

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES

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

The Royal Priesthood

Book One

By J. Preston Eby

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Table of Contents

A Kingdom Of Priests.....	4
All The Earth Is Mine	16
Priests Displaying His Glory.....	29
The Making Of A Priest.....	41
Compassionate Priests.....	54
Partakers Of The Heavenly Calling	66
Qualifications For Priesthood	78
Qualifications For Priesthood (continued).....	91
Qualifications For Priesthood (continued).....	104
Qualifications For Priesthood (continued).....	117
Qualifications For Priesthood (continued).....	131
Qualifications For Priesthood (continued).....	144
The Progression of the Priesthood	170
The Expanding Priesthood	183
The Expanding Priesthood (continued).....	196
About The Author	210

Chapter 1

A Kingdom Of Priests

In the Bible there are a great number of words, phrases, and expressions that are especially significant in the creative and redemptive plan of God. One of the first such phrases was uttered by God Himself before ever He brought mankind into being when He said, "Let us make man in our image." This was the purpose of God condensed into about as few words as can be used. Then there were the inspired words of Isaiah when he prophesied, "Unto us a child is born; unto us a Son is given." Connected with this were the words of the angels unto the shepherds, "For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord," and the proclamation of the Voice from heaven at the Jordan river, "This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." Now God and man were united together in one body, never to be separated, never to be divided. And there were the meaningful words spoken by Jesus on the cross, "It is finished!" and then the wonderful words of the messenger at the tomb, "He is not here, He is risen." I am quite sure that no man as yet has ever plumbed the depths of those words and their meaning to all mankind. Innumerable works have been written, countless sermons have been preached, and many beautiful hymns have been intoned about the unsearchable riches of Christ and the unspeakable glories of redemption; but truthfully, no one has yet fathomed the depths of such glorious and awe-inspiring realities.

There are many other examples of such words and phrases, but one we want to consider in this message is the proclamation of the Lord to His people in Ex. 19:5-6: "And ye shall be unto Me A KINGDOM OF PRIESTS." The full text reads, "Now, therefore, if ye will obey My voice indeed, and keep My covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto Me above all people: for all the earth is Mine: and ye shall be unto Me A KINGDOM OF PRIESTS, and an holy nation." The subject of the royal Priesthood, like many of the themes of Scripture, is inexhaustible. It sparkles as the twinkling stars of the heavens with glories which many have not yet beheld. Let us put our eye to the telescope of the Holy Spirit, and allow this grand subject to be brought nearer to our spiritual vision for, in so doing, we shall behold more of the grandeur and ineffableness of the "High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus," and of the purpose and majesty of OUR ONENESS IN HIM. This makes it mandatory upon us to remove the shoes from off our feet and tread carefully upon this holy and mysterious ground. But at the same time it also holds out the promise to us that we shall here gain an insight into some of the most marvelous and glorious things in God's whole mighty work of creation and redemption.

A PEOPLE FOR A PURPOSE

Turning to our text, the first thing that we notice is the injunction to obedience. "If ye will hearken to My voice indeed, and keep My covenant." We could not think of a disobedient people being for God - "a peculiar treasure, a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation." The apostle Peter speaks of the saints as "children of obedience;" they are begotten of that nature, and characterized by it. He speaks of "being born again, not of corruptible

seed, but of incorruptible, by the living and abiding Word of God" (I Pet. 1:14, 23). Man after the flesh is born of corruptible seed, but there is another generation born of incorruptible seed, who desire earnestly the pure milk of the Word, and then the strong meat of the Word, and who grow up into the measure of the stature of the fullness of the Christ by it. They become "a chosen race, a kingly priesthood, a holy nation, a people for a purpose" (I Pet. 2:9). Just what the Lord proposed in Exodus chapter 19.

As one has written: "In the sovereign operation of the Spirit of God upon mankind, there is the apprehending of those whom He chooses to become a part of His specific workings for this day. In every age He has selected those whom He wills, drawing them out and beyond the normal course of this world's living, and placing within them a Divine Call, a sense of destiny which must be fulfilled. This inworking of His grace results in the formation of a 'new creation species' which becomes part of that 'firstfruits' for the demonstration of His love and salvation for all mankind. It is clearly written, 'And it was of His own will that He gave us birth as sons by His Word of Truth, so that we should be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures - A SAMPLE of what He created to be consecrated to Himself' (James 1:18, Amplified). Hence this divine selectivity is a vital part of the outworking of His own purpose, not for the excluding of all men from His salvation, but rather for the consummation of that plan, as they become instruments through whom His grace and mercy are revealed to others."

To these the word of promise is given: "Ye shall be a PECULIAR TREASURE unto Me above all people." Many of us know all too well that this word "peculiar" has often been used to cloak religious conduct both strange and irrational. People have been known to dress in outmoded or unusual styles of clothing, to act in wild and curious ways, and to do rather weird things and then grin a self-conscious grin and justify it all by saying, "Well, we are called to be God's peculiar people!" The English word "peculiar" in the language of A.D. 1611 (when the King James Bible was published) had no connotation of queerness, oddness, ridiculousness nor foolishness. It translates the Hebrew word GULLA meaning "to shut up wealth - to put the jewels, treasures, etc. belonging to a king in a safe, protected place because of their extraordinary value." It was God's way of emphasizing that His special people would be of great importance, value, and purpose to Him - a treasure above all other treasures.

Every loving mother and father has a good idea of what God meant. There are babies in houses up and down every street, as you can tell by the baby clothes hanging on the lines of a summer day. But in the house where you live, there is one little infant in particular, and he is a peculiar treasure unto you above all others. It does not mean necessarily that he is prettier, but it does mean that he is the treasure above all other treasures, full of hope and purpose in your lives, and you would not trade him for any other child in the whole world. He is a peculiar treasure! This gives us some idea, at least, of what we are - God's special jewels marked out for Him!

But it means infinitely MORE than that! The apostle Peter, reiterating the covenant of Ex. 19:5-6 states, and the Diaglott beautifully renders, "But you are a chosen Race, a Royal Priesthood, a holy Nation, a PEOPLE FOR A PURPOSE; that ye may declare the Perfections of Him who called you from darkness into His wonderful light." In the phrase, "a people FOR a purpose," it has been pointed out that the word "for" is the Greek word "eis" meaning INTO, and signifies that forward action of God taking a people and leading them onward, preparing them, purifying them, until they become merged into ONE with His purpose and reality. A people INTO A PURPOSE! So many wander through their

whole life time here upon earth with no aim, no vision, no goal, no purpose for living, no understanding as to the why of this schooling experience under the dealing of God's hands, and no preparation for what lies beyond.

The sovereign Lord and King of the universe says that He is choosing a people to be His very own "special treasure" for the outworking of His purpose. It is said that a bar of steel worth five dollars, when made into ordinary horseshoes will be worth only ten dollars. If this same five-dollar bar is manufactured into needles, the value rises to \$350, but if it is made into delicate springs for expensive watches, it will be worth \$250,000. This original bar of steel is made more valuable by being cut to its proper size, passed through the heat again and again, hammered and manipulated, beaten and pounded and finished and polished, until it is finally ready for its delicate task. This truly is a parable which sets forth a vital truth concerning the elect of God. Let us realize that God expends His effort only on that which gives promise of having value. The farmer does not spend time tilling the sand hill that has no value for crops; he puts most of his time and work into the heavy field which has the greatest promise of an abundant harvest. When God leaves us utterly alone, and does not lay His heavy hand of dealing upon us, we may be sure that our lives are barren, and fit only to be "vessels of dishonor" in the great house of His Kingdom.

Someone has said, "Sunshine all the time only makes a desert." We need the clouds, the dark days, the storms, the rain, the winds, just as much as we need the sunshine, and God who is molding our lives, seeking to make us into the image of our Lord Jesus Christ, is the One who knows what is best for us if we would be a part of HIS PURPOSE in the earth. In this connection, we hear Job saying, "He knoweth the way that I take: when He hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold" (Job 23:10). Notice that Job does not say, "I know the way that He takes," but rather, "He knoweth the way that I take." We would like to know what God is doing. We would like to pull aside the veil and see the end from the beginning. We would like to know the way that He is taking us, but if we did, and if we could see, we would not need faith to believe and accept GOD'S WAY. So Job, in the midst of all his deep afflictions, found comfort, not in the fact that he knew the reason and the answer for all of God's dealing with him, but he took encouragement in the truth that GOD KNEW WHAT HE WAS DOING. "He knoweth the way that I take," he said confidently, and then his faith leaped over every barrier, and as he looked into the distant future, he cried, "When He hath tried (processed) me, I shall come forth as gold."

As His special treasure He has a great and wonderful plan for us. There is no need to comment at length on the instruments He employs in preparing us to be what He desires, for we have them on every hand, pressure upon pressure, difficulties, testings, trials, labors and cares, along with the precious blessings, victories, and triumphs of His grace. But it is essential to realize that the Father has great PURPOSE in it all that we might be trained, developed, processed and formed with a view to our being part of His greater purpose which encompasses the ages yet to come. Treasures are not locked in the treasure-house merely because they have great value - they are there RESERVED UNTO A PURPOSE. In due time they shall be brought forth to serve as vessels of honor at the royal banquet, as adornment for ruling dignitaries, as materials for some splendid building or magnificent temple, or yet to support a fighting army, to conquer other kingdoms, to secure the peace, and to make provision for the needs of the people.

