Each statement is a fact and is the truth. They are to be believed and not pried into, for God, who cannot lie, has said they are so.

Surely these are simple truths that even a child can understand. The Word was made flesh. The Word made flesh was the only begotten of the Father. The Word made flesh was the Son of God. But note well - the eternal Word was not the Son - the Word MADE FLESH was the Son! The Word has now become the Son and the Son is now the Word. There is no truth in all the Scriptures more clearly set forth, and greater emphasized, than that Jesus was the SON of God. God Himself dispatched the mighty Archangel from heaven to first declare it. As the hour approached for Jesus to be conceived in the womb of the virgin Mary, Gabriel announced to the astonished Galilean maiden, "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God" (Lk. 1:35). When Jesus had been baptized by John in the river Jordan, God spoke from heaven and said, "This is My beloved SON, in whom I am well pleased" (Lk. 3:22). Again, when Jesus had taken Peter, James, and John up into the mount, and was transfigured before them, a voice came from heaven and said the same thing, "This is My beloved SON, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye Him" (Mat. 17:5). There is neither time nor

space to even begin to quote the vast multitude of Scriptures that declare Jesus to be the Son of God. Even the devils that possessed some people, recognized Him as God's Son. "And devils also came out of many, crying out and saying, Thou art the Christ, the Son of God" (Lk. 4:41). The Roman centurion, when he had witnessed the things that happened when Jesus was crucified, said, "Truly this was the Son of God."

It seems, from the writings of the apostles, that it is very important that we believe that Jesus is the Son of God. Not that He was GOD THE SON, but that He was GOD'S SON. After Jesus had opened the eyes of the man who was born blind, and the Jews and the Pharisees had cast Him out of the synagogue, Jesus found him on the street and said to him, "Dost thou believe on the Son of God?" And he answered and said, "Who is He Lord, that I might believe on Him?" And Jesus said to him, "Thou hast both seen Him, and it is He that talketh with thee." And he said, "Lord, I believe," and worshipped Him (Jn. 9:35-39). After John had faithfully recorded many things about Jesus in his Gospel, toward the end he penned these challenging words, "And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, THE SON OF GOD, and that believing ye might have life through His name" (Jn. 20:31).

Many who read these lines will say, "I have always believed that Jesus is the Son of God!" But how can we believe that He is God's Son, and at the same time believe the many man-made doctrines and babylonish traditions we have been taught about Him? For instance, if you are one of those who refers to Jesus as "the Second Person of the Godhead - GOD THE SON," how can you then believe that He is God's Son? You can't believe that He is GOD THE SON and at the same time believe that He is GOD'S SON. The one belies the other. Every good Trinitarian believes that GOD THE SON was eternal, omnipresent, omniscient, omnipotent and immutable. In layman's language this means that the "Second Person of the Godhead" was almighty, all-knowing, everywhere present at the same time, without beginning, uncreated, co-eternal and equal in every way with the Father.

Now there is no doubt in my mind that the Bible teaches, and very clearly, that Jesus is God's Son. But search how you may, you will never anywhere, in all the pages of God's blessed Book, find the expression GOD THE SON. John 3:16 and numerous other passages call Jesus the "only begotten Son of God." John, when introducing Jesus to us as the Logos made flesh, said this, "And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us. And we beheld His glory, the glory as of the ONLY BEGOTTEN of the Father, full of grace and truth" (Jn. 1:14). And again, "No man hath seen God at any time; the ONLY BEGOTTEN SON, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him" (vs. 18). This should be sufficient to establish the great truth that Jesus is a BEGOTTEN Son of God. He was, at one time, the ONLY begotten Son. He is no longer God's ONLY begotten Son, for God has had many sons of different orders, and now has also many "begotten" sons of whom Jesus is the "FIRSTBORN among many brethren" (Rom. 8:29). "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born (begotten) of God: and every one that loveth Him that begat, loveth him also who is begotten of Him" (I Jn. 5:1).

Many saints, however, use the unscriptural phrase "eternal Son" in speaking of Jesus. They say that the "eternal Son of God" came down to earth. This raises a most important question - Did Jesus, as part of the Godhead, exist from eternity as God's only begotten Son? Do the Scriptures teach this? Or is it just another time-honored tradition that we have always ASSUMED must be taught or supported somewhere in the Bible? What

does "begotten" mean? The word "begotten" is a form of the verb "beget", which means "to procreate, to father, to sire." We find this word many times in the Bible, especially in the genealogies, as in Genesis, chapter five. "And Adam lived a hundred and thirty years, and begat a son in his own likeness, after his image, and called his name Seth. And the days of Adam after he had BEGOTTEN Seth were eight hundred years, and he begat sons and daughters." Adam, the earthly father of the human race, had a begotten son born in his image and likeness. Seth was exactly like his father Adam. Our heavenly Father, the Father of spirits (Heb. 12:9), also had a begotten Son in His image and after His likeness, the One who is the express image of His Person.

If Jesus was first of all God's ONLY BEGOTTEN Son, then when was He born the Son of God? BEGOTTEN indicates a definite point in time - the point at which conception takes place. By definition, the begetter (father) always must come before the begotten (offspring). There must be a time when the begetter exists and the begotten is not yet in existence, and there must be a point in time when the act of begetting occurs. Otherwise the word "begotten" has no meaning. So, the very words "begotten" and "Son" each contradict the word "eternal" as applied to the Son of God. ETERNAL sonship is alien to all the holy Scriptures. To be His begotten Son there had to be a time when He was born of God. The Son of God had to have a beginning, else He could not BE the SON - the offspring of God. God fathered...begat...yea, sired Jesus Christ!

The Sonship - or the role of the Son - began with the child conceived in the womb of Mary. The Scriptures make this perfectly clear. Gal. 4:4 says, "But when the fullness of time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law." The Son came forth in the fullness of time - not in eternity past. The Son was made of a woman not begotten eternally. The Son was made under the law - not before the law. The term "begotten" refers to the conception of Jesus described in Mat. 1:18-20 and Lk. 1:35. The Son of God was begotten when the Spirit of God miraculously caused conception to take place in the womb of Mary. This is evident from the very meaning of the word "begotten" and also from Lk. 1:35, which explains, "The Holy Spirit shall come upon you and the power of the Most High shall overshadow you; for that reason the holy thing which is BEGOTTEN shall be called the Son of God." The message is clear - the Holy Ghost would overshadow Mary and she would conceive - therefore her child would be the Son of God. We should notice the future tense in this verse: the child to be born SHALL BE CALLED the Son of God.

Hebrews 1:5-6 also reveals that the begetting of the Son occurred at a specific point in time and that the Son had a beginning in time: "For unto which of the angels said He at any time, Thou art My Son, THIS DAY have I begotten Thee? And again, I will be to Him a Father, and He shall be to Me a Son? And again, WHEN HE BRINGETH IN THE FIRST BEGOTTEN INTO THE WORLD, He saith, And let all the angels of God worship Him." The following points can be deducted from these verses: the Son was begotten on a specific day in time; there was a time when the Son did not exist; God prophesied about the Son's future existence ("will be"); and God brought the Son into the world sometime after the creation of the angels (messengers) for they were commanded to worship Him on the day when He was brought forth.

Other verses of Scripture emphasize that the Son was begotten on a certain day in time - "this day" (Ps. 2:7; Acts 13:33). All the Old Testament verses that mention the Son were clearly prophetic, looking forward to the day when the Son of God would be begotten (Ps. 2:7,12; Isa. 7:14; 9:6 etc.). From all of these verses, it is easy to see that the Son of God

is not eternal, but was begotten by God almost 2000 years ago. Now, as I stated earlier, God has had many sons of various orders, but I am speaking here of a unique and transcendent sonship - BEGOTTEN SONS. Jesus Christ was God and He was the Son of God. But He was NOT "God the Son" or an "eternal Son." The Son of God was begotten on the day when the Father gave Him conception in the womb of a virgin and brought Him into the world!

BACK TO THE WORD

This brings us back to the Logos, the Word. The clear and unmistakable testimony of Scripture is that "In the beginning was the Word." In the beginning the Word already was. He comes out of eternity to meet us. He was already there when the beginning was. But nowhere do we find the Scripture that says, "In the beginning was the SON, and the SON was with God..." You see, precious friend of mine, the eternal WORD was MADE FLESH and BECAME THE SON, the Son of God full of grace and truth, in whom now dwells all the fullness of the Godhead BODILY. Jesus was the Word, and the Word existed as long as God existed, but the Son was that eternal Word made flesh, made a man, yea, a God-man, dwelling among us, resurrected, ascended, coming again in His many-membered body, Emmanuel, God with us forevermore! The Christ is the Word of God and the words that He speaks are Spirit and they are Life. As the WORD Jesus could say, "Before Abraham was, I AM" (Jn. 8:58). But as the SON He receives the witness of the Father, "Thou art My Son, THIS DAY have I begotten Thee." The Word became the Son and the Son IS the Word. "And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and He that sat upon him...and His name is called THE WORD OF GOD" (Rev. 19:11-13).

MELCHIZEDEK - THE WORD!

The Word, prior to His manifestation as Jesus Christ, the Son of God, was unbegotten, and therefore changed His form from time to time, from the burning lamp to the burning bush, to the pillar of fire, to the pillar of cloud, to the angel of Jehovah, to the form of a man, etc. Some time ago while reading an article by a sister in Christ I was struck with this thought which I could not escape. Of Melchizedek it is written that he was "without father." The thought was this: "No heavenly Father, either!" As the writer pointed out, this seemed like sacrilege and heresy at the time, but as I have pondered this statement it has become crystal clear to me that the WORD (Logos) of God was truly UNBEGOTTEN - it was the SON who was begotten!

The only being who appears through the pages of the Old Testament that perfectly meets the distinct features of the man Melchizedek is this One called THE WORD. Truly, He was without father or mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, being made "like" unto the Son of God by virtue of the fact that He was the visible embodiment and manifestation of the invisible God, demonstrating how the SONS of God would serve Him in this High Priestly Order; and in that connecting "go-between" role He qualified as the true heavenly priest, touching God from one realm and man from the other; and of what other One can it be testified that "he liveth"? Of Melchizedek it is witnessed that HE LIVETH! And of the Word of God we are told, "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the WORD OF GOD, which LIVETH and ABIDETH FOREVER" (I Pet. 1:23). Again, "For the WORD of God IS ALIVE and full of power..." (Heb. 4:12, KJV & Amplified).

Who was Melchizedek? I'm sure you know by now that it is my conviction that he was a THEOPHANY, that He was THE LOGOS, THE WORD - an Old Testament manifestation of God on the plane of the material world. He was God come forth on the human level to communicate to man, a visible One connecting the invisible world to the visible world, and the visible to the invisible, God touching man and man touching God, the realm of the eternal heavenly and celestial Priesthood - THE ORDER OF MELCHIZEDEK! He is both God and man, King and Priest. Abraham did not have the priesthood of Levi, but he had a higher, greater. He had the audible voice of God, the visible representation of His Person. That was Melchizedek, which was in the beginning, an eternal priesthood, with no beginning and no ending. Melchizedek has always been. He is the WORD OF GOD - eternal, divine! This is our message.

A further proof of this great truth can be found in the very meaning of the word "order". "Thou art a priest for ever after the ORDER of Melchizedek" (Ps. 110:4). This word "order" is of utmost importance regarding the Melchizedek Priesthood. It is DIBRA in Hebrew which is the feminine form of DABAR which means: arrangement; to arrange words in order; a word; to speak; commune; declare; pronounce; be spokesman; decree; an oracle. The whole thought that underlies the various meanings of this word is ORDERLY ARRANGEMENT - nothing haphazard, nothing by chance, nothing hit or miss, everything in proper place. Yet with it all there is that predominate thought of WORDS, DECREES, SPOKESMAN and ORACLE. This Melchizedek Order is not by chance, not by man's development but rather the expression of the LIVING WORD, the revelation of the Most High by the Spirit and according to His perfect timing. The ORDER of Melchizedek is THE PRIESTHOOD OF THE W-O-R-D!

All of the elect sons of God who are called to the Melchizedekian Priesthood are the extension and projection of THE WORD. The word LOGOS is used in connection with our birth as sons in I Pet. 1:23, "Being born again by the WORD of God." To be born of the Word means that we are children of the Word, we shall speak and emanate and personify the nature, power, wisdom, truth and glory of God unto creation. This is the name of the Christ because it is WHAT HE IS, and as He is, so are we in this world. Ah, beloved, GOD IS PRODUCING A W-O-R-D C-O-M-P-A-N-Y and He will set them in order as the full and complete revelation of Himself - the Melchizedekian Priesthood. It is not just a word that this company speaks - it is WHAT HE IS. And when we BECOME the manifestation of the Most High in the earth we BECOME the Logos, because it is from this Word that we are born. Those of this Order shall indeed be recognized by the pure Word that flows from them, the reality of speaking as the Oracle of God, but beyond that, they shall BE that Word, they shall BE that Oracle, they shall BE the decree of the Almighty. It is not enough to speak for the living reality of what is spoken must emanate from the STATE OF BEING, so that the individual IS that thing whether that individual utters a word or not.

LIKE THE SON - AFTER THE ORDER

There is a beautiful truth that lies buried just beneath the surface in the contrast between Melchizedek and Jesus Christ. It is said of Melchizedek that he was MADE "LIKE UNTO the Son of God," whereas it is stated of Jesus Christ that He was MADE "a priest for ever AFTER THE ORDER of Melchizedek" (Heb. 7:3,17). I would draw your attention to the fact that both men were "MADE" - Melchizedek being MADE "like unto" the Son and the Son being MADE "after the Order" of Melchizedek. On the one hand, Melchizedek was made like unto the Son while, on the other hand, the Son was made after the order of

Melchizedek. Oh, the mystery of it! An objection has been put forth that it would be redundant to say that Melchizedek was made LIKE UNTO the Son of God, if actually He WAS the Son of God. But it answers the question when we see that Melchizedek was NOT the Son - He was THE WORD - the Word which long centuries afterward was begotten of the Father, made flesh, and came into the world as THE SON OF GOD.

There is something very interesting in the book of Daniel about this. When Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were thrown into the burning fiery furnace, because of the king's anger, as the king stood in front of the furnace and looked into the open door, suddenly he started with disbelief; he was filled with wonder at what he saw, and he said to the nobles around him, "Did we not cast three men bound into the midst of the fire?" And they answered the king, "True, O king." He answered and said, "Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt, and the form of the fourth is 'LIKE' the SON OF GOD." Ah - King Nebuchadnezzar did not say that the form of the fourth was like God, or that the form of the fourth was the Son of God. He used exactly the same term that the writer of Hebrews used to explain that Melchizedek was made "like unto" the Son of God. The word "like" is from the Hebrew word DEMAH meaning "to resemble by comparison."

I do not doubt for one moment that the great king Nebuchadnezzar was moved upon by the Spirit of God and that, unbeknown to himself, he spoke by the Spirit of prophecy, and that the fourth man walking in the fiery furnace was none other than the Logos, the Word - Melchizedek, if you please - that One made "LIKE UNTO the Son of God"! This great One prefigured and pointed to the ABIDING SON who was to come as Head and High Priest of an everlasting Priesthood, from the incorruptible celestial realm, after the Order of Melchizedek. All this, and secrets of grace, even more profound, are revealed yet hidden in what is recorded of Melchizedek.

After the ORDER of Melchizedek! At a later date I hope to write in greater depth concerning this wonderful ORDER OF MELCHIZEDEK. But in bringing this article to a close I wish to share the following description of the ministry of King Jesus and His many brethren "after the Order of Melchizedek."

OLD TESTAMENT MANIFESTATIONS OF THE WORD

1. He appeared as King of Peace to – Abraham
2. He appeared as Friend of Mankind to – Abraham
3. He appeared as Power with God and Man to – Jacob
4. He appeared as Deliverer and Covenant Maker to – Moses
5. He appeared as Captain of the Lord's Host to – Joshua
6. He appeared as Liberator to – Gideon
7. He appeared as God's Strength in Man to – Manoah
8. He appeared as Controller of World Events to – Ezekiel
9. He appeared as Deliverer from Death to – Nebuchadnezzar
10. He appeared as Revealer of Future Events to – Daniel

THE ORDER OF MELCHIZEDEK (Heb. 7:1-28)

1. This ministry is that of a KING-PRIEST
2. This ministry is UNLIMITED
3. This ministry has the SOURCE of an ENDLESS LIFE
4. This ministry is EVERLASTING - THROUGH ALL AGES

5. This ministry is UNCHANGEABLE
6. This ministry is UNIVERSAL - to ALL MEN
7. This ministry springs from JUDAH (praise)
8. This ministry BRINGS PERFECTION
9. This ministry WILL NOT FAIL - IT IS BY AN OATH
10. This ministry PUTS AWAY THE CURSE OF THE LAW (sin, sickness, poverty and death)

Chapter 26

The Melchizedek Connection

(continued)

There is, undoubtedly, no greater mystery in all of holy writ than that which surrounds the ministry of the Melchizedek priesthood. So great are its depths that the inspired apostle, in introducing this wonderful subject, could only say that of Melchizedek there were "many things to say and hard to be uttered" (Heb. 5:11). It was in connection with this topic that the apostle offered the keen observation that "strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil" (Heb. 5:14). And he was speaking specifically of the magnitude of the Melchizedek priesthood when he urged the believers to leave the elementary principles of the doctrine of Christ and "go on to perfection" (Heb. 6:1).

The apostle's failure to elucidate the "many things" that were "hard to be understood" has, no doubt, challenged multiplied thousands of sincere students of the Word of God. Studious researching of the Scriptures, however, could never have unfolded the mysteries of the Order of Melchizedek whose secrets were hermetically sealed in the celestial realm, until the time appointed of the Father for the full revelation of this priesthood. Only as the hour for the manifestation of the sons of God has approached has God begun to lift the veil, there to reveal to our wondering hearts the glories contained in the mystery of the Melchizedekian Order. I do not hesitate to tell you that the magnitude of this priesthood shall, in these last days at the end of the age, descend upon the sons and daughters of the Most High as they are raised up into His resurrection life and are clothed upon with the fullness of His power and glory. The opening of these precious things of God to the many hearts that wait before Him in this hour all the more confirms that the time has arrived for the establishing of a people in the Order of Melchizedek, and that it is, indeed, time for God to move through His anointed King-Priests to bring all kindreds and all peoples and all nations into the peace and righteousness and glory of the Kingdom of God. What a wonderful hour to walk with God!

THE KING OF SALEM

"For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the Most High God...first being by interpretation King of righteousness, and after that also King of Salem, which is, King of peace" (Heb. 7:1-2). Here is something mysterious and majestic. Where was this Salem over which Melchizedek was King? It has been supposed by some that Salem was the Canaanite city of Jerusalem. I do not think that is true at all. Salem is not an earthly city, in fact, it is not a geographical place at all - the word "salem" simply means peace. The apostle does not say that Melchizedek was King of Jerusalem. He was King of peace; he was a man who could make peace in that day, who ministered and blessed out of the dominion of the peace of God. He was King of peace and Priest of the Most High God. He was from a Salem that was not on this physical realm, but actually a spiritual, heavenly, eternal realm.

In Galatians, chapter four, the apostle Paul makes it abundantly clear that there ARE two Jerusalems. "For it is written, that Abraham had two sons, the one by a bondmaid, the other by a freewoman. But he who was of the bondwoman was born after the flesh; by he of the freewoman was by promise. Which things are an allegory: for these are the two covenants; the one from the mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage, which is Hagar. For this Hagar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children. But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all" (Gal. 4:22-26).

Paul has been here drawing a comparison or a contrast between Hagar and Sarah, the children of the bondwoman and the children of the freewoman, which allegorically represent two covenants and the two Jerusalems. He states that there is a Jerusalem from below, which is here on this planet, the Jerusalem that now is and is in bondage with her children; which answers to Hagar and is fleshly, earthly Israel under the law. There is, moreover, a Jerusalem which is above, and the Jerusalem which is above, being free, answers to Sarah and is the children of God through the new covenant, born from above by the Spirit. "But the Jerusalem WHICH IS ABOVE is free, which is the mother of us all." It refers to the ALL who are free and are born under a different covenant than the one given at Sinai. It does not mean all in the sense of everybody living and dead, everybody in every grave and in every nation. Thus ALL must be qualified and understood to mean those born of spiritual birth under a new covenant and in freedom. This Jerusalem is the mother of the heavenly Israel after which the earthly Israel is patterned, and this is shown in the book of Revelation in the twelve gates bearing the names of the twelve tribes of Israel.

Let all who read these lines understand that Melchizedek was not King of Salem in the sense of the earthly Jerusalem, but he was KING OF THE JERUSALEM WHICH IS ABOVE, the eternal City of Peace. Melchizedek stepped out of the heavenly realm, He was from above, He was from this heavenly Jerusalem, of which the one on earth was just a shadow. He was from the real Temple, a minister of the true Tabernacle, the heavenly Sanctuary (Heb. 8:2), and the one here on earth was just a replica of that which was in the heavens. That is why the author of Hebrews refers to it as a "shadow." Most saints do not realize there has been in existence a heavenly Israel, a heavenly Jerusalem, a heavenly Temple and a heavenly Priesthood with a heavenly Sacrifice from before the foundation of the world. They rather think that God and Moses picked each other's brains for forty days and nights to figure out the best way to build a Tabernacle! God specifically showed Moses how to build the Tabernacle and its furniture, for all of it was already in heaven, including the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world (Rev. 13:8).

How clear the Scripture is about this! "We have such a High Priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens; a minister of the sanctuary, and the true tabernacle, which THE LORD PITCHED, and not man. For every High Priest is ordained to offer gifts and sacrifices...who serve unto the example of HEAVENLY THINGS, as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle: for, See, saith He, that thou make all things according to the PATTERN (the original) showed to thee in the mount. And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission. It was therefore necessary that the representations of things in the heavens should be purified with these (blood of bulls and goats); but THE HEAVENLY THINGS THEMSELVES WITH BETTER SACRIFICES THAN THESE. For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the

true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us" (Heb. 8:1-5; 9:22-24).

Everything that is seen in the earth regarding the purpose and plan of God had its origin in the heavenlies. The arrangement and structure of the Tabernacle and all its furnishings and ceremonies and priestly ministrations were to be made according to the "pattern" shown Moses in the Mount. Therefore there had to be a heavenly reality from which the earthly was made. The Jerusalem which is above is the mother of us all, and that great City has twelve gates bearing the names of the twelve tribes of Israel. This intimates that there is a heavenly Israel as well as an earthly Israel, and, in fact, since the earthly is made after the pattern of the heavenly we would not be in error to say that there was a heavenly Israel before there was ever an earthly Israel. In ages past before we came to live in this body of flesh we existed in pure spirit form and belonged to that great Commonwealth of the Heavenlies. Then it surely is not out of context to also believe that the Melchizedek Priesthood was also pre-existent in ages past and was, as I have pointed out in an earlier article, manifested in the Garden of Eden under the symbolism of the Tree of Life. And now, praise God, through the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Ghost once again "WE ARE COME unto Mount Zion, and unto the City of the Living God, the heavenly Jerusalem...to the general assembly and Church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven" (Heb. 12:22-23).

All of Jerusalem's children are born of the Spirit, and led by the Spirit. And now in this heavenly light, power and spirit they come to be the heavenly Jerusalem's children, that is, born from above. And is not this the city that Abraham sought for, which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God? Is not this the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the living God, that he sought for? Is it not from among this people, born of the Spirit and led by the Spirit, that the Melchizedek Priesthood is revealed? Ah, little wonder that the apostle declared that in relation to this Melchizedekian Order there are "many things to say and hard to be understood" by those unspiritual ears that remain unquickened and uncircumcised by the Spirit of Truth.

Abraham, being touched and blessed from that heavenly realm, clearly understood these wonderful things, for it is written of him, "By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as a stranger...FOR HE LOOKED FOR A CITY WHICH HATH FOUNDATIONS, WHOSE BUILDER AND MAKER IS GOD" (Heb. 11:9-10). He not only went out of Ur of the Chaldees, but he went into Canaan. And not even this alone, but he sojourned there, he abode there, he lived there, but not as a citizen; he dwelt in tents, thus signifying a temporary status, that he was but a pilgrim and a stranger, passing through the land. Thus the inspired apostle states that this dwelling in tents served as a symbol that he found here no continuing city, but looked and searched for one to come, one that had foundations, that was permanently fixed - of the eternal realm. By faith he saw the unseen. He had his heart as little in Canaan as in Ur; it was in the heavenlies; it was with God; it was in the eternal realm of the Spirit.

And of those elect saints who share Abraham's longing it is written, "For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country...they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for He hath prepared for them a city. For here we have no continuing city, but we seek one to come" (Heb. 11:14,16; 13:14). Of the present, earthly, natural realms, it can truly be said, as one has written, "'we have here no continuing city' - 'for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are age-abiding' (II Cor. 4:18). Thus Abraham's

testimony was such that he was not looking for a permanent dwelling place on a material earth realm, for he sought for that BETTER, that is, that HEAVENLY realm which endures. His testimony was not so much a verbal one, as a life which he lived, while he sojourned in the land of promise, a natural inheritance which God declared would be his, and his seed after him. He was as a stranger to this earth realm, for HE BELONGED TO ANOTHER, he belonged to the heavenly realm" - end quote.

Such a confession as Abraham's is clear indication that he had not found on the physical, earthly plane the dwelling place or state of being which could provide permanent satisfaction, "for they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country." "Country" is from the Greek word PATRIS meaning literally "father-land." The term connotes a true homeland FROM WHICH ONE HAS SPRUNG and where he really belongs. What Abraham really looked to was a BETTER COUNTRY, a heavenly one, for in Melchizedek he caught a glimpse of the world from which he had come and by the Spirit he saw that realm to which he must return. And like Abraham, until the Kingdom of Heaven in its power, as it came down from the throne of God in heaven, becomes our one desire, and until we leave all and sell all for this pearl of great price, our faith cannot stand in the power of God, or overcome sin and death and the world. Oh, Father! may it be our one desire to live as those who are PARTAKERS OF A HEAVENLY CALLING, yea, PARTAKERS OF A CELESTIAL PRIESTHOOD, as those who are pilgrims and strangers in this present state of being, pressing forward into the perfections and glories of God. "Glorious things are spoken of thee, O city of God" (Ps. 87:3). "Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon THEE. And they shall call THEE, the city of the Lord, the Zion of the Holy One of Israel" (Isa. 60:1,14). Jerusalem is the habitation of peace. It is interesting to note that in the Hebrew language the word for peace is the same as completeness. Thus it speaks of a DWELLING IN THE COMPLETENESS OF GOD - and this IS peace! No wonder glorious things are spoken of this realm. The city of God is not some huge monstrosity floating down through the galaxies. The city of God is a PEOPLE OF GOD dwelling in a PLACE IN GOD and having their STATE OF BEING in God.

As one has so aptly written, "If you join your spirit to any part of the spirit of the world, you will have here NO CONTINUING CITY - for all that is in the world is temporal. Over and over again you will find your city demolished, and you have to flee to another city to sojourn for a while. But once we are JOINED TO THE LORD, and freely give ourselves wholly to His sovereign control, His Lordship, we begin to find an enduring substance, an inner control that abides - a foundation that is sure. Is it any wonder that we can no longer be satisfied with that which the world possesses? Ah, we have here, in this present realm, no continuing city, but WE SEEK (require) ONE TO COME. And because of this desire for a better, that is, A HEAVENLY: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called our God: and He is preparing for us a city - which hath foundations, substance of pure reality. 'There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God' (Ps. 46:4). Out of the deep of the bosom of God, flowing through our spirit which is united one in Him, then reaching into every avenue of our will, mind, and being. Yes, 'Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised in the city of our God' (Ps. 48:1). He will be EXALTED in every life He brings into the fullness of salvation" - Gospel Echoes.

THE "ORDER" OF MELCHIZEDEK

The word "order" in the phrase "order of Melchizedek" is something like the word "order" we use when we speak of certain worldly religious orders, such as the Franciscans or the

Dominicans, or the orders of various secret societies or lodges. The Bible says that Jesus is a priest after the "Melchizedekian" Order. And that was a startling statement when it was made. It was startling because the people who heard it first, knew of only one order of priests. Those were the Levitical priests of Israel and they were of the Aaronic order. When the new age of the Church was inaugurated, the priesthood of Aaron was terminated and replaced with THE MELCHIZEDEK PRIESTHOOD. This is why Jesus had to be a special kind of priest. He had to have the Melchizedek Connection.

God is a God of order, and not of confusion. Truth has an order for all things that God made by Jesus Christ, who upholds all things by His word and power. So, with His word and power He keeps all things in their places, and in their order, and in their times, and in their seasons; the summer and the winter, the night and the day, the sun, moon, and the stars, all things are kept in order by the word of God and His power; and the earth is the Lord's, and the fullness thereof. "The Lord hath sworn, and will not repent," speaking of the Christ, "thou art a priest for ever, after the Order of Melchizedek" (Ps. 110:4). And Christ is not called after the order of Aaron (Heb. 7:11-22). Here you may see, Melchizedek the priest was not made WITHOUT AN ORDER, and Aaron's priesthood was made by an order of God, according to his rod's budding in the Tabernacle. And Christ was not a priest made without an order, but is after the order of Melchizedek; and His royal priesthood, who offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God, are in His spiritual order, and in the order of the Spirit of God.

It is significant that the very first time the word "priest" appears in the Scriptures, is in Gen. 14:18, referring to Melchizedek, "priest of the Most High God." And the last time the word "priest" is used, is in Rev. 20:6, concerning the overcoming saints of God who have part in the first resurrection, and who cannot die anymore; of them it is said, "they shall be priests of God and of Christ." You start with the Melchizedekian Order, and you end with the same order, for it is AN ABIDING PRIESTHOOD. In the interim other priesthood orders might arise and disappear, but this ONE carries right on through into the FIRST RESURRECTION COMPANY, out from among the dead, as His SONS become partakers of "the power of an endless life." The Melchizedek order of priests is not yet complete, for Jesus, as a forerunner into that Order, must be joined by those who are to follow after to make up the entire Melchizedek Order. There are many others among the Lord's remnant who are to be joined to Christ in this Melchizedek ministry, and until that Melchizedek Order is completed, the remainder of God's redemptive and restorative plan of the ages cannot be fulfilled. This is the truth the writer to the Hebrews proclaimed when he wrote, "Wherefore, holy brethren, PARTAKERS OF THE HEAVENLY CALLING, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus...which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil; whither the FORERUNNER IS FOR US ENTERED, even Jesus, MADE AN HIGH PRIEST FOR EVER AFTER THE ORDER OF MELCHIZEDEK" (Heb. 3:1; 6:19-20). I would draw your attention to the fact of the use of the indefinite article concerning Christ and the priesthood. Before pointing out the particular statements made about Christ as High Priest it will be helpful for me to explain the difference between the use of the definite article and the indefinite article. The words "the," "a," and "an" in grammar are called ARTICLES. The word "the" is the DEFINITE article. When we say, for example, "THE book is on THE table," we are pointing out a particular book on a particular table - something DEFINITE. The words "a" and "an" are called INDEFINITE articles. When we say, "I have A book," we know that an item with the characteristics of "book" is present, but no specific or particular book is indicated - it is something INDEFINITE. Thus, the

definite article (the) always IDENTIFIES a person, place or thing, but the indefinite article (a, an) QUALIFIES a person, place or thing.

This is most interesting and enlightening in view of the fact that throughout the book of Hebrews the INDEFINITE article is everywhere used in relation to the priesthood of Christ! Notice the following quote from Hebrews: "_ merciful and faithful High Priest ...we have A great High Priest...for we have not AN High Priest which cannot be touched... He made not Himself to be AN High Priest...Thou art A High Priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek...made of God AN High Priest...such AN High Priest became us...we have such AN High Priest who is set on the right hand of the Majesty on high...but Christ being come AN High Priest...we have A High Priest over the house of God..." Nowhere in the entire New Testament is Jesus called THE priest or THE High Priest. This is most significant! In striking contrast we observe that the DEFINITE article is on every occasion used in reference to the High Priests of the Aaronic order - they are always called, each in his turn, T-H-E HIGH PRIEST. Consider the following quotes from the New Testament: "Then assembled the people unto the palace of THE High Priest, who was called Caiphaz...and they led Jesus away to Caiphaz THE High Priest...and THE High Priest arose...and THE High Priest answered...then THE High Priest rent his clothes...and one drew a sword, and smote the servant of THE High Priest...and Annas THE High Priest asked, By what power have ye done this...and Annanias THE High Priest descended with the elders..." The fact is that in Aaron's order there could BE only one High Priest, so the one man filling that office was invariably called T-H-E HIGH PRIEST!

The above quotations from Hebrews, therefore, are not speaking of our Lord and High Priest in the sense of identifying Him but rather of qualifying Him. His identity is established and sure, but what is being presented is the QUALITY OF THAT PRIESTHOOD. He is not presented to us as the one and only High Priest of the Melchizedekian Order; it is the NATURE of that priesthood that is unfolded. Furthermore, the fact that the indefinite article is used means that He is not the only priest, or High Priest, in this priest hood, but is ONE - the emphasis is on His particular place, position, function and ministry, but with many other priests also entering in beyond the veil into the Most Holy Place to minister as partakers of this heavenly calling after the very same Order. The words "AN High Priest" indicate that the Melchizedekian Order IS AN ORDER OF HIGH PRIESTS or a HIGH PRIESTHOOD. Our Lord could not be "A High Priest" of this Order unless this Order IS that of High Priesthood.

Melchizedek is a priesthood of ORDER! Jesus Christ was made a priest forever, after the ORDER of Melchizedek. In like manner, in the resurrection, every man comes up in his OWN ORDER. "But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But EVERY MAN IN HIS OWN O-R-D-E-R: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at His coming. Then cometh the end...all things subdued...God all in all" (I Cor. 15:20, 22-24,28). Now what does this mean? The Greek word translated "order" is TAGMA and means a "group," or "rank," or "band," or "company." TAGMA actually comes from a root word meaning to appoint, determine, or set in array, as used in Acts 13:38, "and as many as were ORDAINED (set in array) to eternal life believed." The thought is of soldiers marching in bands, companies, regiments or battalions. As in times of war the country calls age groups and forms them into companies of men, so in like manner the Spirit of God calls to resurrection and life every man in his own time, order, and rank. Man holds no power to hasten that order even for an hour; neither has he power to delay it.

But above all it means a SETTING in a particular place in the life of God. A NEW ORDER HAS BEEN ESTABLISHED and with it A NEW AND HIGHER ORDER OF PRIESTHOOD, "Who is made, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but AFTER THE POWER OF AN ENDLESS LIFE" (Heb. 7:16). The new order is as new and different as is life and death. No doubt there were many endeavoring to continue the old order of "the law of a carnal commandment," however, that old order has been replaced with THE NEW ORDER OF LIFE. The old order spoke of death and imperfection, while the new order speaks of LIFE AND PERFECTION. The Melchizedek order of priests are to be blessed with the oath given "after the power of an endless life." All who will attain to that calling will be without infirmities, weaknesses of the flesh, and the carnality of the sinful nature. The old law made men High Priests which have infirmity (feebleness of body or mind, frailties of the flesh); but "the word of the oath (or the promise of the new order), WHICH WAS SINCE THE LAW, make the Son, WHO IS CONSECRATED (or perfected) FOR EVERMORE" (Heb. 7:28). All who attain to this Order shall become what Christ is! Since Melchizedek (Christ) IS the resurrection and the life, and since, as we have seen, the resurrection is an ORDER - or ORDERLY ARRANGEMENT -to resist God's order is to deny the resurrection and to resist the very life of God.

The resurrection - incorruptible life - is NOT AN EVENT, nor a TIME ELEMENT, but is, rather, a MAN! Jesus said to Martha, "I A-M the resurrection and I A-M the life!" Martha looked to a day, and little did she realize that the Resurrection had just walked into town. The resurrection, then, is a MAN. The Son, a HIGH PRIEST after the Order of Melchizedek, IS the RESURRECTION! And the HIGH PRIESTHOOD is an ORDER! The RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE is an ORDER! As we lay hold upon our inheritance in Christ, apprehending that for which we have been apprehended, pressing on into the fullness of God, being conformed into His image; as we move into our ORDER, as the bones begin to shake and come together, EVERY MAN IN HIS OWN PLACE, we move into Melchizedek, and as we move into Melchizedek, we move into LIFE and RIGHTEOUSNESS and PEACE and POWER, praise His wonderful name!" For He is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; for to make in Himself of twain ONE NEW MAN" (Eph. 2:14-15). "Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a PERFECT MAN, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ" (Eph. 4:13). God is making a new man, a perfect man. There is going to be a new man after a new order. This new man is a new creation in the Christ. That's God's purpose for calling us, for birthing us, for filling us with His Spirit, for dealing and changing and transforming us from glory to glory into His own image and likeness. And here is what this new many-membered man is for: A NEW MAN FOR A NEW AGE. Through our many years in the pews of Babylon all we ever heard was "the end of the world, the end of the world, the end of the world is coming!" So we grew up looking for the end of the world. All the preachers ever thought about, it seems, was the "end of the world." Now I am going to tell you something folks - there isn't going to be any end of the world! If you would like an interesting study, that will really open your eyes, you don't have to know one word of Greek to do it. Get a Young's Analytical Concordance of the Bible. This takes all the words in your English translation and gives you the true meaning of the original Greek word. Look up all those Scriptures in the King James translation where Jesus spoke of "the end of the world." You will discover that in the original Jesus never said the end of the world" at all, He just said "the end of the age." Look up the times where Jesus spoke in the King James version of "those who would be accounted worthy to attain the next world" etc. Check it, and you will find that in the original Greek Jesus didn't say anything

about a world to come, but He said, "those that are accounted worthy to attain THAT AGE." And THAT AGE is going to be right here, beloved!

There isn't going to be an end of the world. You might as well stop packing your suitcase and testing your wings and praying God to kill you and take you to heaven. We have far too many Christians in the world today with dying faith, but they don't have any LIVING FAITH. They're always wanting to die, and go off to heaven to be with the Lord. That is, until they get chest pains or a stomach ache, then they rush down to the hospital and spend their very last dime to keep from flying away out there to be with the Lord! It gets rather ridiculous. They talk about going away to heaven to be with the Lord, they sing about going to heaven, they preach about going to heaven, they shout about going to heaven, they clap about going to heaven and then do positively everything they can do to KEEP FROM GOING TO HEAVEN! They go to every doctor, enter every hospital, swallow every pill, pass through every healing line, and call the saints far and near to fast and pray - so they won't have to go off to be with the Lord! Ah, something is wrong, very wrong, somewhere!

God is raising up a people in this hour with a vision for LIVING, not so they can stick around to see their great-grandchildren, or go on another cruise, or raise another garden - but because of an inner consciousness of the mind of Christ that the Spirit of God doesn't want us out there - He wants us right here bringing in this NEW AGE! There will be no end of this world, only the end of an age. The end of an age in which Satan in the carnal mind and wicked heart of man has been ruling over the world, and the bringing in of a new age in which God's many-membered man is going to be ruler over all this world that God created for the Sons of God right here.

Someone may say, "But Brother Eby, you said earlier that we are to seek for a better country, a city which has foundations, which is not of this earthly realm, even a heavenly." Yes - but WE ARE that city and the glorious city of God "COMES DOWN from God out of heaven" (Rev. 21:2). The Tabernacle of God is WITH MEN (Rev. 21:3). All nations shall walk in the light of that City, my friend. The Melchizedek ministry is GOD'S ROYAL PRIESTHOOD manifested in power upon this earth, out of the realm of the Spirit, out of the City of God. The High Priest ascended to be seated on the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens, but on the day of Pentecost suddenly there "CAME a sound FROM HEAVEN as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost" (Acts 2:2,4). The High Priest of the Melchizedekian Order came to earth in mighty Spirit power to indwell a people, the City of God came down from heaven, and continues to come down as the saints minister from that higher realm, and God tabernacles among men. For two thousand years this glorious City of Peace and Life and Righteousness has been in preparation to rule over all nations and given all things and bring deliverance to groaning creation. That is what God is calling His many-membered Son out for and that is what God is preparing him for. For a new age. God is preparing a new man for a new age right here on this earth. This new man will live in the heavenlies, but he will walk on the earth. And when God gets that man prepared, He is going to turn the dominion of the world over to this new man for the new age.

The great truth that I would unfold in this message is this: This NEW MAN is going to be after a NEW ORDER. I want to drive this point home to every believing heart what new

order means. All across the land today we hear these terms, "old order," "new order," or "divine order." And many saints don't have the foggiest notion what "order" means! They hear the words, "new order," or "divine order," and they think its just a new message coming forth. That's all it means - a new revelation, something for everyone to preach and sing and shout about. Ah, beloved, if that's all you see in God's new order, you're going to miss it! An order means a SYSTEM OF THINGS, an ARRANGEMENT. There always has to be an order, remember that.

Divine order is that order that God reveals that He is going to put this new man in. This NEW MAN must be after a NEW ORDER. He will not be after the old Levitical order of Aaron and the Aaronic priesthood, neither will he be after the old order of the babylonish church systems. You see, a priest in any age, and in any situation, is only a mediator between God and the rest of His creation. That's what a priest is. This new man is going to be a priest forever. He's going to be the mediator through which God meets the rest of His creation forevermore. In this age there is only one man who has risen from the earth realm to be seated in the Melchizedekian Order - the man Christ Jesus. So there is now ONE mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus. But in that glorious age and the ages to come all the other sons, His many brethren, sons of the first resurrection shall be "priests of God and of Christ." This new many-membered man will not be a priest after the order of Aaron and the Levitical order of the law. Neither is he going to be a priest after the so-called democratic and denominational order that we have in the world and in the church system today. This new man is going to be a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek.

God had a priesthood long before Moses ever trod the dust of Sinai. Sometimes we don't think He did, we thought the first priesthood that ever came into being was the Levitical priesthood. But God had a minister and a mediator long before Moses, God had a priest long before Aaron. And he was God's minister for that hour, because Abraham paid tithes to him. The apostle reveals in Hebrews that there are many wonderful truths we ought to know about Melchizedek that we have not known as yet. He said in effect, "I have many more things to teach you about Melchizedek, but I can't teach them to you because your ears have become dull of hearing. And when for the time you ought to have become teachers of others, you've become such as have need of the milk of the Word again." Hasn't the Holy Spirit ever pricked your curiosity as to what the apostle wanted to teach those Hebrews about Melchizedek? Well, Brother, He has mine! You see, if the Spirit wanted to teach Melchizedek truths to the Hebrew Christians, then it was New Testament truth. For years I knew in my deepest heart that God had truth for His elect concerning Melchizedek. But He didn't give it to us for the same reason He couldn't give it to the Hebrews. I do not hesitate to tell you that most of the Church today, when for the time they have been Christians, some have been Christians for forty years and should have become teachers of the mystery of Christ, but the vast majority have become such as need the milk of the Word again. So I waited on God for that Melchizedek truth that's pertinent to God's purpose for us in this hour. Now let me give it to you.

THE KING-PRIEST

Never under the Aaronic order of priesthood, apart from one example, do we find where a king exercised the office or ministry of a priest. In the Levitical order the offices of king and priest were separated, there were those who reigned as kings, and there were those who were the Lord's priests. Kings could not intrude into the priest's office, and priests could not sit on the throne. Judah produced the kings, and Levi produced the priests. On

one occasion Uzziah, king of Judah, tried to assume the role of priest and "went into the temple of the Lord to burn incense upon the altar of incense" and was smitten with leprosy in his forehead (II Chron. 27:16-20). God had separated the two offices for that time, and the one was not to intrude into the other.

Melchizedek is the sign, the symbol, the first example of a priest as designated in the Word of God. He was called a priest of God long centuries before the Old Covenant order was established for the Levites to be the subsequent priests. Thus, the first or beginning example represents the pattern or true design of God for what He considers a priesthood. Melchizedek had royal blood in his veins, he claimed the title of kingship. The very meaning of the name Melchizedek is "KING of righteousness" and this righteous King was also the Priest of the Most High God. What was always kept asunder under the Law Covenant, by divine wisdom and purpose was united in Him who was "made like unto the Son of God." It is the glory of Christ and His many brethren as KING-PRIESTS that Melchizedek so wondrously prefigures. A new order has arisen in Jesus Christ. He is a King-Priest. And He has made us to be Kings and Priests, a Kingdom of Priests, a Royal Priesthood unto God. "They shall be PRIESTS of God and of Christ, and shall REIGN with Him" (Rev. 20:6).

The principal idea attached to the title "king" is that of authority and rule; to the title "priest" that of mediation, mercy, ministry and reconciliation, drawing men nigh unto God, and God nigh unto men. Why is Jesus seated as a priest upon the throne of the heavens? It is that man may be blessed, and that God may be glorified in man. As priest He lives only for others, to bring them near to God. He lives as king only that He might reveal the Kingdom - the power, authority and glory - of God in and through us.

There is a most significant side-light to this great truth of Christ as King-Priest. Heb. 8:1-2 tells us that "we have such an High Priest, who is SET on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens; a minister of the true tabernacle." It is interesting to note that under the Levitical order priests NEVER SAT DOWN. "And every priest STANDETH daily ministering and offering...the same sacrifices" (Heb. 10:11). All the way through the Old Testament Israel had the Tabernacle of Moses, the Tabernacle of David, and the Temple of Solomon - none of these three had any chairs! You will never find any record of a chair among the items of furniture in either the Tabernacle of Moses, the Tabernacle of David, or the Temple. There were no chairs because the priest of Israel never sat down. And the priests of Israel never sat down because their work was never finished. And their work was never finished because the blood of bulls and goats could never take away sin. So they would function in the Tabernacle and later in the Temple day after day and week after week and month after month and year after year at the feasts of Passover, Pentecost and Tabernacles. Once each year the High Priest would go into the Holy of Holies on the day of atonement, sprinkling the blood before him, but they never finished, they never consummated, never brought to an end, never brought it to fruition, they could never sit down because it had to be done again and again and again and again. It was simply a picture, the blood of bulls and goats could never take away sin, could never deal with the heart and cleanse it. But Jesus, "after He had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, SAT DOWN ON THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD" (Heb. 10:12). His is an infinite sacrifice of eternal duration. He offered Himself once and for all, never to be repeated, so HE SAT DOWN.

But there is a further truth. While priests, in the ministrations of their office, did not sit down, kings were always SEATED upon a throne. "For thus saith the Lord; David shall

never want a man to SIT upon the throne of the house of Israel" (Jer. 33:17). Priests always stood, but kings always sat. And Christ is now a King-Priest. "Behold the man whose name is The BRANCH; even He shall build the temple of the Lord; and He shall bear the glory, and shall SIT and RULE UPON HIS THRONE; He shall be a PRIEST UPON HIS THRONE: and the counsel of peace shall be between them both (between kingship and priesthood)" (Zech. 6:12-13). The Christ SITS as a KING-PRIEST. This word He sends to His overcoming brethren: "To him that overcometh will I grant to SIT WITH ME IN MY THRONE, even as I also overcame, and am SET DOWN with My Father IN HIS THRONE" (Rev. 3:21).

And although He is seated as King-Priest, praise God, He can still STAND as a priest to minister to man's need, as shown on that awful day when the faithful Stephen was stoned to death. "When they heard these things, they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed on him with their teeth. But he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up steadfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and JESUS STANDING on the right hand of God. And he I said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man STANDING on the right hand of God. And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep" (Acts 7:54-60). Ah - though He sat as heaven's King with all regal authority and could have, with one sweep of His hand, wiped those miserable murderers off the face of the earth forever, yet He STOOD AS A PRIEST, looking, extending His arm of compassion, not alone to His beloved servant Stephen, but still offering grace to Israel, if they would only hear. And He stands, still! For His arm is not shortened that it cannot save, and He is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He EVER LIVETH to make intercession for them. He sits as a King, but He stands as a Priest!

What a beautiful picture is here portrayed by the Spirit of God! Melchizedek was King of righteousness and King of peace. Is that something in the natural realm? Was there a literal place called Righteousness? A literal place named Peace? Righteousness and peace; these are the characteristics of the Kingdom of God. "For the Kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost" (Rom. 14:17). Our High Priest is a King, a King of righteousness, and a King of peace; He is the embodiment of these characteristics that He may be able to minister these attributes to His people. As King of righteousness and King of peace the RIGHTEOUSNESS of the law and the PEACE of God's grace are brought together. It was, then, of this priestly kingship that David prophesied when he said, "Surely His salvation is nigh...MERCY and TRUTH are met together; RIGHTEOUSNESS and PEACE have kissed each other" (Ps. 85:9-10). Mercy and truth are met together - praise God, what a summit meeting! These words are pregnant with meaning. When one contemplates the very impossibility of such an union, it is an overwhelming thought that mercy and truth are met together. Truth is harsh and demanding; mercy is lenient and lax. Truth condemns and devours; mercy covers and exonerates. Yet here, in the Melchizedek priesthood, these two incompatible forces are MET TOGETHER! Such is the condition and ministry of sonship, for it is written that the "law (truth) came by Moses, but GRACE (peace) and TRUTH (righteousness) came by Jesus Christ" (Jn. 1:17). Of Moses it was written, "Moses was faithful AS A SERVANT in all his house," for though he brought truth, it slew its hearers - "but Christ AS A SON over His house," because in Him TRUTH was tempered with MERCY - mingled with love - satisfied with the sacrifice of Himself! Blessed be the name of the Lord! "Mercy and truth are met together...and righteousness and peace have kissed each other."

Partakers with Him in this heavenly calling, when one actually becomes KING OF RIGHTEOUSNESS, he shares that dominion, that authority, that power that is derived from holiness, rightness. And when one actually becomes KING OF PEACE, he shares that unlimited outflow of mercy, of compassion, that is derived from His infinite love. May God make it real to you, however, that before one can become king of peace, he must of necessity be king of righteousness, for without righteousness there is no true peace. And He is bringing forth His order of RIGHTEOUS SONS, sons of the Highest, who become priests of the Most High.

JESUS IS PRIEST AND KING. The Lord Jesus is a Priest who is ever merciful and compassionate. He will and does meet the needs of man, but He is also the King who demands your obedience to His sovereign will. Is He your Ruler and Governor? The majority of the Church world is only interested in His being a Priest or the Merciful One who meets the needs of man, saving, healing, delivering, blessing, answering prayers. The blessed emphasis of the Word of God is His LORDSHIP! He is to be King and Ruler and Governor over my life and yours. Surely He will meet your needs, but He will also demand your obedience! We must learn about BOTH dimensions of the Melchizedek ministry. We cannot project a loving Priest without the firm discipline of His Kingdom. And we cannot preach the Gospel of the Kingdom without the mercy and compassion of His Priesthood.

"Unto the Son He saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and for ever. A scepter of RIGHTEOUSNESS is the scepter of Thy Kingdom" (Heb. 1:8). As you know, we don't live in a monarchy. The United States gained its independence on July 4, 1776, and became a republic. The British would understand the scepter far better than Americans, because they live under a monarchy in which the king or queen bears his/her scepter as an emblem of authority. It is the symbol of the authority of that great office of the monarch who sits upon the throne reigning and ruling. In the Bible, of course, Jesus is King. It says, "A scepter of righteousness is the scepter of Thy Kingdom." His scepter is not made of gold, silver and jewels. What Jesus honors is righteousness and righteousness is not just the symbol but the basis of authority in His Kingdom. If we are going to exercise authority in the Kingdom of God, it is going to be only as we know righteousness, as we take up righteousness as a scepter, as the authority of our lives. Do you want to be an overcomer? Then learn that Jesus is Priest AND King. There is a great error abroad in the land today. There is a projection of a one-sided gospel to the multitudes that appeals to the flesh. This is how it comes across: "God loves you, God wants to forgive you, bless you, heal you, deliver you, solve all your problems, prosper you, fill you - God wants to meet all YOUR NEEDS." And that is tremendously true! But if that is our EMPHASIS, if that is where our message STOPS, if that is ALL that we tell God's people, then we are in trouble! If we make that priestly truth our priority, we will produce a race of spoiled spiritual brats who are immature and selfish, takers and not givers. And when the clouds of adversity and trouble roll in, when the storms of tribulation and fiery trial break in unbridled fury upon the land, as they surely shall, these poor folk will be frustrated, fearful, upset and angry with God when He doesn't come running when they quote their favorite "faith" Scriptures. A warped presentation of truth will produce warped saints. And the land is filled with these today!

Jesus Christ wants to reveal Himself not only as King, not only as Priest, but as KING-PRIEST. You've heard the old testimony: "Jesus is my Saviour, Healer, Sanctifier, Baptizer and thank God - I rejoice over this more than anything else - He is my COMING King." The vast majority of Christians today do not want this Man to RULE over them.

They do not mind His ruling over the communists and the devil and the millennium, but they feel they are covered by the grace of God, they demand all His blessings, and go their way and do what they want to do. That is why they have kept Him coming - "My COMING King". The Lord wants to be King NOW. We are told in Colossians that He "has translated us into the Kingdom of His dear Son." Already it has taken place, already we are in that Kingdom, already Christ has a Kingdom and is its King. The word "kingdom" comes from two terms, "king" and "dominion" - king's dominion. It exists wherever the dominion of Christ rules and holds sway over the hearts of men. Christ is the great King right now, ruling all things for the well-being of His subjects and bringing to absolute perfection and completion His plans which He has ordained before the foundation of the world. He is the King eternal and invincible. He shall yet arise in glory in His NEW MAN FOR THE NEW AGE and reveal Himself as the great conquering King, and then all shall know Him. Every tongue shall confess and every knee shall bow and all men will at that time crown Jesus Christ LORD OF ALL.

The Lord wants to be King NOW. But He wants to be more than that. We first have to know Him in His kingship, in His authority, in His rulership, in His government. The Scripture calls Him "a righteous Governor." We have to first know Him as King. But why does He desire us to know Him as King? Why does He desire to set up the throne of His Kingdom in our hearts? So that He can make US to become kings. But that is not the end. He is not setting up His throne within us, just to make us kings. But He is setting up His throne in us - "unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and hath made us KINGS AND PRIESTS unto God and His Father" - He is making us kings in order that He may be able to appear and manifest Himself in the midst of the kings as THE KING OF ALL THE KINGS. The world will never know Him as the King of kings until there are kings among whom He can stand and reveal Himself as King of kings. Do not think you will be puffed up when you come into kingship - "Ah, when I become a king!"

When you become a king, that is just the beginning. It is just the beginning of the opportunity for the revelation of Jesus Christ as KING OF KINGS. But He is a Priest upon His throne. He is Priest in our hearts. In this age only the Church knows His wonderful priesthood. But the hour is coming when the priests of the Order of Melchizedek shall touch all creation. You are only becoming a priest, my brother, my sister, so He can manifest HIS HIGH PRIESTHOOD through you. May God make this real to you today! The NEW ORDER for the NEW MAN in the NEW AGE is not the New Testament Church or fivefold ministry. New Testament Church order is for one age only - the age we have been in for the past 2000 years. The Scriptures are clear: "And He gave some apostles...prophets...evangelists...pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints...for the edifying of the body of Christ: T-I-L-L we all come...unto a PERFECT MAN, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ" (Eph. 4:11-13). The five-fold ministry is given only UNTIL - and the PERFECT MAN, the NEW MAN FOR THE NEW AGE - is on the other side of that UNTIL! In perfection, in the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, in full sonship, in the Melchizedek Order, in the KING-PRIEST ministry the five-fold ministry forever passes away. The five-fold ministry is for the Church age to help us along the way into God's fullness. But in the glorious age and ages to come there will be no apostles, no prophets, no evangelists, no pastors or teachers as we know them.- there will only be KING-PRIESTS after the Order of Melchizedek. The five-fold ministry was never given to save the nations or restore creation back to God. It was given for the perfecting of the saints for the work of the ministry. In 2000 years it has not brought deliverance to the groaning creation. That's

why a NEW ORDER must be brought in. The new order is a people moving in HIS ALMIGHTY POWER mingled with HIS INFINITE LOVE. And THIS ORDER will get the job done! This is the order of KING-PRIESTS where mercy and truth are met together. Hallelujah!

Chapter 27

The Melchizedek Connection

(continued)

No part of the New Testament, with the possible exception of the book of Revelation, is more difficult for the immature Christian to understand than the Epistle to the Hebrews. Much of its imagery is drawn from the Old Testament temple ritualism, with its priesthood, sacrifices and the like. The rest is rooted in the person and ministry of that ancient mysterious priest, Melchizedek. Thus we find ourselves simultaneously in two thought worlds which are not ours, and it is easy to feel that there is nobody to show us around. This Epistle moves in a world of its own. Its categories of priesthood, of earthly shadows pointing to heavenly realities, of types and figures, are unique.

The writer to the Hebrews exhorts in Heb. 5:11 concerning the Order of Melchizedek, "...we have much to say which is hard to explain, since you have become dull in your spiritual hearing and sluggish, even slothful in achieving spiritual insight" (Amplified). Then he continues, "For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. Strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil" (Heb. 5:12,14). The message is clear - the truths on the Melchizedek priesthood are strong meat that only the mature can comprehend. This truth is solid food, strong meat, and it will take some spiritual stature and stamina to masticate and digest it until it becomes a very part of the being. We know so little, but He promises to guide us into ALL TRUTH, and when we ask for bread, He will not give us a stone.

Speaking to those baby Christians who were still in need of milk, and not yet ready for the strong meat, the author says in essence: Considering the time you have been believers, you ought to be able to go beyond the milk of the Word, of the first elementary, rudimentary, fundamental principles of the doctrine of Christ, into the deeper truths of revelation which are meat for men of full age. Then follows that stirring challenge, "Therefore leaving the (elementary) principles of the doctrine of Christ, LET US GO ON TO PERFECTION" (Heb. 6:1). If we do not GO ON to perfection, we will never partake of the strong meat of Melchizedekian truth, nor experience the out-workings of its reality in us. There are listed six things which belong to the "first principles" which we are to leave, that we might go on into deeper dimensions: (1) repentance from dead works (2) faith toward God (3) doctrine of baptisms (4) the laying on of hands (5) resurrection of the dead (6) judgment. It is interesting to note that these "milk of the Word" principles make up the CARDINAL DOCTRINES of most of the Churches today - be they Catholic, Protestant, Evangelical, Fundamentalist, Pentecostal or Charismatic! ALL, according to Hebrews, major in minors and minor in majors!

We have seen for years that a repetitious preaching of the "fundamentals" or "basics" of the Gospel to saints who have already received the Lord as Saviour, Baptizer, Healer,

etc., hardly makes for spiritual growth. To lay over and over again the foundation of repentance, faith, baptisms, laying on of hands, and the doctrines of resurrection and judgment, never gets you past the foundation, for nothing is ever built thereon. Praise God for the foundation, but LET US GO ON TO PERFECTION! People sometimes ask why I don't devote more time in my writings to the "basics" of the Gospel. The answer is very simple: God has a whole world full of preachers and Churches dispensing milk. If it is milk you wish to drink, my brother, my sister, there is a truck load on almost every street corner, Churches with crate after crate piled high, book stores packed full, and radio and television stations squirting milk all over the place twenty-four hours a day. Little need for me to grab a bottle and shove it in someone's mouth. Ah, I will do even that, should I meet a babe that must have milk. But our writings are directed specifically to those who, considering the time they have been believers, ought to be able to go beyond the milk stage, unto the perfecting truths which are meat for men and women of maturity. We must say earnestly that in view of these words concerning Melchizedek in Heb. 5:11, "Of whom we have many things to say, and hard to be understood," we need to approach this subject with deep humility and earnest prayer for light and for wisdom from above. For is it not true of practically the whole Church, in a sad degree, that we "are become dull of hearing...such as have need of milk"?

This rich truth of Melchizedek must drop down from the lofty heights of our intellect and be birthed into our heart. Then it must move down into our FEET! We must WALK OUT these principles in shoe leather, or the light that is in us will become darkness. It is not head-knowledge we want, for the mere gaining of knowledge for the sake of knowledge is but vain philosophy. There has already been too much rhetoric; we cry for reality! It is with this attitude that I want to continue sharing the glory of THE MELCHIZEDEK CONNECTION. I want to show you the very heart and soul of the King-Priest ministry, which is after the Order of Melchizedek.

THE MOST HIGH GOD

One of the very first truths revealed in Scripture through Melchizedek is that of GOD MOST HIGH. "And Melchizedek king of Salem brought forth bread and wine: and he was priest of THE MOST HIGH GOD. And he blessed him, and said, Blessed be Abram of THE MOST HIGH GOD, possessor of heaven and earth: and blessed be THE MOST HIGH GOD" (Gen. 14:18-20). The MOST HIGH GOD is revealed in connection with Melchizedek, the king of Salem, in the days of Abram. Melchizedek, we are told, was "priest of the Most High God," and it was through him that Abram also received the knowledge of God as the Most High, for it was only after Abram's meeting with Melchizedek that he says, "I have lifted up my hand unto the Lord, the Most High God, possessor of heaven and earth" (Gen. 14:22). The elect's knowledge of the Most High God therefore is somehow connected with the knowledge of Melchizedek, and of the special nature of his priesthood, as "priest of the Most High God." There is something very deep and special in the knowledge of God as the Most High, and of the priesthood of God Most High.

The title, Most High God, is EL ELYON, in the Hebrew. EL means "strong," while ELYON means "Most High, elevated, supreme, lofty." It derives from the root ALAH meaning to ascend, but not in the sense of the action of one ascending progressively to higher heights, but as ONE THAT IS PERMANENTLY FIXED IN THE HIGHEST POSITION. Yet it is also fulfilled in Jesus Christ who truly did descend and has now ASCENDED "far above all principalities, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is

named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come" (Eph. 1:21). "He is the Head of the body, the church: Who is the Beginning, the Firstborn from the dead; that in all He might have pre-eminence" (Col. 1:18). And "He shall be great, and shall be called THE SON OF THE HIGHEST" (Lk. 1:32).

I must point out that EL ELYON is not a proper name; it is rather a DESCRIPTIVE TITLE. It is a title such as "King," "President," "Prime Minister," "Archangel," "Supreme Pontiff," etc. If we say, "I have met President Reagan," the NAME "Reagan" identifies the person, and the TITLE "President" reveals a position as head of a government. When we speak of "the Archangel Michael," the NAME "Michael" identifies the being, whereas the TITLE "Archangel" shows his rank as the chief among the angels. The word ELYON is applied to things as well as persons, ALWAYS THE HIGHEST OF A SERIES OR ORDER OF LIKE NATURES. For example, It is used of the "highest (elyon) baskets of a tier of baskets (Gen. 40:17); of Israel as "the nation high (elyon) above all nations (Deut. 26:19); of the "king higher (elyon) than other kings" (Ps. 89:27); and of "chambers higher (elyon) than other chambers" (Eze. 41:7).

A number of precious brethren have made much of the distinction between JEHOVAH and the MOST HIGH GOD. Some have taught that the names Jehovah and Most High God reveal different aspects of God's nature, while others have presented Jehovah and the Most High almost as two different Gods altogether. I do not like to differ from my brethren whom I love dearly and esteem highly in the Lord, but I would be remiss if I failed to point out that the simple, unvarnished truth is that Jehovah IS the Most High God! The Word of God draws absolutely NO DISTINCTION between the two at all, and this is clearly understandable once we see that "Most High" is NOT A NAME - its a title! Who is the Most High God? Why, JEHOVAH Himself is God Most High. The evidence is found right in the great Melchizedekian chapter (Gen. 14) when Abram, having been blessed by the Most High, exclaims, "I have lifted up my hand unto JEHOVAH, the MOST HIGH GOD, possessor of heaven and earth" (Gen. 14:22).

In the King James version of the Bible wherever you see LORD in capital letters, as in the verse just quoted, it really is in the Hebrew YAHWEH or JEHOVAH. So who is Jehovah? He is the Most High. Who is the Most High? Why, bless your heart, Jehovah is the Most High. Who is possessor of heaven and earth? The Most High is possessor of heaven and earth. And in our text, who is possessor of heaven and earth? JEHOVAH is! You simply cannot differentiate between Jehovah and the Most High God. Jehovah is His NAME; Most High His TITLE. The name Jehovah reveals His Person, while the title Most High signifies His exalted position far above all gods.

Listen! In the Psalm, which speaks perhaps more clearly than any other of God's Kingdom over all nations, the Psalmist's reason why all should praise Him is, that "JEHOVAH, MOST HIGH, is terrible: He is a great King over all the earth. He shall subdue the peoples under us, and the nations under our feet; for God is the King over all the earth; and the princes of the people are gathered together to be the people of the GOD OF ABRAHAM; for the shields of the earth belong unto God. He is greatly exalted" (Ps. 47:1-9). All this is ascribed to "JEHOVAH, MOST HIGH." It cannot be stated with greater clarity than in Ps. 83:18: "That men may know that Thou, whose name alone is JEHOVAH, A-R-T THE MOST HIGH over all the earth." And again, "He that dwelleth in the secret place of the MOST HIGH shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of JEHOVAH, He is my refuge and my fortress: my God; in Him will I trust...because thou hast made JEHOVAH, which is my refuge, E-V-E-N THE MOST HIGH, thy

habitation" (Ps. 91:1-2,9). "But Thou, JEHOVAH, A-R-T MOST HIGH forevermore" (Ps. 92:8). Consider, dear one, it is precious to note that in Gabriel's mission to Mary concerning the birth of Jesus, he disclosed, "He shall be great, and shall be called THE SON OF THE HIGHEST," and "the power of THE HIGHEST shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called THE SON OF GOD" (Lk. 1:32,35). Jesus is the Son of THE HIGHEST. And whose Son is He? Ps. 2:7 tells us. "I will declare the decree: JEHOVAH hath said unto Me, Thou art MY SON; this day have I BEGOTTEN THEE." Jesus Christ is the Son of JEHOVAH, the MOST HIGH GOD! We could pile Scripture upon Scripture and proof on top of proof, but these few examples should suffice to convince any thinking heart that JEHOVAH IS THE MOST HIGH GOD. There is no difference.

God's purpose in a name is its MEANING! I have met a great number of people who feel they mouth all the correct forms of God's name, but they know absolutely nothing about God's name, for they have never entered into relationship with Him IN HIS NATURE REVEALED BY HIS NAME. God's name is His nature. The name Jehovah is derived from the Hebrew verb HAVAH meaning "to be," or "being." This word is almost exactly like the Hebrew verb CHAVAH meaning "to live," or "life." One can readily see the connection between BEING and LIFE. Thus Jehovah means THE SELF-EXISTENT ONE or THE ETERNAL. The self-existence of God is one of the most amazing things. God exists eternally, and that means that He does not need any outside help or support. He is the One who in Himself embodies essential life, permanent existence, derived from no source outside Himself, and absolutely dependent upon no other person, thing, or circumstance for its continuance. This quality inhered originally in Jehovah God alone, as it is written, "The Father hath life IN HIMSELF" (Jn. 5:26).

In Memphis, Tennessee, many years ago, there was a rector in an Episcopal Church, a very odd fellow, who decided that he would fast and reach the place where he did not need to take food at all. When he became unconscious they took him to the hospital and began to feed him intravenously, got him back to consciousness, and since then he's been eating regularly! But I do not hesitate to tell you that GOD does not have to eat. He did not shop this weekend at any of the super markets, neither did He have any food brought in from any celestial garden. He hasn't laid up a supply for the week. God doesn't worry about calories or vitamins. You can't cut off God's supply. The famine in Africa today is an awful thing, but God hasn't had to worry about His supply. God does not need any props or supports to hold Him up on a weak side. There is no weakness anywhere. He is not subject to an accident, and He carries no insurance at all. He doesn't get sick, or eat an apple a day to keep the doctor away. Death cannot touch Him for He is not dependent upon the sustaining power of any thing beyond Himself. He has no burial insurance, nor has He reserved a crypt at Forest Lawn Cemetery. God looks to no one. He doesn't have to have an oxygen supply. He doesn't wear a space suit. He doesn't travel in a flying saucer. His existence is not contingent on any outside aid or support. He is self-existent. It is His nature to BE. He is THE ABSOLUTE; nothing causes Him, He causes everything! He is the source and author of all life. He gives life. Ah, He is the ETERNAL, the MOST HIGH GOD, JEHOVAH - the SELF-EXISTENT ONE!

Can we not see by this the harmony between Jehovah, the eternal, the SELF-EXISTENT, the Most High God - and the priesthood of Melchizedek, the priesthood of the Most High God, which is AFTER THE POWER OF AN ENDLESS LIFE? If we try to separate between Jehovah and the Most High we at once destroy the one supreme characteristic of the Order of Melchizedek - THE POWER OF AN INDISSOLUBLE LIFE! How foolish to

say that Aaron's fading priesthood was the priesthood of Jehovah, but that the priesthood of Melchizedek is not of Jehovah, but of the Most High. Jesus is the Son of Jehovah who IS the Most High God, and all creation waits with eager anticipation for the manifestation of the OTHER SONS OF JEHOVAH THE MOST HIGH GOD who shall deliver all from the bondage of corruption, and into the POWER OF AN ENDLESS LIFE, glory to God!

SONS OF THE HIGHEST

With these lofty thoughts of God in our minds our hearts respond with joyful accord when Christ in His wisdom shows that it is God's intention that he who walks in the blessed realm of sonship should be as constant and unchanging as is God Himself. To His disciples Jesus spoke these incredible words: "For as the Father HATH LIFE IN HIMSELF; so hath He given to the SON TO HAVE LIFE IN HIMSELF" (Jn. 5:25-26). LIFE IN HIMSELF! This is self-existent life, a life not derived from any source, not dependent upon any sustenance, inherent life! Jesus could stand and declare, "I AM THE LIFE!" No man before Him could say that. But the firstborn Son of God could say that, because He was THE SON OF THE HIGHEST.

The word ELYON (Most High, Highest) always means THE HIGHEST OF A SERIES OR ORDER OF LIKE NATURES. So, while this word, applied to our Lord, reveals that HE is the HIGHEST, it at the same time reveals that there are others below Him, endowed by Him with like natures, in the same way related to Him, SONS OF THE HIGHEST. This is the point referred to in Ps. 82:1-6 which Jesus quotes and applies to the people of God: "God standeth in the congregation of the mighty; He judgeth AMONG THE GODS. I have said, YE ARE GODS; and all of you are CHILDREN OF THE MOST HIGH." What the "Most High" delights in is a life in accordance with His own. That life is expressed perfectly in the firstborn Son of the Highest, Jesus the Christ.

The exceeding great wonder of all is that not only did Jesus possess the self-existent life of His Father Jehovah, but God has made Him to be "a life-giving Spirit." Truly, "He that hath the Son HATH LIFE" and "this is the record, that God hath given UNTO US ETERNAL LIFE, and this life is in His Son" (I Jn. 5:11-12). How plain. If the Spirit of Jehovah dwells in us, He imparts THE POWER TO COMMENCE ETERNAL, SELF-EXISTENT LIFE within us RIGHT NOW! True, the life we have received is not truly eternal yet, for we are still BEING CHANGED. But God's life has been injected into time to be processed and matured within us into that unchangeableness which He Himself IS, and to the degree that this has been wrought in us we are enabled now to know and express THE INNER STABILITY OF THE CHRIST, praise His name!

This is the nature Jesus pointed to when He taught us, "But love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be THE CHILDREN OF THE HIGHEST: for He is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil. Be ye therefore merciful, as YOUR FATHER also is merciful" (Lk. 6:35-36). These sons of the Highest are able to love their enemies, do good, and lend, looking for nothing in return, and show infinite mercy to the unthankful and to the evil because they walk in the SELF-EXISTENT LIFE of their Father.

How many weak and dependent saints are running around constantly from meeting to meeting, from seminar to seminar, from preacher to preacher, from prayer group to prayer group, SEEKING LIFE. These dear souls always need to receive some kind of "blessing." What's wrong with these folk? I will tell you! Their source of life is ON THE

OUTSIDE! Being babies, they are not yet aware that all-sufficient, ever-abundant, self-existent life dwells WITHIN THEM. They are unable to appropriate the power and triumph of the Christ-life for themselves. Their senses have not been exercised to discern that He that is in them IS GREATER than he that is in the world. They have not developed to that state of maturity where they know Christ to be the substance of their life, their all-in-all, sufficient to conquer every enemy and transcend every problem within and without. And what a tragedy it is that so many preachers and churches keep their people perpetually on this childish level of existence by restricting their diet to "milk" and training their babies to continually look to the "pulpit" to be fed, healed, delivered, taught and blessed, like little birds in the nest with their beaks wide open, waiting for mother to plop a worm into their mouth.

One of the most challenging passages in all of the Word of God is found in Eph. 4:15, "But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into Him in all things, which is the head, even Christ." The key words are: GROW UP I-N-T-O HIM...WHICH IS THE HEAD. Grow up into ...the Head! Who ever heard of such a thing? Who has ever seen a body grow up into a head? The body grows, and the head may grow somewhat, but the body remains a body and the head remains a head. But in the progressive development of the many-membered Christ, the door has been opened for some members who will GROW UP I-N-T-O T-H-E H-E-A-D. It signifies a transference from one part of the body to another, from the body proper, up into the head. It means that these grow up into the measure of the stature of the fullness of the Christ, sharing ALL that He is. These are the Sons of the Most High, becoming priests of the Most High God.

The Most High is God in His highest state, the perfection of His life, the fullness of His power, God upon His throne. This is the highest level of life and authority that's where Melchizedek was a priest, at the very throne level of the entire universe. This is the realm where you do not draw life from others, but you have life in yourself, life for yourself, and life for others. You are not a receptacle but a source. Jesus unfolded this realm when He proclaimed, "The Son of man CAME NOT TO BE MINISTERED UNTO, but to minister, and to give His life" (Mat. 20:28). Jesus did not come to receive life for HE WAS LIFE. He did not come to receive life but to GIVE LIFE. He HAD LIFE IN HIMSELF even as the Father had life in Himself. Within that life was contained every element of victory, righteousness, and power He could ever need. All the resources of God were within Him. If He needed power the power was in the life. If He needed encouragement, the encouragement was in the life. If He needed wisdom the wisdom was in the life. This is a nature and a life that is not dependent upon anything without, for it is a self-existent life, requiring no sustenance, not derived from another, not drawing from anything, ALL-SUFFICIENT, ABUNDANT, GLORIOUS AND UNCHANGING LIFE!

You can always tell when people are growing up into the Head. They no longer need to BE MINISTERED TO. They aren't waiting for a healer to come to town and lay hands on them, for they have grown up into that measure of His fullness where they are now able to appropriate FOR THEMSELVES the faith of God within to gain the victory over sickness and disease. They have no need for a prophet to give them a word, to tell them where to go or what to do, to reveal the will of God for their life, because they have learned to hear HIS VOICE and walk daily in wisdom and understanding, in the conscious awareness of Father's plan and will. They don't talk about their problems, or lament about the devil, for the joy of the Lord is their strength and the peace of God rules in their heart. They don't ring up the elders requesting prayer for this and that need in their life, for they have discovered the river of God flowing from deep within their own

being, life full, abundant and triumphant! Oh, yes, they may ask prayer for OTHERS, but not for themselves. These are always ministering, but do not stop to be ministered to. This company is BECOMING THE PRIESTS OF JEHOVAH, THE MOST HIGH GOD, even those who HAVE LIFE IN THEMSELVES.

Some folk hear this word and suppose that we are "doing away with the gifts." Oh, no! beloved, we are not doing away with anything. All the wonderful gifts of the Spirit of God remain right where they have been for two thousand years - in the Church - for all who need them. But I now write these lines to those elect saints who treasure the beautiful hope of sonship, and I do not hesitate to tell you that as long as we continue having to BE MINISTERED TO by the gifts, we will never know the glory of having GROWN UP INTO THE HEAD. In the "body" realm it is "fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, make the increase of the body unto the edifying of itself" (Eph 4:16). But in the "headship" realm it is, "As the Father hath life in Himself; so hath He given to the Son to have life in Himself" (Jn. 5:25-26). It is the difference between the "in part" realm and the "fullness of God" realm. Vast multitudes are content to dwell in the former, but only a few blessed souls dare press their way into the latter. It is not a question of whether or not we have the gifts, whether or not we move in the gifts. There is liberty to exercise any gift God has given when we find some precious soul that needs ministry in that realm. It is, rather, a question of whether W-E NEED TO BE MINISTERED TO THROUGH THE GIFTS! I find that gifts are still a blessing, and encouragement, and help from time to time, and praise God for them all, for it is manifest that we have not yet attained to all the fullness we follow after. But those who shall stand in the HEADSHIP COMPANY as SONS OF THE HIGHEST, KING-PRIESTS AFTER THE ORDER OF MELCHIZEDEK, will have the FULLNESS OF LIFE AND GLORY AND WISDOM AND KNOWLEDGE AND POWER I-N-T-H-E-M-S-E-L-V-E-S - self-existent ones, the offspring of Jehovah, the Most High God. These will know and experience and manifest GOD IN THE HIGHEST.

BLESSING THE MOST HIGH GOD

"And Melchizedek king of Salem brought forth bread and wine: and he was priest of the Most High God. And he blessed him, and said, Blessed be Abram of the Most High God, possessor of heaven and earth: and BLESSED BE THE MOST HIGH GOD" (Gen. 14:18-20).

The following paragraph was sent to me by a sister in the Lord and expresses so beautifully an aspect of the Melchizedek ministry, that I am constrained to share it with you here. "The first order of this Melchizedek Priesthood is BLESSING. In Gen. 14:19-20 we are given the exact words of Melchizedek in blessing Abraham. Listen to this: 'And he blessed him, and said, Blessed be Abram of the Most High God...and BLESSED BE THE MOST HIGH GOD.' The order is reversed in this blessing, for you would naturally think that Melchizedek would bless the Most High first and then bless Abram, but not so. The blessing of this great man came on Abram to begin with. Remember well, a blessing cannot be given in reality until the one giving it is a Blessor indeed. You will nowhere find an account in the Scriptures of Melchizedek being anything but a Blessor. He was not a judge, he was not a curser, he was not vindictive, he did not judge after the sight of his eyes nor the hearing of his ears - instead he was a king and a priest who lived in the realm of blessing and from there became a blessing to others. So great was this position that he could reverse the order from blessing the Most High first, to blessing the man of faith first. We are entering the time and position where we stand in the Messiah's stead

and pour forth blessings upon those who are in the pathway of faith without ever thinking that we must first bless the Most High for the blessing upon the individual to be effective. Melchizedek recognized and knew that Abram was a man of faith walking in all the light that had been given to him; but now a new blessing was to be forthcoming, that of blessing him in, by and through the Most High, the EI ELYON. Abram up to this point had not had this revelation, but it is evidenced by the following verses that he immediately took hold of this unfolding of the Most High and began to use and put it into practice. When the rare blessing is given from a true Blesser, a new revelation is not hard to accept and enter into with alacrity" - Redemption Writings.

Then, Melchizedek, secondly, blessed the Most High God who had given Abram such a great victory. The word in Hebrews 7 used for "bless" is in the Greek EULOGETOS. The English words "eulogy" and "eulogize" come from this Greek word which is a compound of EU (good) and LOGOS (I say, a word). The meaning is thus "I say good," "to speak well of," or better expressed in English as "good word." It should be more accurately translated simply "eulogized." In other words the blessing is embodied in the GOOD WORD that proceeds out of the mouth of the Melchizedek Priesthood. It is not a word of judgment, condemnation, vindictiveness or cursing. It is exactly what it means - GOOD WORD - and that is BLESSING indeed both toward men and toward the Most High. One cannot be a Blesser and at the same time be critical, judgmental, condemning, exacting or harsh. While the preachers in the religious systems may damn to eternal hell all who do not subscribe to their particular interpretation of God's Word, the Melchizedek Priesthood will always be characterized by mercy, forgiveness, love, compassion, and BLESSING.

To the Most High goes all the honor and glory and blessing for the triumphs that ensue in life, even though those triumphs are gained through hard battle and fierce trials. "And Melchizedek EULOGIZED the Most High God!" To eulogize is to speak a good word to, to speak well of, to praise or extol the virtues of. Melchizedek PRAISED the Most High God, he EXTOLLED the Most High, he BLESSED the Most High. Note, this is not the adoration of the Son of God, but of the God and Father of the Son. Ah, this is the Spirit of sonship which cries, "Abbe, Father!" As it is written, "He (Jesus) is not ashamed to call them brethren, saying, I will declare Thy name unto My brethren, IN THE MIDST OF THE CHURCH WILL I SING PRAISE UNTO THEE!" (Heb. 2:12). None but the Son can truly eulogize the Father, the Most High, and THE SON eulogizes Him in and through THE SONS.