A treasure for a purpose! What a calling! There is a company, gathered out of all generations, and joined unto the Christ, which in due time shall be led forth out of the Father's TREASURE HOUSE OF SONS to be the manifest expression of His image,

character, and nature, the revelation of the fullness of His power and glory, who shall carry to fulfillment all of His counsel and will. For these the whole creation groans, and they are in the process of preparation, reserved unto a day of manifestation. God knows every detail of His redemptive plan for His creation, and precisely the work to be wrought by each of His kings and priests, and He chooses by His election of grace those previously marked out (predestinated) according to His foreknowledge, and who shall come INTO PURPOSE at the appointed time as Sons of God to deliver groaning creation from the bondage of corruption, restoring all back into God again, praise His wonderful name!

A KINGDOM OF PRIESTS

And just what is God's purpose? He declares, "Ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto Me above all people: for all the earth is Mine: and ye shall be unto Me A KINGDOM OF PRIESTS." Since kingship was virtually the only type of government or state known in the ancient world, "kingdom" could well be translated today as a "government" or "state." A GOVERNMENT OF PRIESTS! A PRIESTLY STATE! A HOLY NATION OF PRIESTS! God offered to Israel this glory of being a "kingdom of priests." ALL the tribes were to be priests. Because of their failure to enter the land at Kadesh-barnea and because they made and worshipped a golden calf while Moses was on the mountain receiving God's law, only one tribe was chosen to be a priestly tribe and that not on behalf of the world, but on behalf of the unbelieving, rebellious people of Israel! God's purpose remains, however, to have an entire nation of priests in the fullness of what priesthood means. Israel collectively was to be a royal and priestly race, a dynasty of kings and priests, each member uniting in himself the attributes of king and priest. Every man a king! Every man a priest! A kingdom of priests!

The Greek Old Testament (Septuagint) states that they were to be "a priesthood of kings." It was intended to be the way of life, the office, the nature, the ministry of all Israel, not just a selected few. Israel's would be a priestly way of life, with priestly dignity, priestly power and authority, priestly holiness and priestly character. God's kingdom people were to be a priesthood set at the crossroads of the world to minister to all tribes and nations the things of God. They would become the holy people, the mediating nation for all the other nations. Ah, beloved, there is a realm of living and ministry that goes beyond just being a Christian, or attending Church meetings, or going through the motions of so many religious activities. God has always wanted a Kingdom of Priests. Priests and Kings ... just like Jesus! One of the chief reasons for the weakness and immaturity of the popular Church is the mistaken idea that the saint's happiness and blessing is the main object of God's grace. A fatal error! God's aim is far holier and far higher. He chooses out of the nations a people, inworks into them all the triumph of HIS REDEMPTION, all the victory of HIS LIFE, that they in turn shall carry out His redemptive purposes on behalf of the whole creation. A Royal Priesthood! Ah, that is God's aim, His purpose.

When God first created man... when he had come fresh from the fingers of his Maker ... when he had inhabited that primeval garden and knew all the delights of that heavenly realm ... when he saw the glories of the spangled heavens above and the beauties of the world and nature about him... there is no doubt that the greatest bliss and the highest joy which mankind knew in this world was that communion he had with his Creator who walked in the garden with him in the cool of the day. Man was created to have fellowship

with God. No doubt, the greatest ecstasy, the sublimest joy, that man can ever know is to experience fellowship and union with God. When man sinned and the whole human race was plunged into vanity and chaos, suddenly there came across the sunshine of that fellowship a dark cloud which blotted out the light and hid the face of God from man. Man now was not only a banished criminal, but he was also an estranged son, cast away from the Father's heart and home and no longer experiencing that blessed fellowship and beautiful relationship with his Creator, God, and Father.

Man has wandered long and far seeking something he knows not what. His heart is empty and it will never be filled until it is filled with that blessed love of God. He will for ever be restless until he finds himself at home in God again, until he knows once more that oneness with the living God.

"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. 2:17). "For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need" (Heb. 4:15-16). There are two things every man needs - reconciliation to God - and grace to help, strengthen, and give overcoming victory in time of need that we may continue the journey, pressing forward into the fullness of our redemption in Him. These instinctive cravings of the soul are as mighty and irrepressible as the craving of the body for sleep or food; and they are as evident amid our luxury and refinement as in primeval forests, or beside the historic rivers of antiquity.

To meet these two needs - reconciliation and grace to help - men have constituted one of their number a priest. That word has an ominous sound to our ears, because it has been associated with immoralities and cruelty. The world has never seen more unscrupulous scoundrels than its priests, whether of Baal or Moloch, of Judaism or the Papacy. All through the ages it has seemed impossible for men to receive power in the spiritual realm without abusing it to the injury of those who sought their help. Study the history of the priesthood, which murdered the Christ because He threw too strong a light upon its hypocrisies and villainies; and you have the history of every priestcraft which has darkened the world with crime, and saturated its soil with the blood of its prophets and the saintliest of men.

AND YET THE IDEA OF THE PRIEST IS A NATURAL AND A BEAUTIFUL AND A SCRIPTURAL ONE. It is natural for men who are conscious of sin barring their approach into the presence of a holy God to say to one of their fellows, "Our hands are stained with blood, and grimed with toil; our garments spotted with pollution and dust; our lives too busy for us to spare time for those rites which alone can fit the sinner to stand before the eye of God; do for us what we cannot do for ourselves; prepare yourself by holy rite, and vigil, and fasting from sin, so as to be able to stand in the presence-chamber of the All-Holy; and, when you have acquired the right of audience with Him, speak for us, make reconciliation for our sins; and then come forth to us, ministering of His life and blessing those who have not attained to your position, but yet struggle with the strong, rough, bad world in which they live."

This seems to be the underlying thought in all that vast system of this world's priestcraft which has built temples in every land, reared altars on every soil, and constituted a priesthood among the most degraded as well as the most civilized races of mankind.

And there is great BEAUTY in the work and ministry of a true priest, as God has ordained. In the Levitical Priesthood of the Old Testament the priest who had a true priest's heart was not always engaged in the bloody work of sacrificing flocks of fleecy sheep, by which alone, in those rude days, the cost of sin could be computed; the true priest would have other, and, perhaps, more touching work. He would be the shepherd of the timid souls around him; listening to confessions whispered over the heads of the dumb victims; feeling compassion for erring, helpless, and wayward ones; comforting those who were passing through scenes of sorrow, till faces, shadowed with tears, began to gleam with holy light; arresting the proud hand of the oppressor. Never possessed of self-interest; never looking for ease, or pleasure, or gain; never resting while one poor wanderer was away in the snowdrift or on the desert floor. Yes, and more! He would be the spokesman of souls, praying for those who did not pray for themselves; praying with those who knew not what or how to ask; interceding for the whole race of man. Ah! such was the ministry of the true priest, beautifully typifying the greater priesthood to come, the chosen race born from above, the holy nation conformed to the image of God's Son, the royal priesthood, the people prepared for HIS PURPOSE.

THE MINISTRY OF PRIESTHOOD

Deep down in the heart of men there is a strong and instinctive demand for a priest, to be a mediator, to lay one hand on man, and the other on God, and going between both to bring the two together into unification. A priest or priesthood infers that there is a reason why such has been called into play. It denotes that there is an estrangement between God and His creatures and the priest ministers to bridge that gulf and bring about peace and at-one-ment.

Webster's dictionary defines priest as: a mediatory agent between God and man. In the Old Testament the word priest is translated from the Hebrew word COHEN, the root meaning of which is "one who stands up and draws nigh for another." The Greek word, in its root, means "to minister." Thus, a priest is one who "draws near and ministers on behalf of another." And the priest always draws nigh and ministers in TWO DIRECTIONS - drawing nigh to God on behalf of the people and drawing nigh to the people on behalf of God. The priest stands and ministers unto the Lord on behalf of the people while, on the other hand, he ministers unto the people on behalf of the Lord. The ministry of the priest is an intermediate or go-between ministry. He reaches out with one hand and takes hold of God; he reaches out with the other hand and takes hold of humanity; and he brings the two together by virtue of his priestly ministrations.

The inspired writer to the Hebrew saints says of our Lord Jesus Christ: "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 of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man" (Heb. 8:1-2). What does he mean when he says that Christ is the "Minister of the Sanctuary"? In every temple there was a god, an unseen god, to whom the temple was devoted. But there was a priest, the priest of that temple, who was to receive the petitions or the sacrifices of the worshipper and to get the answer back from God. So it was with Aaron in the Old Testament. It is said of him and of the priests of Israel, "they shall stand in My presence to minister," and they shall go out and bless in My name."

There is both a Godward and a manward work in reconciliation and redemption. And so our great High Priest, Jesus, stands as the Minister of the Sanctuary, as the Priest of the Tabernacle, the realm of His dwelling, and He ministers in a dual way. Christ as the Minister of the Sanctuary, has done these things: First of all, He opened the sanctuary, the way into the fullness of the presence and life and power and glory of God. This He did by His blood, pouring out His life, making it available so that in its power we have access into God. When He ascended into the heavenlies He entered, with His own blood, by the energies of His own divine life, into the Holiest place. And we read that with that blood, with that sacrifice - the better sacrifice of a divine life - the heavenly things were cleansed, and that in opening up the Holiest with His blood, He secured for us complete and most confident access into God's presence and glory. In Himself He brings us nigh unto God. But He does more. Without interruption there flows back from the Father to the Son, in whom He delights, a stream of blessing to impart to His people upon earth. And even so, as the sunlight streams from the sun, there flows forth unceasingly from the Son of God a stream of life and light and love and power and glory unto all who believe. It is flowing even now. Oh! we must realize this. The Christ brings us nigh to God IN HIMSELF and IN HIMSELF He brings God into us. "To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself" (II Cor. 5:19).