The prayer which for centuries has been known as the LORD'S PRAYER is the PATTERN PRAYER for sons. Jesus has taught us to pray thus: "Our Father which art in heaven, HALLOWED BE THY NAME." Here is disclosed the great principle regarding the attitude in which sons approach the Father. Sons do not rush or push their way into His presence, neither do they come as beggars, pleading, crying, demanding that God DO for them or GIVE to them. Once the Most High reveals to us our relationship to Him as sons, He then brings us into intimate fellowship and vital union with Him as sons. It is not alone on the basis of relationship to God in sonship that we have the blessed privilege of "asking whatsoever we will," but our asking is the outgrowth of our fellowship and union with the Father. The son who rushes up to his Father demanding, "GIVE me, give me, give me... do, do, do...this and that," may not receive because his ATTITUDE is wrong - selfish and demanding. His disposition is not proper - he is a SPOILED BRAT! God has a lot of would be sons who act more like spoiled brats than TRUE SONS! The son who honors, loves, reverences, obeys, adores, appreciates, thanks and eulogizes his Father,

walking in precious fellowship and union of mind, will and purpose, may surely "ask what he will" and receive LIBERALLY from the loving heart of the Father. The Psalmist admonishes: "Serve the Lord with gladness: Come before His presence WITH SINGING...ENTER into His gates with THANKSGIVING, and into His courts with PRAISE: be THANKFUL unto Him, and BLESS His name!" (Ps. 100:2,4). Sons do not demand...they WORSHIP' And all their needs are MET IN THE OVERFLOW! The priests of the Most High will be recognized by the fact that they speak a GOOD WORD, a LIVING WORD both unto men and unto God. They are BLESSERS, indeed!

THE SECRET PLACE OF THE MOST HIGH

As we pursue these thoughts concerning the Most High and the priesthood of the Most High, we are brought to that most glorious Psalm that has been such an inspiration to so many all through the years - the ninety-first Psalm. Truly it is a Psalm for the priest of the Order of Melchizedek! "He that dwelleth in the SECRET PLACE OF THE MOST HIGH shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of Jehovah, He is my refuge and my fortress: my God; in Him will I trust. Surely He shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler, and from the noisome pestilence. He shall cover thee with His feathers, and under His wings shalt thou trust: His truth shall be thy shield and buckler. Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night; nor for the arrow that flieth by day; nor for the pestilence that walketh in darkness; nor for the destruction that wasteth at noonday. Because thou hast made JEHOVAH, which is my refuge, even the MOST HIGH, thy habitation; there shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling. For He shall give His angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways" (Ps. 91:1-6,9-11).

The Levitical priesthood was connected with the SECRET PLACE of the Tabernacle or the Temple, the Most Holy Place made with hands, where dwelt the Ark of the Covenant, the Ark of Jehovah's presence. This was the SECRET PLACE for the Aaronic order of priests, and it was so sacred and so secret that no one dare look upon this place unprepared, uninvited or unfit lest he die. Only the High Priest, and that once each year, was permitted to enter that most secret and sacred spot. The physical and earthly Secret Place of the Aaronic priesthood points forward to the true and spiritual SECRET PLACE OF THE MOST HIGH where again, only those apprehended ones who receive the call, quickened by His Spirit, have boldness to enter in by the blood of Jesus.

The Hebrew word for SECRET means hidden, concealed, protected, disguised. The Hebrew word for PLACE indicates standing, spot, locality, condition. Thus this SECRET PLACE of the MOST HIGH is a hidden, concealed, protected, and disguised location, condition and standing. It is not open before the eyes of all men, but is reserved for those prepared for it. It is that realm "within the veil" whither our Forerunner is for us entered, where the MOST HIGH may be known in the fullness of Himself.

All the blessings and provisions of the ninety-first Psalm are qualified by this word: "BECAUSE thou hast MADE Jehovah, which is my refuge, even the MOST HIGH, thy HABITATION." Again I would quote the true and eloquent words of another: "The word MADE means literally to PUT which carries the thought of placing something. It is a word of action, not passivity. Therefore the thought is of actively placing or making the MOST HIGH our habitation, not of waiting for Him to sovereignly place us in the habitation. This points up the fact that we have a part to play in this which is making the choice that the MOST HIGH will be our dwelling place." Then we come to the word HABITATION which is an interesting word, for it comes from the root which means COHABITATION or DUTY

OF MARRIAGE. From this then comes the thought of a home which is based upon the union of two people. Therefore it is plain to be seen that the MOST HIGH is not just to be a refuge or hiding place, but He is to be a HABITATION where a perfect union takes place, where lives are blended one into another, where love rules, where cohabiting is a reality. This is where each belongs to the other, where the interest of the other is predominate, where total blending takes place.

Now connecting this with the Order of Melchizedek, it is to be recognized that the Most High blends with this priesthood, and this priesthood blends with the Most High. There is such a union, such a oneness, such a completeness that there flows forth the life of the Most High through all those of this priesthood calling. The nearest way to describe this union is by what little we know of true marriage, which is a totality of union. This condition then accounts for what follows: No evil shall befall you, no plague shall come nigh thy dwelling, His angels shall have charge over you, they uphold you lest you fall. We glowingly repeat these words because they are so wonderful, but the condition that precedes it is what makes it a reality - by making the MOST HIGH our HABITATION!!!!" - Redemption Writings.

There is a Most Holy Place within us, in our spirit, where our Lord ever dwells beyond the passions of the soul and the lusts of the flesh; it is there we must enter. No enemy can reach you in this precious retreat: neither can any enemy get you out of it if by faith you abide in HIM. Is the adversary tormenting you with fears and forebodings? Hide away in the clefts of the Rock. Is there something that is disturbing and distressing you? Hide away in God; commit your way unto Him and He will bring it to pass. Are you misunderstood and unjustly accused or maligned? Find a cleft in the Rock, Christ, and hide away; for this Rock was cleft for you and me that our lives might be hid with Christ IN GOD. People who see us do not know that we are hiding away in the SECRET PLACE OF THE MOST HIGH! They see only a heavenly, supernatural calm, which abides through every storm and pressure; but God knows we are hiding away in the Secret Place; and the adversary knows whence comes this VICTORIOUS QUIET. If we abide in the Secret Place of His Spirit, we are as much hidden away as God can hide us. Walking in the conscious awareness of His overshadowing presence and grace and power is a Secret Realm the world can never see nor comprehend. Those about us see our bodies walking around on earth; but they do not know that we, who live in these frail tents, are hidden away so that neither man nor devil can find nor touch us.

If we take this place and there abide, at every step we shall prove that Jehovah, the authority of God's life, the Most High, is a wall of fire round us and that He is the glory within. Dear children of the Most High, ABIDE IN HIM! It is alone with our Lord; it is when the strife and opinions of the human have ceased; it is when earth has receded and Heaven and Eternity have drawn near enough for us to begin to see the unseen, that the voice of our Lord is heard in our hearts, and His beauty appears. It is in such separation and communion, that His image begins to be manifested. God would have us dwell in His presence until it is the atmosphere we breathe, the breath and source of our lives and joy; until it is so a part of us that we are hardly conscious of this holy relation with God, unless, through some carelessness, it is interrupted and we miss it.

O precious Secret Place, O wondrous Habitation, which can only be found when new vision is given to the sons of the Most High! O blessed Hiding-Place where no one but God is with us, and no eye but His beholds us if we perfectly abide there! What strength

and power, what refreshing and holy swiftness to those who MAKE the Most High their habitation, who dwell in the SECRET PLACE OF THE MOST HIGH!

POSSESSOR OF HEAVEN AND EARTH

The first revelation of Abram's God as THE MOST HIGH is in conjunction with Melchizedek meeting Abram as he returned from a great battle. And on this occasion, he referred to the Most High God as POSSESSOR OF HEAVEN AND EARTH (Gen. 14:19). God MOST HIGH indicates that nothing is higher, nothing can be higher. Nothing in heaven, and nothing on earth. Out of this position proceeds everything else. The magnitude of EL ELYON staggers the imagination, overwhelms the mind, transforms the soul, and enthralls the spirit. And it is from this station that He is POSSESSOR OF HEAVEN AND EARTH. The word translated "possessor" comes from the Hebrew word QANAH whose root meaning is to erect, create, procure, and thus TO OWN. Consider, then, Col. 1:16 wherein the apostle explains, "For it was in Him that all things were created, in heaven and on earth, things seen and things unseen, whether thrones, dominions, rulers or authorities; all things were created and exist through Him and in and for Him" (Amplified). The King James version says that all things were created BY the Christ, but the Greek says that all things were created IN HIM. Paul is here Speaking of God as the Creator and as creating all things IN THE SON.

I must emphasize that God is the Creator of ALL THINGS. Notice the things that the inspired apostle includes in creation. ALL things in the heavens, or all things that are in and constitute the RULING ELEMENT - "the heavens do rule" (Dan. 4:26). ALL the things on earth, or all things that are in or constitute those elements which are ruled, or under authority. ALL things that are visible, or that are discernable to the physical senses - ALL that the eyes can see, ALL that the ears can hear, ALL that we can touch, feel, taste or smell - has been created by God. ALL things that are invisible were created by our God - ALL the wisdom, ALL the knowledge, yea, even that which has not yet been tapped or conceived of by the mind of man - GOD CREATED. ALL of the myriad machines and devices that shall yet come out of the mind of man, were created by God. ALL of the vast forces and powers and universal laws that science has not yet discovered, were created by God. ALL the thrones, and the glory and the power of those who occupy them, were created by God. ALL the dominions or lordships, the mastery and the supremacy, were created by God. ALL the principalities and powers, angels, intelligence's, chief ones, in heaven and on earth, were created by God.

It is not just the fact that all of these things were created by God that startles us the most, but it goes on to say that they were created IN THE CHRIST. The King James version of Rom. 11:36 begins, "For of Him...are all things." This word "of" comes from the Greek word "ek" literally meaning OUT OF. This clearly places God as the one Source of all things, and hence the Amplified's beautiful rendering, "For all things originate with Him and come from Him." Col. 1:16 says, "For it was IN HIM that all things were created, in heaven and on earth, things seen and things unseen, whether thrones, dominions, rulers or authorities" (Amplified). Yes, the Most High is the Creator, Ruler, Owner and Sustainer of all things, He is the Possessor of all, of heaven and earth, of the Church and the world, of angels and demons. Thus the question of the apostle is answered, "Is He the God of the Jews only? Is He not also of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also" (Rom. 3:29). For He is "the God of the spirits of all flesh" (Num. 16:22). He has said, "All souls are Mine" (Eze. 18:4). "All lands" should "know," that "it is He that hath made us, and not we ourselves: we are His people, the sheep of His pasture" (Ps. 100:1,3). And let all who read

these lines know that as surely as the Most High is POSSESSOR OF HEAVEN AND EARTH, this His rightful claim He never foregoes, though men, or angels, or devils stake a second claim. The end is as certain as the beginning because the MOST HIGH is the Possessor of ALL. Can we not see by this that the Priesthood of the Most High is a Priesthood that shall BLESS ALL IN HEAVEN AND IN EARTH? Because we are HIS POSSESSION He also will recreate us, redeeming and bringing us back into an upright position. His possession is His right, and all His works are right. I am not willing to concede one thing to the devil forever. Satan is possessor of NOTHING! My God is Possessor of ALL! All that He has purposed for His creation is right and just and altogether wonderful, praise His name.

We read in Isa. 40:22, "God sitteth upon the CIRCLE of the earth." While the word for "circle" in the Hebrew denotes the sphericity of the earth, it may also indicate the CYCLES of nature. These cycles are the continual goings and comings of the seasons, days, months, years, etc., which were ordained of God in the beginning. Everything in nature moves in cycles: winter and summer, seedtime and harvest; generation after generation, all show the might and wisdom of God. Even electricity must have a circuit. A battery has a positive and a negative to complete the circuit. SO IT IS WITH GOD'S WORK. In the spiritual realm God is the positive, and Satan is the negative. It is therefore reasonable to conclude that man, the highest of God's creation, came out of God, was then lowered into the world of vanity, darkness, and death, but will return to God, thus completing the cycle, not in part, but in full. Even Jesus came out of God, and descended into the depths of man's fall, then arose and returned to God.

This "law of circularity" requires that EVEN AS ALL THINGS BEGAN IN CHRIST, ALL SHALL END IN CHRIST. "I am ALPHA and OMEGA, the beginning and the end, the first and the last," saith the Lord (Rev. 22:13). Only the glorious mind of Christ can reveal to our wondering hearts what that means! Through a glass darkly I can see that He was the FIRST - "before all things." Can I also believe that HE IS THE LAST? If He is the BEGINNING, can my feeble mind dare to comprehend what it signifies when He says that He is also the END? All that existed IN CHRIST before the ages began, shall RETURN INTO HIM AGAIN that HE may be the FIRST and the LAST, the BEGINNING and the END. All that came out of Him, lowered into the realm of the negative, completes its circuit and returns once more to its former estate - IN GOD! The first Adam had power to take ALL with Him into death, without their knowledge or consent: therefore, the second Adam, the Lord from heaven, gathers up the same number in His redemptive work and man who came out of God shall return, that the circle may be unbroken.

But more than that, Paul assures us in Col. 1:16 & 20 that "...by Him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by Him, and for Him: and, having made peace through the blood of His cross, by Him to RECONCILE ALL THINGS UNTO HIMSELF; by Him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven." This implies that the principalities and powers in the heavenly realms NEEDED RECONCILING and ARE RECONCILED by the blood of God's Son. This is why the redeemer was both a HEAVENLY BEING and an EARTHLY BEING. He was the Word from heaven made flesh upon earth, heaven and earth blended into one, so that the Son could say, "No man hath ascended up to heaven, but He that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven" (Jn. 3:13). Praise God, even the principalities and powers IN THE HEAVENS are included in the glorious reconciliation and peace

secured by the blood of His cross, the Man who was from heaven, born on earth, reconciling both realms into one IN HIMSELF.

What a work, what a ministry lies before us! I declare to you that GOD IS PREPARING A PRIESTHOOD COMPANY after the Order of Melchizedek, priests of the Most High God, priests of Him who is POSSESSOR OF HEAVEN AND EARTH. These priests are the completion of Him who is "heir of all things" and who is "crowned with glory and honor" and is "set over the works of His (God's) hands." And though God "left nothing that is not subject to Him," yet "NOW WE SEE NOT YET ALL THINGS subjected unto Him." Sons of the Highest, His priests, shall join in the marvelous work of setting in array UNDER HIM all things to His glory and praise. The way into this wonderful priesthood, the hope of creation, is to be possessed by THE POSSESSOR. Does such a calling seem too high for you? True, you cannot begin to fulfill such a ministry in this present "in part" realm, but consider, precious friend of mine, the INFINITE RESOURCES available as a son and a priest of the Most High God, POSSESSOR OF HEAVEN AND EARTH! To grow up into His fullness is to tap the unlimited sufficiency of the omnipotence and omniscience of God which is equal to every situation and need. Small wonder, then, that Paul could cry out, "I can do ALL THINGS through Christ which strengtheneth me" (Phil. 4:13), and "thanks be unto God, which ALWAYS CAUSETH US TO TRIUMPH in Christ" (II Cor. 2:14). To be united to HIS FULLNESS, filled with the life of the SELF-EXISTENT ONE, is to have that free flowing of the Spirit which knows no lack. There can be no need so great that cannot be handled because of inadequate supply. There can be no darkness that cannot be flooded with His light, no hell that cannot be filled with His holiness, no death that cannot be swallowed up of His life, no hatred nor strife that cannot be dissolved by His love, no bondage that cannot be broken by His power. It is difficult for our minds to grasp the vastness of this realm of the MOST HIGH, and what it will mean to minister out of THAT REALM. Our halting steps today are but baby steps in this great realm of God, but this much is sure, "He who has begun a good work in you will continue until the day of Jesus Christ - developing that good work and perfecting and bringing it to full completion in you" (Phil. 1:6). And even now, under the pressure and testings of this present process of change from glory to glory into HIS IMAGE, "God is able to make ALL GRACE abound toward you; that ye, always having ALL SUFFICIENCY in ALL THINGS, may abound unto EVERY GOOD WORK" (II Cor. 9:8). Glory to God!

Chapter 28

The Melchizedek Connection

(continued)

The whole of the book of Hebrews is a wonderful message and I doubt that it could ever be exhausted. For there is a continual rising in this letter. The first chapter establishes the fact that the Son is above all others. In the first chapter of Hebrews, neither the name Jesus, nor the title Christ is used. It is always the Son. This chapter does not deal with Jesus the Saviour, nor with Christ as the Anointed One, but it sets forth the glory of the SON ~ the realm of sonship. God who spoke in the past in divers ways to the fathers, has in the last of these days SPOKEN BY A SON. Unto which of the angels did God say at any time, "You are My Son, this day have I begotten you"? We have seen for some time that God would lead us to the place where we would speak less of the person of a son and of a Father, and speak more of SONSHIP and FATHERHOOD. Sonship is a relationship that we enter into with the Father. Fatherhood is a relationship the Father enters into with us.

Any person, prepared of God to enter into sonship, will enter into that relationship, for God is bringing many sons to glory or into sonship. So the first chapter of Hebrews establishes the superiority of the Son over angels. The second chapter establishes the fact that God is leading some of humanity into the place of sonship. In this second chapter is given a description of man. God made man a little lower than the angels, crowned him with glory and honor, and placed him over the works of His hands. Then the author tells us that we do NOT YET see all things put under the authority of man, BUT WE SEE JESUS. This point is overlooked by a great many people and it causes them to err. In this second chapter Jesus enters into humanity, lives out the nature and will of the Father on the earth plane, resurrects from the dead as a glorious and incorruptible God-man, and is exalted to the throne of the majesty on high. He finishes what God had begun in the Adam of dust in that dim and misty past in the opening chapters of Genesis. Jesus becomes the first - and so far the only individual - to reach perfection or the perfect creation prophesied in these wondrous words: "Let us make man in our image, and after our likeness" (Gen. 1:26).

The author speaks of Christ's house, whose house WE ARE, in the third chapter. The fourth chapter deals with the iniquity and perversity of the children of Israel, and then proceeds to our great High Priest. The fifth chapter tells us about the great High Priest and that even though Jesus was a Son, yet He learned obedience through the things He suffered. The sixth chapter calls us away from spiritual immaturity and urges us onward to perfection. The seventh establishes the Melchizedek Priesthood as above the Levitical Priesthood. The eighth describes the better sanctuary and the better covenant. The ninth tells of the better sacrifice and the better blood.

Then we come to Hebrews 10:38, "Now the just shall live by faith, but if any man draw back my soul shall have no pleasure in him." Then the whole of the eleventh is an

account of the men and women who, before the coming of the Christ, lived by faith. This chapter has been called the "Honor Roll of Faith" or the "Hall of Faith". What mighty things were wrought by faith! Most Christians today would be happy, proud, and honored to have their names inscribed in this great Honor Roll of Faith. But one name is conspicuously missing. You won't find the name of Jesus in the whole of chapter eleven. HE is not on the Honor Roll of Faith! Jesus does not stand in this wonderful Hall of Faith! Why? Because Hebrews eleven faith is "in part" faith and let us see what it will get you. You can do two glorious things with this faith: first, you can DIE; and second, you can DIE WITH NOTHING! Hear it! "These ALL DIED I-N F-A-I-T-H, NOT having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. And these all, having received a good report through faith, RECEIVED NOT THE PROMISE" (Heb. 11:13,39).

Am I spoiling a good message for you? What does it say in Hebrews eleven? "These all D-I-E-D IN FAITH, NOT HAVING RECEIVED THE PROMISES." It would be interesting to hear some of our modern "faith" and "prosperity" preachers preach a faith sermon using this passage as their text. A couple of intriguing titles would be: HOW TO DIE BY FAITH and HOW TO GET NOTHING BY FAITH. So if Hebrews eleven is your walk of faith, then get ready to DIE, and prepare yourself to DIE WITHOUT THE PROMISE! What did those great men do with Hebrews eleven faith? "These all, having obtained a GOOD REPORT by faith..." They got a GOOD REPORT CARD! And that is all the average Christian today is interested in. "Pray for me," they implore, "that I'll hold out to the end." Or they glowingly report, "My, what a revival we had. Fifty people got saved, a hundred were filled with the Spirit, a whole lot of folk got healings, and we had four hundred in Sunday School!" Aha GOOD REPORT CARD!

Vast multitudes of God's precious people desire nothing more in God than a GOOD REPORT. The forgiveness of sins, emotional blessings, a few miracles, and the hope of the rapture constitutes the apex of their hope in God. But a good report is not the promise. Blessings are not the promise. Healing is not the promise. Even raising the dead is not the promise, for women received their dead raised to life again in Hebrews eleven, but not one of them received the promise, so they all died again. If you settle for a "good report," my friend, you will miss the promise! If you settle for tongues, you will miss the promise. If you settle for blessings and miracles, you will miss the promise. I do not hesitate to tell you that there is a company of people across the land and around the world today that is as radical as I am - they want the PROMISE! All those great heroes of faith did exploits, but they did not receive the promise. Yes, they were a long way from perfection, they fell far short of the fullness of God, and were a great distance from the ultimate that God has prepared for His people. They saw great and mighty things "afar off".

This chapter of Hebrews brings out clearly the difference between seeing the promises of God, and entering into them in reality and fullness. There is a tremendous truth here that we must understand, if we are to know the difference between revelation and reality. Many misguided souls think because they have a revelation from God and have seen some glorious truth, that they can now claim to have entered into that realm in experience and reality. They therefore claim to be "manifested sons," "immortal," "infallible," "kings," "equal to Jesus," "beyond sonship, into fatherhood," and other ridiculous claims not supported by their lives or ministries. These bring great reproach upon the true Kingdom message. Because of these loud and boastful claims, many sincere, truth-seeking people

shy away from any mention of "sonship," "the manchild company," "the Kingdom message," "immortality," "the life message," "Christ in you the hope of glory," "the Melchizedek Priesthood," and other glorious truths that we all should be pressing into.

The promises the "good report" saints had seen afar off involved perfection in spirit, soul, and body, incorruptible life, the full stature of Jesus Christ, universal dominion, with the full measure of the wisdom, knowledge, grace, nature, glory, power and life of Almighty God. And while we must not be presumptuous - assuming we already possess what we have not experienced - yet the Word of the Lord standeth sure, "God having provided some BETTER THING for US, that they without us should not be made perfect" (Heb. 11:40). And according to Hebrews twelve that "better thing" is a BETTER FAITH! Ah, yes, there is a progression in faith, from one degree and quality of faith to another. "For in the Gospel a righteousness which God ascribes is revealed, springing from faith and leading to faith - disclosed through the way of faith that arouses to more faith. As it is written, The man who through faith is just and upright shall live and shall live by faith" (Rom. 1:17, Amplified).

The faith of Hebrews eleven is a different kind and quality of faith than the faith of Hebrews twelve. Hebrews eleven faith is man's faith IN GOD. But Hebrews twelve faith is God's faith IN MAN. What a difference! With Hebrews eleven faith they "all died, not having received the promise." But in Hebrews twelve we are admonished, "Let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the AUTHOR (source, origin) AND FINISHER OF O-U-R FAITH" (Heb. 12:1-2). The faith which receives the promise is the faith of Jesus Christ. Paul declared, "The life which I now live in the flesh I live BY THE FAITH OF THE SON OF GOD, who loved me, and gave Himself for me" (Gal. 2:20). HIS dimension of faith is able to conquer every circumstance and overcome the very last vestiges of sin and death and obtain the promise. H-E OVERCAME ALL THINGS BY FAITH! He overcame sin and the devil by faith. He did the perfect will of God by faith. He conquered death by faith. He arose from the dead and ascended to the right hand of the Majesty on high by faith.

If you will study carefully the miracles of Jesus in the Gospels you will see that there is an ascending scale of faith in Jesus' ministry, each miracle greater in faith and power than the ones before. Consider this order: (1) turning water into wine (2) healing of leprosy, palsy and fever (3) calming the storm (4) casting out the legion of demons (5) feeding the five thousand (6) raising Lazarus from the dead (7) the transfiguration (8) the resurrection (9) the ascension. Can you not discern the gradual increase in glory from miracle to miracle? Jesus PERFECTED FAITH. By faith HE obtained the PROMISE! And now, praise God! He gives to us HIS FAITH and perfects it within us. He leads in the way of faith, He walked in it Himself, He opened it for us, He draws and helps us in it. The Old Testament saints gave us examples of faith; Jesus is the Leader of OUR FAITH, the faith that enters into resurrection life, the perfection and fullness of God, the Holiest of All, that better and perfect thing which God hath provided for us.

Hebrews twelve moves on from the perfecting faith of Jesus to the glory of Mount Zion, the city of the living God...and to an innumerable company of messengers; to the general assembly and church of the firstborn...and to God the judge of all; and to the spirits of just men made perfect; and to Jesus...and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel (Heb. 12:22-24). To how great splendor had the Hebrew Christians been accustomed - marble courts, throngs of white-robed Levites, splendid vestments, the pomp of symbol, ritual and ceremony, the beauty of choral psalm! And to

what a contrast were they reduced - from the majesty of the temple to meeting in some hall, or home, with the poor, afflicted, and persecuted members of a despised and hated sect! It was, indeed, a change, and the inspired writer knew it well; and in these magnificent words, the sublime consummation and crown of his entire argument, he sets himself to show that, for every single item they had renounced, they had become possessed of a spiritual counterpart, a reality, an eternal substance, which was compensation told over a thousand times.

Ah, beloved, called to be sons of God, the Royal Priesthood of Melchizedek's Order, WE BELONG TO MOUNT ZION. "Ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched and that burned with fire...but ye are come unto Mount Zion." The Mount Zion of old was the gray old rock on which stood the palace of David, a site sacred to every Israelites heart for holy memories and divine associations. "The Lord hath chosen Zion, He hath desired it for His habitation. This is My rest for ever; here will I dwell; for I have desired it" (Ps. 132:13-14). To the pious Israelite, Mount Zion was the joy of the whole earth, the mountain of holiness, the city of the Great King. Her palaces, gray with age, were known to be the home and haunt of God. The very aspect of the hoary hills must strike panic into the heart of her foes. And her sons walked proudly around her ramparts, telling her towers, marking her bulwarks, considering her palaces, while fathers told to their children the stories of her glory which in their boyhood they too had received (Ps. 48). The counterpart of this city is ours, and ours forever. The halo of glory has faded off those ancient stones, and has passed on to rest on the true city of God, built of living stones, of which the foundations are Righteousness, the walls Salvation, and the gates Praise; which rises beyond the mists and clouds of time, in the light that shines not from the sun or the moon, but from the face of God. In other words, in this universe there is a holy company of men and women, pure and lovely, the elite of the family of man, redeemed, sanctified, cleansed, matured, perfected, transformed, gathered in a realm beyond the darkness and limitation of the carnal mind, beyond the ravages of sin and the power of death, beyond the bondage of religion and the will of the flesh. Into this realm nothing can enter that defiles or works abomination, and deals in lies.

The patriarchs caught sight of that city in their pilgrimage, it gleamed before their vision, beckoning them ever forward, and forbidding their return to the country from which they had come out. And the seer of Patmos beheld it descending from God out of heaven, bathed in the divine glory. To that city we have come. It has come down into our hearts by the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit; day by day we walk its streets; we live in its light; we breathe its atmosphere; we enjoy its rights; and we are destined to rule as King-Priests from its throne until all creation has been subdued unto God.

THE PRIESTHOOD OF LIFE

As we follow on to know the Lord in this new and living way, it is with confidence that the Spirit of the Most High will direct our steps and open our understanding. We are at the point in history, at the breaking of the dawn of a new age, when only God can lead us step by step into the NEW ORDER He has prepared for us. No man but Jesus has trodden this way before. Only HE can teach us the path of sonship, and direct our steps on the highway to Zion. I do not say that the words of Jesus which are contained in the four Gospels are the only words that God has ever inspired; for I believe that God inspired the holy prophets from the beginning of the world before Christ came. I believe that He inspired apostles and prophets and teachers after He came. I believe that God still inspires men and women who walk with Him in intimacy of fellowship and vital union

today. I believe that inspiration is as continuous as God; God's inspiration will never cease. "There is a spirit in man: and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding" (Job 32:8). If I believed anything else, I should realize that I were talking in direct conflict with my own experience.

I desire to speak with perfect frankness, for I do not wish to be misunderstood. I do not believe that God's elect today is bound either by the example of Jesus Christ in the flesh, or of the first twelve apostles, or of the New Testament Church. While Christ has left us an example, that we should follow in His steps in so far as the principles of sonship are concerned, if you attempt to bind me to the exact modes of Jesus Christ and to follow in His example in all things, I will not do it. Jesus the Christ was born in a stable and laid in a manger, was He not? Am I to go away and have my next baby - my wife will never have any more babies, but if she had any more babies - am I to go away and hunt for a stable in which our baby is to be born? Because my Lord Jesus Christ in the days of His flesh had no place to lay His head, and if in God's infinite mercy He has given me a place to lay my head, am I to lie in the open air on the mountain top and out in the deserts, just because I want to follow the example of Jesus?

Because God by His boundless grace enables me to travel from time to time and speak in homes, halls, conference rooms and church buildings, am I going to say, "The firstborn Son spoke only on the mountain sides, and by the lakes; if the people are to hear me, they have to all come to the mountain." I would have a long way to go to find a mountain in Florida! That is not it at all. We are to follow Christ in the same Faith, in the same Hope, in the same Love, in the same Nature, in the same Wisdom, in the same Patience in the same Vision, in the same Relationship with the Father, in the same Power, in the same Spirit of Forbearance and Mercy and Compassion for humanity, and with the same Courage in fighting sin and sorrow and death.

If you tell me that I am to follow the example of the apostles, I say No, I will not do any such thing. The apostle Paul, for instance, went away and shaved his head at Cenchræ for a vow. How undesirable it would be for me to go away and shave off the little hair that is left on my head just because I want to follow the example of Paul! The apostle Paul did a number of things I would not care to do. He rather boasted that he did not have a wife. There is no doubt that he was a widower, because he would not have been a member of the Rabinnical Council, and would never have been an official witness at the death of Stephen, consenting to that death, unless he had been a Rabbi of rank. A member of that Council must needs be a married man. I agree with some of the Bible scholars, that the apostle Paul was probably a widower at the time he wrote the epistle in which he writes about a wife. I must confess that if Sis. Eby should take it into her head to go to heaven any time within the next few years, it is quite possible that I should choose her successor. And, if I passed to the other side, she could not do a better thing than to get a better man. The apostle Paul had some good reasons for not being married. If a man is going to get into jail in every city and have trouble all the time, it is not a very good thing to carry around with him a woman in a convict ship and get wrecked on Malta. While Paul had the power, therefore, to take about a wife, yet he did not do it because, under the circumstances, it was not best. But the circumstances of today are different for a great many of us. We are to be LED BY THE SPIRIT in all things, not try to imitate the apostle Paul or Jesus (who also was not married!).

I am not going to follow in the footsteps of Peter, because I think we may learn a few things, and keep away from doing some things that Peter did. I hold, and I teach, and I

will teach, that the example of even Christ Himself is not to be wholly followed. That is to say, we are not to have enforced poverty because He made Himself poor. We are not to gather around us twelve disciples because He had twelve disciples. We are not to work at getting ourselves assassinated because He was hung on a cross by a mob. If we are LED BY THE SPIRIT to offer ourselves in a martyr's death, gladly will we do so; but we shall not seek it as a means of following in Jesus' footsteps. We are not to expect to ascend into heaven from the Mount of Olives just because He did. We may never spit in the dirt and make clay to anoint a blind man's eyes. We may never go to a Convention and with whips chase out those who sell books and tapes, as Jesus did those who sold doves and pigeons in the temple in Jerusalem.

May I wax bold to add that there is not even any need to try to duplicate precisely the way the Churches were structured in the early days, or the way their ministries functioned. The priesthood of Melchizedek is not concerned with how to do or not do natural things. It is not a priesthood after the flesh. It is an outflow of life after the Spirit. It does not concern itself with form; it breathes forth as an essence.

Let me use an example. There are two ways in the natural to do things. Everything that happens in the universe is effected by one of these two means. The first way is by external manipulation - the work of the hands, for instance. A great many things in this world are done and produced by external manipulation. The seat you may be sitting in as you peruse these lines was built by a power outside itself, by a machine or by some man's hands. The house you live in, the car you drive, the clothes you wear, and the hundreds of items you use and contact daily in your activities were all made by external manipulation. Each has its own design, form, substance and use, arranged by the wisdom and ingenuity of man. The second method for producing things is by procreation - the generating power of LIFE. The grass and trees in your yard, the birds circling overhead, the barking dog, the fish in the waters, the beasts of the field, the food you eat, and your own being as well - all are PRODUCTS OF LIFE. None of their beauty, design, form, substance or purpose is the product of man's hands or any external manipulation. True, man nurtured them so they could grow, but he did not impart to them their characteristics.

The former are all made by an outward action, whereas the latter are all produced by an internal power. All things everywhere exist as a result of one of these two means: (1) external manipulation, outward action or (2) the power of an indwelling life. And there is a remarkable and significant difference between the two! You can readily tell which is which. None of those things produced by external forces has life. Your house is not alive. The furniture is not alive. The Golden Gate Bridge does not have life. The Empire State Building does not possess life. The Hoover Dam is not a living thing. The Space Shuttle is not alive. Nothing in all God's vast universe that has been made by external manipulation has any life whatsoever. BUT EVERYTHING PRODUCED BY LIFE HAS LIFE AND IS ALIVE! The law is, Only that which is the product of an indwelling life is of life and has life. All things formed from without are not of life and do not have life - they are dead.

If we are not in the life of the Spirit, regardless of what way we use, or how we do things, we are still in deadness. Many years ago when God was drawing us out of the old order forms and traditions of the religious systems, we discovered a new way to have a

meeting, that is, to arrange the seats in a circle rather than in one direction. The logic behind this was that in the church systems the pews all face in one direction toward the elevated platform - representing MAN'S ORDER - the "show" directed from the platform and watched by the "spectators" in the audience. The arrangement embodied the division between the so-called "clergy" and the "laity". On the other hand, the chairs in a circle represented to us the closeness and unity of the body of Christ - with liberty for each member to participate in a true "body ministry". But we made a startling discovery. After we had changed our arrangement of chairs we found that we had just as much deadness as before! You see, the problem was not with the chairs - it was with the people! The secret to life does not lie in any EXTERNAL ARRANGEMENT nor in some physical thing you may do outwardly in the natural. How chairs are arranged neither promotes nor hinders the work of God by the Spirit. It has been my experience that God pays no attention at all to how such matters are arranged. However we do it, it is for OUR CONVENIENCE, and is neither an inducement nor hindrance to the Holy Spirit! The truth is, I have been in some glorious meetings in conventional church buildings, while I have attended some very dry meetings with the chairs in a circle. Conversely, I have witnessed precious and beautiful movings of the Spirit of God when the chairs were in a circle, and a great number of horribly dead meetings with the pews facing the platform. Ah, it was the heart condition, the spiritual attitude, the hunger after God and yieldedness to His Spirit, that made the difference - not the seating arrangement! Oh, how we do get the cart before the horse! God really does not care one whit about any of those natural things. All of the things we do apart from the life of the Spirit are of death. But the man or woman who is of a broken and contrite spirit, God will never refuse, praise His wonderful name!

If we are not walking in the life of the Spirit, the more directions we have, the more deadness we will have. If we arrange the seats in one direction, we will have one direction of death. If we arrange the chairs in four directions, we will have four directions of death. When you are a dead person, no matter what way you arrange you, you are still dead. When I am living, regardless of how I am seated, I am still living. It is not a way; it is life. It is not the method; it is the Spirit. There are too many silly teachings among the saints today, and all the ways have been tried in the past. It is not the way, but the life, the Spirit, the priesthood in the Holy of Holies. Forget about the way; get into His presence and let HIM saturate you. We have to be in the presence of the Lord. We must open ourselves and be filled with Him. A son is one who possesses God and is possessed by God. Anything else than this is not sonship.

Some precious brethren will not like nor receive what I now say, but it is the truth. Rather than trying to "set in order" the New Testament Church with its five-fold ministry elders, gifts, etc., we should expect the Holy Spirit to bring forth in every assembly of saints the type of ministry that is needed and suitable for that place. It will not always be the same, nor will it always take the same form. God is a God of infinite variety as you can readily see by observing nature. No two snowflakes are alike! How many diverse kinds of dogs, and cats, and animals there are in the world! No two people are exactly alike. Do you suppose, then, that every local church or fellowship should be structured exactly alike and function in precisely the same order? Does life produce "carbon copies" of the parents? If it does, then you and all your children should look, act, and think exactly the same! Things that come off of the assembly line like so many uniform sausages or automobiles do not have life and are not of life. I do not hesitate to tell you that many churches and fellowships today have been structured by the external manipulation of some self-appointed apostle who supposes he has found the order of the Spirit in things God did away across the sea two millenniums ago! Instead of seeking to set God's

people into the order of something God did in another place, and in a different time, we should pray for the Spirit of wisdom and revelation from God to be enabled to discern what God IS DOING and IS SAYING by His Spirit today. God is desiring to birth that unique expression which comes by the development of HIS LIFE WITHIN. This expression will be different from any other expression, but it will carry the seed of His life.

In the religious systems the order, the method, the technique, the organization, the creed, the liturgy is all-important. But in the Melchizedekian Order THE ONE WAY IS THE LIFE OF THE LORD. We must live and move and have our being in the life of the Spirit. This is why there are no patterns, no methods, no precedents of any kind established in the New Testament for the ministry of the Melchizedek Priesthood. Jesus never did the same thing in exactly the same way twice. When He healed blind Bartimaeus He merely spoke the word, "Go thy way, thy faith hath made thee whole," and he received his sight. But when He healed the two blind men in the house He touched their eyes in addition to speaking a word. And when He healed the man born blind from birth He spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and He anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay, and commanded him to go wash in the pool of Siloam.

So, what is the best way to heal a blind man? No one can tell you - not even Jesus! What is the best way to preach the Gospel? No one can tell you. What is the best way to hold a meeting? Again, no one can tell you. If you were to ask me what the right way is, I would have to say that I do not know. I really do not know what is the right way to do anything. I do not know the right way to meet humanity's needs, or solve the saint's problems, or bring people into the present truth. In the Bible you can never find T-H-E RIGHT WAY to minister or to do the work of the Kingdom. This is because the New Testament is the dispensation of the Spirit. What ever you do, whatever way you use, wherever you go, it must be by the Spirit. And the Spirit is original, He is never static, His way is always fresh and new and transcendental. He may never repeat what He did yesterday, or the way He did it. In these last years, wherever I have gone, I have never paid any attention to the way. Regardless of the way people meet or minister or serve the Lord, it does not mean anything. The real question is this: Is there the presence of the Lord? Is there the life of the Spirit? What is GOD doing? And HOW is HE doing it? I look to see what God IS DOING, rather than trying to introduce some "order" for God to move in.

May the Lord have mercy upon all who cherish the hope of sonship that we may be delivered from anything other than the LIFE of this priesthood. We must learn this one lesson that the Melchizedek Priesthood is known only by the OUTFLOW OF HIS LIFE. Then we will abide in His presence and come out from the Lord's presence with the bread and wine to minister to creation's needs. The Order of Melchizedek is not in any way related to so-called New Testament Church order. It is more than that, it is something of life, the order of life, the order brought forth by life, something living, something divine, something sovereign, something transcendental, and something that operates by the POWER OF GOD WITHIN. We are conscious that God is bringing something new and glorious into being. He is bringing something into this earth that is far, far beyond anything we know. He is birthing a manchild, a priesthood, a new order. It will make right everything that has been wrong. It will make everything as God planned it to be. It will bring righteous judgment, it will bring mercy, and deliverance, and power and glory to creation beyond our fondest hopes or our wildest dreams. It will set creation free. There will be life for all. And God shall become All-in-all, hallelujah!

THE END OF THE MELCHIZEDEK ORDER

I would now draw your attention to the duration of the Melchizedek priesthood. The Melchizedek priesthood is after the power of an indissoluble or indestructible life, but does that mean that the ministry of the Melchizedek Order continues forever? It is stated, "Thou art a priest FOREVER after the order of Melchizedek" (Heb. 7:17). The average person sees that word and automatically assumes that it means that the Order of Melchizedek is an ETERNAL Order. But this is not the case. The Greek word from which FOREVER is translated is AION from which we get our English word EON. Whenever one speaks of EONS he is not talking about eternity, rather EONS denote specific spans of TIME.

In late years there has been much controversy over the meaning of the little Greek word AION. Certain deceivers, to further their unscrupulous ends and uphold their blasphemous and Romanish doctrine of eternal damnation, have maintained, contrary to and in spite of all revealed facts, that it means ETERNAL. And our Authorized Version renders it, together with the adjective AIONIOS as "age, course, eternal, forever, evermore, for ever and ever, everlasting, world, beginning of the world, world began, world without end." What a horrible mixture!

But we need not remain in darkness, for fortunately the Word of God tells us precisely what this Greek word means. Too few have taken the time or energy to consider the real meaning of AION. As I have pointed out it is the word from which we get our English word EON. Many attempts have been made to prove that eons are eternal. But this is more than a grave error, it is the height of stupidity, for the divine Author of the blessed Bible has not Himself used them in that way. AION nowhere means eternal! Its simple meaning is AN AGE. In its plural form it means AGES. This fact can be unquestionably and incontrovertibly demonstrated from numerous New Testament passages. A glance at any good concordance proves that the noun AION, or AGE, is not the synonym of eternity. A study of each case would make a library; so, leaving this task to the reader, we must content ourselves with adducing a few specimens to demonstrate the fact. It is usage that determines meanings - THEIR usage, not ours; the meanings that the holy prophets and apostles gave to their words rather than those that our English translators may try to give. Let me illustrate.

In Eph. 2:7 we find, "in the ages (aions) to come." In Col. 1:26 we find, "the mystery which hath been hid from ages (aions)." In Eph. 2:2 we find, "ye walked according to the course (aion) of this world." In Heb. 1:2 we find, "by whom also He made the worlds (aions)." In Heb. 11:3 we find, "the worlds (aions) were formed by the word of God." In about fifteen instances, such as Mat. 12:32, I Cor. 1:20, etc., we find it rendered "this world (aion)." Twice we find "this present world (aion)." In Gal. 1:4 we find, "deliver us from this present evil world (aion)." In Eph. 6:12 we find, "the rulers of the darkness of this world (aion)." In II Cor. 4:4 we find, "the god of this world (aion)." In I Cor. 2:6 we find, "the wisdom of this world (aion)." In Lk. 16:8 we find, "the children of this world (aion)." In Mk. 4:19 we find, "the cares of this world (aion)." How much more correct and understandable it would be if the translators had used the word AGE instead of world!

In Mk. 10:30 we find that there is not only this present aion, which is evil, but also "the world (aion) to come." In Lk. 20:35 we find, "but they that shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world (aion), and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry nor are given in marriage." In Heb. 6:5 we find, "and have tasted...the powers of the world (aion) to come." And in Lk. 1:70, Jn. 9:32, etc., we find that the aion had a beginning: "since the world (aion) began."

And now in reviewing the Scriptures we have just quoted we note that this aion is something which has a king; it has princes; it is in darkness; it had a beginning; it has an ending; it is evil; it has wisdom; it has children who marry; it has cares. The aions we find were made by Christ, simply through His spoken Word, and we also find in Col. 1:26 that the mystery of Christ in us, the hope of glory, has been hidden from these aions. Now, if AION means ETERNAL, or FOREVER, consider how ridiculous the Word of God would be! The Holy Spirit would be found saying, "the mystery which has been hid from eternities;" "the mystery of Christ which in other eternities was not made known;" "in the eternities to come;" "ye walked according to the eternities of this world;" "by whom also He made the eternities;" "the rulers of the darkness of this eternity;" "now once in the end of the eternities hath He appeared;" "the harvest is the end of the eternity;" "since eternity began;" "in the eternities to come," etc. etc. Let the scholars whose business it is delve into the many intricacies of expression, and worry over the many grammatical combinations. Suffice it to say here that there have been "aions" in the past, there is this present "aion," and there are "aions" to come. And these all combined make up TIME, encompassing the whole of the progressive plan and program of God for the development of His creation.

Any thinking person should clearly see that if you translate the word AION which means AN AGE by the words ETERNAL or FOREVER, which have nothing to do with time, you immediately get the wrong idea. And so it is with the Melchizedek priesthood. While the King James Bible says, "Thou art a priest FOREVER after the order of Melchizedek," the Greek form is "eis ton aiona" which, literally translated is TO THE AGE. The Melchizedek priesthood lasts for TIME. In this tremendous passage we see the duration of this priesthood - TO THE AGE. We have no conception yet of the great and vast ages that are still ahead of us. When the ages have all been completed, then a priesthood will not be needed, but as long as time lasts, the priesthood is a necessity.

A priesthood "to...THE AGE!" The true understanding of the Word of God is freighted with far more glorious meaning and depth of purpose than the shallow traditions of church creeds. While the Scriptures speak of an age, and the ages, and the ages of the ages, one age proceeding from, or out of, a previous age until all the ages have run their courses - it also points to that glorious climatic age of all ages. We read the phrase, "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever" (Heb. 1:8). These words, for ever and ever" come from the Greek which literally reads TO THE AGE OF THE AGES. This is very familiar terminology in the Scripture.

Few men have been caught away by the spirit of inspiration as was the wise king Solomon when he penned the beautiful Song of Solomon. God dropped one thousand and five songs down into the heart of Solomon, but of these, only five comprising the Song of Solomon, have been preserved and have found a place in Holy Scripture. Inspiration named it "The Song of Songs," that is, the one song which was above and beyond all the songs that have ever come from human heart and human lips. Just as the "Song of Songs" was chief above them all, just as the "Holy of holies" was the holiest place of all, just as the "King of kings" is the greatest King of all, so all through the Scriptures, though obscured by many translators, we have this remarkable phrase TO THE AGE OF THE AGES. It points to that age which shall be the most glorious of all, and which finds its type in the year of Jubilee. This is the Holy Spirit's way of expressing the superlative, and so far as God's plan of the ages is concerned this AGE OF THE AGES is T-H-E A-G-E PAR EXCELLENCE of them all. A simple illustration of this is our expression, "a day of days," meaning a day that comes out of previous days, which

crowns them, and embodies not only what they contained, but the full fruition of all that was elementary in them. Eternity does not emerge full grown in man's consciousness until this wonderful age is ended. This AGE OF THE AGES is that glorious climax to His purpose and process of the ages, wherein He states, "Behold, I make ALL things new" (Rev. 21:5). And when He says, "A-L-L," it is self-evident that there is nothing remaining in the universe which shall not be made new, else all is not all. "For He must reign UNTIL He hath put ALL enemies under His feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death" (I Cor. 15:25-26). When the last enemy is under His feet, destroyed, and there is no more death in any creature anywhere in all God's great universe, then shall God be A-L-L IN ALL! The Amplified gives, "Be everything to everyone." Time comes to an end when the ages end and eternity, with God "All in all," becomes a conscious reality.

Christ is a priest after the Order of Melchizedek, not forever, as we have erroneously been taught, and not for just this one age of the Church dispensation, either, but unto THE AGE, that glorious climatic age of all the ages. It cannot be made plainer than it is in Young's Literal translation where we read, "And those indeed are many who have become priests, because by death they are hindered from remaining; and He, because of His remaining - TO THE AGE, hath the priesthood not transient, whence also He is able to save TO THE VERY END, those coming through Him unto God - ever living to make intercession for them" (Heb. 7:23-25).

Great are the mediatorial and redemptive glories of God's priesthood! What distinguishes this ministry above all others is the fact that it carries its wonderful mission to a conclusion. The Melchizedek priesthood is a priesthood TO A FINALITY. The fact that there will come a day, O glorious day! when it will no longer be needed, is the highest praise that can be brought to the Melchizedek priesthood. It will, in due time, have accomplished its mission, and finished the task God intended it to do. All other ministries retire because of their weakness and inability to bring aught to perfection. But the Royal Priesthood retires with honors - having accomplished its glorious mission. Oh, how it drags the Christ's highest honors in the dust to distort God's Word so that His priesthood is eternal and His reign everlasting! Christ does not reign forever, my friend, for "He must reign T-I-L-L He hath put all enemies under His feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. For He (the Father) hath put all things under His (Christ's) feet. But when He saith that all things are put under Him, it is manifest that He is excepted, which did put all things under Him. And WHEN all things shall be subdued unto Him, then shall the Son also Himself be subject unto Him that put all things under Him, that GOD may be all in all" (I Cor. 15:25-28). May God forgive the ignorant zeal which seeks to gild the glory of His crowns with the tarnished tinsel of man's imagination! What He starts He will finish, and what He commences He will consummate, praise His name!

"But one in a certain place testified, saying, What is man, that Thou art mindful of him? or the son of man, that Thou visitest him? Thou madest him a little lower than the angels; Thou crownedst him with glory and honour, and didst set him over the works of Thy hands: Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet. For in that He put all in subjection under him, He left nothing that is not put under him. But now we see not yet all things put under him (man). BUT WE SEE JESUS..." (Heb. 2:6-8).

George Wylie of Canada has so aptly written, "We do not yet see man crowned with glory and honor, nor do we yet see all things put in subjection under him; but the writer goes on to say, 'But we see Jesus crowned with glory and honor.' So far HE is the only man to be crowned with glory and honor, but there are many sons to follow, who will, in the end, be

crowned with glory and honor. Now it is very noticeable that the writer said nothing about all things being put under the feet of Jesus here. He just said, 'But we see Jesus crowned with glory and honor.' Why the omission? We are told in Eph. 1:22, that God HATH put all things under His feet; and in I Cor. 15:27 he said the same thing, 'For He HATH put all things under His feet.' This seems certain that God has already done this. Then why did the writer fail to say so? We know that God raised Christ from the dead, and that He set Him at His own right hand in the heavens. We see Jesus at the right hand of God, crowned with glory and honor. He is seated there on His throne with His Father; but let us not forget what David prophesied, 'The LORD (Jehovah) said unto my Lord, Sit Thou at My right hand, U-N-T-I-L I make Thine enemies Thy footstool.' We see Him there now, sitting at the right hand of God the Father, crowned with glory and honor, head of all principalities and powers; but He must reign UNTIL His enemies have been put under Him. Though God has said He HAS put all things under Him, we do not yet see all things under Him, and this is why we have no mention of it in this chapter. Though God has ordained it, it has not yet taken place. This is something yet to be accomplished, even though God says it has already been done. God has raised His Son, Jesus, to an exalted position above all things. He has made Him the head of all principalities and powers. He has given Him a name that is above every name. He has given Him a position that is second to none but God Himself. The only one who is higher than JESUS is God. So far as position and authority is concerned, Jesus is higher than all else in the universe, and in this sense all things are put under Him, and under His feet. But though He has been given the headship over all things, not all things are in subjection unto Him. Not by any means. There are multitudes of men on earth who are not in submission to Him. There are still hosts in the heavens who are not in subjection to Him either, and will not be for ages yet to come. But the Kingdom is going to be given to the Lord and His Anointed, and He will reign UNTIL He has brought everything in the universe into subjection unto Himself; for He must reign UNTIL He has brought all His enemies under His feet; and when this is done, then Jesus will turn the Kingdom over to the Father, that God may be All in all. Then will be fulfilled the prophecy that, 'Every knee shall bow, of things in the heavens, and on the earth, and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father' (Phil. 2:10). Hallelujah, everything restored to find their one head in Christ. 'And this is in harmony with God's merciful purpose for the government of the world, when the times are ripe for it - the purpose He has cherished in His own mind of restoring the whole creation to find its one head in Christ, yes, things in heaven, and things on earth, to find their one head in Him' (Eph. 1:9-10, Weymouth)"- end quote.

One of the main arguments of the book of Hebrews is that the Aaronic priesthood and sacrificial ritual "brought nothing to completion". It was a treadmill of repetitive service which could not make the participants perfect. But Christ's Melchizedek priesthood does and will bring mankind into perfect harmony with God, however many ages it takes, for He continues to live and remains a priest unto "THE AGE". He is well able to complete the work and bring the priestly service to a close. If Christ's priestly intercession is to continue FOREVER, His priesthood is just as impotent as Aaron's, and will no more obtain its objective than the Aaronic. Once human estrangement has been replaced by universal reconciliation, no further priestly mediacy will be needed. Hence Christ, and all who share His priesthood, are priests after the Order of Melchizedek "eis ton aionan" - to the age. WITH WHAT ANTICIPATION DO WE AWAIT THAT GLORIOUS AGE! At last, at long last, praise God, the Royal Priesthood will be able to say with finality, IT IS FINISHED! MISSION ACCOMPLISHED!

The Order of Melchizedek, a mystery, I dare say,
And yet our God doth apprehend a people for this way.
The former realm must pass away, the Levites, with their law,
A priesthood that was for its day, but not without its flaw.
It was of God, for just a time, until the whole was changed,
And out of Judah came the Christ, with hope for the estranged.
A King of Righteousness is He, such holiness divine,
And now He ministers the same till purity is shine.
And also works a perfect peace, completeness is the score,
The power of an endless life, with GRACE abounding more.
- Ray Prinzing

Chapter 29

The Melchizedek Connection

(continued)

Our Lord Jesus Christ is a High Priest forever after the Order of Melchizedek. He is a MINISTER OF THE SANCTUARY, AND OF THE TRUE TABERNACLE, WHICH THE LORD PITCHED, NOT MAN. The heavens, with the heavenly life of Christ there, are shown in the book of Hebrews to be the true counterpart of the tabernacle Moses built, and He, a Priest-King upon the throne, is seen to be a minister of the Sanctuary, of the true tabernacle. The inspired writer then proceeds to remind us, that "EVERY High Priest is appointed to OFFER both gifts and sacrifices: wherefore it is necessary that this High Priest also HAVE SOMEWHAT TO OFFER" (Heb. 8:3). The specific and primary ministry of God's High Priest is TO OFFER. Therefore Christ, our great High Priest, must also be ordained to offer.

The High Priest under the Levitical system could not enter into the Sanctuary until he had offered a blood offering, a sacrifice. Therefore, since Jesus is the anti-type of the type, He too "must have somewhat to offer"; and since He is seen in the heavenly Sanctuary, that is proof that He did offer a sacrifice which has been accepted by God the Father. And what did He offer? He offered HIMSELF - "holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners" (Heb. 7:26). Furthermore, "Christ THROUGH HIS OWN BLOOD, entered in once for all into the Holy Place, having obtained eternal redemption" (Heb. 9:12).

And what does this phrase, HIS OWN BLOOD, mean? To Moses God said that He gave the blood upon the altar to be an atonement for the soul, because THE LIFE OF THE FLESH IS IN THE BLOOD (Lev. 17:11). That is, the blood in the body is the life of the body. Ah the power of any blood is in the worth of the life. In the blood of Jesus THE POWER OF THE DIVINE LIFE DWELT and worked - hence its intrinsic value. He was the Son of God by conception but the son of man by birth. He was a specially prepared body to contain a SPECIALLY PREPARED BLOOD that was to be THE LIFE of all humanity. This blood was precious from the fact that it was a unique blood which would do something for all humanity that no other blood could ever do. It was the Word of God that became flesh, who was made man. It was the life of God that dwelt in Him. That life gave His blood, every drop of it, an infinite value. The blood of a man is of more worth than that of a sheep. The blood of a king or a great general is counted of more value than hundreds of common soldiers. The blood of the Son of God! - it is in vain the mind seeks for some expression of its value; all we can say is, it is His own blood, the blood of the Son of God!

The life is in the blood. As the value of this life, so the value of the blood. In Christ there was the life of God; infinite as God is the worth and the power of that blood. In Christ there was the life of man in its perfection; in His humility, and obedience to the Father, and self-sacrifice, that which made Him unspeakably well-pleasing to the Father. That blood of Jesus, the blood of God and the blood of man, poured out in death, was a

perfect fulfillment of God's will, and a perfect victory over all the power of the carnal mind, effecting an everlasting atonement for sin, and putting it forever out of the way, destroying death and him that had the power of it. Therefore it was that in the blood of the everlasting covenant Jesus was raised from the dead; that in His blood, as our Head and Surety, He entered the highest heaven; and **THAT PRECIOUS BLOOD IS NOW AND FOREVER AVAILABLE TO US WITH ALL ITS INCORRUPTIBLE POWER.**

Beloved sons and daughters of God! The blood of Jesus! The blood of the Lamb! Oh, think what it means. God gave it for your redemption from Adam's race and your transformation into the image and glory of God. God accepted it when the firstborn of the new creation entered heaven and presented it on your behalf. God points you to it and asks you to believe in its omnipotent energy, in its everlasting sufficiency. Ah, this celestial man was injected into a whole world full of men descended from the earth-man to impart something we had lacked from the day Adam was driven from Eden's bright portals. That something was LIFE, LIVING BLOOD, for He said He came to give life to the world. He could impart a life to the world that would change it completely.

When Adam transgressed, the LIFE OF GOD, which had been breathed into his nostrils, departed from him and all that was left was a residue, that mortal something which flowed in the veins of his body. This blood contains nothing of the life of God, and in its composition and nature is similar to the blood of the animal kingdom, for when the glorious power of divine life departed from Adam, he entered into the kingdom of death. Adam was made a LIVING SOUL. From the Greek the statement reads, "The first man was made a ZOE PSUCHE (living soul). ZOE, throughout the entire Greek New Testament, is always used in reference to the LIFE OF GOD. PSUCHE, on the other hand, is used of the natural life of animals and men. Since both words are used of Adam's life in the beginning, it is clear that he possessed a natural life imbued, infused, injected, impregnated and permeated with the glorious incorruptible LIFE OF GOD. This life, ZOE, is the life Jesus promised to give to man when He said, "I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish," and this, beloved, is the LIFE THAT DEPARTED FROM ADAM when he transgressed, leaving him ashamed, fearful and DEAD. The life is in the blood, but our blood, being devoid of eternal (zoe) life, is in reality dead blood and capable of sustaining only physical life, and that only poorly until man returns to the dust from whence he came. It is not without significance that, when the bodies of men are embalmed, the first act is to remove the corruptible blood that the dead body may be better preserved. Instead of incorruptible and, therefore, deathless blood, Adam's blood corrupted through sin and became subject to death. To redeem this DEAD SINNER, life must be again imparted. The only remedy for death is LIFE. This life is in the blood, and so blood must be furnished which is sinless and incorruptible. Now none of Adam's race could do this, for "in Adam ALL die." There was only one, yes, ONLY ONE, who could furnish that blood, the virgin-born Son of God, the man from heaven, the last Adam, with a human body, but sinless, supernatural blood inseminated by the Holy Ghost.

Jesus came to bring life to the world. Here is where His blood differed from the ordinary blood or life of men. His blood was precious in that it was able to do something for mankind which man's own blood or life could not do. The natural blood or life of mankind was only for a few years at most, but the blood of the Christ was the LIFE OF THE AGE. So there must somehow be a discontinuance of the blood of a few years, that the blood or the LIFE OF THE AGES might be injected into mankind.

Let us notice one thing further. The red liquid that ran through the veins and arteries of the body of Jesus is not the blood whose power redeems mankind and all things unto God. There is no biblical basis for attributing any unusual properties to Christ's body fluids. The term "blood of Christ" is far more significant than any magical or mystical power falsely attributed to His physical blood by those who are ignorant of the truth. And here I must speak a word against one of the popular myths that has been widely circulated among God's end-time saints. Various teachers have maintained that human blood is in some, mysterious way "congealed light." Now that term carries with it a certain kind of mystical aura, and a rather scientific sound. But the truth is that it is neither scientifically founded, scripturally sound, nor spiritually veracious. Blood is composed of the very same chemical and mineral substances of which the earth is made. If blood is congealed light, then your refrigerator, automobile, house, and a bunch of bananas are just as truly congealed light! Blood is mostly water, but in the blood many substances are dissolved and in this fluid float specks of matter that do not dissolve. The liquid part of blood greatly resembles sea water. It contains salt, sodium, potassium, calcium, and other minerals. The specks of matter that float in the blood are of three kinds: red corpuscles, white corpuscles and platelets. The liquid part of the blood without these solid particles, but including the various chemicals in the blood, is called plasma.

The thing of importance about the precious blood of Jesus is not its physical structure, but the glorious fact that blood bespeaks L-I-F-E. What Jesus poured out was His life, His holy, pure, undefiled, divine, heavenly, incorruptible life, the ZOE PSUCHE the life of GOD! He lived and walked out that glorious life in human form and then poured it out as an offering unto God. And God took the offering and poured it out, in return, upon mankind! "He...spake of the resurrection of Christ, that His soul was not left in hell, neither His flesh did see corruption. This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, HE HATH SHED FORTH THIS, WHICH YE NOW SEE AND HEAR" (Acts 2:31-33).

Ah - the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of God, the divine and incorruptible life of God as it had been perfected and lived out in the life of the Son of God - was now shed forth to be received by all men to transform and lift them up high into the holiness, wisdom and power of God. The precious blood of Jesus! There is an old Roman Catholic dogma which says that Christ carried His blood with Him to heaven in a bowl. Without even knowing its source, evangelical Christianity clings to that ludicrous idea from the Dark Ages by perpetuating a form of mysticism around the physical blood of our Lord. There is no bowl in the universe that could have contained what Jesus Christ carried into the heavens! When Christ entered heaven, He carried not physical blood, which of necessity would be corruptible blood, but His DIVINE-HUMAN LIFE. He did not transport a bowl of blood or a bucket of blood; He entered in His resurrection body, with the full power of that divine life He had poured out on behalf of Adam's doomed race. If He had not poured it out, He would have forever remained the ONLY perfect man - the only Son of God. But, blessed be His wonderful name! He shed His precious blood, poured out His quickening Spirit that all may drink thereof and live!

SPIRITUAL SACRIFICES

Everything about the blood of Jesus is spiritual. All that His blood effects within us is spiritual. The sacrifice He offered unto God was spiritual. The mighty work wrought in our lives by the power of His offering is spiritual. And all the sacrifices of the heavenly realm

into which we now are translated are spiritual sacrifices. The altar upon which the spiritual sacrifices are offered is Christ Himself, as it is written, "BY HIM therefore let us offer the SACRIFICE of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to His name. But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with SUCH SACRIFICES God is well pleased" (Heb. 13:15,16). "The SACRIFICES OF GOD are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise" (Ps. 51:17).

The "sacrifice of praise" in no way infers that we must consistently and persistently mouth words of praise and thanksgiving unto God when we in no way "feel" like doing so. That is the idea that many people have. They feel they must "wring" some praises out of their dull soulish senses in order to offer a "sacrifice" of praise to God. To the contrary, the sacrifice of praise must be the very BEST of our powers, like the lamb without blemish in the Old Testament, painstakingly selected and carefully and reverently brought to the Tabernacle door. In the awesomeness of His presence and glory we launch joyously down our tiny rivulet, until we are borne out into the great ocean of praise, which is ever breaking in music around the person of Jesus. Praise is one of the greatest acts of which we are capable; and it is the transcendent service of heaven. In that blessed realm they ask for naught, for they have all and abound; but throughout the cycles of glory the inhabitants of those bright worlds fill them with praise. And why should not our earthly tasks be wrought to the same music? We are the priests of creation; it becomes us to gather up and express the sentiments which are mutely dumb, but which await our offering at the altar of God. The praise of the Royal Priesthood is not that which is offered in the assembling of the saints, in which so much is soulish instead of spiritual, but the daily expression of the priestly spirit, thanksgiving and honor and glory to God in all things and for all things, in the nitty-gritty of everyday experience and under the pressures and problems of life. More than words, this sacrifice is an attitude, a disposition, a STATE OF BEING. It is the outraying of the nature, love, grace and mercy of God in all and unto all. Ray Prinzing has often stated that the messenger must so become one with his message until the messenger BECOMES THE MESSAGE. In the same vein, the praiser must so become one with his praise until the praiser BECOMES THE PRAISE of God in the earth. This is the greatest of all spiritual sacrifices!

This wonderful High Priest under which we labor, having no better sacrifice to offer, OFFERED HIMSELF. By the eternal Spirit He offered Himself. The Spirit settled upon Him in distant ages past to guide His footsteps to His one earthly goal - the cross. He had been chosen in the ages past to be the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, and the Spirit had rested upon Him for that purpose. He was High Priest, He was sacrifice, He was altar, He was all. And God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself. In this we have an entirely new conception of the Royal Priesthood. Since the ministry of Christ is also our ministry as a royal kingdom of priests, we are also called to fulfill the ministry of the true priesthood after the Order of Melchizedek. And our ministry is also threefold: to offer a sacrifice, to intercede for the people, and to bless them with the final benediction of completed salvation, even the manifestation of SONSHIP FULFILLED, thus bringing deliverance to the whole creation. The sacrifice we are to offer is clearly set forth by the apostle, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service" (Rom. 12:1). And in sacrificing our bodies unto the Lord as that "LIVING SACRIFICE," we continue to walk in the ways of the Lord, which the apostle describes in verse two: "And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God." This is indeed our sacrifice in behalf of the people and is described as

"YOUR REASONABLE SERVICE." As HIS LIFE is formed in us, we then have to give to creation.

BREAD AND WINE

The Levitical priesthood was given to administer the law. That is all that it was for. We read in Heb. 7:11, "If therefore perfection were by the Levitical priesthood, (FOR UNDER IT THE PEOPLE RECEIVED THE LAW), what further need was there that another priest should rise after the Order of Melchizedek, and not be called after the order of Aaron. For the PRIESTHOOD BEING CHANGED, THERE IS MADE OF NECESSITY A CHANGE ALSO OF THE LAW." A lot of folk have this thing turned around. They believe that the priesthood was changed because the law was changed. But this passage reveals the great truth that THE LAW WAS CHANGED BECAUSE THE PRIESTHOOD HAD BEEN CHANGED! This is most remarkable.

The Levitical priesthood was not confirmed and anointed for service until after the law had been given and the tabernacle set up for the service of the priesthood. God gave Moses the law in the mountain and at the same time the plans for the tabernacle. In Ex. 40: 12-15 we find that after all the tabernacle had been assembled and the furniture placed therein, God said, "And thou shalt bring Aaron and his sons unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation and wash them with water. And thou shalt put upon Aaron the holy garments, and anoint him, and sanctify him; that he may minister unto Me in the priest's office. And thou shalt bring his sons and clothe them with coats: and thou shalt anoint them, as thou didst anoint their father, that they may minister unto Me in the priest's office: for their anointing shall be an age-lasting priesthood throughout their generations." After the tabernacle was finished and all the furnishings moved in and placed, THEN the priesthood was set in order and the priests consecrated for their service. There was no priesthood until the law was given and a place made for ministering that law. The law was prepared first and the priesthood followed the law.

May the Spirit of God give you understanding of the great truth that follows. Long, long before the law was ever given, A PROMISE WAS GIVEN UNTO A MAN. Heb. 6:13-14 states, "For when God made a promise to Abraham, because He could swear by no greater, He swear by Himself saying, Surely blessing, I will bless thee, and multiplying, I will multiply thee. And so, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise. For men verily swore by the greater: AND AN OATH FOR CONFIRMATION IS TO THEM AN END OF ALL STRIFE. Wherein God, willing more abundantly to show unto the heirs of promise the immutability of His counsel, confirmed it by an oath." Or, He interposed Himself. God in giving the promise to Abraham not only swore unto HIMSELF, but the following verse tells us that God gave unto Abraham two immutable things in which He could not lie. He gave to Abraham His WORD and HIMSELF. Neither could lie! This put God in the position that not only did a man have His word, but He Himself had sworn to Himself and He was incapable of lying.

To refresh our minds as what was in the covenant to Abraham, we turn to Gen. 12:2-3. This man Abraham was to become a great nation and a commonwealth of nations. God would bless him. God would make his name great. God would make him to be a blessing to all the ends of the earth. God would bless them who would bless Abraham. God would curse them that cursed Abraham. And lastly, in Abraham and his seed would ALL nations and families be blessed. These are remarkable promises to a man who has no son and in the natural has absolutely NO HOPE of ever having a son!

But this promise was given to Abraham by God interposing Himself, swearing by Himself and binding Himself. This promise MUST COME TO PASS. The blessing of all nations and families of the earth through Abraham and his seed is A WORLD-WIDE MINISTRY AND AN ALL-INCLUSIVE MINISTRY. The Levitical priesthood could never minister a marvelous thing such as this. THE LAW DID NOT CONTAIN SUCH PROMISES. The law did not contain such provisions. Furthermore, the Levitical priesthood was too narrow-minded to do it. They would not accept the salvation of the nations or that God had come to bless and restore all. They believed the promises of God were to the Israelite alone.

So it was necessary for God to remove BOTH THE LAW AND THE PRIESTHOOD. Before either the law or the Levitical priesthood was established, God made a promise to Abraham: "That the blessing of Abraham MIGHT COME ON THE GENTILES (NATIONS) THROUGH JESUS CHRIST: THAT WE MIGHT RECEIVE THE PROMISE OF THE SPIRIT THROUGH FAITH" (Gal. 3:14). Jesus was made a curse for us so that God's promise to Abraham of blessing for ALL THE NATIONS AND FAMILIES OF THE EARTH might be accomplished. When God made a covenant, there was to be a priesthood to cover and administer that covenant. To bring this to pass, there was of necessity to be a priesthood established. At the precise time when God made His covenant with Abraham, we read of a historic meeting between two men of God in Genesis chapter fourteen. In this chapter Abraham has gone to war to release Lot and his people from the kings who had taken them captive. He had three hundred and eighteen of his armed servants to do this. Abraham is returning from his great victory in battle and he bears in his mind and heart the covenant that God had just given to him - the covenant that ended with the promise that through him and his seed would all nations and families of the earth be blessed. The first to meet him upon his return was the king of Sodom who offered Abraham all the spoils of the battle in exchange for the captives, but Abraham would receive nothing of him lest the king say that he had made Abraham rich.

At the same time a strange and wonderful thing takes place. God brings out His High Priest, king of Salem, king of righteousness, king of peace, without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life, but made like unto the Son of God - Melchizedek! Melchizedek went out on the road to meet Abraham. And at once the record states, "And Melchizedek king of Salem brought forth BREAD AND WINE: and he was the priest of the Most High God" (Gen. 14:18). Melchizedek then blessed Abraham and in this unusual meeting we see the ESTABLISHING OF THE MELCHIZEDEK PRIESTHOOD AFTER THE POWER OF AN ENDLESS LIFE IN CONNECTION WITH THE ABRAHAMIC COVENANT. It was imperative that there BE A PRIESTHOOD assigned to the covenant when it came into effect. The priest of the Most High God came forth and met with the man, Abraham, who possessed the covenant.

Now let us see to whom this promise was given beside Abraham. "Now to Abraham and His SEED were the promises made. He saith not, and to SEEDS as of many (the multitude of Israel); BUT AS OF ONE, AND TO THY SEED WHICH I-S C-H-R-I-S-T... and if ye BE CHRIST'S, THEN are YE ABRAHAM'S SEED, and heirs according to the promise" (Gal. 3:16,19). Thus, the Abrahamic covenant was made to both Abraham and THE MANY-MEMBERED BODY OF THE CHRIST! It was made on earth and in heaven. Both earth and heaven heard this word as Abraham, the man of earth, and Melchizedek, the priest from the celestial realm, met together over bread and wine. It would make no difference what came afterward - law, grace or anything else, both earth and heaven had witnessed the giving of the promise and its confirmation. This confirmation was the sealing of the Abrahamic covenant. Even the heathen round about witnessed it, for the

king of Sodom and others were there present, as representatives of those who should be BLESSED thereby. Here was an exchange between heaven and earth and the mighty God interposed Himself. He could swear by no greater, so He swore by Himself. Because the promise was also given to Abraham's seed, or the Christ, God also swore to him. In the ancient custom of cutting the covenant, the flesh of each party concerned was cut and their blood mingled. They then became blood brothers. Thus the covenant could never be broken.

Have you not wondered why Melchizedek gave bread and wine to Abraham as he returned from the slaughter of the kings? I can assure you, precious friend of mine, that it was far more than a mere physical refreshment! What is so significant about Melchizedek bringing forth bread and wine? Note well - he could not bring it forth if he did not possess it! Of what, then, does the bread and wine speak? Since Melchizedek came out from the celestial, incorruptible realm, there can be no doubt that this was a bread and wine come down from heaven! You well know that Christ gave the wine to His disciples, along with the bread, and He said that the bread was His body and the wine was His blood. Thus bread and wine refer to body and blood - the ELEMENTS THAT CONFIRM THE COVENANT! Therefore the bread of the Lord's body was first given, and then the blood. It is the cutting or breaking of the body that renders the blood. And in this way the covenant is confirmed by blood. Some have asserted that Melchizedek brought forth the "emblems" of sacrifice as the church world today partakes of bread and wine as emblems of Christ's death. But the meaning goes further than mere emblems. This was a BLOOD COVENANT between God and Abraham, between God and "the seed" of Abraham - which seed YOU ARE!

Someone may object, "At that time God had no blood, not having yet come in the flesh. But I would draw your attention to a magnificent statement in Rev. 13:8 wherein we read of "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." A better rendering would be, "The Lamb that was put to death from the founding of the cosmos." Now I would like to quote this from Weymouth's translation, "All the inhabitants of the earth will be found worshipping him (that is, the Beast); every one whose name is not recorded in the book of Life - the book of the Lamb offered in sacrifice from the creation of the world." The sacrifice and death of the Lamb of God did not start with the events surrounding Calvary; it began away back there in the beginning, and culminated on Calvary. He was the Lamb who was put to death FROM THE BEGINNING.

Ah, Melchizedek WAS HIMSELF THAT LAMB whose offering was already a glorious and eternal reality in the heavens, remaining only to cast its shadow upon the earth, on Golgotha's hill. And there was blood, pure blood, incorruptible blood, divine blood, the very blood of God Himself. Then and there the covenant of God to bless all the nations and families of earth was ratified through the bread and wine brought forth by Melchizedek from the celestial realm, the celestial flesh and the heavenly blood of God, that he offered and gave to Abraham. It is my deep conviction that these two partook of that which Melchizedek brought forth. They broke the bread of the body of the Christ, and drank the wine of the blood of the Christ, as Jesus does with us now in the power of the Kingdom of God. Thus, Abraham and Melchizedek and all the nations and families of the earth represented by Abraham, were bound together in a covenant that could not be broken. There God set the Melchizedekian Priesthood over His covenant with Abraham. This priesthood was so installed at that mysterious meeting on the road. Some of the most marvelous things and most significant and lasting have taken place in little out of the way places in this world. Few were there to witness, but the covenant made with

Abraham was sealed in this action and the priesthood after the Order of Melchizedek was appointed to watch over the covenant. So naturally, when Jesus came, bringing to light the priesthood established long ago, the temporary priesthood of Aaron HAD TO GO. The Priesthood of Melchizedek had a PRIOR CLAIM on Israel and all humanity. The new priesthood being revealed, the old law must go also, because this new High Priest was to bring in a better covenant with better promises.

The new covenant which we as sons of God enjoy is in truth the extension, fulfillment, or completion of the covenant that God made with father Abraham. That is why when this new priest appeared the law had to be changed. The Abrahamic covenant was four hundred and thirty years before the old covenant of the law was given through Moses to the children of Israel. The covenant God made with Abraham was a covenant of faith, not works, and that covenant is fulfilled today in the house of sons over whom Jesus Christ is set as Lord and Master. That is why we who are of the faith of Abraham, and circumcised in mind and heart, joined as members of the body of the Christ, are called "THE SEED of Abraham." The bread and wine that Melchizedek served Abraham was the communion of this wonderful covenant. None ever again partook of the power of this covenant until that blessed night in which Jesus told His disciples, "Take, eat: this is My body...this is My blood of the New Testament (Covenant) which is shed for many" (Mk. 14:22-24). These wondering disciples were the first recipients of the life of this covenant since Melchizedek met Abraham on the road.

You see, dear ones, the principle is this: "EVERY High Priest is appointed to OFFER both gifts and sacrifices: wherefore it is necessary that this High Priest also HAVE SOMEWHAT TO OFFER" (Heb. 8:3). Not alone Aaron, not alone Jesus, but MELCHIZEDEK ALSO MUST HAVE SOMETHING TO O-F-F-E-R! Melchizedek, when he came to Abraham brought sacrifices, and what did he bring? He brought bread and wine. These were the two sacrifices of the priesthood of Melchizedek. And the law of first mention teaches us that those are the sacrifices of THE WHOLE ORDER OF MELCHIZEDEK. He came to Abraham with bread and with wine. So, therefore, the one who follows in the steps of Melchizedek must bring forth the same offerings - the offerings of bread and wine. What do we see, therefore, in the New Testament? In the last supper Jesus brought forth bread and wine and said, "This is My body and My blood of the new covenant." Why? BECAUSE HE IS A PRIEST AFTER THE ORDER OF MELCHIZEDEK! It is the High Priestly ministry of the Order of Melchizedek to give bread and wine, the body and the blood, the Word and the Spirit of Jesus Christ! At the last supper the High Priest was presenting the two offerings of the Melchizedek Priesthood and He proclaimed, "Now I am going to fulfill these two offerings in My body and in My blood."

All the members of the Melchizedek Priesthood will be MINISTERS OF BREAD AND WINE, that is, ministers of the Living Word and Quickening Spirit of the Most High God. Learn this, my precious brother, sister, and you will comprehend a great mystery: Melchizedek and Jesus brought forth bread and wine, and those of that Priesthood will do likewise. They will bring it forth - because they are possessors thereof.

There is a most enlightening statement in I Cor. 10:16-17. "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? FOR WE BEING MANY ARE ONE BREAD, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread." The key to this verse is the word COMMUNION. The Greek word means SHARING TOGETHER, PARTICIPATION,

PARTNERSHIP. This then indicates that the COMMUNION of the body and blood of our Lord is more than a mere mental, physical, or emotional sharing. If body and blood is SUBSTANCE and REAL, then it means a sharing of HIS BODY AND HIS BLOOD, of His celestial flesh and His heavenly life. It means a flowing of His very BEING into us and back into Him, circulating back and forth between us. Therefore the COMMUNION of His body and blood would be the sharing together of His redeemed body and glorified life, and is this not what creation is waiting for?

And is not this the bread of which Jesus spoke, "This is the bread which came down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof and NOT DIE. I am the LIVING BREAD which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever; and the bread that I will give is MY FLESH, which I shall give for the life of the whole world...verily, verily, I say unto you, except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink His blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. For My flesh is meat indeed and My blood is drink indeed. He that eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood DWELLETH IN ME AND I IN HIM. As the living Father hath sent Me, and I live by the Father, so he that eateth Me, even he shall live by Me. This is that bread which came down from heaven; not as your fathers did eat manna and are dead; he that eateth of this bread shall live forever" (Jn. 6:50-58). Our hearts cry out, "Lord, evermore give us this bread!"

As a friend has so eloquently expressed, "Oh, that we might SEE THE SON and eat of Him that we might enter into the promise of everlasting life - the power by which Jesus Christ was made a priest forever after the Order of Melchizedek. It is this same life, this same power, this same qualification for priesthood that He offers in these words: 'Labor not for the meat that perishes but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall GIVE unto you, for Him hath the Father sealed' (Jn. 6:27) 'To him that overcometh,' the Lord said, 'will I GIVE to eat of the HIDDEN MANNA...' (Rev. 2:16). HIDDEN MANNA - that LIVING BREAD, that GLORIFIED FLESH, that came down from heaven - this is the GIFT OF GOD to the overcomer.

"The scene of this encounter between Melchizedek and the father of our faith is the climax of victory for Abraham. He had pursued the kings of the dale with only a handful of men, had fought the battle, and had rescued all that was his from the hand of the enemy. In him, then, is set forth a perfect picture of the overcomer to whom is promised the hidden manna. The kings, of course, speak to us of those dominions that rule us - whatever is king, whatever is god or an enslaver in our lives - whether it be the lusts of the flesh, the pride of life, the principalities and powers in heavenly places - whatever the overcomer-to-be must wrestle against to deliver all that pertains to himself from the yoke of bondage. That he fought 'not by might nor by power, but by the Spirit of the Lord' is clearly manifested in both the comparative smallness of his army and the words of Melchizedek himself when he said, 'The Most High God...hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand.' Hallelujah! It was only after Abram had waged warfare in the strength of God's Spirit and was returning victorious that the glorious king of Salem, Melchizedek, brought forth to Abraham that 'bread and wine' of which Jesus spoke saying, 'Except ye eat My flesh and drink My blood, you have no life in you.'

"For Abraham the time had come: UNION through COMMUNION at the table of the Lord! He was, in that act, entering into the glories of the Melchizedek Priesthood, as it were, eating the flesh and drinking the blood of the great High-Priest sacrifice, becoming one with Him who is made 'after the power of an endless life.' In the eating of that flesh and

blood, Abram entered into the Holiest of All 'through the veil, that is to say, HIS FLESH' and, in a figure, took his place in the glorified body of Christ" - end quote.