In the Old Testament on the Day of Atonement, on that day and that day alone, the High Priest entered in beyond the veil, from the Holy Place into the Holy of Holies. That great veil which had hung there for so long kept out any who might enter into the presence of God. There in the Holy of Holies, in that perpetual darkness, God dwelt in the Shekinah Glory between the outstretched wings of the two Cherubim on either side of the Ark of the Covenant, beneath which were the broken tablets of the law and over which was the gold-covered Mercy Seat. Once each year, and only once, the High Priest could touch that veil, They had been carefully and sternly forewarned that should any man touch that veil, he would instantly be struck dead by God, reminding us that no man can enter into the realm of God unless he comes in God's way and in God's time and in God's appointed method. And so the High Priest comes not without blood, having first confessed his own sins, and the sins of the people, and offering a sacrifice for his own sins, and for the people's.

The mystery of it is that ALL ISRAEL - every man, woman, and child - were on that day identified in the person of the High Priest. He was a representative man, a corporate man as it were. The whole congregation of Israel went into the glory beyond that veil IN HIM. He drew nigh unto God on their behalf, and they were brought nigh unto God in him. The people of Israel never knew when the High Priest would come out again. They never knew whether the sacrifice for his own sins, and for theirs, had been acceptable, if he had done all things right, or that coming there in the darkness where God dwelt he might be struck dead. And so they had placed golden bells all around the hem of his robe. As long as they heard those bells tinkling they knew that the Priest was still alive and their hopes were alive in him. They knew that soon he would emerge from that awesome realm and come forth to bless them in the name of God. They knew that even as they had gone in beyond the veil in the High Priest, so would God come forth from beyond the veil in the Priest to bless them, imparting of Himself into them.

The High Priest was thus the mediator between God and the people. He carried the presence of God, the sins and needs of the people, and carried the people in him. He obtained from God the power to declare the remission of sin and the right of blessing the people. God drew nigh unto the people in the person of the Priest. God ministered of

Himself unto the people through the blessing of the Priest. "And Moses and Aaron went into the tabernacle of the congregation, and came out, and BLESSED THE PEOPLE: and THE GLORY OF THE LORD APPEARED UNTO ALL THE PEOPLE" (Lev. 9:23). The service of the priesthood is clear, FIRST TO MINISTER TO THE LORD, then to stand between the Creator and His creation, to minister the life of Christ to those who sit in darkness, in the region of the shadow of death, until all are fully reconciled to God again. The body of the Christ, as its glorious Head, must be a kingdom of priests, a people for His purpose.

True priestly blessing is to flow out two ways: TO GOD, and to man. "BLESS THE LORD, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless His holy name" (Ps. 103:1). "Thus will I BLESS THEE while I live; I will lift up my hands in Thy name" (Ps. 63:4). As a dear brother in the Lord has written: "There is something so precious about the action of a child that turns to you with their hands outstretched and lifted up to you - signifying their desire to be received of you, of their trust, of their love, of their willingness to cast themselves upon you for their care. Is this not an earthly parable of what it means to BLESS THE LORD, lifting up our hands in His name? We freely acknowledge that we love Him, we trust Him, we commit ourselves to Him, we desire to be received by Him. An uplifted hand bespeaks volumes of blessing to the Lord. And uniquely enough, while we are thus blessing Him, speaking well of Him, and signifying to all that we deem Him worthy of our love and trust, it brings rich blessings to our own heart as well, for He does receive us, and He does become our strength and security, our sufficiency for all things. Praise God!

"GIVE UNTO THE LORD, ye kindreds of the people, give unto the Lord glory and strength. Give unto the Lord the glory due unto His name: bring an offering, and come before Him: worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness' (I Chron. 16:28-29). The outflow of our spirit in worship before Him need not be limited by time or space, nor affected by circumstances, nor hindered by lack of others with whom to unitedly worship. Even this phrase included, 'bring an offering' - in blessing the Lord there surely are more ways of bringing an offering, than sending a check to the needy somewhere. That is all well and good in its place, as He directs and orders our way. But we are now speaking of, GIVING TO THE LORD - offerings of praise, expressions of our adoration, songs which magnify Him in our consciousness, so that our spirit flows out to Him in love.

"There is another facet to consider also, for the very girding up of the loins of our mind, to bless the Lord, will restrain thoughts which are negative and unfruitful. Ah, you cannot truly BLESS THE LORD, and sing praises to Him, and at the same time think Condemnation thoughts toward your neighbor because his dog dug up your flower bed. Therefore we are encouraged to 'bless the Lord, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless His holy name.' When ALL THAT IS WITHIN US is centralized in the act of blessing the Lord, it has brought our whole being into harmony and oneness, positive and upbuilding. Wonderful! Then there is a reaching out to bless others - this is a ministry unlimited by time or space, unhindered by an Iron Curtain, or any other such man-caused barrier. As our 'vapours of blessing' ascend, the Spirit of the Lord can cause them to distill in blessings in the remote corners of the earth.

" 'And as soon as David had made an end of offering burnt offerings and peace offerings, he BLESSED THE PEOPLE in the name of the Lord of hosts' (II Sam, 6:18). 'The king (Solomon) turned his face, and BLESSED THE WHOLE CONGREGATION of Israel...' (II Chron. 6:3). 'Then the priests the Levites arose and BLESSED THE PEOPLE...' (II Chron. 30:27). The Levitical priesthood were charged with the ministry of blessing the

people and to put the Lord's name upon them so that He would bless them. This was a foreshadowing of that greater priesthood to come, the Order of Melchizedek. In Gen. 14:19, as Abraham returned from battle and the rescue of Lot, we read that Melchizedek met Abraham, 'and he BLESSED HIM... and BLESSED THE MOST HIGH.' The Order of Melchizedek is an ORDER OF BLESSERS, no cursings, no negation to be uttered, no darkness, no blackness, but theirs is a ministry of blessing" -end quote.

I cannot emphasize too strongly the important truth that ALL PRIESTHOOD has a double outreach - ministry to both God and man. It could not be otherwise, for a priest is one who "stands between" two factions in mediation, and the moment a priest ceases to touch both God and man, unifying the two, he simply ceases to be a priest. He may be a worshipper who speaks to God, or a king who rules the people for God, or a prophet who speaks on behalf of God, but no man can have a one-sided ministry and be a priest. The priest must minister unto God on behalf of men and unto men on behalf of God. The priest must touch God with one hand and mankind with the other hand, bringing the two together by his ministrations. Anything less or different than this is not priesthood at all.

When Moses blessed the priestly tribe of Levi he said, first, "They (the Levites) shall teach Jacob (the carnal man) Thy judgments, and Israel (the regenerated man) Thy law," and secondly, "They shall put incense before Thee, the whole burnt sacrifice upon Thine altar." This is priestly, SPIRITUAL MINISTRY unto both God and man. As to the ministry unto men, how true it is that it is only the man who himself walks in power before God that can speak with effect to the hearts and consciences of others; nothing else will do - nothing else will work, either upon the hearts or in the lives of those about us. There may be, and, alas, is much of mere sermonizing, systematic teaching and preaching of things which the mere intellect may have received, and which, by a natural fluency of language, we may be able to give out; but all such teaching is vain, and must be laid aside by all who would be a part of God's Royal Priesthood. True, it might often give to our gatherings and our witnessing an appearance of barrenness and poverty which our poor, proud, programized, activity conscious hearts could ill brook; but would it not be far better to keep silence than to substitute mere carnal effort for the blessed energy of the Holy Spirit?

True ministry, however, the ministry of the Spirit, will always touch men in their deepest hearts and commend itself to their consciences. We can always know the source from which a man is drawing who speaks in "the words which the Holy Ghost teacheth," and with "the ability which God giveth;" and while we should ever pray to be delivered from the mere effort of man's intellect to handle the holy truths of God, we should diligently cultivate that power to teach which stands connected, as in Levi's case, with the denial of the claims of flesh and blood, and with entire consecration to HIS PURPOSES.

In the second aspect of Levi's ministry we have a very elevated point: "They shall put incense before Thee, and whole burnt offering upon Thine altar." This is ministry UNTO THE LORD. We put incense before God when we are enabled, in the power of communion, to present in His presence the sweet odor of the Spirit's work in our lives and the sacrifice of praise. But a priest never approaches God solely for himself, he continually represents men unto God, so in Rev. 8:3-4 the incense of worship is offered up "WITH the PRAYERS of the saints." In either of these dual roles, the Levites in ministry to their brethren, and the Levites in worship before God, it was as acceptable in the sight of God, and as divine an exercise of his priestly functions, for a Levite to instruct his brethren as it was for him to burn incense before the Lord. This is very important. We

should never separate these two things. If we do not see that it is the same Spirit who must qualify us to speak FOR God as to speak TO Him, there will be a great lack in our ministry. And if we endeavor to speak only FOR God and do not minister TO Him, or, if we minister TO Him but fail to MINISTER HIM unto men, then we know nothing of THE ROYAL PRIESTHOOD. Oh God! make us priests indeed.

It is interesting to note that the Melchizedek Priesthood is also a priesthood flowing in two directions. "And Melchizedek, king of Salem, brought forth bread and wine: and he was the priest of the Most High God. And he BLESSED HIM (Abraham), 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). How interesting that Melchizedek blessed ABRAM, and then goes on to also BLESS THE MOST HIGH GOD. God is raising up a priesthood who will not only be able to bless men but they will be able to bless God, for they BECOME THE BLESSING OF GOD, redounding to His praise continually. These are those priests who do nothing of themselves, but fulfill the word, "Lo, I come to do THY will, O God," doing only those things which they see the Father doing.