It has been said that we become what we eat. Truly, as we eat of Him, we are transformed into what He is. Can we not now understand the words of the apostle, "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the COMMUNION of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the COMMUNION of the body of Christ? FOR WE BEING MANY ARE ONE BREAD ...FOR WE ARE ALL PARTAKERS OF THAT ONE BREAD" (I Cor. 10:16-17). This has nothing whatever to do with eating crackers and drinking grape juice at church on Sunday morning, for it was the OLD COVENANT that stood in "meats and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances imposed on them UNTIL the time of reformation" (Heb. 9:10). In celebrating and FULFILLING the Old Testament feast of Passover Jesus said, "I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, UNTIL THAT DAY when I drink it NEW (changed, in the new covenant, spiritually) W-I-T-H Y-O-U IN MY FATHER'S KINGDOM" (Mat. 26:29). The Amplified Bible says, "I say to you, I shall not drink again of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it with you NEW AND OF SUPERIOR QUALITY in My Father's Kingdom." And Moffatt translates, "I tell you, after this I will never drink this produce of the vine, till the day I drink it NEW with you in the REALM OF MY FATHER." Luke records it thus, "I will not anymore eat thereof, until it be FULFILLED IN THE KINGDOM OF GOD" (Lk. 22:16). And Paul says, "Who...HATH translated us INTO THE KINGDOM OF HIS DEAR SON" (Col. 1:13). The Amplified Bible states, "The Father has delivered and drawn us to Himself out of the control and the dominion of darkness and has transferred us into the Kingdom of the Son of His love." And remember, beloved, "The Kingdom of God is N-O-T MEAT AND DRINK; but righteousness, and peace, and joy IN THE HOLY GHOST" (Rom. 14:17).

That the bread and wine of this NEW COVENANT COMMUNION are not physical, natural bread and wine is clear from Paul's teaching in I Cor. 10:16-17, "The cup of blessing which WE BLESS, is it not the COMMUNION OF THE BLOOD OF CHRIST? The bread which WE BREAK, is it not the COMMUNION OF THE BODY OF CHRIST? For WE being many ARE (the) ONE BREAD...for we are all partakers of THAT ONE BREAD." Jesus said, "I AM the bread that is come down from heaven." As we partake of HIM, not Him in a wafer, but Him in spirit and in truth, by the power of the Holy Ghost, we eat of that bread and become that one bread. As HE IS BROKEN among us, as His life is shared, and His Word communicated from member to member, we are partakers of that one bread. The cup most churches bless is the cup of grape juice or wine from the local supermarket. The bread which the vast majority of preachers bless is the bread from the bakery. But the cup which WE BLESS I-S the communion of THE BLOOD OF CHRIST, and the bread which WE BLESS I-S the communion of THE BODY OF CHRIST, and WE ARE that bread, and HIS LIFE WITHIN I-S that blood, praise His name! We do not bless the cup of the old covenant, which stood in meats and drinks; we bless the cup of the new covenant which is NEW IN THE KINGDOM OF GOD.

Here is the most scriptural Communion Service in the universe: "Behold, I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear My voice, and open the door, I WILL COME INTO HIM, AND WILL SUP WITH HIM, AND HE WITH ME" (Rev. 3:20). It is my deep conviction that it is utterly impossible to eat or drink Christ with my physical mouth, therefore, I MUST eat and drink of Him in the same spirit in which He spoke when He said to the Samaritan woman, "I have water to drink, which if a man drink of it, he will never thirst again." And she wondered how He could draw such water without a bucket! And today

after two thousand years the churches are no further along in their spiritual understanding than was this poor ignorant woman of Samaria!

For centuries now Christians have been "taking communion" believing they were eating the flesh and drinking the blood of Christ. They were seeing the type, but missing the anti-type. The Scripture testifies, "And the WORD was MADE FLESH and dwelt among us, and we beheld HIS glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth" (Jn. 1:14). The eternal, living, incorruptible WORD OF GOD was MADE FLESH in the Person of Jesus Christ. The flesh of Christ is not the human body of Jesus, nor is it crackers or holy wafers; the flesh of Christ is the BREAD OF GOD, the TREE OF LIFE, the LIVING WORD OF GOD that came down from heaven, of which if a man partake HE SHALL LIVE FOREVER.

Jesus Christ is the Word of God. Just as the Word was made flesh, so His flesh IS THE WORD. The bread is His body. Not the body of Bethlehem, but the glorious body of incorruption. The breaking of the bread is the BREAKING OF HIS WORD, the incorruptible Word of God that liveth and abideth forever. When He broke that Word to the travelers on the road to Emmaus, their eyes were opened and they KNEW HIM. When Christ breaks the bread, the Word of God, our eyes are opened and we BEHOLD HIM and transformation into His image begins. The wine, Jesus said, was His blood, shed for the remission of sins. His blood, beloved friend, is ETERNAL LIFE, the BLOOD OF GOD, and those who drink of His blood which is His Spirit drink deeply of eternal life.

It is interesting to note that the statement of Jesus wherein He says, "I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father's Kingdom," is repeated in Mk. 14:25 and Lk. 22:18. With three references to it, it must be very important. Three is the number of REVELATION, so there must be a deep truth to be unfolded. The unusual word in this verse is FRUIT, which in the original is not the word commonly used for fruit. It is the Greek word GENNEMA meaning literally GENERATION. Our Lord would no longer drink of that generation of which He was a part, of the natural, He would no longer partake of those things on the carnal plane, the earth realm, but the greater and more glorious DAY was dawning when He would drink the wine NEW WITH US in the Realm of His Father - the SPIRIT REALM. In other words, there is a drinking together of HIS GENERATION which is a NEW drinking, a NEW wine, a NEW dimension of life, a NEW spirit, a NEW blood, IN THE KINGDOM! It is a sharing of His blood and ours, a drinking together anew. We are already in that Kingdom, praise God, and so do we eat and drink, and it is now time for those of the Melchizedek Priesthood to bring forth bread and wine! All creation is hungering and thirsting for REALITY, and the voice of Jesus comes upon the wings of the Spirit saying, "Give ye them to eat."

What does it mean to you, my brother, when Jesus says, "I will not drink henceforth of this FRUIT OF THE VINE, until the day I drink it NEW W-I-T-H Y-O-U in My Father's Kingdom"? The fruit, of course, is His life, the vine refers to Christ, whereas the branches refer to us. "I am the vine, ye are the branches: he that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit" (Jn. 15:5). It is the branches that bring forth the fruit of the vine. In Judges 9:13 the vine is pictured as speaking, asking, "Should I leave my new wine, which cheereth God and man, and go to be promoted over the trees?" In one sense these words depict the sacrificing Christ who has sacrificed everything of Himself. But this is not the main point. The primary significance is that out of His sacrifice He produced something to cheer both God and man - NEW WINE.

Have you had such an experience of Christ? Betimes under the Lord's sovereign dealings we are put into a particular situation in which we must sacrifice ourselves to make others happy and the Lord happy. When in this situation we are brought to draw upon the Lord, it is then that we experience Him as the wine-producing vine; and as branches we become the producer of something out of our union with Him that gives cheer to God and cheer to others. Out of this experience we become in a practical way the branches; we become the producer of that which cheers and blesses both God and man. Ah, there are infinite resources IN HIM to meet every need of sorrowing humanity. Christ is so rich! He is the one who produces glory for God and glory for man. We are experiencing Christ as the great wine-producer. This is the mark of the priests after the Order of Melchizedek - they bring forth bread and wine! And God is blessed, and man is refreshed, for through these sons all the nations and families of the earth SHALL BE BLESSED. The Levitical priesthood calling was to minister unto man "that he might offer both gifts and sacrifices." The Levitical priesthood, however, offered up DEAD things in order to please God and bless man. But the Melchizedek Order brings forth the LIVING BREAD of the Word of God and the NEW WINE of the incorruptible life of God.

What must be done to the grapes to make them wine? They must be pressed. To please God and bless men we must be pressed. We rejoice to learn that Christ is the vine and we the branches bearing the exquisite fruit of His glorious nature and victorious life. Our ransomed souls shout, Hallelujah! Glory to God! But do not say Hallelujah too quickly, precious one, for immediately following the maturity of the vintage comes the pressing. The grapes must be pressed that there come the OUTFLOW of His life to bless God and quicken man. You, too, must be pressed! The more you drink the wine of Christ, the more you will realize that you must be pressed. You must be broken in order to produce something in the house of the Lord that will flow out in blessing to God and creation.

There is a deep spiritual meaning here, and that is the description of the process through which the precious manifestation of HIS LIFE WITHIN is brought forth. It is through many hard things, through much bruising and bringing down, that this costly wine of His nature is made and perfected for our God. If we would offer the vintage of this eternal fruit, we must pass through HIS PROCESSINGS which alone can bring forth the outflow of Himself. The life giving fountain of the precious blood of Christ was wondrously opened in the agony of the cross, and so shall it be with all those blessed souls who follow the Lamb whithersoever He goes. There will be the pressure and bruising that come from the people about us. There will be the purifying pressure that Father's hand brings as He chastens and brings us low. It is the trampling and crushing that presses out life itself which brings forth the sweet wine of the grape. When wine is made from any fruit, it requires large quantities of the fruit to make a small quantity of juice. So it is with the wine of the grape. All the fiber and hard particles must be removed, so that only the pure juice remains, symbolizing the purity of His life that is unmixed with any fleshly attitude or action; or with any pride because of the work that the Spirit has wrought upon us; or with any other adulteration.

Melchizedek and Jesus brought forth bread and wine, and those of that Priesthood will do likewise. The Melchizedek ministry is not one of judgment and condemnation, but one of grace, mercy, compassion, light, love and life. Sunday after Sunday in the pulpits and on radio and television we hear the preachers ranting and raving about doom, destruction, judgment and damnation. Seems the preachers are of the twisted opinion that men will not turn to Christ unless they are hung over the flames of hell, or moved by some hair-raising, spine-tingling story that it is someone's "last chance" and unless they get right

with God something awful is going to happen to them, perchance before they can get home! They will freely cast billions into some form of eternal torment and everlasting separation from God, while they hopefully will have a few go to heaven - to that beautiful "Isle of Somewhere." Too often the Sunday night evangelistic sermon concerns threatening world events portending imminent catastrophe, with dire predictions about what the Russians are going to do, or the Illuminate, or our own government, or the Antichrist, or someone else. I do not hesitate to tell you that all such preaching is a soulish attempt to SCARE people into the Kingdom of God. They claim to preach a full gospel, but their message is not even one percent GOOD NEWS. The gospel means "Good News," it means "Glad Tidings" of deliverance and emancipation unto all men, not horrible tidings of shame and vengeance and failure and eternal defeat.

Thank God! He is raising up a priesthood - a company of SAVIOURS - and these shall bring forth bread and wine. A table shall be set, laden with the rich bounties of His grace and glory. How different is this glorious priesthood from the ministries of Babylon's religious systems! The ministers of Babylon come threatening and frightening, spewing forth dark clouds of vengeance and damnation. But this priesthood comes with but one weapon: Love. A foolish and faithless church today would wreck eternal vengeance on all who do not see eye to eye with them in their folly, to consign to unending torment and torture all who have rejected a gospel which they could not accept because their eyes were blinded by the god of this world and no one thought enough of them to claim them through grace to life everlasting.

Why cannot men cease their ignorant prattlings and learn once and for all that "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, NOT IMPUTING THEIR TRESPASSES UNTO THEM" (II Cor. 2:9). It is high time for all men to learn that Jesus Christ is "the Saviour of THE W-O-R-L-D" (Jn. 4:42), not its destroyer. And it is high time for all men to learn that He arose victor over every foe, that He came to redeem the whole world, and will accomplish all that He purposed to do. "The Lord of the W-H-O-L-E E-A-R-T-H shall He be called" (Isa. 54:5; Mic. 4:13; Zech. 4:14). It is time for all men to begin to believe the Word of God and to cease from following their own shameful delusions. "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, WILL DRAW A-L-L M-E-N unto Me" (Jn. 12:32). How creation groans for these deliverers - the manifested sons of God! We would minister HIS LIFE, bread and wine, from the celestial realm, that all may be refreshed, healed, quickened and transformed. God will grant it. May God hasten it!

Chapter 30

The Melchizedek Connection

(continued)

"For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the Most High God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings, and BLESSED HIM; to whom also Abraham GAVE A TENTH PART OF ALL; first being by interpretation King of righteousness, and after that also King of Salem, which is King of peace" (Heb. 7:1-2).

All scriptural truth is great and precious. No costly gem of earth can compare its value to the precious worth of truth. From the vast storehouse of truth contained within the holy scriptures there shines forth with dazzling brilliance two wonderful revelatory actions in the brief passage quoted above. First, there is the blessing and second, the tithe. How these two have been reversed in our thinking! It has been inscribed in endless volumes, preached on innumerable radio and television programs, and shouted from the pulpits everywhere that the tithing comes first and the blessing comes second. Of course, the scripture quoted most often in support of that teaching is Mal. 3:8-10 wherein God said to Old Testament Israel, "Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed Me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed Thee? In tithes and offerings. Ye are cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed Me, even this whole nation. Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove Me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it."

The Bible does indeed teach that God blesses us as we give to Him. There are laws at work that God has built into the universe: that God will not be placed into the debt of any man; that no one can outgive God; that he that sows, reaps. Those laws in the spiritual world, as in the physical world, are based upon faith. It is an act of faith in the law of the harvest which a farmer exercises every spring when he takes perfectly good corn that could be made into perfectly good bread to feed his family, and throws it away into the dirt. He does that because he knows that he is not throwing it away; he is sowing it and he will reap a harvest. The Bible repeatedly makes reference to these laws, that in obedience to God we will be blessed.

When we come to the Melchizedek Priesthood, however, the order is reversed. Notice with intense consideration the inspired words of Moses, "For this Melchizedek...priest of the Most High God...met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings, and BLESSED HIM; to whom also Abraham GAVE A TENTH PART OF ALL." Can we not see by this that the blessing precedes the tithing in the Order of Melchizedek? The law of tithing had not been given to Abraham or his seed when Abraham met Melchizedek, for there was not as yet an Israel of God in the world. The priesthood of Aaron would not be established until hundreds of years thence. Abraham had absolutely no comprehension of the God who would envelop Himself in a thick cloud amidst the thunderings and lightnings of the fiery Mount Sinai, a sight so terrible that Moses cried, "I exceedingly fear

and quake." Who could endure the sight of that devouring fire, which was the apt expression of divine holiness? "The Lord came from Sinai, and rose up from Seir unto them; He shined forth from Paran, and He came with ten thousand of His saints; from His right hand went a FIERY LAW for them" (Deut. 33:2). The term "fiery," as applied to the law, is expressive of its holiness, "Our God is a consuming fire" - perfectly intolerant of evil, in thought, word, and deed.

As the heavens are higher than the earth, so is the Melchizedek priesthood higher than the priesthood of Aaron. The Aaronic priesthood administered the LAW, whereas the priesthood of Melchizedek ministered BLESSING. You will nowhere find an account in the scriptures of Melchizedek being anything but a Blessor. He blessed Abraham and he blessed the Most High God. Let it be understood, a blessing cannot be given in reality until the one giving it is a Blessor indeed. Melchizedek had nothing whatever to do with the law - he was not a judge, he was not a magistrate, he was not a curser, he was not a destroyer - instead he was a king and a priest who lived in the realm of blessing and from thence became a blessing to those he ministered to. There is a cosmic law that declares that one must be blessed before he can be a Blessor. Consider what Heb. 7:6-7 says, "But he whose descent is not counted from them (Levi)...blessed him that had the promises. And without all contradiction the less is blessed of the better."

Melchizedek did not bless just anyone, but he blessed him that had the PROMISES. How great were the promises given to Abraham! There were seven great and wonderful promises given to Abraham, enumerated in Gen. 12:2-3. The first was, "I will make of thee a great nation." The second was, "I will bless thee." The third was, "I will make thy name great." The word name carries with it the idea of honor, authority, and the character of the individual. God was saying to Abraham that he would make his honor to be great; his authority was to be great and even his character great. I will make thy name to be great. The fourth promise was, "Thou shalt be a blessing." The fifth was, "And I will bless them that bless thee." The sixth, "I will curse him that curseth thee." Then the seventh was, "In thee shall ALL FAMILIES OF THE EARTH BE BLESSED." Not the families of Israel, nor the families of the Church, but ALL FAMILIES OF THE EARTH. In these precious promises God caused Abraham to understand that he was the beginning of something that was to be WORLD WIDE and not some insignificant local affair.

God promised Abraham that He would bless him. And when Melchizedek came out of the celestial realm that day, HE BLESSED ABRAHAM. Then the Lord said, "Thou shalt BE a blessing...in thee shall ALL families of the earth BE BLESSED." Ah - he was blessed...TO BE A BLESSING! With reverence and godly respect I now tell you that you, dear reader of these lines, are included in these wonderful promises. "Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds as to many; BUT AS OF ONE, and to thy seed, WHICH IS CHRIST" (Gal. 3:16). God made this covenant, even this promise, with TWO PEOPLE only. With Abraham and with His own Son, Jesus the Christ. With Abraham and his singular seed - WHICH IS CHRIST. God not only made this covenant with a man, Abraham, but He made it with HIS OWN SON. God had a witness in earth and a witness in heaven that He had made a covenant that through Abraham and His Son, would every nation and family be blessed and it was confirmed with an oath so that it could never fail.

"And if ye be Christ's, THEN ARE YE ABRAHAM'S SEED AND HEIRS ACCORDING TO THE PROMISE" (Gal. 3:29). Can we comprehend this? We today, now, are heirs according to that marvelous promise God gave to Abraham and the Christ. We are heirs

of every one of those seven conditions that God gave to Abraham. We can take them all individually and apply them to ourselves and to the whole body of the Christ. To Abraham God promised a seed which would come to bless the whole earth, a seed through whom each and every person ever to see the light of day would be blessed and delivered. We see that seed begin in the preparation of a nation chosen and separated unto Himself. Long centuries afterward we behold Jesus of Nazareth, anointed with the Holy Ghost and with power, walking the length and breadth of that favored nation showing forth among its people the wondrous glory of His Father. God's holy word declares Him to be the direct seed of Abraham according to the flesh, but the Son of God with power. Truly He was the promised seed, the seed of Abraham and the anointed Son of God, "thy seed which is Christ." To Paul the revelation was given to reveal how we, the redeemed of this age, are MEMBERS IN PARTICULAR OF CHRIST, so that we are the CHRIST BODY as Jesus is the CHRIST HEAD, that the Head and body together, indwelt by one Spirit, are ONE CHRIST, the temple of the Lord and the habitation of God. "For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: SO ALSO I-S C-H-R-I-S-T" (I Cor. 12:12). It is through this corporate, many-membered Christ that the promises to Abraham and his seed shall be gloriously fulfilled and all families and nations of the earth shall be blessed.

"Even as Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him for righteousness. Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham. And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen (nations) through faith, PREACHED BEFORE THE GOSPEL UNTO ABRAHAM, saying, IN THEE SHALL ALL NATIONS BE BLESSED" (Gal. 3:6-8). In this passage we see that God one day did some preaching. The almighty God with infinite care and wisdom laid the plans for the magnificent work He would do through Abraham and his seed. Then He told Abraham to attend a preaching service He was going to hold. Abraham was the congregation. It makes no difference where the service was to be held. God was the preacher and it would have been very wonderful to have been in the service. As God began to preach, He brought forth the Gospel or the GOOD NEWS and it was this: ALL NATIONS were to be blessed in Abraham.

All the nations of earth are to be blessed. Certainly they have all been kissed by God's wonderful sunshine and have drunk of the refreshing rain from heaven, but that is not what God is here speaking of. He is pointing to a great manifestation of God that has not occurred - a time when God will speak to all, reveal Himself to all, deliver all and bless all. A great and mighty move of God shall come in the earth that few men have even dreamed of when the younger sons of God, the CHRIST BODY, in union with their glorious Head are manifested in the fullness of the wisdom, glory and power of God, at which time the whole creation will be lifted from the bondage and night of corruption into the glorious freedom of the children of God (Rom. 8:18-23). What an exceeding great responsibility is laid upon us in the promises to Abraham which we share!

Notice how many times the words "bless," "blessed," and "blessing" occur in God's promises to Abraham. Small wonder that when Melchizedek came he BLESSED him that had the promises! And he was blessed to be a blessing. He was blessed to become a Blessor. And so are we. "SO THEN they which be of faith ARE BLESSED with faithful Abraham" (Gal. 3:7). It isn't alone Abraham who is blessed, but we also who are of faith are blessed with him. THE VERY SAME BLESSING WITH WHICH MELCHIZEDEK BLESSED ABRAHAM HAS NOW COME UPON US. Oh! the wonder of it. That blessing is that God through us who ARE BLESSED W-I-L-L B-L-E-S-S ALL FAMILIES

AND NATIONS OF THE EARTH. No matter who we are, great or small, if we are of faith, we are blessed with faithful Abraham - blessed TO BE A BLESSING. How wonderful are these things! They are far beyond our expression or the ability of the most eloquent to describe!

A millennium after God blessed Abraham to make him a blessing the word of the Lord came to the remnant of Abraham's seed proclaiming, "And it shall come to pass, that as ye were a curse among the heathen, O house of Judah, and house of Israel; so will I save you, and YE SHALL BE A BLESSING: fear not, but let your hands be strong" (Zech. 8:13). Let us notice this statement: "Ye shall be a blessing." How important punctuation is! Should someone put a question mark behind this statement it would read, "Ye shall be a blessing?" And looking at ourselves, none of us are very important people in this present world system, we're just common, ordinary, mostly uneducated people; laborers, plumbers, farmers, electricians, mill workers, office workers, housewives, barbers, mechanics, etc. The great ones of this world would look askance at us and incredulously query, "YE shall be a blessing?" But we know from the Lord Almighty that as we follow on to know the Lord we SHALL be a blessing, indeed. So we put an exclamation mark at the end of the sentence, not a question mark. "Y-E SHALL BE A BLESSING!" I am sure that all of the Lord's elect, those who press forward toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus, cherish the Precious Promise that we are called to be a part of that seed which shall bless all the families and nations of the earth. As we daily view the desperate needs about us, of friends and family, of the sinful, sorrowing, needy, sick and dying, oh! how we WANT to be a blessing! To be a blessing - what a promise that is! What hope is contained therein But you don't just walk up to a person and announce, "I'm your Blessor." We need to first BECOME. We must BE. To BE bespeaks a state of being. God is teaching us, preparing us, training us to BE Blessors indeed.

This preparation takes place here, now, in our daily walk with God. We need training, we must acquire certain skills, and betimes the preparation brings suffering, so that we might be merciful high priests. If anyone could have been a Blessor without any training it would have been our Lord Jesus Christ. But we find that "though He were a Son, yet learned He obedience through the things which He suffered; and being made perfect, He became the author of eternal salvation unto all that obey Him; called of God an High Priest after the Order of Melchizedek. For it became Him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings" (Heb. 5:8-10; 2:10). Ah, it does not stand to reason that an untrained, uninstructed, undeveloped, untested, immature people will be used by God to bless and lift and transform all the families and nations of the earth.

Out of the crucible of crisis and the furnace of affliction God is raising up in the earth a BLESSING COMPANY. These have received a word from the Lord as did the prophet of old, "God is not a man, that He should lie; neither the son of man, that He should repent: hath He not said, and shall He not do it? or hath He spoken, and shall He not make it good? Behold, I HAVE RECEIVED COMMANDMENT TO BLESS: and He hath blessed; and I cannot reverse it" (Num. 23:19-20). As one has written, "There is a principle which becomes one of the foundational workings in our process of BECOMING, as found in the verse, 'Judge not, and ye shall not be judged: condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned: forgive, and ye shall be forgiven. Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again' (Lk. 6:37-38). Giving - and receiving again according to how we have given. This is a

principle which covers a vast area, far more than just sharing of our finances, but in all our giving expressions - projected attitudes towards others, feelings towards others, words spoken towards others, etc. so that we are reminded again, 'blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.' 'Bless those who persecute you - who are cruel in their attitude toward you; bless and do not curse them' (Rom. 12:14, Amplified). God has His servants for every task, and will place a sword in the hand of the slayer, and those who shall purge the earth of its corruption. Justice will be established in the earth, and righteousness shall be the foundation of His kingdom. They will 'execute the judgments written,' with 'vengeance upon the heathen, and punishments upon the people' (Ps. 149:7,9). But the Lord will also have those vessels of mercy, which intercede with the prayer, 'O Lord...in wrath remember mercy' (Hab. 3:2), for they would BLESS the nations" - Gospel Echoes.

The Order of Melchizedek is an ORDER OF BLESSERS, no cursings, no negation to be uttered, no vindictiveness, no judgment, but there is a ministry of blessing. This is far more than a doctrine to be received or a formula of words to repeat, this is an expression of love and compassion that flows from our spirit toward others until all the families and nations of the earth have been touched and healed and quickened by His all-conquering love.

I must mention again the principle of the Melchizedek Priesthood and the seed of Abraham in respect to blessing. Melchizedek blessed Abraham. God had said to Abraham, "I will bless thee...and thou shalt be a blessing...in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed." First Abraham was blessed, and then he could become a blessing. Blessed to BE A BLESSING. Oh! may God somehow burn this truth indelibly into our hearts. But there is also the realm wherein men bless in order to be blessed, giving and receiving again according to how they have given. "Give, and it shall BE GIVEN UNTO YOU." "Blessed are the merciful, for THEY SHALL OBTAIN MERCY." "Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are "hereunto called, that ye should INHERIT A BLESSING." This is all true, but when the Holy Spirit begins to reveal the higher Order of Melchizedek within your spirit, my brother, a vast transforming change commences to take place in your understanding. Gone forever is the desire to give in order to receive, to be merciful so that in some future time you might receive mercy, or to bless with a view to being blessed. Henceforth we begin to see things as God sees them and from this high and holy vista our purified desire becomes only to BE BLESSED that we may BE A BLESSING. In the Order of Melchizedek ALL THINGS ARE REVERSED. Truly there is a changing, a reversing of all things in the New Order which is being birthed in the sons of God. Our old ideas, teachings, conceptions, doctrines, methods, and desires are being upset and overthrown, and our old theology acquired in the religious systems of Babylon is fast flying out the window. As the Spirit of the Lord quickens the yielded minds of those who wait before Him in this hour, the elect is being led into new paths and the divine order of the Most High. So fear not, beloved child of God, to let go of the teachings of yesteryear, for those were but the swaddling clothes of your BECOMING in God. God's apprehended ones are now moving into a dimension where there are higher laws, higher understanding, higher reality. It must be remembered that every dimension functions by laws of its own, and so it is with the Melchizedekian Order. The first order of this sacred realm is BLESSING.

A work of transformation is taking place in the mind. God is not dealing in this hour with the outward manifestation, but He is probing deep into our being, to change the attitudes, thoughts and desires of mind and heart. Thank God, He is stripping away the

masquerades, purging and purifying, that we might be conformed to His image, changed into His mind, a partaker of His nature. We are challenged with our own development unto spiritual maturity, and therefore we have received a commandment to bless - not that we might receive anything in return - for we cannot truly bless another until it proceeds unselfishly and unmixed out of a pure heart - a genuine desire that they be blessed. Oh for that purity of spirit, that complete deliverance from the "seed-faith" mentality being peddled by the money-hungry preachers of this evil day that continually urges the people to GIVE in order to GET and to BLESS with the motive of BEING BLESSED a hundred-fold in return. May the blazing heat of God's holy fire so transform our minds and hearts until every action can be thoroughly WITHOUT GUILE, no ulterior motive for whatever this might turn to our own welfare again.

I do not hesitate to tell you that giving to receive again, planting with a vision to reaping a harvest, is a true principle in God - but it is the law of a plane beneath the Order of Melchizedek. Increase is the law of the realm of limitation, of want, the in-part reaching forth to acquire more. But the priesthood of Melchizedek is of the realm of the unlimited, of His fullness, of an endless or indissoluble life. The priests of this order minister not from a sense of THEIR NEED, but out of the consciousness of HIS FULLNESS. This transformation of mind and attitude must take place in every son of God. These sons shall not do the will of their heavenly Father in the childish hope that He will REWARD them for it; but such lift up their voices in one accord with the blessed firstborn Son, saying, "Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me, I D-E-L-I-G-H-T TO DO THY WILL, O my God: yea, Thy law is written within my heart" (Ps. 40.7-8).

TAKING TITHES OR RECEIVING TITHES

Immediately upon receiving the blessing Abraham gave tithes of all to Melchizedek. This is the first mention of tithes in the scriptures. Only on one other occasion is tithing mentioned before the law of tithing was given to Israel. In Gen. 28: 20-22 Jacob vowed a vow unto the Lord at Bethel, saying, "If God will be with me, and keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, so that I come again to my Father's house in peace; then shall the Lord be my God...and of all that Thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth unto Thee." When God gave His laws to Israel through Moses He established the law of tithing in the nation. Read how the priests under the Levitical order were taken care of. "And the Lord spake unto Aaron, Thou shalt have no inheritance in their land, neither shalt thou have any part among them: I am thy part and shine inheritance among the children of Israel. And, behold, I have given the children of Levi all the tenth in Israel for an inheritance, for their service which they serve, even the service of the tabernacle of the congregation. But the tithes of the children of Israel, which they offer as a heave-offering unto the Lord, I have given to the Levites to inherit: therefore I have said unto them, Among the children of Israel they shall have no inheritance" (Num. 18:20-21,24). The priests and the Levites had plenty and it was so by the law of God. God decreed that every Israelite must bring in a tithe, ten percent of all his increase so that there might be meat in the house of God; not the Tabernacle as the house particularly, but the priesthood as the house of God, that the Tabernacle and the Temple should be taken care of, and the ministry of God performed therein. Did you ever stop to think that the tribe of Levi, the priesthood, received eleven-tenths of the increase of the Israelites? They received one tenth from each of the eleven tribes, and so really they were receiving one share or one tenth more than there were tribes to receive them. Not only that, but they received portions of land and cities for their use, but not as their personal inheritance. They ministered for twenty years during their lives, from the age of

thirty until they were fifty. After that, nothing was required of them in the way of service in the Tabernacle. And God provided for them throughout their entire lives

There is a striking and important contrast between the tithing systems of the two priesthood orders revealed in Heb. 7:5-6. "Verily they that are of the sons of Levi, who receive the office of the priesthood, have a commandment to TAKE TITHES of the people according to the law, that is, of their brethren, though they come out of the loins of Abraham: but he whose descent is not counted from them RECEIVED TITHES of Abraham..." Let us notice the comparison between the two systems - the Levitical priesthood was commanded by the law to TAKE TITHES (Num. 18:26) from the people; but Melchizedek, not operating under law, having no commandment to take anything, asked for nothing, demanded nothing, took nothing, but graciously RECEIVED the tithes freely given to him by Abraham. And what a vast difference!

We are in that time when all who treasure the beautiful hope of sonship must recognize the difference between the two divergent priesthoods whose principles of operation are still in use in the earth today. There is that ministry in vogue today that literally TAKES tithes, DEMANDS tithes of the people and they feel they have a right to do so. One of the prime requirements for membership in the religious systems is your pledge to PAY TITHES into their organization. Christians are taught by the churches to PAY A TITHE; this is one of the cardinal tenets of faith. From the very beginning the new convert is instructed that if he doesn't tithe he is robbing God, he is told that to be saved is to tithe, and not to tithe is to backslide; for it is obvious that "if a man rob God" (by not giving to the preacher), he surely is a sinner of the first magnitude. The tithe is such an important item to the modern evangelist that it often takes an hour to "lift" the "offering" as by fair means or foul, he TAKES tithes of the Lord's precious people.

If the tithes cannot be extracted through the use of law, pressure, or fear tactics, many so-called ministries have stooped to the most humiliating and disgraceful fraudulence and hocus-pocus trickery to bleed the poor people who attend their extravaganzas. Some months ago a classic example of these crude methods came across my desk. There was this preacher who had a very ingenious idea on "stewardship Sunday." He had all the pews rigged with electrical wires. While asking the congregation how many would tithe, he pushed a button which sent current throughout so that all of those who were to tithe would leap to their feet. The whole congregation, of course, jumped up!

There is no shortage of men and women seeking gold and glory. The land is overflowing with them, those seeking their own gain and each staking his own claim. Within the past couple years, two of the most famous international television pulpiteers have been exposed and their vast financial holdings have been publicized. They have millions of dollars invested in their personal homes and property while they beg and plead for money from the widows and the poor. They live sumptuously while those who support their grandiose programs are living as paupers. Where are those who are true harvesters of souls rather than those who gather (harvest) money? Where are those who are building God's kingdom rather than their own? Where are those who truly feed the sheep? Where are those who are not lifted up with pride? Where are those who are not puffed up with their own importance? Where are those who do not exalt themselves? Where is the preacher who doesn't seek to ingratiate himself to the one with the expensive clothes and the luxury automobile? Where is the weeping before the altar? Where are those who refrain from using the world's methods to conduct God's business? Where are those who do not charge for the Gospel? Where are those who do not have a ministry for sale?

Where are those who have not taken unto themselves the gold and the glory? Where are those who are not displaying their flesh in their man-made promotions? Where are those of a broken and contrite spirit? Where are those with the meekness and purity of the Lamb? Where are those who have not brought the spirit of this world into their midst? Where are those who do not put their picture on every page of their magazine and their name on everything they do? Where is the simple message of the Kingdom of God without the Hollywood extravaganza and showmanship? Where is the worship in the beauty of holiness, in spirit and in truth, rather than carnal musical entertainment? Where are those who approach God with reverence and godly fear and do not treat the sacred things as though they were part of a carnival? Where are those who have laid hold of God? Where are the humble? Where are the pure in heart? Where are those who are conformed to the image of the Son of God? Where are the prayer warriors and the intercessors? Where are those who love and treat the poor, the elderly, the senile, the maimed, the feeble minded, the illiterate, the sick, the homeless, the diseased, and those in prison as their own flesh, yea, as the Lamb of God Himself? Where are those who proclaim the Gospel of the Kingdom without the slightest motive of financial reward for themselves? WHERE ARE GOD'S TRUE MEN AND WOMEN OF THE HOUR? Of this you can be certain - these will not be found within the halls of Babylon's religion - but only among God's faithful remnant who have received the call to come out of Babylon and, forsaking all, have gone unto Him, without the Camp, bearing His reproach, separated unto Him alone.

Where will those stand in the day of judgment who put a price on God's glorious blood bought Gospel? I have in my hand the account of one healing preacher who wrote thus: "When God impelled me to set a price on my instruction in healing, I could think of no financial equivalent for an impartation of a knowledge of that Divine power which heals; but I was led to name \$300.00 as the price for each pupil in one course of lessons." I tell you, preacher, God had no hand in your mercenary fee, and you are a liar. It is a lie to tell me or any one that the great God and Father in heaven told you to charge in money for what, if you were really His servant, is God's free gift, Divine healing. When Jesus sent forth His disciples, He said, "Preach the gospel, heal the sick, FREELY you have received, FREELY GIVE," and He never took that back, never! Where did you get your revelation from, preacher, to charge \$300.00 for twenty lessons on healing? Considering the multitudes that followed Jesus and the apostles, think how wealthy they could have become had the Father given them such instructions!

Religion today is BIG BUSINESS. Some of the best known "born again" Hollywood personalities, should you inquire about engaging them to give their testimony at a meeting, will send their business manager over with a contract guaranteeing them several thousands of dollars for their forty-five minute appearance. This is not ministry - it is BIG BUSINESS. The local Christian Bookstore has become quite a showcase for what is called "Christian bric-a-brac." They are crammed full of every imaginable trinket, plaque, statue and artifact that they can sell with a religious flavor. Christian music albums now cost \$8.00 to \$10.00 apiece. The country is swarming with those who call themselves Christian speakers, musicians, bands and singers who CHARGE an admission fee to their seminars and concerts. Verily, I say unto you, the ticket prices are an abomination and a stench in the nostrils of a holy God and a spike in the hand of our dear Saviour. There is no biblical or spiritual foundation whatsoever for SELLING THE WORD OF GOD - be it a Bible, a record of songs or praises to God, a sermon, book, tape, seminar, concert or any other thing.

Have today's ministers never read the wondrous invitation penned by the faithful seer of Patmos? "I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star. And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take of the water of life FREELY" (Rev. 22:16-17). Freely! Jesus, the Water of Life, hath given freely, freely, freely, freely for every man. It falls like the rain upon the evil and the just. "The Lord is good to all; and His tender mercies are over all His works." The eyes of all wait upon Him, and to good and bad alike He openeth His hand, and freely supplieth the need of every living thing. God never sells. Any church or ministry that wants to sell God's gifts must be apostate. "Freely ye received, freely give."

I have never in my life made a bargain for any spiritual service I rendered. I never received a salary, excepting for one six month period when I was among brethren who did not understand the principles of the Kingdom, and then I did not ask or bargain for anything, I accepted what they were accustomed to give until I could expound to them more perfectly the way of the Lord. Then I told the brethren to cut off the salary and let me receive only the free-will offerings that the saints would be led of the Lord to hand to us, and it was done. In years past we served as ministry to several churches, traveled as an evangelist, took our family to three foreign countries, living and laboring for a total of six years on the mission fields, and for the past ten years have devoted our full time to writing and publishing the message of the Kingdom of God, sending out from this office FREE OF CHARGE untold hundreds of thousands of articles and booklets all around the world. Never have we sent out any letter or gone to any meeting asking or begging for money for either ourselves or the work. Never in all these years have we gone hungry, or naked, or been foreclosed upon, or been stranded in any city or place, and though the expenses each month are large and increase every week, yet no bill has gone unpaid.

Many years ago I was inspired, encouraged and instructed by the testimony of that great man of prayer, George Muller. George Muller was the man of faith from the orphanages in Bristol, England who literally "prayed in" every dime and dollar for that vast work. At the end of his life he writes, "For nearly seventy years every need in connection with this work has been supplied. The orphans, from the first until now, have numbered 9,500; but they have never wanted a meal. Hundreds of times we have commenced the day without a Penny; but our Heavenly Father has sent supplies the moment they were actually required...Seven million, five hundred thousand dollars has been sent to me in answer to prayer (this was in the 1800's!)...tens of thousands of times have my prayers been answered.

"When I first began to allow God to deal with me, relying on Him, taking Him at His word, and set out fifty years ago simply relying on Him for myself, family, taxes, traveling expenses and every other need, I rested on the simple promises I found in the sixth chapter of Matthew. I believed the Word, I rested on it and practiced it. I took God at His word. A stranger, a foreigner in England, I knew seven languages and might have used them perhaps as a means of remunerative employment, but I had consecrated myself to labor for the Lord, I put my reliance in the Lord who had promised, and He has acted according to His Word. I've lacked nothing - nothing. I have had my trials and difficulties, and my purse empty, but my receipts have aggregated. I have received thousands and thousands of dollars, while the work has gone on these fifty-one years. Then, with regard to my pastoral work; for the past fifty-one years I have had great difficulties, great trials

and perplexities. There will always be difficulties, always trials. But God has sustained me out of them, and the work has gone on.

"Now, this is not, as some have said, because I am a man of great mental power, or endowed with energy, and perseverance - these are not the reasons. It is because I have confided in God; because I have sought God, and He has cared for the Institution, which, under His direction, has one hundred schools, with masters and mistresses, and other departments of which I have told you before. I do not carry the burden. And now in my sixty-seventh year, I have physical strength and mental vigor for as much work as when I was a young man in the university, studying and preparing Latin orations. I am just as vigorous as at that time. How comes this? Because in the last half-century of labor I've been able with the simplicity of a child, to rely upon God. I have had my trials, but I have laid hold upon God, and so it has come to pass that I have been sustained. It is not only permission, but positive command that He gives, to cast our burdens upon Him. Oh, let us do it! My beloved brothers and sisters in Christ, Cast thy burden upon the Lord and He shall sustain thee. Day by day I do it. This morning sixty matters in connection with the church here, I brought before the Lord, and thus it is, day by day I do it, and year by year; ten years, thirty years, forty years" - end quote.

I can add to this my own testimony. I have trusted God, but I have worked hard, harder many times than I would have worked if I had continued my business career. And we have never charged for a book, or article, or sermon, or tape, or service or any other thing we have shared with the saints. And our Father has graciously supplied every need - day by day. This is God's way, the principle of the Kingdom of God, "freely you have received, FREELY GIVE!" Oh how good it has been to publish the Gospel of the Kingdom freely! This way the poorest widow woman or the most destitute saint can receive in the same measure as those who have hundreds or thousands of dollars to contribute to the work. No matter what anyone says, the contrary is a sham and a lie, and no evidence in the world can be given to prove otherwise.