Our Lord Jesus Christ is the High Priest of the Melchizedekian Order, to which we, the members of His body, the Royal Priesthood, are called, and while He has beautifully offered Himself up to God as a sweet smelling savour, an acceptable sacrifice, and the incense of all His divine attributes, He also "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). I have met many would-be Sons of God across the land who pride themselves that they have been called aside to MINISTER UNTO THE LORD, but they have absolutely no corresponding vision to SAVE MEN, and wouldn't walk across the street to minister to a needy soul. Ah, I do not hesitate to tell you, precious ones, that such have no true revelation of what is embodied in the MELCHIZEDEK PRIESTHOOD. How I rejoice in the knowledge that Jesus Christ, the High Priest of the Melchizedek Order, does indeed have a ministry manward! Without it I, and you, too, precious friend of mine, would still be lost without God and without hope in the world. Thank God, HE REACHED DOWN HIS HAND FOR ME!

"Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need" (Heb. 4:16). "...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. 2:17). "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). HE ever liveth to bring such victory to His creation, none left out, none rejected, for "I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw ALL MEN unto Me" (Jn. 12:32), and "all the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the Lord: and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before Thee" (Ps. 22:27). And there shall come a priesthood who shall truly labor together with Christ until all enemies are subdued under His feet, until death is no more, until all things are made new, until the knowledge of the glory of the Lord covers the earth, as the waters cover the sea, and until HIS LIFE FILLS THE UNIVERSE, praise His name!

Furthermore, the Priesthood of the Sons of Zadok revealed in Eze. 44:9-31, contrary to what many teach, is also a dual priesthood, to God and man. "And the Levites that are gone away from Me, when Israel went astray, which went astray away from Me after their idols; they shall even bear their iniquity. Yet shall they be ministers in My sanctuary, having charge at the gates of the house, and ministering to the house: they shall slay the burnt-offering and the sacrifice for the people, and they shall stand before them to

minister unto them. Because they ministered unto them before their idols, and caused the house of Israel to fall into iniquity; therefore have I lifted up Mine hand against them, saith the Lord God, and they shall bear their iniquity. And they shall not come near unto Me, to do the office of a priest unto Me, nor to come near to any of My holy things, in the most holy place: but they shall bear their shame, and their abominations which they have committed. But I will make them keepers of the charge of the house, for all the service thereof, and for all that shall be done therein. But the priests the Levites, the SONS OF ZADOK, THAT KEPT the charge of My sanctuary when the children of Israel went astray from Me, THEY SHALL COME NEAR TO ME TO MINISTER UNTO ME, and they shall stand before Me to offer unto Me the fat and the blood, saith the Lord God: THEY SHALL ENTER INTO MY SANCTUARY, AND THEY SHALL COME NEAR TO MY TABLE, TO MINISTER UNTO ME, and they shall keep My charge" (Eze. 44:10-16).

How clear that there was a class of Levites who busily served in the temple, and yet they were not serving HIM; they were merely serving the HOUSE. If an Israelite came along to the temple and wanted to worship God, those Levites would come to his aid and help him offer his peace offering and his burnt offering. They would help him drag the sacrifice to the altar, and they would slay it. Surely that was a grand work to be engaged in! And God took account of the service of those Levites who helped men bring their offerings to the altar, and who ministered to the house. Yet, because of their departure from the Lord, HE STRIPPED THEM OF THEIR PRIESTHOOD, and all that they did was not ministry to Himself. They were serving the house, but they were not serving God. And they were not called priests, for their's was a one-sided ministry.

But what do we really mean when we talk about serving God or serving the temple? Here is what the Lord said: "But the priests, the Levites, the sons of Zadok, that kept the charge of My sanctuary when the children of Israel went astray from Me, THEY SHALL COME NEAR TO ME TO MINISTER UNTO ME; and they shall STAND BEFORE ME to offer unto Me the fat and the blood." The conditions basic to all ministry that can truly be called ministry "unto the Lord" are - drawing near to Him and standing before Him. Such ministry is confined to a certain place, "They shall enter into My sanctuary, and they shall come near to My table to minister unto Me." Ministry that is "unto Me" is in the inner sanctuary, in the hidden place, alone with God, not in the outer court exposed to the crowd. Unless we really know what it is to draw near to God, we cannot know what it is to serve HIM. It is impossible to stand afar off and still minister to HIM. We cannot serve HIM from a distance, encumbered with the activities of THIS WORLD. There is only one place where ministry to Him is possible, and that is in the Holy Place. In the outer court you approach the people; in the Holy Place you approach the Lord. It is only as we draw near to Him that we can minister to Him. To come into the presence of God and kneel before Him for even an hour many times requires all the strength we possess. Oft times we sing the old hymn, SWEET HOUR OF PRAYER, and it is a lie upon our lips for we haven't spent even a half hour in prayer for months. But everyone who ministers to the Lord knows the preciousness of such seasons in the secret place of His presence, the sweetness of lingering there in communion with Him. It need not be physically alone, but alone in attitude of heart, the whole being lifted up unto Him, and flooded with His presence. And more and more as we learn what this means, our ministry unto Him becomes a PERPETUAL STATE OF MIND AND BEING, rather than a momentary exercise. The Royal Priesthood LIVE AND WALK AND HAVE THEIR BEING IN THE SPIRIT, the mind of the Father communicated unto them continually, His nature ruling, His presence abiding.

But we may think, as many do, that these sons of Zadok, because they did not minister TO THE HOUSE, had no ministry whatever UNTO MEN. NOT SO! For the Lord had a further word for these sons of Zadok, and gave them this instruction: "And when they go forth into the utter (outer) court, even into the utter court TO THE PEOPLE, they shall put off their garments wherein they ministered, and lay them in the holy chambers ... and THEY SHALL TEACH MY PEOPLE the difference between the holy and the profane, and cause them to discern between the unclean and the clean. And in controversy THEY SHALL STAND IN JUDGMENT (as judges); and they shall judge it according to My judgments" (Eze. 44:19,23-24).

Can we not see by this that there is NO PRIESTHOOD OF ANY ORDER which is excluded from the dual ministry which true priesthood embodies. To abolish either of these roles would be the destruction of the priesthood itself. Watchman Nee wisely wrote: I love to read in Acts 13 about the prophets and teachers in the Church at Antioch, that 'as they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Ghost said: Separate Me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them.' We see there the one principle that governs the work of God in the New Testament dispensation. The Holy Spirit only commissions men to the work AS THEY ARE MINISTERING TO THE LORD. Unless ministry to the Lord is the thing that governs us, the work will be in confusion. In the beginning of the Church's history in Antioch, the Holy Spirit said, 'Separate ME Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them.' God does not want volunteers for His work; He wants conscripts. He will not have you preaching the Gospel just because you want to. The work of the Lord is suffering serious damage today at the hand of volunteers; it lacks those who can say as Christ did: 'He that sent Me...' Oh, brothers and sisters, the work of God is God's own work, and not work that you can take up at your pleasure. Neither Churches, nor missionary societies, nor evangelistic bands can send men to work for God. The authority to commission men is not in the hands of men, but solely in the hands of God. Serving the Lord does not mean that we do not serve our fellow-men, but it does mean that all service to men has service to the Lord as its basis. IT IS SERVICE GODWARD THAT URGES US OUT MANWARD" -end quote.

God has always wanted a priesthood. The priesthood is foundational to the outworking of His redemption and central to His plan of the ages. The covenant of God still stands today: "Now therefore, if ye will obey My voice indeed, and keep My covenant, then ye shall be A PECULIAR TREASURE UNTO ME ABOVE ALL PEOPLE: for all the earth is Mine: AND YE SHALL BE UNTO ME A KINGDOM OF PRIESTS, AND AN HOLY NATION." Oh, beloved, come, let us now open our hearts wide to Him. Come, and as we gaze upon this glorious ministry and its life-flow to all the families of the earth, let us yield ourselves unto God that He may work His wondrous work in our lives, bringing us into such union with Jesus, the High Priest of our profession, that we become in nature and power His ROYAL-PRIESTHOOD in the earth! The manifestation of the Sons of God for which all creation is in travail is nothing more nor less than the full manifestation of God's fully developed and empowered body of KING-PRIESTS AFTER THE ORDER OF MELCHISEDEK. Those apprehended unto this ministry are indeed, A PEOPLE FOR A PURPOSE!

This is but a feeble introduction to so vast and glorious a theme, which winds its way like a mighty shimmering river through the pages of Holy Writ. We shall pursue this subject, Lord willing, in coming issues.

Chapter 2

All The Earth Is Mine

"Now, therefore, if ye will obey My voice indeed, and keep My covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto Me above all people: FOR ALL THE EARTH IS MINE: and ye shall be unto Me A KINGDOM OF PRIESTS, and an holy nation" (Ex. 19:5-6).

The subject of the Royal Priesthood, like many of the themes of Scripture, is inexhaustible. It sparkles as the twinkling stars of the heavens with glories which many have not yet beheld. Let us put our eye to the telescope of the Holy Spirit, and allow this grand subject to be brought nearer to our spiritual vision for, in so doing, we shall behold more of the grandeur and ineffableness of the "High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus," and of the purpose and majesty of OUR ONENESS IN HIM. This makes it mandatory upon us to remove the shoes from off our feet and tread carefully upon this holy and mysterious ground. But at the same time it also holds out the promise to us that we shall here gain an insight into some of the most marvelous and glorious things in God's whole mighty work of creation and redemption.

And just what is God's purpose? He declares, "Ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto Me above all people: for all the earth is Mine: and ye shall be unto Me A KINGDOM OF PRIESTS." Since kingship was virtually the only type of government or state known in the ancient world, "kingdom" could well be translated today as a "government" or "state." A GOVERNMENT OF PRIESTS! A PRIESTLY STATE! A HOLY NATION OF PRIESTS! God offered to Israel this glory of being a "kingdom of priests." ALL the tribes were to be priests. Because of their failure to enter the land at Kadeshbarnea and because they made and worshipped a golden calf while Moses was on the mountain receiving God's law, only one tribe was chosen to be a priestly tribe and that not on behalf of the world, but on behalf of the unbelieving, rebellious people of Israel! God's purpose remains, however, to have an entire nation of priests in the fullness of what priesthood means. Israel collectively was to be a royal and priestly race, a dynasty of kings and priests, each member uniting in himself the attributes of king and priest. Every man a king! Every man a priest! A KINGDOM OF PRIESTS!

There is a strong and instinctive need in this world of sinful men for a priest, to be a mediator, to lay one hand on man, and the other on God, and going between them both to bring the two together into unification. A priest or priesthood infers that there is a reason why such has been called into play. It denotes that there is an estrangement between God and His creatures and the priest ministers to bridge that gulf and bring about peace and atonement.

Webster's dictionary defines priest as: a mediatory agent between God and man. In the Old Testament the word priest is translated from the Hebrew word COHEN, the root meaning of which is "one who stands up and draws nigh for another." The Greek word, in its root, means "to minister." Thus, a priest is one who "draws near and ministers on behalf of another." And the priest always draws nigh and ministers in TWO DIRECTIONS

- drawing nigh to God on behalf of the people and drawing nigh to the people on behalf of God. The priest stands and ministers unto the Lord on behalf of the people while, on the other hand, he ministers unto the people on behalf of the Lord. The ministry of the priest is thus an intermediate or go-between ministry. He reaches out with one hand and takes hold of God; he reaches out with the other hand and takes hold of humanity; and brings the two together by virtue of his priestly ministrations.

THE DIVINE SANDWICH

I have often characterized our text as the GREAT DIVINE SANDWICH. A sandwich is two slices of bread between which is placed meat, fish, cheese, or the like. Three items are necessary to make a sandwich, the two outer items - two identical slices of bread - and in between another, and different, item. Such is the structure of our text. There are two statements of like nature surrounding and enclosing another and different kind of statement. Notice the two outer statements: (1) Ye shall be a PECULIAR TREASURE unto Me above all people (2) Ye shall be unto Me A KINGDOM OF PRIESTS, and a holy nation. Then, "sandwiched" in between these two wonderful promises is this remarkable word: FOR ALL THE EARTH IS MINE.

Can we not see by this that the purpose of God to establish in the earth a Royal Priesthood is rooted in the great fact that ALL THE EARTH IS HIS? That all the earth is His answers the WHY of priesthood. Long milleniums ago at Sinai the cry went ringing forth: "Ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto Me above all people: FOR ALL THE EARTH IS MINE," and the words that follow may correctly be stated thus: "BECAUSE ALL THE EARTH IS MINE ... ye shall be unto Me a kingdom of priests."

ALL THE EARTH IS MINE

In the light of this Scripture I would like to reaffirm something which the world at large, and many Christians, seem to have forgotten: THIS IS GOD'S WORLD! Long before time began...long before a single heavenly body inhabited the vast regions of space ... GOD WAS. When He told Moses to tell Pharaoh that the "I AM" had sent him, God was talking about His eternal, present-tense existence, before anything else had been "framed by the word of God." I cannot - try though I may - picture a time when there was nothing but God in all the vast expanse we call SPACE ... not one star, planet, or galaxy. I cannot imagine what it could have been like not to have a world ... with its towering mountains, its vast canyons, and its majestic waterfalls thundering down from the awesome heights in indescribable power, then sweeping on to the seas. The total absence of all these things is beyond my poor, limited comprehension. But the truth remains, as stated in the first four words of Scripture: "In the beginning God..."

Long before the worlds were made ... long before the billows rolled across the boundless seas long before the mountains thrust their towering, snow-capped peaks up through the clouds... long before there was one flower, or the song of any bird, or the roar of any beast... yes, long before there was anything at all ... THERE WAS GOD. Then the blessed Word of God rolls back the curtain of antiquity and shows us God at work, creating all that is, and all that ever was. This passage of Scripture goes a mighty step further and establishes for all time and eternity the OWNERSHIP of this world: "In the beginning GOD created the heaven and the earth." He made it, and it is His. No one can take it from Him. It was then that God wrote His signature of ownership - a signature that reaches from the earth to the farthest outposts of the cosmos.

There is an understanding that is developing in the consciousness of the "called out ones," those who are going beyond the static creeds and empty traditions of the Church systems and pressing on into the purposes of God, to know that ALL the earth is the Lord's. Not just a tree or two, not just a mountain or two, not just the Church, but all of it, the very fullness thereof. We are His whether we know it or not, we are His whether we like it or not, whether we desire to serve Him, or whether we are presently in rebellion against His will. It is both heartening and assuring to read such Scriptures as these: "The EARTH is the Lord's, and the FULLNESS THEREOF; the WORLD and THEY THAT DWELL THEREIN" (Ps. 24:1). God has everything in the palm of His almighty hand. He is sovereign. Jesus is King! Jesus is Lord! Job said, "In whose hand is the soul of every living thing, and the breath of ALL MANKIND" (Job 12:10). The current population of planet earth is more than four and a half billion. For 1990, it is projected there will be six billion, and by the year 2000, it is estimated there will be six and a half billion residents on our planet. GOD GIVES BREATH AND LIFE TO THEM ALL AND THE EARTH IS THE LORD'S AND THE FULLNESS THEREOF.

The prophet Daniel penned these inspired words: "The Most High ... liveth forever, whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and His kingdom is from generation to generation. And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and He doeth ACCORDING TO HIS WILL in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay His hand, or say unto Him, What doest Thou?" (Dan. 4:34-35). God is saying to us that HE IS SOVEREIGN. Another way to express that truth is: God owns the earth and everything in it - He does what He wants to do and nobody can stop Him from doing it. In particular He is sovereign with what He does with the earth. God does not have to ask anybody's permission to do anything He wants with any part of the earth - and none can hinder or resist Him!

Now, I was raised with the mentality that somehow the devil got the whole thing and that the earth belongs to "the prince of the power of the air" and "the god of this world." NO, IT DOESN'T! God owns it all and He gives it to whom He wills. He has the right to appoint stewards over creation based on His purpose and their faithfulness, regardless of moral, religious, or other considerations.

Let us look at three people in the Scripture whom God raised up to rule in the earth. Isa. 44:24 to 45:7 talks about Cyrus, the Persian king whom God put in charge of the earth. In Isaiah, the prophet called Cyrus God's shepherd. That's astounding, to think God would raise up a heathen king to accomplish His purposes in the earth. God says, "I will raise up Cyrus, My shepherd, and he is to rule over the whole thing by My divine appointment." In Dan. 4:28-37, we discover that Nebuchadnezzar ruled by God's divine appointment. If we think of the Kingdom of God as a democracy, we are falling short in our thinking. There's only one vote - and it's God's! He says, "I'm going to appoint you, Nebuchadnezzar, and you're going to be the king and you're going to rule, and I will establish you in all the earth. And I'll give you wisdom and power and might and majesty." He promised it to him and it happened. Then when Nebuchadnezzar started thinking that he had done it himself, God said, "I'll take it from you." God took the kingdom from Nebuchadnezzar by allowing him to lose his mind for a season. He lived in the wilderness, ate grass like a cow, had long hair all over his body, and his fingernails grew like bird claws. At the end of this humbling experience, Nebuchadnezzar repented and blessed the God of heaven as the only source of all kingdoms and powers and confessed that God was fully able to "humble those who walk in pride." If we look again in Daniel, we find that Belshazzar, Nebuchadnezzar's son, had the same problem with pride that his

father did, and so God also smote him in an instant and took away his kingdom. Truly, "The earth IS THE LORD'S and the fullness thereof!"

If the earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof, then we need to somehow come to understand that God has never at any time dealt with Satan on a percentage basis. God never did tell Satan that he could have ninety percent and God be satisfied with ten percent. Neither did God ever say that Satan could have even ten percent and He, God, would be satisfied with ninety percent. WITH GOD IT IS ALL. It ALL belongs to Him. First, because He created it, and second, because He redeemed it. God has assigned to Satan a limited sphere of influence over the creation, for the outworking of God's wise and wonderful plan, but HE HAS NOT CEDED NOR TRANSFERRED OWNERSHIP OF EVEN ONE INCH OF IT TO SATAN FOR A POSSESSION. To say that there is any part of God's creation that Satan will possess forever is a horrible blasphemy against God. As one has written, "Not always, however, shall men be in opposition to our Creator, for after all present travail is ended, and man has run his course of self-will and rebellion, there shall be an inflow of the love of God into every heart which shall draw the creature back to his Creator, to serve Him with a whole heart, and worship before Him in complete obedience to His will. So great a transforming power is the operation of His grace in man, that we shall come to Him in love, and serve Him because we want to serve Him, freely and joyfully."

When Melchizedek, priest of the Most High God, blessed Abraham, He said to him, "Blessed be Abram of the Most High God, POSSESSOR OF HEAVEN AND EARTH." This word possessor comes from the Hebrew root meaning to erect, create, and thus TO OWN. From a verb meaning to contain, or hold. As the Scripture says, "IN HIM we live, and move, and have our being" (Acts 17:28). He contains us, even before we begin to contain Him, as the INDWELLING CHRIST. Man has been HELD by God, long before man ever received God into his own being to contain Him. HE is the POSSESSOR of heaven AND EARTH. Furthermore, "BY HIM all things consist," or are held together, and "Thou hast created ALL things, and for THY PLEASURE they are and were created" (Rev. 4:11). This answers the question of the apostle, "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) and He has decreed, "Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, ALL YE LANDS. Know ye that the Lord He is God: it is He that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we (all lands) are HIS PEOPLE, and the SHEEP OF HIS PASTURE" (Ps. 100:1, 3).