Let me ask all who charge for their ministries, books, magazines or tapes: If Christ sent you to do the work, why did He not supply its needs without you charging or begging? Why would the Lord not lay the need of His work on the hearts of the faithful if the work is of Him? Has His Word not told us that the Lord will supply all our need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus? (Phil. 4:19). If the Lord sent you to preach, to pray, to distribute literature or tapes, would He not supply your need as He did for His disciples? (Lk. 22:35). If He will not supply your need would you not be justified in closing your doors and folding up the ministry? I certainly believe so. Oh ye of little faith! That is the root of the matter. If God is going to apprehend me to do a work and then leave me to my own resources, to sell the Gospel, to put a price on the incorruptible Word of omnipotent God, to beg and plead with men to accomplish it, then there is undoubtedly something very wrong somewhere. Woe unto them that make the house of the Lord a place of merchandise! "Oh," they excuse themselves, "you can never accomplish anything for God that way. If you do not remind, coax, stimulate, inspire, entice, and prod the people to give, they will not give. If you do not impress upon them the urgency of the need and pass the offering plate before their noses, the supply will dry up. You cannot do any great work without asking for money; it is simply impossible." God's people should never be deceived by these self-appointed promoters of God's work. They are merely men without faith, with no comprehension of the power of the Kingdom of God.

Why should it be thought a thing impossible that God who heals the sick, raises the dead, and sustains the vast universe of hundreds of billions of stars and planets and suns and moons should supply the needs of His own work miraculously in response to His servant's faith? It is so great a thing that if we did not have the assurance that we have a faithful God who is able to do it, we should simply say the thing is impossible. We should say that with the Indian Chief, who said, in the early days of this country, when Brainerd, the missionary, took the Gospel to him and told him its requirements, "The thing is impossible; it cannot be done." "Yes," said Brainerd, "it can be done. You can be delivered from all your sins, and you can be meek, and humble, and lowly, and yet brave. You can cease to do evil." "I cannot," said the Chief; "it is impossible. The thing cannot be done." Walking up and down and to and fro in exceeding trouble of mind, at last the Chief stopped, and, looking at Brainerd, said, "It can be done, Missionary, if the Great Spirit will give me a new heart." "That is just it," said Brainerd. "The Great Spirit will give you a new heart. If you will ask God for Jesus' sake, the Great Spirit, the Holy Spirit, will come and give you a new heart." "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me." "Then," said the Chief, "let us ask Him"; and that was how he first began to pray. He asked the Great Spirit for a new heart, and he got it that day.

Oh! if only God's ministers would get a new heart and learn this great principle of the Kingdom of God - "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and ALL THESE THINGS SHALL BE ADDED UNTO YOU. But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret SHALL REWARD THEE OPENLY" (Mat. 6:33,6). It works. ALL THINGS A-R-E POSSIBLE TO HIM THAT BELIEVETH! God is still true, and I am willing to let every man be a liar. Today the Lord is shining the searchlight of His glorious presence into every nook and cranny of the house of the Lord, exposing all that is not of Him. All of man's perverted religion must go! All of religion's man-made schemes must end! I declare to you by the word of the Lord that the house of the Lord is being cleansed, and God is calling upon His elect to repent and turn from man's perversions. The Lord has come to His temple and is judging His house, even as He did during His earthly ministry, casting out those who buy and sell, referring to the churches as "a den of thieves" and no longer "the house of prayer" (Mat. 21:13).

All who by law, by coercion, or by fear TAKE tithes from God's people live still under the Old Testament Levitical order, their unanointed eyes sealed in blindness from that higher, more glorious Order of Melchizedek. Do we mean by this that in the Order of Melchizedek the principle of tithing and giving is done away? No way! Tithing was not merely a part of the Mosaic legislation. It predated Moses by many centuries. Jacob gave tithes hundreds of years before God thundered His law from Mount Sinai. Tithing is not a matter of the law at all. Abraham gave tithes to Melchizedek, the king of Salem, and priest of the Most High God. It is interesting that Jesus Christ is a King-Priest after the Order of Melchizedek and when Abraham gave tithes to Melchizedek, he acknowledged his sovereignty over him as King and Priest. If Christ is not our great High Priest, we have no priest worthy of the name, and if we do not give unto HIM the tithe and the offerings we make our blessed Lord less than Melchizedek and even less than the Levitical priests of the Old Testament times. The difference lies with the order of priesthood. Levi was commanded to TAKE tithes from the people, but Melchizedek only RECEIVED tithes from him who had the promises.

Ray Prinzing has so aptly written on this point: "How many are TAKING tithes today, by fair means or foul, and they feel they have a right to do so; but others are simply

receiving them as God supplies their needs through faithful givers. This arising Melchizedek kind of people are trusting in the Most High God, who possesses heaven and earth, and they just believe in Him to provide, therefore instead of TAKING they are content with RECEIVING what He supplies. This is not with condemnation for those who pass an offering plate, nor for praise to those who simply have a box where contributions might be given but rather a probing into our hearts to see whether we have a desire to TAKE or just receive as God gives. One may refrain from outwardly taking, while inwardly wishing they could lift from the people some of these large offerings which others do - WHAT IS THE MOTIVATION OF OUR INWARD DESIRE? Do we know what spirit we are of? At least I liked the honesty of a preacher who once said, 'This is a faith work - faith in all you people to give,' and so he promptly proceeded to make his appeal. But if our faith is in the MOST HIGH GOD, then there need be no appeal to men, but just a committal to Him who is able to 'make all grace abound toward you, that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work,' as we read in II Cor. 9:8. This same principle works from the other side, do we have to be asked to give, or do we know the grace of giving as unto our Lord?" - end quote. To which I would add - those of the Melchizedek Order are BLESSERS primarily, then when people out of their own sanctified spirits GIVE without manipulation of their tithes and offerings, those of the Melchizedek spirit RECEIVE it with praise and thanksgiving unto God. What a difference between the TAKING and RECEIVING of tithes! There is NO LAW here, the entire issue is raised up into the dimension of SPIRIT.

Our dear friend and precious brother, Elwin Roach, publisher of THE PATHFINDER paper, penned the following words of practical and godly admonition. "I have heard people say that since tithing is of the law, and they don't want to be bound by the law, they only give when the Lord 'tells them to give,' not realizing that to give only because they are TOLD to do so is evidence that they are STILL UNDER THE LAW. It matters not who is telling us to give: the written Word, pastors of the churches, or the Holy Spirit Himself, if we are compelled to give in any way other than LOVE, we are giving according to the law. Is there any difference between the Spirit that told Moses to have Israel to tithe unto the Levites, and the Spirit that will tell us to give to a certain ministry? I can see no difference between them - it is the SAME SPIRIT; therefore, if it was a law to Israel of old to give, then it is also a law to those today if they have to be TOLD TO GIVE, even if it is by THE HOLY SPIRIT. When we are truly BORN OF GOD, no one has to prompt us to minister to the saints in the area of finances or anything else, for IN LOVE we give according to the need. This, dear ones, is FULFILLING THE LAW, for in this it is our very NATURE TO SO DO. In my estimation, it is far better to do things because of our intense love for God, the saints, and His creation, than because we are TOLD TO. Sure, it is wonderful to hear our Lord and then obey Him, for we are called to be faithful servants; but without being truly BORN of His Spirit, growing up into Him, and being enraptured in the marital union of Christ, we soon fail at what we are told to do. Without KNOWING GOD personally, it is impossible to love Him, and when love is lacking we will do exactly what Israel did when the laws were imposed upon them - they rebelled when the laws offended the desires of the flesh. This is what we have when people today are not supplying the needs to Christ and use the excuse that 'tithing is of the law'. In reality they have more love for themselves than of God or His creation, and giving offends the desires of their flesh, so like Israel they rebel" -end quote.

As I have pointed out, we know that under the law Israel was obligated to pay their ten percent and their offerings. Is that now lifted off of us when we begin to walk in sonship? I will tell you what sonship will do to your tithes and offerings. It will lift off of you the law

that requires you to pay ten percent and lay upon you the spirit of love whereby you have to give your all. Sonship will take all that you are and all that you have and bring it into the Kingdom of God. God does not care a snap about your money until He gets your heart, and then if God gets your heart He will get your money, for if a man's sonship does not get down into his pant's pocket, he is a miserable sham. ALL now belongs to God, and as the spirit of love motivates you and directs you to give thus and so, you will automatically do that because it is a new law in the INWARD PARTS - the law of the Spirit. Its a new law of love that reigns within as a nature. Jesus gave everything, He didn't stop with ten percent. He gave everything that He had. He gave away to earth the greatest treasure that heaven ever had! And with it He has BLESSED US as Melchizedek blessed Abraham of old. And we now return unto HIM our all - not by compulsion or manipulation a crafty preacher, but by the inworking of His Spirit of grace.

Another has written, "If we compare the ministry of Jesus with that of modern preachers, we will see that the preacher of today is truly of another spirit and not of the Spirit of Christ. Jesus told His disciples, 'The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay His head' (Mat. 8:20). Having made this statement, Jesus did not follow it with an appeal for the people's money. He simply trusted that all His material needs would be met. Basically, God's people are givers. Those who believe the Gospel and are in harmony with all its precepts, are givers. The Lord's precious people will give out of an overflowing heart, and the Lord knew this. Therefore, He did not need to ask for anything. All He needed in this life was supplied Him by those who believed His message. It is always encouraging to see the Lord's people give as unto the Lord, even if they do give to a man who is mis-using the funds. He will be severely judged of the Lord, while those who give out of an overflowing heart of love will be blessed abundantly" - Paul Mueller in THE LIVING WORD.

Chapter 31

The Priesthood Of Mercy

"But ye shall be NAMED the priests of the Lord: men shall call you the ministers of our God...for as the earth bringeth forth her bud, and as the garden causeth the things that are sown in it to spring forth; so the Lord God will cause righteousness to spring forth before all nations" (Isa. 61:6,11).

Perhaps you have heard the question, "What's in a name?" A name is more than a moniker, more than a simple badge or means of identification, something by which we address people specifically and individually. In Biblical usage there is MUCH in a name. True, the names we give our children in this modern day usually have little or no significance. We often name our children after some favorite aunt, uncle or grandparent, or choose a name because we like its sound or association. But in Bible times names were chosen with great care and were frequently given by prophetic utterance or under divine inspiration so that the names actually revealed the NATURE, CHARACTER, ATTRIBUTES and DESTINY of the person, and thus carried a message to all who spoke or used that name.

In a very real sense the "name" of a being is regarded as being a real part of the person. In a certain sense there can be no separation whatsoever between a man's name and what he is as a person. If you think about it, we, who live in this "modern" world, make the same kind of connection for we say that a man's name is what he makes it to be by what he does and says. Some are said to have a "name for honesty," while others are declared to have a "bad name." In such instances the "name" and character are one and the same. In the Old Testament the innermost being of a man is expressed in his name. This is why Esau declares of his conniving brother, "Is he not rightly named Jacob? (Supplanter) For he has supplanted me these two times" (Gen. 27:36). Abram, which means "father," had his name changed to "Abraham," meaning "father of many nations," for such he was to become in very fact. His wife also was given a change of name from Sarai, which means "contentious," to "Sarah," meaning "Princess," for, said the Lord, "I will bless her, and she shall be a mother of nations; kings of peoples shall be of her."

There is the feeling that one's name actually possesses a certain power over its bearer because it cannot be separated from the essence of his personality. In the name of Nabal, the husband of Abigail, is found the expression of his essential character. Seeking to excuse him she says, "As his name is, so is he! Nabal (Fool) is his name, and folly is with him" (II Sam. 25:25). This same principle is to be seen in the life of the patriarch Jacob. After wrestling with the Angel of the Lord he underwent a change of attitude and alteration of character which was accompanied by a change of name. Having seen the "face" or presence of God he was no longer the same man that he had been before his encounter with the Lord. Since "name" and character are absolutely identified there had to be a change in Jacob's appellation. The Angel of the Lord, therefore, said, "Thy name shall no more be called Jacob, but Israel (Prince): for as a prince thou hast power with God and with men, and hast prevailed" (Gen. 32:28).

The name of the Son of God is Jesus. That is His complete name. That is His correct name. That is His full name. The name of the eternal Word of God who stepped across the stars to the planet earth to be born in the little village of Bethlehem, five miles south of Jerusalem, is Jesus. That is His complete, proper, full name. His name is Jesus. The angelic messenger appeared to Mary and announced, "Thou shalt call His name Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins" (Mat. 1:21). The name Jesus is exactly the same as the Old Testament name Joshua. Joshua or Jesus - its the same name. And Joshua or Jesus or YeHoshua means "salvation of Jehovah." So when the mighty angel Gabriel appeared, he said, "Call the child that which will be descriptive or characteristic of what He is going to be and do. Call His name that which will describe His accomplishment." The messenger said, "Thou shalt call His name Jesus, or thou shalt call His name Saviour, FOR He shall save His people...call Him Saviour because He is going to SAVE."

Biblical names were almost invariably given to project, to convey some major aspect of the individual who would bear that name. Since He would be the Salvation of Jehovah unto His people, call Him Saviour. Some of you are saying, "Now hold the fort, Eby, isn't His first name Lord and His last name Christ?" NO! Neither Lord nor Christ is a name. It is very important that we understand that. Christ is not a name. Christ is a position. Christ is an office. Christ is a title, as also is Lord. Christ is a description of an individual who holds a particular office. If I were to say to you, "What is the name of the man who holds the highest office in the United States of America," you would say, "His name is Ronald Reagan." And if I said to you, "What is his office?" you would say, "President." You understand immediately that his name is distinct from his office. Now we might call him "Mr. President," but we're calling him by his office, not by his name. His name is Ronald Reagan; his office is President. When I speak to you about King, that is an office. When I speak to you about Prime Minister, that's an office. President is an office, Prime Minister is an office, Christ is an office - its not a name. Christ comes from "Christos" or in the Old Testament "Mashiyach" - the Messiah. And Christ literally means "anointed,)" or better, "THE Anointed One." When we're talking about the Son of God, we're saying that His name is Jesus - Saviour. His office is Christ the Anointed One. God has MADE Jesus to BE CHRIST.

The inspired prophet summed up in one bold statement what it means to be a priest of God. "Ye shall be NAMED the priests of the Lord: men shall call you the ministers of our God" (Isa. 61:6). There is marvelous significance in that one word "named." Named! You shall be N-A-M-E-D the priests of the Lord. This passage forcefully reveals the great truth that all who would be priests of God MUST UNDERGO A CHANGE OF NATURE, to become priests by name, by nature, so that priesthood is not merely a title given to them but a nature lived out through them. If our spiritual minds can grasp the fact, to be NAMED the priests of the Lord means to be NATURED the priests of the Lord, to so be imbued with the priestly nature until we BECOME A PRIEST in our very state of being.

Jesus, when teaching His disciples in Mat. 5:38-48, said these words, "Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth." In other words, give back to people exactly what you receive from them! This is the way of the human nature. If someone blacks your eye, then blacken his in return. This is the way the human nature desires to do. In a Sunday School class the teacher had been teaching on the principles in the Sermon on the Mount, and she inquired of little Johnny, "Johnny, what would you do if Tommy slapped you on the right cheek?" He answered, "Teacher, I would turn the other one." And then as an afterthought he said, "But boy, if he hit that one, I would beat

the stuffing out of him!" This little fellow was just being true to his human nature. Jesus went on to say, "But I say unto you, that ye resist not evil; but whosoever shall smite you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if any man will sue you at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also. And whosoever shall compel you to go with him a mile, go with him twain. Give to him that asketh you, and from him that would borrow of thee, turn him not away. Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbor and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you."

Ah, to act thus is contrary to human nature. The human nature wants to retaliate in the way it has been treated. If someone loves us and is gracious to us, we seek to requite their love and kindness; but if they strike us, we want to strike back. If they curse us we return the same to them. Jesus said, "It is easy to love those who love us, the publicans and sinners do that." But to love those who hate you and despitefully use you, that is something else! To be able from the heart, by nature to do these things that Jesus teaches us here is evidence of the possession of the divine nature. Not to so act as one under law or compulsion; but to so love and forgive and bless because it is within our nature to do this - then we are getting somewhere in God! It requires a change of nature. It is not natural to be a priest, it is not according to the human nature to respond to the shortcomings, insults, injuries, sins and wretchedness of men with understanding, compassion, mercy and redemption.

Jesus continued, "That ye may be the sons of your Father which is in heaven; for He maketh His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust." You see, God makes no difference; He is not a respecter of persons. He treats the evil man exactly the same as He treats the good. He sends His rain on the just man and on the unjust alike. He will treat the rebellious the same way as He treats the obedient. This is OUR FATHER! And we are His sons, those who share His nature, who think as He thinks and act as He acts. This is what it means to be named - NATURED - the priests of the Lord! Let us note in passing, the Authorized version says, "that ye may be the children of your Father in heaven." The Greek word here is "huios" meaning "sons," mature sons, not little children. Mature sons are NATURED priests!

MERCIFUL PRIESTS

Why did the eternal Word of God become a man? Why did He have to? What humiliation and sacrifice He endured when He stripped Himself of His glory, and took upon Himself the likeness of sinful flesh! George Wylie relates the following experience from his eventful life which beautifully expresses the purpose of Christ in descending into the estate of man. "Years ago, when I was still at home on the farm, we had a manure pile in the field; the former owners had been cleaning out the barn and piling the manure there for years. There was a colony of snakes living in this manure pile, and on a sunny day one could see several of them lying on the sunny south side sunning themselves. One day I was emptying a load of manure on the north side, and I sneaked up over the pile to get a look at the snakes. There were several lying there; and as I stood observing them, the Lord seemed to say to me, How would you like to become one of those creatures and live among them in this manure pile? I shuddered at the thought. I just couldn't comprehend how terrible it would be. To lower myself to that extent was unthinkable. Then the Lord said to me, 'For my Son to leave His home in the glory above, to become a man in the likeness of sinful flesh, for your sake and your salvation, was much worse

than that.' I have never forgotten that experience. It made me appreciate much more the sacrifice He made for me" - end quote.

The writer to the Hebrews put it this way: "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same. For verily He took not on Him the nature of angels; but He took on Him the seed of Abraham. Wherefore in all things it behooved Him to be made like unto His brethren, that He might be a MERCIFUL AND FAITHFUL HIGH PRIEST in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people" (Heb. 2:14-18). When the Word of God consented to be made flesh, to strip Himself of the glory He had before, and become a man, a human being, to live among the vileness of the sinful, rebellious and dying, to be touched by the same infirmities, weaknesses and feelings that touch us, to suffer being tempted in all points like as we are, to learn obedience by that suffering, to be rejected and suffer the agony of false accusation and the humiliation of ridicule, the pain of the stripes received from the Roman lashes and the suffering of the cross itself; why did He submit to all this? The stock answer to this is that He had to become a man in order to purchase our redemption. This is true. This is part of the reason He became a man, but only part of it; there is much more to the reason He became a man, much more. Not for one moment would I detract from His great love for us in the sacrifice He made for our salvation. Such love, such wondrous love! Words fail to express the wonder of all that was transacted at Calvary, and how thankful and appreciative we should be for it. But in the passage quoted above we see that He became a man, not only to die on the cross for our sins, but after having redeemed us, to become a High Priest forever after the Order of Melchizedek, a faithful High Priest and a MERCIFUL HIGH PRIEST. Ah, Jesus could be the eternal KING without having been so totally compassed about with infirmity; but He could never be a MERCIFUL HIGH PRIEST without it. He might have been perfect in character, and desirous to help us; but, if He had never tasted death, how could He allay our fears as we tread the verge of Jordan? If He had never been tempted, how could He succour those who are tempted? If He had never wept, how could He dry our tears? If He had never suffered, hungered, wearied on the hill of difficulty, or threaded His way through the quagmires of grief, how could He be a merciful and faithful High Priest, having compassion on the ignorant and wayward? But, thank God! our High Priest is a perfect one. He is perfectly adapted to His task.

The saintliness that cannot romp and laugh with little children, and looks askance on the sins and sorrows and tragedies in the world around, and shuts itself up in cloistered seclusion, is not the spirit of our great High Priest, who watched the children playing in the market places, and called them to His arms, and mingled freely at the dinner tables of the rich and famous and sinful. No; the saintliness that becomes a son of God must find its home in the ordinary homes and haunts of men.

THE NATURE OF MERCY

How many people excel in so many virtues, and live in a state of holiness so far as their conduct is concerned, and yet spoil it all with an unmerciful disposition. It has been said that there are only two kinds of sin: There are the sins of the body and the sins of the disposition. Christians have come to condemn the sins of the body as far worse. But listen to this, O sons of God: No form of vice, not worldliness, not greed of gold, not drunkenness, not adultery itself, does more to shut God up from men than unmercifulness. For embittering life, for breaking up communities, for destroying the most sacred relationships, for devastating homes, for withering up men and women, for taking

the bloom of childhood, in short, for sheer gratuitous misery-producing power, lack of love and unmercifulness take the lead.

The sins of the body and the sins of the disposition are characterized by the Prodigal Son and by his Older Brother. But, ultimately, which was worse? And how many prodigal sons are kept out of the Kingdom of God by the unlovely character of those who profess to be inside? Analyze, as a study in mercy the thundercloud as it gathers upon the Elder Brother's brow. What is it made of? Jealousy, anger, pride, judgment, vindictiveness, uncharity, cruelty, self-righteousness, touchiness, doggedness, sullenness - these are the ingredients of this dark and sullen soul. Judge if such sins of the disposition are not worse to live in, and for others to live with, and more destructive to God's gracious nature, than the sins of the body? Did Jesus not say that the harlots and the publicans enter into the Kingdom before the Pharisees? Why is a judgmental, condemning disposition so vile? Because it denies the very redemptive nature of God - His mercy! And I do not hesitate to tell you that no man can be a priest after the Order of the Son of God unless he be a MERCIFUL PRIEST. There are no others. The unmerciful will not stand in the company of the Melchizedek Priesthood.

Let all men know that God is a GOD OF MERCY! "The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy. He will not always chide: neither will He keep His anger for ever. He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities" (Ps. 103:8-10). "Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all ye lands. For the Lord is good; His mercy is everlasting; and His truth endureth to all generations" (Ps. 100:1,5). "Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful" (Lk. 6:36). "Blessed are the merciful..." (Mat. 5:7). SONS OF THE HIGHEST will be merciful even as their Father! Webster defines mercy as: Benevolence, mildness, or tenderness of heart; a disposition that tempers justice and leads to the infliction of a lighter punishment than law or justice will warrant; clemency; an act or exercise of benevolence or favor; a blessing; compassion or pity, or the power to display either. Someone has written that "Mercy is forbearance from inflicting harm under provocation. It is compassionate treatment of an offender or adversary. It is the disposition to exercise compassion and forgiveness. In fact, mercy is compassion so great as to enable one to forbear punishing even when justice demands it. Many would sacrifice upon the altars of justice every offender without the slightest thought of mercy. But Jesus declared, 'Go ye and learn what this meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice: for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.'"

These are qualities and attributes of OUR FATHER. Our Father is MERCIFUL - and it therefore follows that His sons will be merciful as they manifest the nature of their Father. For long centuries Christendom has endeavored to make men sin-conscious, devil-conscious and hell-conscious. It reminds me of a story I read once of a little boy who went with his mother to the toy department of a store. A big sign read, "Children are not allowed to play with the toys or on the toys." Ignoring the sign, the little boy climbed on the hobby horse and started rocking back and forth. His mother said, "Come on, you've got to get down, you cannot play on that horse." He pushed her away and held on to the neck of the horse, even though she scolded and tugged at him. Finally, the clerk approached and said, "Sorry, but the sign says, 'No Children Allowed on the Toys.' But if your mother wants to buy it..." The boy ignored him so the clerk called the Assistant Manager who grabbed the boy's arm and repeated, "Sonny, you're not allowed to play on that horse unless you buy it." The boy pushed him away, so the Assistant Manager called the Manager. He also gave the youngster a lecture, explaining in very rational terms,

"Sonny, if everybody came and played on these toys they would soon be broken and we could not sell them, we'd lose all our money. Now its time to get off the horse." The little boy hung on tighter. Frustrated, the store manager called the staff Psychologist, who proceeded to go through all the various behavior modification techniques and strategies to get the boy off the horse. But the kid wouldn't budge. Finally, a tough, burly old man, who had been watching the entire scene, approached the frustrated motivators and said, "Let me talk to him." He went over and whispered something in the boy's ear. Immediately the boy jumped off the horse and said, "Okay, momma, lets go home." Surprised, the mother asked, "What did that man say to you?" The youngster replied, "He told me, 'You get off the horse or I'll break every bone in your body!'"

The Church has used the same technique to bring men to Christ and who can say that fear of judgment, hell and damnation has not motivated men to turn from sin to the Lord? Such tactics do indeed bear results, but the message of judgment must ever be counterbalanced with the demonstration of mercy. "Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other" (Ps. 35:10). I remember some of those hell, fire and brimstone sermons that used to make straight hair curl, trying to scare people into heaven. I heard some preachers say, "God takes all the sins that He is holding in reserve against you and holds them over your head to keep you going straight!" Then they would thunder on, "You're going to have to face every sin because they are all written down in your book and held in reserve. On the day of judgment, God is going to take a big screen and projector and show all your sins to the world, including your family and friends. Then you will be cast into the flames of eternal hell, kicking and screaming and writhing forever without mercy." People really squirmed when they heard a message like that, and it seemingly moved some people toward God, but praise God, it isn't true!

Demonstrations of mercy, such as the world has never known, are now upon our horizon, ready to be manifested at our Father's appointed time. Concurrent with the darkness that covers the earth, and gross darkness spread as a veil over the people, is the LIGHT OF HIS GLORY which shall arise upon His own, a message of MERCY and HOPE. God is forming a merciful priesthood to minister unto all nations. God has prepared a divine show for all the earth. It is a light arising in the darkness and over the darkness. It is a theatrical of MERCY in a world of wrath and violence.

THE GOD OF MERCY

When Moses went up into the mount to receive the tables of the law, before ever that law was fully given to Israel, already there was a proclamation of the mercy of the Lord that would far supersede the law they were about to receive. "And the Lord said unto Moses, Hew thee two tables of stone like unto the first: and I will write upon these tables the words that were in the first tables, which thou brakest. And be ready in the morning, and come up in the morning unto mount Sinai, and present thyself there to me in the top of the mount. And he hewed two tables of stone like unto the first; and Moses rose up early in the morning, and went up unto mount Sinai, as the Lord had commanded him, and took in his hand the two tables of stone. And the Lord descended in the cloud, and stood with him there, and proclaimed the NAME of the Lord. And the Lord passed by before him, and proclaimed, The Lord, The Lord God, MERCIFUL AND GRACIOUS, LONGSUFFERING, AND ABUNDANT IN GOODNESS AND TRUTH, KEEPING MERCY FOR THOUSANDS, FORGIVING INIQUITY AND TRANSGRESSION AND SIN, and that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and

upon the children's children, unto the third and to the fourth generation. And Moses made haste, and bowed his head toward the earth, and worshipped" (Ex. 34:1-8).

Here was a startlingly new view of a Supreme Monarch on the earth, a King who forgives law-breaking, and trespass, and evil, to anyone who seeks that forgiveness. He will not clear the guilty as long as they remain guilty before Him, there would be a full accounting of iniquity, but even the penalty inflicted has limitations - "unto the third and fourth generations" - and then the correction ends and the Lord in wrath remembers mercy. But they need not remain guilty before Him, for even His law provides a way to His mercy. In that moment when the guilty are willing to meet God on the grounds of the mercy proffered for their forgiveness, they come to know Him, the Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin - and that was under the law! The Old Covenant was a supreme wonder on the earth, in the world of that time, exactly on that account: MERCY OFFERED TO ALL. There was not any other nation in whose law was revealed such a LORD and such a GOD, and the extent of His mercy was marked out by the sweet Psalmist of Israel who proclaimed, "The mercy of the Lord endureth for ever." What a revelation! There never was any law in any other nation like it, for that very reason: MERCY OFFERED TO ALL.

"And it came to pass, as Jesus sat at meat in the house, behold, many publicans and sinners came and sat down with Him and His disciples. And when the Pharisees saw it, they said unto His disciples, Why eateth your master with publicans and sinners? But when Jesus heard that, He said unto them, They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick. BUT GO YE AND LEARN WHAT THIS MEANETH! I WILL HAVE MERCY, and not sacrifice; for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance" (Mat. 9:10-13). Jesus was quoting to them from Hosea 6:6 wherein the scripture wording is, "I desired mercy, and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings." The Old Testament life and worship was built around sacrifices. The sacrifices meant this: That in the worshipper was the knowledge that all life belongs to the Creator. The worshipper came with the offering of the blood of an unblemished animal because God's own Word said to do so. The offerer came with the acknowledgment: "All life is Thine. I am a sinner and deserve to die. But Thou hast given me the right to offer this animal, in faith, on my behalf. And I acknowledge that my life belongs to Thee." That was the FAITH of the sacrifices, and sacrifice was the great central feature from the time that God sent the first family of man out of His Paradise.

Yet, here, we have Jesus saying, "Go and learn what this meaneth, I will have mercy, AND NOT SACRIFICE." In Hosea the word is, "I desired mercy and not sacrifice." The word "desired" and the word "will" mean the same thing when God is speaking of Himself. In English we use the phrase "will have" as the equivalent of the term "desired." The clear intention of Jesus in quoting the passage, is to place before those heckling Pharisees a statement regarding the WILL of God - the WILL which He had come to do. They had asked, "WHY! does He eat with sinners? WHY does He do it?" And in His answer Jesus stated for all time what the direct WILL OF GOD is, between Himself and His creatures, and also for His people one with another. It is best to drop the English word "have" and use the straight equivalent of the Old Testament word "desired." Thus stated it is, "I WILL mercy, and not sacrifice." The word "desired" and the word "will" tell us what God wants us to know: I WILL mercy. If you will accept that as a seed into your heart, it will grow up, by doing it, into a glorious knowledge of THE SWEET WILL OF GOD.

Here is something so vital, so revolutionary, so wonderful that you cannot afford to have any controversy about it, or any doubt in your mind. "GO and LEARN what this meaneth, I WILL MERCY and not sacrifice, for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." They had wanted to know, "Why?" And Jesus in His divine answer tells them: It is because GOD'S W-I-L-L IS M-E-R-C-Y - and I am come to DO HIS WILL. So there you have it, precious friend of mine. Are you willing to know the meaning of this word, "I WILL MERCY"? Let me ask you a question. Deep within your innermost being, does your heart and mind give assent? Does your spirit bear witness, "Yes, that is the will of God!" If you are willing to face that point; and are willing to say that HIS WILL IS MERCY, then dear one, you can go out of the place where you are today knowing more about the Kingdom of God than you ever dreamed that you could know. No matter how impotent your life may have been; regardless how spoiled things have been for you; you can go forth as an expression of the WILL OF GOD. For if you will humble your mind and your will, before the revelation of the Word of God, you can move into a manifestation of the Kingdom of God and will and live there in the atmosphere of HIS MERCY to all.

Ah, even as priests-in-preparation, we are still in the learning process, learning to have mercy, learning to love unconditionally and infinitely and bless. How? By being subjected to all these situations wherein we ourselves need mercy, where we must obtain grace to help in time of need. In some areas we are so intolerant - because we have never been tested on that point, do not know what our own weakness would be in that area. But "every High Priest taken from among men is ordained for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins: who can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way; FOR THAT HE HIMSELF ALSO IS COMPASSED ABOUT WITH INFIRMITY" (Heb. 5:1-2). As one has written, "He who is the Father of mercies shall also bring forth His SONS OF MERCY through whom He shall manifest His compassion and love for all mankind. It is because we are returning to our Father, receiving of His mercies, we are also learning to have mercy upon others. As we receive, so shall we give."

HIS MERCIFUL ONES

My earnest prayer to God is that all His dear sons shall learn this one grand truth: "Judge not, that ye be not judged. For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again" (Mat. 7:1-2). Note the words: Shall be judged - shall be measured. There are two kinds of judgment. One is of condemnation; the other is of mercy. The one is according to appearance and accusation of evil; the other is righteous judgment and according to truth and mercy. Jesus commands to "Judge not according to appearance, but judge righteous judgment." He warns against the judgment which arises from faultfinding and condemning. The warning is this: You will be judged WITH your own judgment, and you will be measured with, or in, YOUR OWN MEASURE. The measure which you use for others is the very same measure which will be used for you - until you learn!

This is so serious a matter that it would seem as though all Christians would be overwhelmingly concerned over these words. But quite the contrary appears to be the fact. How quickly and easily these words are forgotten by many! The reason is that the human heart is a judgment seat, before which everyone passes who is seen or thought of. All day long we are sitting as Judge in the court of our unseen heart. Unseen, that is, to men. Judging others - ceaselessly all day. Day by day, night by night. We are judging, judging, measuring every one and every thing. We do not always need full and sufficient

evidence because we love ourselves, and in that self-love we think that we know. We judge by whims, and feelings, and imaginations; by our own self-made standards, by what we like and don't like. We are the center. Our judgment is according to what people do or do not do in our favor - and for our benefit and glory - and for our satisfaction. We judge by appearance. And so wicked men judged Jesus, and drove Him to death - the guiltless One. Why? Because they did not know nor understand one small thing which is the true knowledge of God. What was that? MERCY - "I will mercy." And you and I will do the same until that beautiful day when the glories of the Melchizedekian Priesthood are unfolded before our wondering eyes and we see and know and understand once and for all the sublime fact that we have been apprehended and are now being prepared by the master hands of our omnipotent Father to be VESSELS OF MERCY, yea, a MERCIFUL PRIESTHOOD unto the whole world.

How precious this inworking of His grace whereby we are being transformed to become HIS M-E-R-C-I-F-UL ONES, How long we have Walked With God without learning what it means to "Have mercy," to become a vessel or channel through whom His mercy is poured forth. There has been far too much fight in us, a demand for justice according to what we perceived to be justice. "And that He might make known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy, which He had afore prepared unto glory, even us, whom He hath called..." (Rom. 9:23-24

A royal priesthood! Merciful priests! The priestly heart is above all things a sympathetic, compassionate heart, in which the love of Christ constrains us to express His goodness unto men. A priestly heart! O Spirit of God! write upon my heart, with indelible letters, the merciful nature of my High Priest. It is my deep conviction that it is more important to manifest the nature of the Christ in meeting a person's need, than in witnessing to people about the "plan of salvation." Christians have become so conditioned to the idea that they aren't "doing anything for God" unless they get out and witness and skillfully use the sword of the Word of God. But, my precious brother, sister, when you are merciful and help people in their desperate need, you BECOME A LIVING WORD to them which says, "I care and God cares for you!" That doesn't mean that we exalt ourselves as Jesus; it simply means that Jesus is living His life through us. We become a Word that is alive to them, not a dead, printed word, or a religious word, but a Living Word. This is a life to be lived, and it is more important than witnessing, quoting scripture, preaching or teaching. Instead of witnessing, we BECOME THE WITNESS of what our Father is REALLY LIKE.

There is no need to be skilled in the wisdom and ways of this world, no special talent is needed, no training, no education, wealth, power, or attainment in order to BE A VESSEL OF MERCY. Any saint of God can be a merciful priest any day, because there are people who need help every day! When we care for them, we are bringing the heart of God to them in the place of their need. Our Father cares for every soul that has ever seen the light of day upon this planet. The way that He has chosen to reveal that He cares is through His MERCIFUL PRIESTHOOD. That is why it is important for us to know what God is like. Do not glory in wealth, or wisdom, or might, or the things of this world, my friend, but glory in this, that you know God, that He is a God of justice and a God that is filled with kindness and tender mercies that endure forever.

It is the property of God to always have mercy. His mercy is above the heavens. It is from everlasting to everlasting. He has provided a way that the banished may always return. There can be no limits to God's mercy. Men have limits to their mercy, but our God has none. The mercy of God is not only mercy, but it is tender mercy. It is mercy of the utmost

tenderness and love. It is mercy which reaches to all. Christ Himself manifested that mercy. It is mercy without any alloy, pure, and without any keeping back. It is mercy without any remembrance of the transgression. It is the blotting of it out. It is the casting of it into the deep sea of eternal forgetfulness. It extends through all time and into eternity. Those who would be priests of the Most High must exercise His mercy. When you exercise mercy it must be in great tenderness; not grudgingly, not by force, but because you desire to do it. Gentle and heavenly mercy is of God. When God speaks of mercy, He uses a figure which is of sublime character. He says not only that His mercy endures forever, but that His mercy is above the heavens, as if it were the dome of Infinite Love over all. Matters not where are the heavens of His justice and wrath; His mercy is higher than all! It shines brightest in the fair crown of God Himself. It seems as if it were the central diamond in the diadem of heaven. On the brows of all who are God's sons there is no brighter gem. He sets a crown of forgiveness and tender mercy upon our brows. When we are merciful and kind and compassionate, we are most like God. Those who are merciful to their fellow men shall obtain mercy without measure.

I am not excusing sin. I am not watering sin down. Every unconfessed and unrepented sin shall receive a just recompense of reward. But the King-Priest ministry after the Order of Melchizedek has been sent to DELIVER, and not condemn the world! Blessed are these peacemakers. It takes a real man to stand between two warring spirits and swallow up the death and hell in both without being contaminated. We have been invited to participate in this MORE EXCELLENT MINISTRY of forgiveness and blessing.

If you are a priest there is something about you which is not ordinary; you have distinct and distinguishing characteristics. You are equipped with Christ, filled with Christ and clothed with Christ. Whatever you handle, you will handle with Christ; whatever you do, you will do with Christ. You will manifest Christ. There are many ministries for priests to perform. Preachers can only preach, singers can only sing, witnesses can only witness; but priests can touch all men with the mercy and love of God right where they are.

THE MERCY SEAT

Exodus chapter twenty-five gives the description and instruction concerning the Tabernacle of Moses, the Ark of the Covenant and the Mercy Seat which was to be over it. The commandment of the Lord to Moses was to take an offering from all whose hearts willingly offered, and construct a Tabernacle - a Tent-of-meeting. It was to be the LORD'S TENT in the midst of the great encampment of the tents of Israel. The specifications were exact concerning every detail of that Tent, the various instruments of service, and the surrounding wall of boards. Everything was planned to make it possible to take it down and re-erect it with speed. Israel was on the move toward the Promised Land. The Presence of the Lord was visibly with them in a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night. The Tabernacle was to be peculiarly the place where the Fire rested. All of this was GOD'S plan, fitted to the revelation He was giving of Himself.

The Tent-of-meeting consisted of two parts: The Holy Place and the Most Holy Place (Ex. 26:31-34). These were separated by a veil, a large curtain of blue and scarlet and fine twined linen of cunning work with Cherubim. The veil was to be hung on four pillars of acacia wood overlaid with gold: their hooks of gold and their sockets of silver. The Ark of the Covenant was to be brought within the veil, and the veil was to divide between the Holy Place and the Most Holy Place. For a cover for the Ark of the Covenant Moses was to make a "Mercy-Seat," a slab of solid gold, in fact a lid, with Cherubim, one at each end

facing each other, and all in one piece. The tables of the law of the Lord were to be put in the Ark and the Mercy Seat placed above it. The Mercy Seat, or Throne, was to be put upon the Ark of the Covenant within the veil, in the Most Holy Place. It was there - upon the Mercy Seat - that the glory of the God of Israel dwelt, and from there God communed with His people and set judgment and mercy in the midst. "And thou shalt put the Mercy Seat above the Ark...and there I will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee from above the Mercy Seat, from between the two Cherubims which are upon the Ark" (Ex. 25:21-22). "Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel...Thou that dwellest between the Cherubims, shine forth" (Ps. 80:1).

The covering of the Ark of the Covenant was the place of the judgment-of-mercy for forgiveness of sin. It was the Judgment Throne of the Invisible One, Israel's King. It was the Throne of Mercy! Everything in the law of Moses centered in that Mercy Seat. All the sacrifices had to do with that Mercy Seat within the veil. All the shedding of blood of offerings had to do with that one chief sprinkling of blood upon the Mercy Seat. The Mercy Throne was, in the arrangement of things, the center of all. The Tabernacle was in the center of the Camp. The Most Holy Place was in the Center of the Tabernacle. The Mercy Seat was in the center of the Most Holy Place. So the Mercy Throne was in the center - or midst - of everything. The Mercy Throne was what the Most Holy Place was made for! The Mercy Seat was not a "seat" as we know a seat; the old English word means the "origin" or "center," just as you speak of the "seat of pain" or the "seat of government" as the point of origin of it. The Mercy Seat was the place where MERCY ORIGINATED. This is the description of something supreme - M-E-R-C-Y!

The Mercy Seat is an absolute picture of Jesus Christ. There is no wood in it at all. It speaks of God and all that is the nature of God as revealed in Christ. The word for Mercy Seat in the Greek language is HILASTERION. In the New Testament there are only four verses that use this word, as follows: "And over it the Cherubims of glory shadowing the MERCY SEAT" (Heb. 9:5). "Whom God hath set forth to be a PROPITIATION through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past" (Rom. 3:25). "God...sent His Son to be the PROPITIATION for our sins" (I Jn. 4:10). "And He is the PROPITIATION for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world" (I Jn. 2:2).

From these four verses you will see that the Greek word HILASTERION has been translated both as MERCY SEAT and also PROPITIATION. Christ, we are told, is the propitiation for our sins. This word is also Mercy Seat. As a brother in the Lord has pointed out, "There is a principle to be found in spiritual truth and experience which can be briefly stated this way: THE HIGHEST ORDER OF ANY THING IS TO BECOME THAT VERY THING. Thus, in relationship to our Lord, whatever it was that was spoken of, be it a door, a way, a shepherd, etc. every symbol and type was personified in Him, as He declared, 'I AM THE WAY' - 'I AM THE DOOR' - 'I AM THE GOOD SHEPHERD.' 'If you look for the fulfillment and consummation thereof, look to Me, for I AM'" - end quote. So - Jesus Christ BECAME OUR MERCY SEAT and now, blessed be God! we have a faithful and MERCIFUL HIGH PRIEST who is also the seat, the center, the origin of EVERLASTING AND INFINITE MERCY.

Yes, Christ is our Mercy Seat, He is our propitiation. The word propitiate means to appease, to sooth, to cause to be favorably disposed, to conciliate. Now this leads to a point of immense importance. We often hear it said that "the death of Christ was necessary in order TO RECONCILE GOD TO MAN." This is a pious stupidity, arising

from inattention to the language of the Holy Spirit, and indeed to the plain meaning of the word "reconcile." God never changed - never stepped out of His normal and true position. He abideth faithful. There was, and could be, no derangement, no confusion, no alienation so far as He was concerned, for He was infinite and unchanging Love from the beginning; and hence there could be no need of RECONCILING HIM TO US. In fact, it was exactly the contrary. Man had gone astray; he was the enemy, and needed to be reconciled. Wherefore then, as might be expected, the Scriptures never speak of reconciling God to man. There is no such expression to be found within the covers of the New Testament! "God was in Christ RECONCILING T-H-E W-O-R-L-D UNTO HIMSELF, not imputing their trespasses unto them." And again, "All things are of God, who hath reconciled US to Himself by Jesus Christ" (II Cor. 5:18-19). In a word, it is God, in His infinite mercy and grace, through the cross of Christ, bringing us back to Himself.

If the Christ, who is our Mercy Seat, the origin of all love and grace and life, had turned away from us, we would have at once been everlastingly finished. I do not hesitate to tell you that God is not dismantling His Mercy Seat, He is not taking His Spirit out of the earth, the day of grace is not, as the preachers so ridiculously proclaim, about to end; indeed, it is barely beginning! Therefore, though we have but tasted of His mercies, through vast ages yet unborn He will continue to unfold the riches of His grace, manifesting it through His vessels of mercy, until the fullness thereof is revealed, and God becomes, finally, ALL-IN-ALL.

It would be amiss to conclude this article without pointing out that ultimately, becoming ONE IN CHRIST, we shall also fulfill this same ministry. Growing up INTO HIM who is the Head, coming unto the measure of the stature of the FULLNESS OF CHRIST, partakers of the heavenly calling of HIS PRIESTHOOD, Kings and Priests reigning WITH HIM upon His throne - all bespeak the same truth - we are destined to BECOME HIS MERCY SEAT. This beautiful truth is stated so simply, yet graphically, in Ps. 103:4, "Who crowneth thee with lovingkindness and tender mercies." In the Hebrew "lovingkindness" is HHESED; "tender mercies" is RAHHAMIM, which is equivalent in power to our English word "compassions." This is the God of all grace placing a crown upon those who rule with Him. This is the God of love placing upon your head the insignia of anointing as one of His King-Priests. What IS this crown, this kingly, priestly anointing, this power and authority to rule? HHESED and RAHHAMIN - LOVINGKINDNESS and TENDER MERCIES! Or it can be stated as: mercy and compassions.

Think of it! God's Crown, God's Ruling Authority and Power! Crowned with MERCY! Ruling by MERCY! This is truth of unfathomed depth. What kind of a crown do you have in mind when you think of "wearing a crown" in the Kingdom of God? It is my prayerful hope that these words will prove helpful in bringing many of God's precious elect into their crown-fitting. "In mercy shall the throne be established" (Isa. 16:5). "Mercy shall be built up for ever" (Ps. 89:2). It is when this MERCY COMPANY has fully become, matured in the nature of God, then shall the completeness of the MERCY THRONE be revealed in the earth. Christ is now "our" Mercy Seat, and in due time God's firstfruits are to become that Mercy Seat for others - to unfold God's transforming mercy to all. I mentioned earlier that the Mercy Throne is what the Most Holy Place was made for. As we today are given boldness by the blood of Jesus to truly enter the Most Holy Place not made with hands - the realm of God's fullness - may we enter humbly with this knowledge, and in this spirit - the Most Holy Place is prepared and ordained...for MERCY! It is made just for the Mercy Seat. The unmerciful will never stand on this holy ground. No place here to view any man with the thought, "does he deserve it?" We have

not deserved it, any more than any man, we had no merits to claim His favor, but it was freely given to us just the same, and from this holy station we shall learn to freely give in like manner, not imputing men's sins unto them, but revealing HIS REDEEMING MERCY.

This is oft times difficult for those priests-to-be who have come out of the church system with a heavy hangover of condemnation and charging every man with guilt and shame. It was a sin to do this, it was a sin to do that, and we were so sin-conscious that we were not able to kindle any consciousness of the awesome power of HIS ABOUNDING MERCY.

This truth might well be illustrated by the children's story of the sun and the wind in the little make-believe story, the sun and the wind discussed which of them was the strongest. The wind said he could prove that he was the strongest by blowing the coat off a man who walked on the road below. So the sun slipped behind a cloud and Mr. Wind started blowing until the man thought a tornado had come up. But the harder the wind blew, the tighter hold the old man took on his coat. Finally the wind saw that he could not blow the man's coat off, so he gave up in defeat. Then it was the sun's turn to try. The sun came out from behind the clouds and smiled kindly on the old man. Presently the warm loving rays of the sun caused the man to pull off his coat. The sun had proved that the power of love and light and kindness is stronger than fury and force!

How we have ranted and raved and stormed at men about their sins and judgment! But it has been well said that "There is no difficulty that enough love will not conquer; No disease that enough love will not heal; No door that enough love will not open; No gulf that enough love will not bridge; No wall that enough love will not throw down; No sin that enough love will not redeem. It makes no difference how deeply seated may be the problem, how hopeless the outlook, how muddled the tangles, how great the mistake - a sufficient realization of love will dissolve it all - if only you could love enough you would be the happiest and most powerful being in the world."

Ah - perhaps now we can understand something of the divine wisdom that, when it purposes to save a world gone awry, says, "FOR GOD S-O L-O-V-E-D THE WORLD, that He gave His only begotten Son..." Then to the bearers of that love He bids, "LOVE your enemies... And God in Christ has enough love to go around, praise His wonderful name!

Chapter 32

Priestly Intercession

"Wherefore He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make INTERCESSION for them" (Heb. 7:25). "I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, INTERCESSIONS, and giving of thanks be made for all men...for this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth" (I Tim. 2:1,3-4).

There was a time in my life when I found it very difficult to understand why the Lord invited and commanded me to pray. Why did we have to pray? Why the ministry of intercession on behalf of men? God is God, so why doesn't He just do what He wants? Why are we even in the picture? Why are the events on earth related to our prayers and intercessions at all? I knew prayer worked, because I saw the effects of my prayers in my everyday life. However, I didn't know why God wanted to involve me in the process. What really was the purpose of prayer?

It all goes back to the creation of man. Jesus said, "The Father hath given Him (the Son) AUTHORITY...because He is the SON OF MAN" (Jn. 5:26,27). One might think it should have read, "because He is the SON OF GOD," but it doesn't say that. The awesome and universal authority of the Son is rooted in the fact that He is the SON OF MAN. Why was it necessary for Jesus to be the "Son of man" to have authority on earth? That man should bear the image of God and have dominion over all things is the first announcement of God's intention regarding man and the first announcement of His purpose, and locked up in that wonderful declaration is a universe of meaning that does not reach the eye and that the mind has never understood.

Man in the image of God is God's government in the Kingdom of God. Creation was originally established with a degree of splendor suitable to the dignity of Adam as its appointed ruler. Man was the final and crowning work of God's hands. I would draw your attention, beloved saint of God, to the fact that man was not created on the first day, nor on the second or third, but in the end of the sixth day when all the rest of His creation had been completed. It was only after the vastness of the heavens and the earth and all the hosts of them had been made that the Creator proclaimed the awesome fiat, "Let us make man in our image, and after our likeness: and let them have DOMINION" (Gen. 1:26). You see, the dominion of the Kingdom was given unto man. Man was ordained of God to rule not only the earth, but the universe. David mentions this in the eighth Psalm. "When I consider Thy heavens, the work of Thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which Thou hast ordained; what is man, that Thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that Thou visitest him? For Thou hast made him a little lower than God (Heb.), and hast crowned him with glory and honour. Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of Thy hands; Thou hast put all things under his feet."

"What is man...Thou hast made him a little lower than God." In case you have a problem with the way I have quoted this scripture, I must point out that the King James version says that man was made "a little lower than the angels." But this is not correct.

The word translated "angels" in the Authorized version, is the Hebrew word ELOHIM which is the Hebrew word for God, the very same word used in Gen. 1:1 where we read, "In the beginning GOD created..." So God made man just a little lower than Himself, or lower than Himself for a little while, but higher than all the rest of the creation, even the angels, for as Paul said, "Know ye not that YE shall judge angels?"

"Thou hast put ALL THINGS under his (man's) feet." Now that phrase, "under his feet" is a Hebrew term which means that he was to have authority over all of His creation. He was to rule it all, govern it all, be head of it all. God made man for that intent and purpose. In the New Testament, the idea is taken still further: "But one in a certain place testified, saying, What is man, that Thou art mindful of him? or the son of man, that Thou visitest him? Thou madest him a little lower than God; Thou crownest him with glory and honour, and didst set him over the works of Thy hands: Thou hast put ALL THINGS in subjection under his feet. For in that He put all in subjection under him, He left NOTHING that is NOT put under him. But now we see not yet all things put under him" (Heb. 2:6-8). There is holy wonder to these words that is almost beyond our understanding. Nothing has been left outside of the dominion of man. Weymouth puts it this way, "Thou hast put everything in subjection under his feet. For this subjecting of the universe to man implies leaving nothing that is not subject to him. But we do not yet see the universe subject to him." The whole cosmos really belongs to mankind, it is his dominion, his sphere of authority, and everything is to be put under his control.

Now for Jesus to have anything to do with this dominion He had to become a man, for the dominion was given to man, and in order for Him to receive the Kingdom, He had to be a man, it was necessary, in fact, for Him to come as the second man, the last Adam. As the eternal Word of God He could have nothing to do with this dominion, though it was through Him that all these things were made. But become a man He did, the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, and as man He has qualified to receive the Kingdom and be the ruling head of it, the King of Glory. The man in God's image and likeness has a divine and royal destiny to exercise dominion and authority in this world and throughout the unbounded heavens He is to be the Head of all. All that happens in the cosmos must take place through man. God created all things and then man in His image and likeness, as the connecting link between God and His creation, that through man in His image and likeness the invisible God might be seen and known and touched by the visible creation. The face of God would be revealed for all creation to behold, in the face of man. The likeness of God would be made known to the entire universe in and by man. The glory, love, grace, wisdom, knowledge and power of God would be exercised toward every creature and world and order throughout the vastness of infinity through the man in the image and likeness of God!

When God gave the world and all things into the power of man, made in His image, who should rule it as a viceroy under Him, it was His plan that Adam should do nothing but with God and through God, and God Himself would do all His work in the universe through Adam. Can we not see by this that Adam was appointed God's KING-PRIEST on behalf of all creation? When sin entered the world, Adam's power was proved to be a terrible reality, for through him the earth, with the whole race of man, and all things, was brought under the curse of sin and death. When he fell his kingdom fell with him. When he came under the dominion of sin and death he took all that he ruled with him. But when creation's new rulers, the second man, the last Adam, Christ the Head and His glorified body of sons of God, are manifested, their Kingdom will be elevated again with them. As

they are forever free from sin and sickness and sorrow and limitation and fear and death; then will their realm be.

This means that IN CHRIST we have been restored as beloved and royal sons and daughters in the family of God. Once again, we have been given the power and authority to carry out our Father's will - to establish His Kingdom here on earth. We now have that authority and privilege. God's royal purpose for this world will be fulfilled through the body of the Christ. He is the heavenly Head, but we are the earthly members that make up that body. God has purposed to work out His will on earth through you and me. Without Him we cannot; without us He will not! We are God's KING-PRIESTS appointed to bless and restore all things into God!

THE PRIESTLY MINISTRY

It is a fact of present truth that the Lord is calling out a remnant of His people to become priests after the Order of Melchizedek, to share in the ministry of Christ, and that all the Lord's people should become a kingdom of priests. The Old Testament priesthood is a marvelous type and example of the ministry of the Melchizedek priests, and that example is being made reality in our lives as the hour of fulfillment approaches. As one has written, "The ministry of the priest began as he offered a sacrifice for himself and then for the sins of the people. The priest then offered the sacrifice upon the altar within the Most Holy Place, and interceded there for the sins of the people, remaining until the Lord had accepted the sacrifice.

"Having offered the sacrifice to the Lord for the sins of the people, and having ministered to the Lord for the people in intercession, the priest then came out to the people to pronounce upon them the benediction or blessing of sins forgiven and their atonement completed. Thus the three-fold ministry of the priest was SACRIFICE, INTERCESSION, AND BENEDICTION. Christ fully demonstrated the three-fold ministry of priesthood, for He became our sacrifice for sins (Heb. 9:9-15). As verse fifteen shows, the true priest is a 'mediator,' standing between God and the people as a 'go-between,' interceding for the people. Christ as our High Priest completely fulfills His priestly office by interceding for the people: 'Wherefore He is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them' (Heb. 7:25). When the High Priest of the Old Testament completed his ministry of sacrifice and intercession in the Most Holy Place, he then came out to the people and blessed them, or gave them the final benediction (Lev. 9:22). In like manner, we expectantly look for the appearing of Christ our great High Priest to come out of His heavenly sanctuary with the final benediction for His people. This truth is also set forth in the book of Hebrews, 'So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation' (Heb. 9:28). Thus Christ as our High Priest fully demonstrates the three-fold ministry of the true priest in sacrifice, intercession, and benediction" - The Living Word.

Christ Himself has become the sacrifice. Behold the Lamb of God) which taketh away the sin of the world! "Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by His own blood He entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us" (Heb. 9:12) And for all who share His priesthood there are two thoughts: "he shall stand before My face to minister" and "he shall go out to bless the people." This is what Christ does: He intercedes and He imparts the blessing. And that is the double work every priest has to do: to ask and bring the blessing down from above, and then go out and dispense it.

From of old God had among His people intercessors to whose voice He listened and gave deliverance. On one occasion it was strangely said of God, "He saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no intercessor" (Isa. 59:16). Here we read of a time of trouble when He sought for an intercessor, but in vain. And He wondered! Think of what that means - the amazement of God that there should be none who loved the people enough or who had sufficient faith in His power to deliver, to intercede, on their behalf. If there had been an intercessor He would have given deliverance; without an intercessor His judgment came down (Isa. 64:7; Eze. 22:30,31). But when it was said of God that He wondered that there was no intercessor, there followed the words: "Therefore His arm brought salvation unto Him. The Redeemer shall come to Sion" (Isa. 59:16,20). God Himself would provide the true intercessor, in Christ His Son, of whom it had already been said, "He bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors" (Isa. 53:12). And now, "He ever liveth to make intercession for us." Christ, as Head, is intercessor in heaven; we, as members of His body, are partners and participators with Him on earth. Because there was no intercessor, God has Himself raised up His INTERCESSOR COMPANY to bring deliverance!

There are two aspects of intercession set forth in the Word of God: that which is Godward; and that which is manward. We shall consider them both. Mighty things have been wrought through the ages by the power of prevailing, intercessory prayer. Daniel was a man mightily used of God and the king of Babylon exalted him above all the princes and presidents of the realm because an excellent spirit was found in him. "Then this Daniel was preferred above the presidents and princes, because an excellent spirit was found in him; and the king thought to set him over the whole realm" (Dan. 6:3). Daniel had wisdom and understanding above any man in the whole kingdom. The question follows - How did he get this excellent spirit, wisdom and understanding? The scripture reveals that he got it by prayer, by keeping in close contact and intimate communion with the Almighty. Daniel received many visions and revelations of world events, present and future even to the end of this age. He did not just accidentally stumble onto these wonderful secrets as he went about his daily work, but He received through much fasting and prayer and intercession. "And I set my face unto the Lord God, to seek by prayer and supplications, with fasting, and sackcloth, and ashes; and I prayed unto the Lord my God, and made confession" (Dan. 9:3,4). We are not told how long he fasted and prayed, but the response was that the angel Gabriel was dispatched from heaven and came and gave to him understanding concerning great and mighty things. Events of great import and the rise and fall of mighty empires were influenced by the prayers and intercessions of this faithful servant of God.

Elijah was a man of prayer and intercession and wrought wonderful things thereby. We are inclined to think of these great men as beyond the ordinary; that there was something special about them or that they had a particular mandate from God. Such is not the case. They were no different than us. The Holy Spirit was exceedingly careful to point out that "Elijah was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed..." (James 5:17). He had the same frailties, the same weaknesses, the same limitations as any man. What made him unique among men was that he prayed, and "he PRAYED EARNESTLY that it might not rain; and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months. And he PRAYED AGAIN, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit" (James 5:17,18). Truly, "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man AVAILETH MUCH" (James 5:16).

In the 1500's a man by the name of John Knox went into a garden in Scotland and knelt for hours in agonizing prayer. Someone who overheard him saw that at the end of that prayer, in great agony of spirit, he finally lifted up his hands to God and cried aloud, "Great God, give me Scotland or I die!" And that prayer was very literally answered before he died. In Knox's day all of Europe was sunk in the mire of darkness, ignorance and corruption. Historians tell us that Scotland was the most backward nation in Europe at that time; its morals were the most degenerate; its church was the most corrupt, and the entire scene was one of gloomy despair. Even the political and social arenas were in chaos. It was into this situation that John Knox was born. And he prayed! He interceded on behalf of a nation. Carlyle tells us that no one man ever succeeded in more totally transforming the entire life of a nation than John Knox. The imprint of his character and his faithfulness may still be felt in the land of his birth. He was God's man, in God's time, to bring a whole nation under the impact of the mighty regenerating hand of God.

All the great revivals of past centuries were products of prevailing prayer and intercession. On the night of the outbreak of the Pentecostal outpouring at the turn of the century the minutes which were bearing a world relentlessly onward to the close of its 19th century flew swiftly by. It was a momentous evening. With a feeling tinged with fear, people everywhere were alertly watching the passing of the year 1899 as it fled on swift feet into the eternal past. It was New Year's Eve - 9:30! 10:00! 10:30! Silently the last few hours of the century moved majestically onward to its grand conclusion. It was an evening full of portent.

Within their homes, family groups sat here and there, amusing themselves quietly. In other places merriment ran high. Tinkling music and dancing feet set the pace, as great throngs of people swept carelessly on through the night in light-hearted gaiety and unrestrained revelry. But in the city of Topeka, Kansas, in one of the large rooms of the great house known as "The Old Stone Mansion," a totally different scene was being enacted. Blazing chandeliers lit up a scene of worship and devotion. The small company of people knelt, or sat quietly about the room. For three weeks they had been there...waiting, praying, believing...scarcely knowing what to expect, yet following undauntedly the faith which had been kindled deep within their spirits. For three glorious weeks heaven had seemed to stoop down and touch the earth, and the whisper of the Spirit had grown to a mighty thunder within their consciousness: "He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost!"

How was one to know when he had been baptized with the Holy Spirit? Was there no sign? Could so important a manifestation of the presence of God take place and one scarcely know it? Would there not be the same supernatural manifestations as accompanied the receiving of the Spirit in the Early Church? The hour of midnight struck. The new century arrived as the little band of expectant saints prayed on. Suddenly, over the assembled company there came the passing of the Divine Breath! A woman began to quiver slightly... the rhythmic quivering of a leaf rippled by the wind...and beautifully, forcefully, distinctly there flowed from her lips ecstatic utterances which soon became a language...unintelligible to the kneeling company, but without doubt a language. Rising to investigate the phenomenon further, they beheld a blue flame-like fire playing about her head, as she gladly and joyfully yielded herself completely to the Holy Spirit of God. Although many groups of intercessors over the country were not present to witness that small and humble beginning, God had ordained that as the next few years quickly passed, the whole world was to hear of what He had done on that New Year's morning at

the turn of the century. And by the time the century had run its course, multiplied scores of millions of believers would have shared the blessing of the experience.

Jessie Penn-Lewis has recorded the history of the great revival that swept through the country of Wales about the same time. In an hour of great apostasy and degeneracy many hundreds of people began to fervently pray and intercede for God to move in that land. In 1901 the Lord drew near to one of His servants in the ministry, and gave him such a revelation of His glory that he cried, like Isaiah, "Woe is me," and entered on a life in God unknown before. Then in a quiet spot on the banks of a Welsh river, burdened over the spiritual condition of the country, he spent hours in prayer, pleading with God with many tears that He would come forth in power and work in the land. Again, in a quiet town in the western part of Wales, there were two or three women meeting together for prayer for several years, beseeching God for a revival among the women of the town.

In the Rhondda Valley, where afterwards the Spirit of God swept with great power, there were some who for years had been praying for a revival which should "sweep over the whole world." We do not wonder that such souls were taken into the secrets of God, the Holy Spirit saying to one of them just three days before the valley was moved by the mighty tide of Life, "Get thee up...there is the sound of abundance of rain!" We find in Monmouthshire the hand of the Lord upon two sisters, one an invalid, who were burdened over the prevalence of sin, and the increase of crime in the county, one sister saying, tearfully, "I cannot sleep day nor night because my dear Lord is despised and set at naught." Another child of God - a retiring, timid lady - bemoaning the deadness of the churches, said, "I shall die unless God exerts His power, and sends a revival!"

At the very same time in a district in Glamorganshire, four young men, only eighteen years of age, were found on a mountain-side holding a prayer meeting, and pleading with God for a revival in their church, which was in a cold and formal state. It transpired that these young men had held their prayer meeting on the mountain every night for a month. But they continued to pray on the mountain-side for two whole months, and, to the astonishment of the church, people joined them, and prayed with them, who never visited any place of worship! The meetings attended only by four at the first now increased to scores, and all testified to the power of God in a special manner.

After many months the windows of heaven were opened and the Holy Spirit swept as an overflowing stream over a huge gathering of five thousand men and women - many of them come from distant parts of the earth to seek the power of the Holy Ghost. The presence of the Spirit in the meetings was like the "wind" moving upon the people. Strong men and women wept under the power of God. The young people flocked to the services, prayers flowing spontaneously from their lips like water from the spring. Soon all the churches were crowded, the valleys and the mountains ringing with the high praises of God. The spirit of gladness and praise filled all hearts, as thousands rejoiced in the marvelous works of God. The mighty tidal wave swept hither and thither - men knew not how or why. The Spirit of God found His own channels. There was no forcing, no urging, not even any inviting by "altar calls," yet nearly 100,000 people had been converted within a brief time, and the numbers grew. Visitors from all parts of Britain and the Continent began to flock to Wales to see the "great sight" of God breaking forth in supernatural power upon the sons of men. Practically the entire nation was turned to God!

Midway through the twentieth century, again there was to be a mighty cry unto God for a fresh and deeper manifestation of His glory. Bands of saints across the land and around the world prayed and interceded for more of God. When God responded this time the glory erupted in a Bible School in Canada. George Hawtin recounts the wonder of what happened: "God does not leave you in a dry land for long if you are bound to be one with Him. Should my life be very long on earth, I shall never be able to forget the glory, the awe, the reverence, the holiness, and the power that came to our class room as we waited on God that glorious 13th of February, 1948, when God began to do a new thing that was destined for a time to shake the church all over America. How we sang the songs of deliverance! How the praises of God echoed down the corridors of the soul and re-echoed among the battlements of heaven! Music of heavenly choirs on earth went sweeping up to the sky steeps while angels stood at heaven's gates and swept their harps of gold. Day after day, month after month the celestial wonder continued. Heaven came down our souls to greet, and glory crowned the mercy seat. People came for thousands of miles to drink at the ever flowing fountain of life" - end quote.

This wonderful move of God brought the restoration of the truths of the body of Christ the five-fold ministry, prophecy with the laying on of hands, spiritual praise and worship and the revelation of God's purpose to prepare a people for the manifestation of the sons of God, through which ministry the Kingdom of God shall triumph in every realm, the glory of God shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea, and creation shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the sons of God. The effect of the move of God that began in Canada in 1948, and spread around the whole world, remains to this day and even now a mighty army of saints is in preparation as overcomers to take the Kingdom and rule and reign with Christ over the nations. Events of immense magnitude and universal significance loom bright upon the horizon!

When Solomon first dedicated the temple in Jerusalem, thus initiating the ceaseless priestly ministrations therein, he knew it would be a house of prayer, and he asked God to hear the prayers that His people would offer there. As the king prayed on that day, he outlined the international effects of temple prayer: the establishment of justice, military defense, protection from drought and other natural disasters, salvation for all the nations and deliverance from captivity (II Chron. 6:22-29). All these blessings were to be the results of God's people praying in the temple. Jesus affirmed this aspect of the temple's role when, after a violent confrontation with the money changers, He declared that the temple was to be A HOUSE OF PRAYER FOR THE NATIONS. The international consequences of prayer in the temple which Solomon and Jesus described are but subtle shadows of God's higher purposes in that greater and more glorious temple of living stones, not made with hands, which for two thousand years has been rising to form an habitation of God through the Spirit.

This company of the sons of God is called to be priests after the Order of Melchizedek to intercede for all mankind, so that they may eventually join the Lord in that grand benediction, the final blessing of CREATION'S DELIVERANCE. The Psalmist pictures this corporate Christ as a COMPANY OF MEDIATORS, standing between mankind and the bounties of heaven, when he says, "I will set His hand also in the sea, and His right hand in the rivers" (Ps. 89:25). The message is clear - the hands of the body of Christ are placed with the left hand in the great spa of mankind, and the right hand in the abundant, refreshing, healing and quickening waters of the river of divine life (Eze. 47:1-9), ready to channel the abundant resources of God from His river of life into the great sea of mankind, thereby blessing all mankind in a glorious manifestation of the life of God. The

course of nations will be determined in the house of God by the prayers and ministry of God's Royal Priesthood. The temple today is a building of UNION WITH CHRIST wherein He will reveal Himself through His apprehended ones, and where their actions on behalf of nations will alter the course of history and bring the righteous reign and total triumph of His Kingdom on earth. Hallelujah!

THE HOLY SPIRIT'S INTERCESSION

We miss so much vital truth by our careless scanning of the Bible. Time and again we read a passage and attach to it superficial meanings arising out of the shallowness of the natural mind, or time-honored traditions we have heard parroted a thousand times by the venerable doctors of religion. Seldom do Christians take the time or make the effort to search out the deeper meaning by the help of that blessed Holy Spirit who has been sent by the Father to guide us into all truth. What a world of misunderstanding there has been regarding one of the most precious and momentous statements ever to proceed from the inspired pen of the apostle Paul! After setting forth by revelation the awe-inspiring truth of the manifestation of the sons of God, he continues with the following exhortation: "Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And He that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because He maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God" (Rom. 8:26,27).

There is no doubt whatever in my mind that these are among the most misunderstood and misinterpreted passages in all of God's holy Book. Generally, among Spirit-filled people, it is taught that the Holy Spirit will pray through us in other tongues, praying for our own or other's needs, when we lack the necessary understanding to pray as we ought. But this is a fallacy. I do not mean that it is a fallacy that the Holy Spirit will cause us to intercede in prayer either in our native tongue or in an unknown language, for I know experientially that He does, and it is a beautiful experience. But this is not the truth the apostle is conveying here. The intent of this passage is to show that the Holy Spirit will make intercession, NOT FOR OUR PERSONAL NEEDS, but for the deliverance of the WHOLE CREATION!

The word "likewise" in verse twenty-six is a conjunctive adverb which joins the subject of true intercessory prayer with the subject preceding it. What is the subject preceding it? Verse nineteen states that all creation is eagerly expecting and waiting for the manifestation of the sons of God. Verse twenty-one says that the creation itself shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption and brought into the glorious liberty already known by the sons of God. Verse twenty-two reveals that the whole creation is groaning and travailing in birth-pangs for deliverance. Verse twenty-three declares that not the creation only, but we ourselves who have received the firstfruits of the Spirit do groan within ourselves for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our bodies from the tyranny of decay. Verses twenty-four and twenty-five speak of the fact that we all wait and groan and travail in hope. And then the inspired apostle follows these sublime statements with these significant words: "LIKEWISE the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with GROANINGS WHICH CANNOT BE UTTERED." Therefore, intercessory prayer, that is, the intercession of the Spirit through the sons of God, is a prayer for the deliverance of the whole creation and the manifestation of the sons of God! The prayer which the Holy Spirit would pray through all the elect is that prayer which corresponds to the groans and

travail of every created thing. Many of us spend most of our prayer time praying for our own needs, rather than allowing the Holy Spirit to pray through us with groanings which cannot be uttered, even the groanings of the whole creation.

It is evident that with so much pettiness and self-centeredness in our praying, WE DO NOT KNOW WHAT WE SHOULD PRAY FOR AS WE OUGHT. I dare say, not one Christian in a million truly knows what he should be praying for! As Paul Mueller has pointed out in one of his writings, "It must be remembered that the one, supreme subject of Romans eight is the maturing of the sons of God, as well as their ultimate manifestation and the deliverance of the creation. The subject of intercession in verses twenty-six and twenty-seven is not given at that point to begin a new thought, but rather to continue the same thought, expressing the responsibility of the Lord's elect to yield to that spirit of intercession. The fact is that verse twenty-nine continues the same original subject of the entire chapter, the predestination of the sons of God to be conformed to the image of Christ. There is no other subject of Romans eight! Therefore, let the mind of the Spirit guide you to true, effectual intercession. Let the Holy Spirit make intercession FOR YOU ACCORDING TO THE WILL OF GOD" - end quote.

When it is asserted that the Holy Spirit makes intercession "FOR the saints according to the will of God," this is construed by many to mean that the Holy Spirit prays FOR US to the end that God will bless us and meet our needs, or the needs of those about us. But there is another meaning more consistent with the subject of the chapter. If you were to say, "I am going to the hospital to pray for Sis. Jones," and I were to respond with, "I will go FOR you," - what would I mean? Obviously, my intention would be to make the visit to the hospital IN YOUR PLACE, and pray for Sis. Jones IN YOUR STEAD. In like manner, if the whole creation is groaning and travailing for the manifestation of the sons of God and the deliverance of creation from corruption that will come through them, and if we ourselves are groaning within ourselves for this very same manifestation and deliverance, surely it follows that the Holy Spirit too, is making intercession FOR us with that kind of groanings that cannot be uttered, such intercession is IN OUR PLACE, that is, the Spirit is interceding IN OUR STEAD, lifting the whole cry and groan and travail of both creation and ourselves into that higher dimension of SPIRIT. On the plane of SPIRIT the groanings are not able even to be uttered, for they are in some marvelous way the groanings of SPIRIT rather than the cry of the physical or psychical realms. He that searches the hearts knows what is the MIND of the Spirit, that is, there is communication on the plane of MIND, in that wonderful realm where mind communes with mind and spirit communes with spirit, beyond utterance. Thus the deepest desire and longing of the physical universe, the saints on earth, and the spirit realm are ONE - for the life of God to be ministered to all creation through sons in His image, His KING-PRIEST COMPANY. To this end creation groans, and we groan, audibly, and the blessed Holy Spirit groans on our behalf and in our stead with those unutterable groanings of the divine mind, for we know not how to pray for this glorious deliverance as we ought. Blessed be His wonderful name!

THE INTERCESSION OF CHRIST

As I have studied the Word of God many things have become evident, one of which is that while intercession GODWARD is a true principle and a precious and powerful ministry, the Scriptures further reveal that the primary thrust of the intercession of the Christ is not Godward at all, but MANWARD, an intercession that is TO US-WARD, to

bring us to God, to draw us to the Father, to work in us, that we might yield ourselves unto Him, to love and serve Him with all of our heart.

The real truth about the intercession of the Christ has been clouded by the corrupted theology of man. I am sure that you, as I, have heard preachers try to describe His ministry of intercession. It goes something like this. Satan, our enemy and the accuser of the brethren, stands before the Father up in heaven accusing us day and night. Satan tells God about all our failings; he enumerates to God every sin we commit in thought, word, or deed. He is constantly, unceasingly, relentlessly and unmercifully accusing us of every shortcoming and weakness. The Father, on the other hand, is portrayed as greatly offended and incensed by our sins, and exceedingly wrath with sinners, a vindictive punisher, somehow obligated by His superior sense of justice to be the avenger of every little thing we do wrong. Many parents have unwittingly darkened the hearts of their little children with threats of the certain vengeance of this God who is a constant terror over the life. "Now don't you do that because GOD will punish you!" And even much stronger things are told to little children. God becomes a mean, harsh, vindictive old man up in the sky with beady little piercing eyes possessing wonderful X ray vision which can penetrate into the deepest recesses of mind and heart, and the thickest darkness of night, scrutinizing every thought and action. This God, moreover, is waiting, lurking about everywhere, with a punishing whip of large dimensions!

Enter the Son. You know as well as I do that the church system has always taught that this God of exacting justice and wrath must be appeased, soothed, turned aside from His vengeance, and that this feat can only be accomplished by the intercession of the compassionate SON, our wonderful Lord and elder brother, standing opposite Satan, before the throne of the Father, as our Advocate, our Lawyer, pleading our cause, beseeching God to be kind to us, not to punish us, and begging for our lives on the ground that He paid the price for the forgiveness of our sins. According to this hypothesis the anger of God can only be appeased by looking upon the bloody sweat and cruel, ugly death of His Son, as He stands there interceding for us.

I do not hesitate to tell you that such teaching is utter rubbish and the brashest sort of nonsense. It springs from the Romish tradition that likens God the Father to a fearful and offended despot, spoiling for the blood of the offenders, and it makes Christ to be the One who pleads with God on behalf of the victim until the Father is consoled and placated. And if it weren't for our Advocate, Jesus, God would listen to the devil's accusations and really lay it on to us. We could even lose our salvation because of Satan's accusations, if it weren't that the merciful Jesus is there to prevent God from casting us into hell, by presenting His blood on our behalf. Such is a gross caricature of the truth. More than that, it is a stupid absurdity and a horrible blasphemy. Praise God, the Spirit is unfolding truth in ever-increasing dimensions of glory which magnify God's glorious nature of love and mercy, His wisdom and power, His goodness and the prudence of all His plans and purposes.

It is my conviction that not even Satan is senseless enough to believe that he could approach OUR FATHER and convince Him to condemn us because of our failures. Nowhere does the scripture state that Satan accuses the saints to God. What it does say is that "the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which ACCUSED T-H-E-M B-E-F-O-R-E OUR GOD day and night" (Rev. 12:10). It is one thing for someone to accuse you BEFORE, that is, in the presence of, or in front of another person, and another thing altogether for that person to accuse you TO the other one. It should be abundantly

evident that Satan does not accuse us TO God, he merely accuses us BEFORE God. It is not the almighty and omniscient God, my brother, my sister, whom Satan wishes to convince of your unworthiness; it is YOU! Satan has no misconceptions about his ability to persuade God of your weakness and worthlessness, but if he can influence YOU to believe that you are unworthy, that you are a failure, that it is impossible for you to attain to the high calling of God in Christ Jesus, or that God does not love you, leaving you condemned and hopeless - he is thereby able to rob you of all your confidence, hope, faith, joy, peace and victory.

Don't think for one moment, beloved, that this scene is set in some far-off heaven somewhere! Satan is not standing in a red devil suit before the throne of God somewhere beyond the milky way - ah, he lurks, rather, in the corruption and unbelief of our own carnal minds, slithering about in the lowest realms of man's earthiness. The reason why so many saints fail when it comes to the temptations and condemnations of the devil is that they don't really want to resist Satan. You see, Satan never comes as some hideous monster with horns, a forked tail and a pitchfork. He doesn't blare at you through a loudspeaker. HE COMES IN YOUR OWN DESIRES! HE SPEAKS IN YOUR OWN THOUGHTS! HE MANIFESTS IN YOUR OWN EMOTIONS! "For from WITHIN, out of the HEART OF MEN, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornication's, murders, thefts, covetousness, an evil eye, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: ALL THESE EVIL THINGS COME FROM WITHIN AND DEFILE THE MAN" (Mk. 7:21-23). The battle rages in the MIND, the DESIRES, the EMOTIONS and the WILL, whisperings out of the dust realm, enticements and accusations that shout at you FROM WITHIN. And God is there, too! The indwelling Spirit of God likewise speaks from within, out of the spiritual mind, the voice of inspiration, the spirit of revelation, the still small voice of the Father from within His temple of clay, gently and graciously assuring, "I love you, my child, you are Mine; I have called you, I have made you My very own son and I am your Father; I am with you, I will uphold you; you can make it, yea, you will make it, for I am faithful and will complete the good work I have begun in you and will present you faultless before My throne." And there - before God in His temple - within - rises the other voice, the voice of the carnal mind, the voice of the flesh - the Accuser! And it is there in the imaginations of the mind that Satan the Accuser must be cast down, and every high thing that exalts itself against the God within.

Satan may accuse us, but God will never condemn. Is God for us, or against us? Is He on our side, or isn't He? "What shall we say to all this? If God be for us, who CAN BE against us? Who can be our foe, if God is on our side? He who did not withhold or spare even His own Son but gave Him up for us all, will He not also with Him freely and graciously give us all things? Who shall bring any charge against God's elect when it is God who justifies? Who shall come forward and accuse or impeach those whom God has chosen. Will God, who acquits us? Who is there to condemn us" (Rom. 8:31-34, Amplified)? That wonderful Father! That gracious Redeemer! The most loving of all Beings! Oh, how I love Him! He turned my heart back again and restored me into His life. God, the Father, sent Jesus - the very fullness of His own heart - sent Him into the world to die on Calvary's cross. God so LOVED the world that He gave! Who is he that condemns? Not God! What can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus? There is not one created thing in all the vast universe that can separate us from God's love - not even the accusation of Satan.

What then does it mean, that Jesus makes intercession for us? Jesus is our mediator, our intercessor and our advocate; He stands between God and us, but just what is He

doing when He does this? Is He pleading with the Father to be merciful to us and forgive us? No a thousand times no! The Greek word is ENTUCHANO meaning "to meet with, to converse with, to entreat." The question is just this: With whom does the Christ meet, with whom does He converse, and whom does He entreat? God, or man? God so loved the world that He gave His Son for us. Does the Father of love have to be entreated? Listen! "To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, NOT IMPUTING THEIR TRESPASSES UNTO THEM... now then we are ambassadors FOR CHRIST, as though GOD DID B-E-S-E-E-C-H Y-O-U by us: we pray (beg, petition, beseech, intercede) YOU in Christ's stead, BE YE reconciled to God" (II Cor. 5:19-20).

Therefore, we find that HIS INTERCESSION IS TO US-WARD, to meet with us, to converse with us, to entreat us, to petition us, to reveal the Father's heart of love and His will to us, to intercede with us, to bring us back to the Father, that WE might be reconciled TO GOD, working in us, that we might know Him in all His glorious and eternal reality. All this attention of Christ is DIRECTED TOWARDS US. God does not have to be interceded with for us, it was God who sent the Christ to us, to meet with us, to woo us, and unfold the glories of the Kingdom of God to our wondering hearts.