IT DOESN'T LOOK LIKE GOD'S WORLD!

I will be the first to admit that this world doesn't look very much like something that is owned by the great and good God. At 5:30 A.M. on July 16, 1945, a light brighter than a thousand suns illuminated the desert sands of New Mexico. One scientist who was watching wept. "My God," he exclaimed, "we have created hell." Ah, our world is on fire, and man without God will never be able to control the flames. The demons of hell have been let loose. The fires of passion, greed, hate, and lust are sweeping the world. We seem to be plunging madly toward self-destruction. We have entered an era of political perplexities, disasters, strikes, gold scares, bankruptcies, bank failures, terrorists, riots, bombings, anarchists, godless communism, floods, hurricanes, droughts, pollution, industrial disasters, the whole social structure crumbling and even nature reacting violently. We have murders, rape, muggings, pornography, sodomy, divorce, immorality,

and blasphemy and abominations of all kinds daily invading our homes in the papers and on television, a sin for which God will certainly bring us to judgment.

I look out over the world today and I see demons stalking through the lands, with literally billions of people held in the prison houses of the dense darkness of false religions, worshipping idols, and devils, and the gods of superstition, tradition and fear. I look out over the world today and I see the spirit of strife and hatred and war, thousands dying daily at the hands of terrorists, in bloody revolutions on the battlefields of the world. I look out over the world today and I see more than one third of the inhabitants of earth, nearly two billion people, enslaved under the iron heel of godless, atheistic communism. It doesn't look much like God's world, but IT IS!

I look out over the third-world nations today and I see poverty and squalor and ignorance on an incomprehensible scale, millions of people starving to death, pitiful little children with protruding eyes and stomachs bloated from malnutrition, without hope in the world. I look out over the industrialized nations of the West today and I see untold millions of people bowing before the gods of humanism, secularism, and worshipping before the shrines of the gods of pleasure, sex, perversion, and debauchery. Fornication, adultery, and homosexuality are all a big joke, just something to laugh about. In America alone there are nine million alcoholics. There are ten million drug addicts. There are twenty million homosexuals. There are fifty million fornicators and adulterers. One thousand Americans are infected with venereal disease - not every year - not every month - not every week - not every day - but every hour! Ah, it doesn't look much like a world that belongs to God, but IT DOES!

I look out across our land today and I see millions of our children on drugs, spaced out, angry with the world, hostile to parents and all authority, and out-of-joint with society. I see that evil teachings, incredible in their filth and degradation, have crept into our public schools on every hand while God, prayer, and the Bible have been thrown out and openly ridiculed. I see a giant crime wave of unprecedented proportions sweeping across our cities, New York City alone has between five hundred and a thousand bank robberies each year, rape is out of control, murder is commonplace, and nothing and no one is safe on our streets anymore. IT DOESN'T LOOK MUCH LIKE A WORLD THAT GOD WOULD OWN, DOES IT? BUT, HE DOES!

This present evil world is hideously marred by SIN. Let us make this thing more personal. Go with me to yonder hospital, and listen for just a moment to the cries and moans of the sick and the suffering. See the red eyes wet with tears, and think of the bleeding hearts behind those tears as they carry that loved one away. Go with me to yonder prison and see the young lives blighted and shriveled with sin, caged up like wild animals. Follow me now to yonder asylum, and listen to the unintelligible jargon of those poor, pitiable souls with their aberated reason and deranged minds, probably because of an act committed by their grandfather when he had his fling, and the very walls seem to whisper the word, SIN, S-I-N! It doesn't look very much like God's world, my friend, but IT IS!

I can't really imagine how much a million is. A dollar a day since the birth of Christ would total only three-fourths of a million dollars. I can't imagine the suffering of a million people, let alone a billion or four and a half billion. Yet, that's the reality of today's world. Famine, illness, fear, oppression, exploitation, poverty, hopelessness, sin, all that is the daily lot of billions of people. Doesn't look like a world that belongs to God, does it? But, IT DOES!

YE SHALL BE A KINGDOM OF PRIESTS

I earnestly pray that God will give a spirit of true humility to all who read these lines, for revelation and understanding are given only to those who humbly confess their ignorance before God. I am persuaded that the professing Church which so glibly speaks of "the priesthood of all believers" actually knows and understands practically nothing about God's ROYAL PRIESTHOOD. God's express purpose for forming the Royal Priesthood in the earth during this present age is because ALL THE EARTH IS HIS. "Ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto Me above all people: FOR ALL THE EARTH IS MINE: and ye shall be unto Me a kingdom of priests." God is preparing a priesthood because He owns the earth, the whole world, and all they that dwell therein.

The Scriptures clearly reveal how ownership is one of the central thoughts in both creation and redemption, the link that binds them together. Two things are always inherent in ownership - purpose and responsibility. Do you not know that if a person makes or buys anything he surely has some PURPOSE in mind for it? And is it not also true that when a person makes or buys anything he has a RESPONSIBILITY to it? The man who buys a good hunting dog has a definite purpose in owning the dog, and if he is not a hunter he will not buy it. With ownership of the dog there comes the responsibility for the dog, to feed and care for it and treat it humanely. You have, I suppose, sometime bought something? As you have paid your money for it and it was delivered to you did you not have a plan for it? And are you not now responsible for it?

Take a simple illustration. Almost twenty years ago Lorain and I bought a house in Sarasota, Florida. It was a lovely little two bedroom white frame house, entirely adequate for that time. Some years later the Lord led us to Mississippi to live and minister among a group of saints, and we were there for almost two years. During that time we rented our house in Florida. The original tenants left, and we rented the house to a man and his wife and grown son, none of whom we had previously known. You wouldn't believe what those people did to that house within the space of a few months! Evidently, they did not sweep those beautiful hardwood floors even once, the dirt was ground into the wood until the entire finish was ruined. Windows were broken out. Water had run over the kitchen and bathroom floors and the tile were loose. The furniture was demolished, the sofa was propped up on bricks and great gaping holes stared at us from other pieces. On and on the disaster went. Needless to say - because we were the owners - it didn't take us long to swing into action! The tenants were promptly given notice and evicted. Then followed the long and tedious process of RESTORATION. Ah, BECAUSE WE OWNED THE HOUSE we had PURPOSE for it and RESPONSIBILITY to it. Because of that purpose and responsibility we were willing to spend the money that had to be spent, expend the energy involved in long days and weeks of hard work until ALL WAS RESTORED to its original beauty and usefulness.

We love with a deeper intensity the children of our own procreation. Suppose a father has five sons, four normal and one abnormal, will he not lavish more love on the abnormal than on the normal ones? Is there any price that he can pay, however great the sacrificial cost, that he will not provide if perchance he may redeem the abnormal one? Is there any effort possible that he can make that he will not undertake in order to restore that one to normality? Lift it up to the spiritual plane and we have the necessity in the heart of the great Creator, the good and gracious Father of all mankind, to provide REDEMPTION AND RESTORATION FOR HIS CREATION, the work of His love! And it is from this great fact of GOD'S OWNERSHIP of the world that He says, "Because all the earth is Mine...ye

shall be a KINGDOM OF PRIESTS!" Because it is His He has a plan to do something about the wreckage that sin has made. God has a purpose for, and a responsibility to, His creation. The Royal Priesthood is the instrument through which Christ's redemption shall be ministered, restoring all into Him again.

Johnny came home with a bad report card and put all the blame on teacher who had it in for him. That was not the end of the world, but it was almost the end of the world when, unleashing the tragic holocaust, Adolph Hitler blamed the Jews for all the woes of the world in his day. "Scapegoatism" is old. Adam put the blame for his sin on Eve, and Eve shifted the blame to the serpent. But God, the great Proprietor of all does not place the blame on others - HE HIMSELF TAKES FULL RESPONSIBILITY for all that has happened to His creation. "For the creation was subjected to frailty - to futility, condemned to frustration - not because of some intentional fault on its part, but BY THE WILL OF HIM WHO SO SUBJECTED IT. Yet with the hope that creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and corruption and gain an entrance INTO THE GLORIOUS FREEDOM OF GOD'S CHILDREN" (Rom. 8:20-21, Amplified).

We are not in this life because we willed to be here in this world. The whole human race is not here because of its will. God is RESPONSIBLE for our existence here in the flesh, lowered into the realm of vanity, sin, and corruption. Adam was not responsible for his existence, for God by HIS WILL brought him into being. In fact the whole race of humanity is God's responsibility. We are here because of his plans, desires, purposes, and will, and God is a God of PRINCIPLE. He having begun a work, will finish it and not throw it aside because it was marred by Satan and sin which He knew was coming.

Ah, while men are busy blaming others for the world's problems, and the devil for their own, God Himself as Owner of all takes His great responsibility for all and therein lies the basis of the whole scheme of creation and redemption. Rom. 11:36 says from the Diaglott, "Because OUT OF HIM, and THROUGH HIM, and FOR HIM are all things. To Him be the glory for the ages. Amen." The Amplified Bible beautifully renders this, "For FROM HIM and THROUGH HIM and TO HIM are all things. For all things originate with Him and come from Him; all things live through Him, and all things center in and tend to consummate and to end in Him. To Him be glory forever! Amen." To say the least, it will give us great peace of mind and heart if we can see and understand that all things came out of God and were created by Him. And it will help us greatly if we can understand that God as Creator and Owner takes responsibility for the world today. GOD IS RESPONSIBLE for every human being that has ever lived, is living, or who ever will live. And because He is responsible and has great purpose for His creation HE WILL DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT!

God has a plan! Indeed, God has a wonderful plan for this world! It is a plan of which the architectural drawings were made in eternity. It encompasses the minutest detail of all creation. I assure you that when time has run its course, and when the last trump has sounded and the veil is dropped upon the scene, we shall discover that that plan has been worked out to its very tiniest detail, just as God had planned it in eternity - that His will has been done! That is an amazing thought because it often seems as if the world is flying off unattended, like a chariot where the driver has fallen off, the horses are running wild, the reins are flapping in the breeze, and it is threatening to go over the precipice at any moment. Yet the Scriptures would have us know that God, the sovereign Lord of history, has His hands firmly upon those reins and that His plan is coming to pass. Think about it! Our God is perfect in all His attributes. He is perfect in His power. He is perfect

in His holiness and justice. He is perfect in His love and mercy. He is perfect in His wisdom and omniscience. Therefore, His plan must be perfect. Indeed it is a perfect plan!

I cannot believe, as some naively believe, that God could ever be satisfied with a world gone awry and a people gone astray, such as we see in evidence today. Just as sure as we restored our demolished home, so certain is it that God will save and restore a lost world! "Because all the earth is Mine, ye shall be unto Me a KINGDOM OF PRIESTS." God has provided the redemption of the world in the sacrifice of Calvary, and now raises up a Royal Priesthood, a many-membered Priest in union with the great and compassionate and faithful High Priest in the heavens, our Lord Jesus the Christ, to minister the claims and power and blessings and benefits of His redemption unto men until all have been restored into His image.

A. E. Saxby wrote: "The character, as well as the ability of the maker, is visible in the thing that He makes. If a good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, then it is certain that the great Creator of all, who is holy in all His ways and righteous in all His works, who is good and only doeth good and whose tenderness is over all His works, can design nothing the end of which is not pure happiness and usefulness. Whatever catastrophes may have intervened, and however mysterious are the processes by which His goal will be reached, it follows, from the fact of His impeachable character, that the consummation of His work will justify all His methods. So wide is His care, and so minute, that a falling sparrow is noted and remembered. Peter gives Him the title of 'the faithful Creator,' meaning thereby that His responsibilities are fully met in a manner only possible to infinite power and love. If His creatorship yearns over a broken bird, how much more will it reckon with all the forces that have combined to mar the image of Himself in the man He has made. If He employs the discipline of a father, the sacrificial love of a mother, the stern justice of a judge and the passionate affection of a husband - and all these are figures chosen by Himself to set forth His attitude towards men and His work for and in them - it is to the end that His great designs of love may ultimately triumph. If He turns men to destruction, it is that He may say, 'Return ye children of men' (Ps. 90:3). If the vessel is marred in the hand of the Potter, it is that He may make it again another vessel (Jer. 18:4). If His work is marred, then His own face will be more marred than any man's, that He may buy back those who have sold themselves for nought. Creation is full of mysteries, but the revealed character of the Creator suffices to assure us of a triumphant solution to them all. Only a traitor to His person and character would deny such a God this certainty!"

A great preacher has shared this beautiful insight: "Never can it be said that a holy God loves an unholy thing. And yet God loves sinners - bringing the often-repeated question, 'Why?' GOD LOVES THEM FOR WHAT HE SEES IN THEM OF HIS LOST AND FALLEN IMAGE, for God can never love anything directly but Himself! God loves everything else for His own sake. 'For THY PLEASURE they are and were created.' God sees in Jesus Christ what you would have been. And this is why God loves lost men. He loves them not by excusing their sin; not by taking an attitude of carelessness; not by any willingness on His part to become morally lax - but He loves them because He once stood and said, 'Let us make man in our image.'

"Here is an illustration that could fall within our own human experience. A man and a woman meet. After falling in love, they marry and have one child, a son. They have a great deal of pleasure as they consider the boy's features. Each says that he looks like the other. Then they change it around and insist that he looks like this one - then again, that one. But the child is their son, and they try to see each other in that boy! The years

pass and the boy grows up and approaches manhood. The hour comes when he breaks with society. He chooses to go outside the law. He drinks, gambles, lies, steals, cheats - and then he murders. He becomes a fugitive from justice, known to be vicious and cruel. The father of that lad dies before the outlaw is caught and thrown into prison. But the grieving mother goes to see him.

"She knows he is finished. Evidence of every kind is against him, fingerprints everywhere, a thousand witnesses. He will pay for his crimes. The mother looks through the bars. It is her son standing there, now a full-grown man. Can she love his cruel deeds as an outlaw? Can she love those heartless acts of gangsterism? Does she love his cold-eyed cruelty? No! She hates them with everything in her good heart. But as he stands there, cornered and silent, she sees beyond him in her memory the man who is no longer with her, and she thinks, 'If only he had been a good boy - he would have just been the image of his father.' She pours out her heart in tears, doesn't she? She loves the boy - but she does not love one thing in him that made him an outlaw! She loves THE IMAGE OF THE MAN SHE LOVED and to whom she gave herself with the promise to follow until the separation by death. And she loves her son, for in him she sees THE LOST AND FALLEN IMAGE of the man she loved!

"We know that God looks down at the human race and sees us in our awful sin. The apostle Paul has recorded seventeen deeds which he describes as the works of the flesh - but they are only the beginning. It would take many sheets of paper to write down the long and dreadful list of sins that man has been capable of committing and is still doing. God is still looking and He hates jealousy, deception, lying, gluttony, uncleanness, impurity, cruelty. We cannot ever think that God loves sinners carelessly, loosely, foolishly, with the thought: 'I don't care - I love them anyway!' No, it is plain that He loves them because He sees in them THE LOST AND FALLEN IMAGE OF WHAT ADAM WAS AND OF WHAT CHRIST IS and loves them REDEMPTIVELY now for Jesus' sake" -end quote.

I believe that God now loves all lost men. There are lost men in jails and prisons and insane asylums. They are in saloons and brothels and in death and judgment and hell, and God loves them all. He still remembers them and remembers His Son on the tree, suffering and dying on their behalf. And in the redeemed body of this resurrected and glorified Son He now prepares a Royal Priesthood after the order of Melchizedek, a SON COMPANY, a KING COMPANY, a PRIEST COMPANY, to restore mankind into the image of God again. "Because all the earth is Mine, ye shall be unto Me a KINGDOM OF PRIESTS!" The earth, the world, and all they that dwell therein belong to God first because He made them, and second because He redeemed them.

In Rom. 8:20 Paul moved by inspiration states that the whole creation groans for this "priesthood." I put "priesthood" in there, but that's exactly what He's talking about. The whole creation groans for the MANIFESTATION OF THE SONS OF GOD for "the creation itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God" (Rom. 8:21). I see it. I see something stirring in the atmosphere. I see a people being taught of God, purged, purified, processed, perfected, taking on the mind of Christ, transformed again into the image of God, taking their rightful places - sons and kings and priests unto their God. They have received a vision of what they are destined to be in God, and of what they are being prepared to do for creation. The message of the hope of sonship and the high calling of God in Christ Jesus is going forth in power in this hour and circling the globe as multiplied thousands of the Lord's

people are heeding the call. God is removing from the hearts of these the foolish desire to "fly away" to some far-off heaven somewhere, as He unfolds within their ransomed spirits the beautiful PURPOSE He has in His firstfruit company. "Because all the earth is Mine, ye shall be unto Me a KINGDOM OF PRIESTS!" You'll have to pardon me, for I may seem slightly crazy, but lately I've wanted to rush out into creation and run up to a tree or a river or the vilest of sinners or into the most impossible situation and say, "Hang on - the manifestation of the sons of God isn't far off. Its even now beginning in the earth!"

Blessed indeed is that company of King-Priests, the Kingdom of Priests, the Royal Priesthood that sings the glad-anthem: "Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed 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). Priests that REIGN! Priests that REIGN OVER THE EARTH! Ah, precious friend of mine, if ever you would reign over the earth, first you must be possessed of a priestly nature - the ministry of reconciliation. The ministry of the Royal Priesthood is rooted in the redemptive work of Calvary. Through death our Lord Jesus Christ actually bought back THE WORLD, A-L-L O-F I-T, unto Himself. No, He did not reconcile only a few believers unto Himself. Let us forever forsake the kind of blasphemous ignorance that can contradict the words of inspiration: "GOD WAS IN CHRIST RECONCILING T-H-E W-O-R-L-D UNTO HIMSELF, NOT IMPUTING THEIR TRESPASSES UNTO THEM; and hath committed unto US (THE ROYAL PRIESTHOOD) THE WORD OF RECONCILIATION" (II Cor. 5:19). Oh! that we all might somehow come to realize the enormity and compassion of Christ's redemption! Satan would ever limit that work, would discount and belittle it, and eventually set it aside. He would keep men blinded to the enormity of the sweeping declaration of Jn. 4:42, "This is indeed the Christ, THE SAVIOUR OF T-H-E W-O-R-L-D," and, "He is the propitiation for OUR (the Church's) SINS: and NOT FOR OURS ONLY, BUT FOR THE SINS OF THE W-H-O-L-E W-O-R-L-D" (I Jn. 2:2).

Do you not know that if a person buys anything he will surely TAKE POSSESSION of it when it is brought to him? You have, I suppose, some time bought something? As you have paid your money for it, was it not turned over to you, and were you not willing to receive it and take possession of it? And if it were not turned over to you after you paid for it, would you not then take appropriate measures to see that it IS DELIVERED INTO YOUR POSSESSION? The higher the price you paid for it, the less was there any doubt that you would take possession of what you paid for. "But" - you will perhaps answer - "if I buy something, I know what it is, and that it is worth the price I paid. But THE WORLD, with its sinful heart and self-will and rebellion and wickedness - there is reason to fear that He who purchased it will not receive it, will not possess it. When I buy an article and another of less value is sent to me, I refuse to receive it; I send it back with the message: 'This is not what I bought and paid for.' " You are right, but consider what the difference is between Him who bought the whole world, and mere human purchasers. He bought what He KNEW WAS BAD, precisely BECAUSE IT WAS BAD; and which HE WILL ACCEPT AS BAD, THAT HIS LOVE MAY HAVE THE JOY AND GLORY OF MAKING IT GOOD. How wonderful this is! The Scripture says: "Christ died for the ungodly; while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." It says, further, that the price of Christ's blood was paid for those who denied the Lord, for those who sold Him, even for His rejectors. What love!