This beautiful truth cannot be expounded more simply or powerfully than it has been by Bro. George Wylie of Canada. Some time ago he wrote, "Intercession is two words put together, inter and cession. Inter means to go between, as an inter-continental flight. This is an airplane flight that goes between two continents. When I went to Korea and Japan I took an intercontinental flight. It took me there and back. It flies between two continents, back and forth. So inter means to go between. The other half of the word is cession. According to Webster this means 'to yield, to give up, a ceding or giving up of one's rights to another.' Put these two words together and we have a go-between who gives up to another. Perhaps the best way I can illustrate it is this. You are on a journey, away from home. You are hungry and need food. You stop at a cafe and the waitress comes with her little pad and pencil and finds what your need is. Then she goes to the source, the kitchen or grill, and gets what you need and brings it to you and ministers to you. In a sense she is your intercessor. She goes between you and the source of your need, gets what you need, and then ministers it to you. This is the ministry Jesus performs now, He receives from His Father, the source of all things good, that which we have need of, and then ministers it to us. God, the Father, is the source of everything good. 'From Him everything comes, through Him everything exists, and in Him everything ends.' He is the giver of every good and perfect gift. 'Every good gift, and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, in whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning' (James 1:17). All that we have need of is in the Father. Everything comes from Him, and is freely given to us through the Son. All the riches of His grace He gives to us through Jesus. Because of what the Lord has been through on earth, and the things He has suffered, He knows exactly what our need is. He goes to the source, God, receives from the Father that which we need, and brings it to us. He has entered into the Holy of Holies, the sanctuary above, into the presence of God who is the source of all our needs; He receives from God the grace we have need of, then ministers that grace to us: be it strength, comfort, faith, peace, joy, healing, health, life; whatever the need, He goes to God and asks for it, receives it, and then brings it to us and ministers to our need. THIS IS INTERCESSION!

"This is the ministry of a priest; to go into the Holy of Holies, into the presence of God, receive of His grace and then minister the same unto those who need it. I think of the ministry of intercession my dear departed wife had. When the Spirit would put some

needy soul on her heart, she would pray; she would get something from God for them, sometimes in the form of a poem; then she would sit down and write to them ministering to them the thing God had given her for them. She didn't just pray for them, and hope God would do something for them. She got from God and gave to them, and many people have told me how her letters were such a blessing to them. She would minister comfort, strength, confidence, faith and life to them. She would lift them out of discouragement and despondency, lift up the fallen hands, strengthen the feeble knees, put new confidence and faith in God in their hearts, and help them to rejoice and praise God. THIS IS INTERCESSION. Any one can pray, but the intercessor does more than that, he receives and gives.

"Thank God, the way into the Holiest of all is open to us, so, 'Having therefore boldness to enter into the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which He hath consecrated for us, through the veil...and having an High Priest over the house of God; let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith' (Heb. 10:19-22). When the Lord died on the cross, the veil that hung before the entrance to the Holy of Holies, separating us from the presence of God, was rent from the top to the bottom, signifying that the way into the presence of God was now open, so that we as the priests of God can enter into His presence. Under the old order only the High Priest could go into the Holy of Holies, and that only once a year, but now every priest can enter into His presence, and in spirit abide there, but we can also go in and out, at will, to receive grace from God to minister to others.

"Any ministry should be preceded by time spent in the presence of God, in the Holiest of all, at the throne of grace, receiving from God of the riches of His grace, so we will have something to minister of God. If we have not spent time with Him and received from Him, then all we minister is something from ourselves, and not something that is of God. This is why so much ministry is ineffective, it is not something from God, but something of self" - end quote. Oh, how we need INTERCESSORS in this hour, not those who weep and wail before God for His salvation, but those who ENTER IN to a place in God to receive of Him that they may in turn ENTREAT MEN TO BE RECONCILED TO GOD and have wherewith to meet the need of all who turn to Him. THIS IS PRIESTLY INTERCESSION!

"Wherefore He is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession FOR them" (Heb. 7:25). Our great High Priest has a ministry of intercession so potent and so powerful that it can save us to the uttermost a complete and full salvation, spirit, soul and body. "To the uttermost." "To" is from the Greek preposition EIS meaning "into." EIS in the Greek language has a goal, thus making "into" or "unto" acceptable renderings. UNTO the uttermost - completely, entirely, all the way into the image and likeness of God! HE will intercede FOR US, on our behalf, communicating the life of God to us until we have experienced the very "uttermost" salvation.

An intercessor is one who stands between, who stands in the gap and makes up the hedge. He is not so much a minister of words as of actions - and of BEING. No man or woman can be an intercessor and be self-centered or selfish, or carnal, or keep his own opinion, or tell God only what he feels disposed to pray for, or have his own feelings, or be telling the world how he feels about it, imputing their sins unto them, or have his own will, or be praying for God to do things in people's lives that he, with limited vision and understanding, wishes to see done.

I passed by a church building once and saw its schedule of services posted outside. Wednesday night was announced - "7:30 - Intercession." I know what they mean, but intercession cannot be locked into an hour or two on Wednesday night! It is a life lived for others. A prayer may be SAID, but an intercession must be LIVED, for it is Christ living for the need of creation in and as you. All who truly minister of His life are intercessors. With them it is not an exercise, not a hobby, not some religious duty, not a means of making a living, but a flow of His life from within. Intercessors do not merely pray for men to be blessed; they are committed to making it happen. They cannot simply pray and walk away, believing that somehow, somewhere, sometime, God in His great mercy will do whatever has to be done. They are committed to finishing the task. God! give us PRIESTLY INTERCESSORS!

Chapter 33

Priestly Intercession (continued)

In my early ministry there was a question in my mind which recurred again and again. I found it very difficult to understand why the Lord invited and commanded me to pray. Why did we have to pray? God is omniscient - He knows all things. He knows the end from the beginning. He knows what things are going to happen before they do. He is conscious of our needs and problems at all times. Jesus said, "Your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask Him" (Mat. 6:8). So I wondered, Why is it necessary for us to acquaint Him of something He already knows? Does God really know what is best for us, or must we try to figure out what is best and then advise God of it? Do we know something about ourselves of which God is not aware, and must be informed? Is it possible that God, having created us, is unable to care for the work of His hands without a request from us? Or can it be that God might overlook something that should be done in our lives, and we are to discover it and tell Him? Is it possible that God may forget something we have requested of Him, so must be reminded again and again? Or does He derive some twisted sense of pleasure from watching us grovel before Him, begging and pleading, before He sardonically bestows His beneficence upon us? Can it be that our judgment concerning ourselves, and the needs about us, is superior to God's judgment, so we must instruct Him in what we think He should do?

Why the ministry of intercession on behalf of men? God is God, so why doesn't He just do what He wants? Why are we even in the picture? Why are the events on earth related to our prayers and intercessions at all? I meditated long upon the words, "God worketh all things after the counsel of His own will." If this be true, then, I mused, I couldn't change the will of God no matter how long or hard I prayed! The Bible says that God answers only those prayers which are "according to His will," so I reasoned, If I can't tell God something He doesn't already know, and if I can't cause Him to change His mind about any matter, then what is the object and the purpose of praying? Again I was reminded of the verse, "Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your own lusts" (James 4:3). I knew God wasn't going to move contrary to His will just to satisfy my petty desires and wishes - so why pray? I knew prayer worked, because I saw the effects of my prayers in my everyday life. However, I didn't know why God wanted to involve me in the process. What really was the purpose of prayer? These momentous questions puzzled me until the Lord graciously imparted to my troubled spirit the understanding of what true intercession is!

Prayer has been used by untold multitudes of people through long millennium's as a refuge in time of need and trouble. Prayer has been employed as a means of approaching God to obtain from Him things that men could not find in themselves. Prayer has been a turning to a Being far above us humans, One able to do for us those things that we have not been able to do for ourselves. It lies within the very nature of man to turn to a Higher Power when he faces his own mortality and limitation in time of necessity or emergency. In these instances people turn to God because they do believe that HE IS, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him (Heb. 11:6). This is a basic and simple foundation in the psychological and physical constitution of man. The fact is, however,

that most people, including Christians, only pray when there arises a pressing need or crisis. When we are sick, or our child is sick; when someone dear lies at the point of death; when the candle has burned out and hope is gone; when we are engulfed by urgent problems in our home or business; or when we want God's blessing on some cherished project we are about to undertake - then we pray! But when the sun shines resplendent in the heavens with ne'er a cloud upon the horizon, the time men spend in prayer is short indeed!

THE HEAVENLY PATTERN

The true nature of prayer and the exact purpose for intercession cannot be rightly understood apart from the typical ministry of the priesthood within the Tabernacle of Moses. There were three stages by which Moses, the man of God, ascended into the Mount to receive from Him the revelation of the Tabernacle. To the first, he went in company with Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and the seventy elders of the children of Israel. "And they saw the God of Israel: and there was under His feet as it were a paved work of a sapphire stone, and as it were the body of heaven in His clearness...they saw God, and did eat and drink" (Ex. 24:10-11). When this wonderful spiritual feast was ended, the voice of God called Moses up to a higher plane - a further peak. He first bade the elders tarry where they were; and then, accompanied only by Joshua, he rose up, and went into the Mount of God, on which the cloud brooded, covered and bathed in the dazzling brilliance of the glory of the Lord. But on the seventh day, even Joshua was left behind. God called unto Moses out of the cloud. And Moses went up further into the Mount, deeper and yet deeper into the heart of the burning glory. All his senses were awake to the wonderful scenes around him, and entranced; "And Moses was in the Mount forty days and forty nights."

During that time instructions were given Moses concerning the Tabernacle, which was to be erected on the desert floor below. Those instructions are exceedingly detailed and specific. Nothing was left to human fancy or chance. Beginning in the Most Holy Place with the Ark and its Mercy-Seat as the Throne of God, where the High Priest ministered unto the Lord on behalf of the people and received from God the blessing and life for the people, the instructions pass through the Golden Altar of Incense, the Show-Bread Table of shittim wood, the Candlestick with its seven branches, the boards, and curtains, and hangings, and the Brazen Laver, until they end at the great Brazen Altar in the Court of the Tabernacle, where God and the priesthood and the sinners all met. In the vision shown Moses of this Tabernacle with its priesthood it was as though the eternal realities which had dwelt forever in the mind of God had taken visible shape before his vision. The unseen became visible. The eternal took form. The spiritual became material. A pattern was shown him. He trod the isles of the True Tabernacle. He beheld the heavenly things themselves. And it was after this pattern that he was commanded to build. "According to all that I show thee, after the pattern of the Tabernacle, and the pattern of all the instruments thereof, even so shall ye make it" (Ex. 25:9).

Truly there are verities deep and profound here. For we are told that these things were made after the pattern of things in the heavens. Every knop, and tache, and curtain, and vessel, and piece of furniture, and each action and ministration of the priesthood therein, had some heavenly parallel, some spiritual counterpart of which it was the rude and material expression. Through these examples and shadows there is no doubt that the ancient saints caught glimpses of eternal realities. And under the teaching of the same Holy Spirit, as taught Moses of old, we explore the sacred meanings which underlie the

ark and the mercy-seat; the altar of incense; the candlestick and the table; the laver and the altar of burnt offering; and the priesthood ministering before all. Each is like a hook in the divine household, to which God has attached a sacred meaning, and which yields up its secret to those who reverently FOLLOW O-N TO K N-O-W THE LORD.

One thing is absolutely certain. The Tabernacle is the meeting place between God and man. It is there that God and man meet and are joined together. Everything in that Tabernacle contributes to that meeting and the ministry of the priesthood effects it.

When the High Priest stands before God, it is man that stands in the presence of God. When the High Priest speaks to God, it is man communing with God on behalf of men. When God speaks to the High Priest, it is God conversing with man on behalf of men. And when the High Priest comes forth from that holy audience with the blessing for the people, he imparts that which he has received on behalf of his fellows by his meeting with God, and in the blessing God and they are joined and co-mingled.

The type has passed, and we know that the Tabernacle built with hands is no more. But what do we see? Men are trying to reproduce it, or to invent a substitute for it. Church buildings, cathedrals and temples are pawned as the meeting place with God! Call these "churches" if you will. THEY ARE NOT CHURCHES. They are mere buildings; and there is nothing sacred or holy about them. We praise God for the privilege of assembling with those of "like precious faith," and rejoice in any gathering of saints that is truly UNTO HIM: but in point of fact it is not in any building made with hands that the priestly ministry is carried on. Ah, how greatly we misconceive our true position! We certainly need not the Tabernacle of Moses, the Temple of Solomon, nor any cathedral or so-called church building or gathering to minister as the Lord's priests; because we are constituted priests of the HEAVENLY TABERNACLE, which no human hand ever reared, and which is the true meeting-place between God and His priesthood, yea, of all who come to God.

"Neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, shall ye worship the Father. But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship Him. God is a spirit: and they that worship Him must worship Him IN SPIRIT AND IN TRUTH" (Jn. 4:21-24). It is an indisputable fact that in all of the recorded history of the human race men have been prone to associate their worship of God with places and things, and to attach some special sacredness or power to that place or thing, until the places and things become more important than God Himself. Many precious folk imagine that because they met God in some glorious experience in such and such a building, room, or seat, they will find Him there again. I remember seeing people during the great healing campaigns of the late 1940's and early 1950's, long after the tent was folded, the lights were out, and the trucks had departed, returning to stand in the saw dust at the exact spot where the glory of God had been seen, expecting to meet God in just the same way again.

Intercession is rooted in worship. If we will take very special heed to what our Lord spoke to the benighted woman at the well, we will understand that the true worshippers SHALL - not ought to, they S-H-A-L-L - worship the Father in spirit and in truth, or in reality, for that is what truth is. God is spirit. The Holy Ghost is spirit. He that is joined to the Lord is one spirit. God makes His angels spirits. Spirit denotes that which is vital and expressive in our state of being. The true worshippers shall worship the Father OUT OF THE STATE OF THEIR BEING, not by words they have learned, nor by ceremonies performed by

rote, nor by an anointing coming upon them. "Thou desirest truth in the inward parts." There must be a reality and obedience to the working of God.

The woman said to Jesus, "Our Fathers worshipped in this mountain; and ye (Jews) say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship." You Jews say that the temple in Jerusalem is the place to worship. We say: This mountain is our holy place. The concept of the carnal mind is: You can only worship God if you are in the right, holy circumstance, not for example in your car driving down the road, or while washing dishes, or on the job. Jesus said: God is not a place, a building or a mountain; God is SPIRIT. You cannot confine God to a temple or a time. God does not move exclusively on Sunday morning at twenty minutes after eleven, following three choruses and two minutes of singing in the Spirit. His Spirit is everywhere, all the time. They that worship God must do so in a state of being: in spirit and in truth. The great apostle Paul declared, "I am poured out like an oblation." Like incense, his whole life was an offering to God.

I was greatly blessed many years ago by the following words written by George Hawtin: "There is a place in God where saints may dwell ten thousand times more real than any natural realm. There is a true temple, NOT MADE WITH HANDS, eternal in the heavens. It is the mystical temple, which is HIS BODY. There is a church which is THE TRUE CHURCH. Its happy saints dwell in the realm of the Spirit, and, because they do, they continually worship God IN SPIRIT AND IN TRUTH. I anticipate that many will ask, 'How do we worship God in Spirit?' But this you will not discover until the hour comes when you learn that neither in this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, nor in the church system, nor in the denomination, nor in the mass, nor in the ordinances, nor in any such thing do men worship the Father. When you have departed from all these things and broken these idols from off your neck and cast their image from before you, then you will see no man but Jesus only, and then only will you understand what it means to worship in spirit and in truth. When this wisdom is sweet to your soul, then like the woman of Samaria you will drop that jug with which you for so long a time drew natural water from a natural well, and you will run off as she to unashamedly declare, 'Is not this the Christ?'"

May God help all who have received the call to sonship to realize that we do not have to go to Jerusalem or to a mountain, or be at a special time or place to worship God, or use special words or a certain form, or go through the religious exercises the whole church world goes through every Sunday morning, but that we worship God at all times and in all places because our whole life IS WORSHIP. May God do a work in us and cause us to be true worshippers, that whether we are in the desert, or in the mountain, or in Jerusalem, or at home, whether by voice, or by offering up, or whatever we are doing, reality be in us, so that whatever we do, we are doing it out of that reality. Strange, isn't it, that most "gifts of the Spirit" only work after three choruses or at the close of the sermon! Let us ask God to help us not to be PROFESSIONAL WORSHIPPERS, but to be TRUE WORSHIPPERS of the Father.

When we meet with a company of the elect, we are not to think of them as the whole of those with whom we worship and minister. The true priest is one of a great festal throng, which is comprising the spiritual temple built of the living stones of redeemed and transformed men and women. As priests in the HEAVENLY SANCTUARY, the TRUE TABERNACLE, we are but part of a great and universal congregation consisting of all the elect saints who have gone before, and those now living, gathered out of all ages, and throughout the vast universe of God. The preacher, the prisoner, the traveler, the mother, the king - all meet there IN THE SPIRIT REALM, and worship and minister from thence.

All are priests, and yonder is the great High Priest of our profession, who has pressed through the heavens and ever lives to make intercession. He is "a minister of the true Tabernacle." And such are we! He has raised us up and made us sit together with Him in these heavenly places, and He has made us to be a kingdom of priests. Ah, it is not "in church" on Sunday morning that we know the power of this priesthood; it is IN THE SPIRIT AND IN TRUTH, in reality wrought within, every moment and everywhere and in every situation and circumstance as we live and walk in HIS REALM.

I trust and pray that the eyes of our understanding may be enlightened to the fact that we are mere learners in the great school of priesthood. God has been using His people everywhere to whatever degree He has prepared the vessel for that revelation of the Christ. There has come a beautiful unfolding of His purpose, the outflow of His life and the manifestation of Himself. But there shall yet come the ultimate, and total, and complete revelation of Jesus Christ - not a narrow, limited thing, not to get a number of people saved and filled with the Spirit, and healed and blessed and used - but the Kingdom of God coming with power and with glory, as an expression and a manifestation of God in His total capacity with no limitations, with all the power, with all the glory, all the might, all the majesty, all the authority, so that nations will be swept into the Kingdom of God, creation delivered, and the last enemy, even death, destroyed from off the face of the earth forevermore. What bright and glorious prospects loom before the vision of God's Royal Priesthood!

WORKERS TOGETHER WITH GOD

It has been said that an intercessor is God's strategist - he sees what God is after, and goes along with Him. The men of the Bible always understood their specific commission. So must we. In the preceding article on this subject I pointed out that in order to understand intercession we must go back to the creation of man. Jesus said, "The Father hath given Him (the Son) AUTHORITY...because He is the SON OF MAN" (Jn. 5:26,27). One might think it should have read, "because He is the SON OF GOD," but it doesn't say that. The awesome and universal authority of the Son is rooted in the fact that He is the SON OF MAN. Man in God's image is God's government in the Kingdom of God. Creation was originally established with a degree of splendor suitable to the dignity of Adam as its appointed ruler.

It was after the vastnesses of the heavens and the earth had come forth from the creative hands of Omnipotence that the Creator proclaimed the awesome fiat: "Let us make man in our image, and after our likeness: and let them have DOMINION" (Gen. 1:26). You see, the dominion of the Kingdom was given to man. Man was ordained by God to rule not only the earth, but the universe with its billions of galaxies. David mentions this in the eighth Psalm. "When I consider Thy heavens, the work of Thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which Thou hast ordained; what is man, that Thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that Thou visitest him? For Thou hast made him a little lower than God (Heb.), and hast crowned him with glory and honour. Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of Thy hands; Thou hast put ALL THINGS under his feet."

Now that phrase, "under his feet," is a Hebrew term which means that man was to have authority over all of God's creation. He was to rule it all, govern it all, be head of it all. God made man for that intent and purpose. When God gave the world and all things into the power of man, made in His image, who should rule it as a viceroy under Him, it was His plan that man should do nothing but with God and through God, and God Himself

would do all His work in the universe through man. Can we not see by this that Adam was appointed God's KING-PRIEST on behalf of all creation? Now for Jesus to have anything to do with this dominion He had to become a man, for the dominion was given to man, and in order for Him to receive the Kingdom, He had to be a man; it was necessary, in fact, for Him to come as the second man, the last Adam. As the eternal Word of God He could have nothing to do with this dominion, though it was through Him that all these things were made. But become a man He did, the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, and as man He has qualified to receive the Kingdom and be the ruling Head of it, the King of Glory.

When sin entered the world, Adam's power was proved to be a terrible reality, for through him the earth, with the whole race of man, and all things, was brought under the curse of sin and death. When he fell his kingdom fell with him. When he came under the dominion of sin and death he took all that he ruled with him. But, blessed be God! when creation's new rulers, the second man, the last Adam, Christ the Head and His glorified body of sons of God, are manifested, their Kingdom will be elevated again with them. As they are forever free from sin and sickness and sorrow and limitation and fear and death - then will their realm be. This means that IN CHRIST we have been restored as beloved and royal sons and daughters in the family of God. Once again, we have been given the power and authority to carry out our Father's will - to establish His Kingdom here on earth. We now have that authority and privilege. God's royal purpose for this world will be fulfilled through the body of Christ. He is the heavenly Head, but we are the earthly members that make up that body. God has purposed to work out His will on earth through you and me, beloved. Without Him we cannot; without us He will not! We are God's KING-PRIESTS appointed to bless and restore all things into God!

The above explains why intercession is necessary. God honors the dominion which He has given to us as elect members of His government on earth. HE EVER REMAINS THE SOURCE OF ALL THINGS, but He respects the position and the authority and the responsibility committed to us as His sons and viceroys under Him. All that happens on earth must happen through man, the redeemed man, conformed to the image of God. The Royal Priesthood of the sons of God is the connecting link between the Creator and His creation, that through them He may be seen, touched, and known. The glory, love, grace, wisdom, knowledge and power of God must be exercised toward every creature everywhere through the priesthood company, the firstfruits of His redemption. Therefore, He waits for us to come before Him in prayer, in holy fellowship, communing with Him about the affairs of the Kingdom, before we rush out into the confusion and sorrows and need of the earthly arena. Intercession is prayer and praise and command that flows out of relationship and fellowship with our heavenly Father. From our conversations with God, we find out His will. It is there in those blessed seasons sitting at His feet, that we come to know what He wants and learn of His ways. Intercession is asking or inviting God to do what we discover He wants to do on earth and, in turn, speaking or decreeing that it be done. In this way, we become "laborers together with God" (I Cor. 3:19).

When we invite God into our realm of dominion (the earth) through intercession based on a knowledge of what He desires, and then decree that His will be done on earth as it is in heaven, this is the power of the Kingdom of God in operation. Oh, that men would understand this one great truth! God will not work on our earth without us becoming a partner who will work with Him that His will might be done through us. Since the establishment of His Kingdom on earth through His redeemed and regenerated body, He will not force His way into our world and violate the dominion which He has given to man.

The elect of God have a responsibility and authority in this world that God will not assume as His own prerogative - a dominion which He will not usurp. He cannot and will not violate this kingdom and this dominion, under the whole heaven, which is given to the people of the saints of the Most High!

You recall that Jesus said in Jn. 5:27, "The Father has given the Son authority... because He is the Son of MAN." However, in verse thirty Jesus says, "I can of my own self do nothing." Authority is given Him, BECAUSE He is the Son of man, yet by Himself He can do nothing! Jesus then goes on to say, "I judge only as the voice (of the Father) comes to me and my judgment is just, for I seek (consult) not my own will, but the will of Him who sent me." He always refers and submits to the will of the Father. The Father, however, depends on Him to be the one through whom His will shall be done here on earth. The Father would not in any way by-pass the willing work of His Son. In a sense, they choose to be dependent upon one another. The Son had been sent to do a work here on earth. The Father did not and would not work without Him. Nor would the Son do anything apart from the revealed will of the Father.

It is this unique and special relationship between the Father and the firstborn Son that becomes the pattern for all the younger sons of God who are growing up into His likeness. Jesus communed with His Father until He saw what the Father was doing and wanted done. As the Son of man, He then had the right and the responsibility to ask or invite - and in a sense decree - that the Father work out His will on earth. The Father then had a right to manifest His power and glory through His Son to bring His will to pass. This is the government of God through the Royal Priesthood! Intercession, therefore, involves knowing God and His will, decreeing His will upon earth, and doing whatever He empowers us to do to make it a glorious reality. This world first of all, and then the vast universe beyond, is our God-given realm of responsibility and authority. And intercession is the first principle in the science of ruling it!

Precious indeed is the promise given in I Jn. 5:14, "If we ask anything ACCORDING TO HIS WILL, He heareth us...and we know that we have the petitions that we desired from Him." If we ask anything - no exceptions - no limit to God's confidence in His sons! And why? Because He trusts them to ask right things "according to His will." He is guiding them, even in what they ask, if they are truly sons after His own heart; so God sets no limit to His power. If anyone is doing God's will let him ask anything. It is God's will that he ask anything. Let him put His promise to the test.

Notice here what the true basis of sonship prayer is. The prayer that is answered is the prayer after God's will. And the reason for this is plain. What is God's will is cosmic purpose. I don't present to understand the depth of it, but when Jesus was going away He said, "Hitherto have ye asked nothing in My name, from now on you will ask the Father in My name, and whatever you ask the Father I will do it." Ah, we have missed the importance of prayer in the redemptive and reconstructive and restorational purposes of God! Our prayers ARE important. It is the law of the Kingdom. You'll find yourself praying, you'll find yourself desiring to pray, and that's the Holy Spirit urging you to do what is necessary to enable things to happen the way they are supposed to happen. In the economy of the Kingdom there is a relationship between the decrees of God and the response of God's people! God created all things by a Word. God SAID, "Let there be...and it was so." Not God wished, or God thought, but God SAID. That's a CREATIVE WORD! Prayer is a participation in the creative Word of God, speaking the new creation into existence. It's a mystery I don't fully understand, but there are times when I have to

pray, there are times when the altar of my soul is full of clouds of holy incense as I send up to God petitions, as I decree a Word, not for myself, but for others, and when I can't articulate them in English I send them up in an unknown tongue. And there is that deep inner consciousness that somehow I am participating in a great tableau and drama of history. How narrow our prayers sometimes can be. We pray so often for ourselves: me and my wife, my son John, we three, no more. How broad our intercession should be! When we come before the throne of God whose Kingdom we represent, there must be a catholicity, a universality, about our prayers. We are the PRIESTHOOD for all creation!

TRUE WORSHIPPERS

There are four stages in intercession; first, to sit at the Lord's feet until we discover His will; second, to yield unto Him that His will may be fulfilled in and through us; third, to decree the thing creatively and proclaim it among men; fourth, to be committed to make it happen, to finish the task, and bring God's Kingdom to pass on earth.

To sit at His feet means to be a worshipper. It is much more than drawing nigh to God with our mouth and pouring forth beautiful expressions of praise or impassioned petitions. "The hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship Him" (Jn. 4:23). The emphasis in this passage is not on worship, but on TRUE WORSHIPPERS. I do not hesitate to tell you that much of the so-called spiritual worship in this hour is in fact idolatrous, for many have made an idol of worship, they worship the beauty and glory of worship, rather than WORSHIPPING THE FATHER. But TRUE WORSHIPPERS are true worshippers because they worship the FATHER in spirit and in truth, or in reality. What we do is not of prime importance. What we ARE is the thing that matters, for out of a state of being comes our doing. The Holy Spirit cried through the prophet, "This people draweth nigh unto Me with their mouth and honoureth Me with their lips: but their heart is far from Me. But in vain do they worship Me..." (Mat. 5:8,9).

It is not sufficient to worship God as an act. If you are not a true worshipper, your worship is vanity, matters not one whit how beautiful or spiritual it may sound; it is not in spirit and in truth, because it is not proceeding out of a state of being. "Well did Esaias prophesy of you, hypocrites" (Mat. 15:7). A hypocrite cannot worship God, it takes a worshipper to worship God. God is looking for those who have become true worshippers. "This people shall be unto Me for a praise, a name, and a glory." The man born blind whom Jesus healed, with wisdom and understanding declared, "If any man be a worshipper of God, and doeth His will, him He heareth" (Jn. 9:31). He did not say, "If any man worships God." Anyone can go through a form of worship. And so he said: If he BE A WORSHIPPER. God heareth not sinners, but if any man BE A WORSHIPPER OF GOD AND DOETH HIS WILL, He heareth him. Multitudes of people daily worship God, but God neither sees nor hears them.

Abraham is the classic example of a true worshipper. There arrived for the faithful patriarch that most solemn of days in which the voice of the Almighty fell upon his listening ear, commanding, "Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt-offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of" (Gen. 22:2). Though this command filled Abraham's heart with pain, yet he would not be as surprised to receive it as a father would in our day; for such offerings were very common among all those people in the land where Abraham lived. Abraham, being strong in faith, never for one moment

doubted or disobeyed God's word. He knew that Isaac was the child whom God had promised, and that God had promised, too, that Isaac should have children, and that those coming from Isaac should be a great nation and a company of nations. He did not see how God could fulfill His promise with regard to Isaac, if Isaac should be slain as an offering: unless, indeed, God should raise him up from the dead afterward, a thought which Abraham's unwavering faith did not discount. But Abraham undertook at once to obey God's command. He took two young men with him and an ass laden with wood for the fire; and he went toward the mountain in the north, Isaac his son walking by his side. For two days they journeyed, sleeping under the trees at night in the open country. And on the third day, Abraham saw the mountain far away. As they drew near to the mountain, Abraham said to the young men, "Abide ye here with the ass; and I and the lad will go yonder and worship, and come again to you" (Gen. 22:5).

Ah! he did not say, "I and the lad will go yonder and offer up a sacrifice," but "we will go yonder and WORSHIP." So great was his faith in God's promise that Abraham declared, "and WE will come again to you." For Abraham believed that in some way God would bring back Isaac to life. He took the wood from the ass and placed it on Isaac, and the two walked up the mountain together. As they were walking, Isaac said, "Father, here is the wood, but where is the lamb for the offering?" And Abraham replied, "My son, God will provide Himself a lamb." And they came to the place on the top of the mountain. There Abraham built an altar of stones and earth heaped up, and on it he placed the wood. Then he tied the hands and the feet of Isaac, and laid him on the wood on the altar. And Abraham lifted up his hand, holding a knife to kill his son. A moment longer, and Isaac would be slain by his own father's hand. But just at that moment the angel of the Lord out of heaven called to Abraham, and said, "Abraham! Abraham!" And Abraham answered, "Here I am Lord." Then the angel of the Lord said, "Do not lay your hand upon your son. Now I know that you love God more than you love your only son, since you are ready to give up your son, your only son, to God."

The message is clear - Abraham WORSHIPPED GOD in the offering up of Isaac. Abraham was a true worshipper! When called on to offer up his son, he did it as an act of worship. If Abraham had not been a true worshipper, he might have offered up Isaac, but it would not have been an act of worship to God. It might have been a sacrifice, but because Abraham was a true worshipper, his offering up of Isaac became an act of true worship in the presence of God.

Worship is from the Hebrew word SHAHAH meaning "to bow down, to prostrate," and from the Greek PROSKYNEO meaning "to prostrate, do obeisance to." Worship is the honor, reverence, and homage paid to superior beings and powers, and to God. It is not words at all, but an attitude, a state of being, a reverent and submissive bending to God's will. It is not what you are doing that matters most, but your state of being when doing it. You can pray for something and it can be just a selfish, proud, egotistical thing. Or it can be an act of worship to God. It is worship when it is GOD'S WILL you seek, that His kingdom might be brought to pass on earth.

When David brought the ark to Jerusalem according to the word of the Lord, he worshipped the Lord in the beauty of holiness (I Chron. 16:29). Why did David have to go back for the ark twice? Because the first time it was not an act of worship. It was an act of triumph: they were conquering their enemies. If it was worship they would have brought the ark according to God's way, but they thought, If the Philistines can haul it on a cart, we can do the same, and so God smote them. But later David worshipped the Lord in the

beauty of holiness, because he brought the ark back according to the Lord's command: on the shoulders of the Levites and rejoicing in the presence of the Lord.

When Job, that mighty man of the East, received the evil tidings that his sons and daughters were dead, and all his possessions lost, "Then Job arose and rent his mantle, and shaved his head, and fell down upon the ground, and WORSHIPPED" (Job 1:20). If Job had been a complainer, he would have complained. If Job had been a backbiter, he would have backbitten. If he was rebellious, he would have rebelled. But Job was a worshipper, therefore he worshipped. He was a man, perfect and upright, one that feared God and hated evil. That was the testimony of his state of being, which was a state of worship. We may be very congenial and lovable people, with an aura of spirituality surrounding our every action, when you catch us in the right mood and under the proper circumstances; but when things start to happen as they did to Job, then whatever your state of being is, it will come out! Job fell on his face, and what he was, was manifested: he was a worshipper, so he worshipped God. Ah, what would have been our first expression had we been in Job's place? May God make us true worshippers! Anyone can draw nigh with their mouth and praise God, but it is vanity, a religious pretense if it is not proceeding from a state of being. God wants worship in spirit and in truth, which comes out of a state of being: true worshippers worshipping the Father!

If there is no complete committal to God, then the offering up of our possessions to God will not be worship. "Though I give my body to be burnt," says Paul, "If it is not an expression of my state of being as a worshipper, filled with divine love, it profits me nothing." God wants what comes out of us to be an expression of what He is doing and of what He has wrought in us. True worship is an expression of our relationship with God, where everything within us is done for the glory and praise and honor of God. That is why it made no difference to God whether Jesus did carpentry work for a number of years, or healed the sick for three and a half years. Jesus was a worshipper. He came only to do the will of His Father whether that meant working or waiting, or winning or losing, or living or dying. The Father said, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I AM well pleased," when all He had done was carpentry work for almost thirty years! Can we not see by this that it is only in the spirit of worship that one can sit at the feet of the Father and receive from His great mind and heart the instruction and counsel of His will. May God make us such TRUE WORSHIPPERS that our walk will be worship!

There have ever been those who seek, as did Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, to offer strange fire - strange worship - before the Lord. The fire of the Tabernacle had been kindled by God Himself, out of the burning heat of His glory-cloud. That divine fire was kept ever burning - God's very own fire - and was drawn forth to light the candlestick and the golden altar of incense. The fire was God's fire, and it characterized the entire ministry of the priesthood as they ministered that which had come directly from the Lord. You recall that Nadab and Abihu took "either of them his censer, and put fire therein, and put incense thereon, and offered strange fire before the Lord, WHICH HE COMMANDED THEM NOT" (Lev. 10:1).

This strange fire is first that which God has not commanded. Rather than worship, then, as it purported to be, it was REBELLION in disguise, because it was not the result of an obedience to the Word of God, but was that which came "by the will of man." Ah, how often have we witnessed the offering of strange fire before the Lord! Throughout long centuries the church systems have accumulated a great variety of traditions, creeds, ordinances, methods, institutions and programs, all of which are but poor products of the

carnal minds of unspiritual men. The apostle Peter gives a remarkable clue that unmistakably identifies a ministry which offers strange fire before the Lord. "But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you... and many shall follow their pernicious ways...and THROUGH COVETOUSNESS SHALL THEY WITH FEIGNED WORDS MAKE MERCHANDISE OF YOU: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not" (II Pet. 2:1-3).

THEIR need of YOUR money is the object of every meeting they hold, every magazine they publish, and every letter they write. They need money for this, money for that, money for their crusades, money for their broadcast, money for missions, money for the destitute, money for buildings, money for Bible schools, money for grandiose programs to save the nation and schemes to evangelize the world. They will send you a book for your money, they will send you a tape for your money, they will send you some gold-colored trinket for your money, they will pray for you for your money and with a thousand other crafty schemes they MAKE MERCHANDISE of the gullible people who blindly follow them.

This strange fire was an adulterous and perverted worship, for the word translated "strange" in the King James version comes from the Hebrew root word ZUWR meaning "to turn aside," hence, to be foreign, strange or profane. There were two brothers, Cain and Abel. What was the difference between them? Abel worshipped God in the offering of a lamb, the prescribed method by which man may come to God. From the foundation of the world there was the revelation of the Lamb slain at the portals of Eden. The commandment was and ever has been that "without the shedding of blood, there is no remission of sin." Cain, however, brought a sacrifice of another nature, for it is written, "And in the process of time, it came to pass that Cain brought of the FRUIT OF THE GROUND an offering unto the Lord" (Gen. 4:3).

It is a remarkable fact that Adam was named because he was formed of the dust of the ground. Man himself is ground, for it is written, "The first man Adam was of the earth, earthy" (I Cor. 15:47). Cain, then, in bringing of the fruit of the ground was bringing the fruit of HIS OWN GROUND, the produce of the flesh, the product of his own thinking and understanding and imagination. Like the religion of this evil day, he offered the good works and zealous programs of his own invention, presenting them to be blessed by God upon HIS ALTAR, and in so doing, he offered "strange fire" - perverted worship - unto the Lord and was, for his sin, driven out from the presence of the Lord. Cain was offering some excellent and beautiful fruit of his fleshly abilities and talents, but there was not a spirit of worship in him, for he brought not what God required. He was not a true worshipper. He passed through all the forms, but the moment he was rejected he killed his brother. He killed because he was a murderer. He killed because he was not a worshipper, he would not bow to be God's viceroy, but presumed to act as a god in his own right. God wants people who are worshippers, who will prostrate themselves before His majesty, and learn of Him, drinking deeply from the unlimited fountain of eternal life and wisdom and power and glory.

Once we have drunk abundantly of the precious mind of our Father in heaven, and have been instructed by His wise counsel, we are then prepared to reign over the earth. Our Lord Jesus Christ is the pattern and example. Once when He walked upon this planet there came to Him a Roman centurion whose servant was sick. "And when Jesus was coming to Capernaum, there came unto Him a centurion, beseeching Him, and saying,

Lord, my servant lieth at home sick of the palsy, grievously tormented. And Jesus saith unto him, I will come and heal him. The centurion answered and said, Lord, I am not worthy that Thou shouldest come under my roof: but SPEAK THE WORD only, and my servant shall be healed." Jesus spoke the word and the servant was healed in the self-same moment. The Lord was not near the place, but a miracle took place. How did this happen? When He spoke His Word was creative and His Spirit went forth and did the work. God speaks, His Spirit goes forth and things are created. Christ speaks, His Spirit goes forth and people are healed, the dead are raised, the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the dumb speak and the deaf hear. The Lord speaks, and mighty empires rise and fall. Have you not noticed, precious friend of mine, that the Lord never did any great works without speaking? To the man with the withered arm He said, "Stretch out your hand." To the paralytic He said, "Arise, take up your bed and walk." To the dead He commanded, "Come forth!" He spoke the Word and marvelous things happened. This is how the Kingdom of God operates. But the Law of the Kingdom is that one can speak into existence only those things that he has received of Him. Oh! how we need to sit at His blessed feet and be taught of HIM!

Reflecting in one of his writings on the exploits of George Muller, whom we have mentioned earlier in this article, George Hawtin once wrote: "For many years I read of the marvelous faith of George Muller. How I coveted a similar faith by which mountains and obstacles could be removed! Well, the truth is that mountain moving faith is very simple. There is nothing to it at all - nothing except complete harmony with the will of God and the purpose of the Lord. Elijah himself could not have done what Muller did simply because God had not asked him to do it. And George Muller could not have called down fire on the altar simply because God did not ask him to do it or lead him into a circumstance where such an act was necessary. A lifetime of experience has taught me that there is ONLY ONE element necessary to real faith, and that one element is THE WILL OF GOD. Therefore harmony with the divine mind is the secret of faith and it is this harmony and submission to God's purpose in us that must be the single thought and the compelling spirit that controls all our fasting and all our prayer.

"How often have you heard Christians dreamily say, 'I wish the Lord would send us a revival.' 'I wish the Lord would save my husband.' 'I wish the Lord would heal my body. 'I wish the Lord would send us a good rain,' or some such thing. Then they will make request in the congregation desiring people to pray that these wishes of theirs, which they call 'prayer requests,' will be answered. Then when such requests go unanswered for years we wonder why the Lord did not hear us. Why should He hear us when the request is born, NOT OF HIS SPIRIT, but OF THE NATURAL MIND? There is far too much rushing into God's presence with out boots on, far too much lifting up of unholy hands, far too much stepping where angels fear to tread, and far too little preparation of the heart in waiting for the Spirit of God to put the YEARNINGS OF THE ALMIGHTY in the spirit and on the lips of man" - end quote. This is beyond any chance of contradiction the CENTRAL TRUTH in intercession. Learn, O man of God, to fellowship with Christ, rejoicing in the Holy Spirit communing with the Father, becoming one with Him in all wisdom and spiritual understanding, walking in His will and doing His bidding, and you will then be qualified to enter upon that precious ministry of priestly intercession as a PRIEST OF THE MOST HIGH GOD. (The end of the Priesthood series)

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).