We must realize how inseparable REDEMPTION and POSSESSION are. Neither can exist without the other, but redemption leads to possession. Redemption is too often

looked at from its negative side as deliverance from sin, from drunkenness, from lying, etc. But its real glory is the positive element of being redeemed UNTO HIMSELF. Full possession of a house means occupation: if I own a house without occupying it, it may be the home of all that is foul and evil. God has redeemed me and made me His own with the view of getting complete possession of me. He says of my soul, "It is Mine," and seeks to have His right of ownership acknowledged and made fully manifest. That will be the full outworking of redemption when God has entered in and taken complete and entire possession. It is redemption that gives God His right and power over me; it is redemption that sets me free for God to now bless and possess: it is redemption realized and filling my soul, that will bring me the assurance and experience of all His power will work in me. In God, redemption and possession are one.

The Scriptures are clear - the WHOLE WORLD belongs to God first by creation, and second by redemption. The ministry of the Royal Priesthood is to minister to the creation on behalf of God that He might have entrance to possess all of what He has paid for as His habitation. God's priests know and understand that the earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof, the world, and they that dwell therein. God's priesthood knows that the Lord has a right to every heart, and the devil has a right to NONE. We are going to press the claims of God our Father and of the Lord Jesus Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit upon every heart of every man, woman, and child in this age and in the age and ages to come until our great and glorious God fully and completely possesses all that He has redeemed for Himself, praise His wonderful name!

As a member of the Royal Priesthood I shall fight that battle for the supremacy of Christ. I shall claim that every foot of this earth and every man upon this earth and under the earth belongs to Christ, for He made the earth and He made every man and He "tasted death for every man." Therefore, every foot of the earth; and every man on the earth and under the earth belongs to Christ my Lord. I claim for His this great and universal Kingdom. The Church has forgotten that the Christ came to establish a Kingdom and that it must break in pieces and CONSUME (take into itself) every other kingdom including the devil's kingdom. The Gospel which Christ preached was the Gospel of the KINGDOM OF GOD. The hope and aim of all His work was the establishment of the Kingdom of God. When the end shall come, He shall have subdued all things to that Kingdom, He shall deliver up the Kingdom to God, even the Father, that God may be ALL IN ALL.

Those who have received the call to the Royal Priesthood preach the Gospel of the Kingdom of God and of the triumph of that Kingdom in every realm. We demand that every man upon this God's earth, and under the earth, and throughout the universe, shall bow the knee and glorify God by calling Jesus Lord and serving and obeying Him with a willing heart. God shall grant it! If it takes ages upon ages to accomplish, God shall grant it!

I notice that America was discovered at the time when Christianity was waking up from the long dream, the terrible night, of the ten centuries of the Dark Ages. The Church of God had gone down into deep darkness and degradation, until Truth was almost lost and liberty destroyed. I notice that the great power of the Christ reawakening the conscience of the sleeping Church began to move amongst the nations at the time when Europe, Asia, and Africa became aware of the existence of the American Continent. Now there are no more continents on this earth to discover, for all the earth is known, and scarcely upon this round globe is there an island that has not been placed upon the map. The whole world now knows the extent, the height, and breadth of land of all the area of this

earth. Its highest mountains have been measured; its deepest depths have been explored, even visited, and the whole world is known. Now that we know it, the one great thought is WHO SHALL POSSESS IT?

"Ask of Me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for THY POSSESSION," says the Messianic Psalm. Christ conquered, and He is conquering, and He is to conquer. I claim this earth for God for He made it. I claim this earth for God, for the earth is the Lord's. The sea is His, and He made it. His hands formed the dry land. I claim everything that comes out of the bowels of the earth for God, for "the earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof" and "all the gold and the silver is His." I claim every man in Crystal River, and in Miami, and in New York, and in Hong Kong, and in Peking, and in Moscow and in the whole wide world for God, for "it is He that hath made us, and not we ourselves." I am not willing to wickedly cede even one thing or one person to the devil, as do some, for "the earth is the Lord's; the world, and they that dwell therein." Amen!

I proclaim to you, as a minister of God, that the Church is here in this world for the establishment of the Kingdom of God. The body of the Christ IS the Kingdom of God in this world and its King-Priests must reign until the kingdoms of THIS WORLD become the kingdoms of our God and His Christ. I can never be satisfied, the heart of God can never be satisfied, until I see the Kingdom of God in every heart, the Kingdom of God in the home, the Kingdom of God in the workshop, the Kingdom of God between employers and employees, the Kingdom of God governing the civic affairs of the city, the Kingdom of God in the government of the state, and the Kingdom of God ruling in every nation and every land. I proclaim the Kingdom of God, and I tell you that God has sent salvation to save us from the kingdom of men, and of devils. The rule of men will never meet the needs of men. The rule of men will never please God. The rule of men will never deliver the world from hate and war and death. The foolish statement that you so often quote: "That government of the people is to be by the people and for the people" is a fallacy that must be destroyed. The government of the people is NOT to be by the people, but the government people is to be BY GOD, and FOR GOD. Not by the people and for the people, but government of the people by the great God who made them, and came and died for they are to live for Him. The government of God is not an external government of laws and bureaucracies and armies and guns, but the internal rule of His Spirit as He sits enthroned upon the throne of men's hearts. Transformed into the image of Christ, indwelt by the mind of Christ, filled with the attributes of Christ, men need NO EXTERNAL FORCE to manipulate, control, direct, or govern them. "The Kingdom of God is within you" (Lk. 17:21).

Because all the earth is His God is raising up a Royal Priesthood to reign in mighty spirit power and authority over the earth, not to be little human dictators but with an outflow of life and light and love, touching God with one hand, and humanity with the other, bringing the two together, that God may indwell men by His Spirit and live and rule in them in power and glory. The kingly nature in us is not to dominate over men's lives, but to deal with and break the power of self-hood and rebellion and sin and the devil that men may be reconciled unto God. Kings have power and authority, priests reconcile in mercy and love. But once the reconciliation has taken place, and the Christ is enthroned, we deliver men up to God, even the Father, that GOD IN THEM MAY BE ALL IN ALL. That is the principle of the Kingdom. We rule only to subdue them unto God - then GOD RULES IN THEM. He rules first THROUGH US, that He may rule finally IN THEM.

God has always wanted a priesthood. The priesthood is foundational to the outworking of His redemption and central to His plan of the Ages. The covenant of God still stands today: "Now therefore, if ye will obey My voice indeed and keep My covenant, then ye shall be A PECULIAR TREASURE UNTO ME ABOVE ALL PEOPLE: for all the earth is Mine: and YE SHALL BE UNTO ME A KINGDOM OF PRIESTS, AND AN HOLY NATION." Oh, beloved, come, let us now open our hearts wide to Him. Come, and as we gaze upon this glorious ministry and its life-flow to all the families of the earth; let us yield ourselves unto God that He may work His wondrous work in our lives, bringing us into such union with Jesus, the High Priest of our profession, that we become in nature and power His ROYAL PRIESTHOOD in the earth! The manifestation of the Sons of God for which all creation is in travail is nothing more nor less than the full manifestation of God's fully developed and empowered body of KING-PRIESTS AFTER THE ORDER OF MELCHISEDEK. Those apprehended unto this ministry are, indeed, A PEOPLE FOR A PURPOSE!

Chapter 3

Priests Displaying His Glory

"Now, therefore, if ye will obey My voice indeed, and keep My covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto Me above all people: FOR ALL THE EARTH IS MINE: and ye shall be unto Me A KINGDOM OF PRIESTS, and an holy nation" (Ex. 19:5-6).

I have often characterized our text as the GREAT DIVINE SANDWICH. A sandwich is two slices of bread between which is placed meat, fish, cheese, or the like. Three items are necessary to make a sandwich, the two outer items - two identical slices of bread - and in between another, and different, item. Such is the structure of our text. There are two statements of like nature surrounding and enclosing another and different kind of statement. Notice the two outer statements: (1) Ye shall be a PECULIAR TREASURE unto Me above all people (2) Ye shall be unto Me a KINGDOM OF PRIESTS, and an holy nation. Then, "sandwiched" in between these two wonderful promises is this remarkable word: FOR ALL THE EARTH IS MINE.

Can we not see by this that the purpose of God to establish in the earth a Royal Priesthood is rooted in the great fact that ALL THE EARTH IS HIS? That all the earth is His answers the WHY of priesthood. Long milleniums ago at Sinai the cry went ringing forth: "Ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto Me above all people: FOR ALL THE EARTH IS MINE," and the words that follow may correctly be stated thus: "BECAUSE ALL THE EARTH IS MINE ... ye shall be unto Me a kingdom of Priests."

In the light of this Scripture I would like to reaffirm something which the world at large, and many Christians, seem to have forgotten: THIS IS GOD'S WORLD! There is an understanding that is developing in the consciousness of the "called out ones," those who are going beyond the static creeds and empty traditions of the Church systems and pressing on into the purposes of God, to know that ALL the earth is the Lord's. Not just a tree or two, not just a mountain or two, not just the Church, but all of it, the very fullness thereof. We are His whether we know it or not, we are His whether we like it or not, whether we desire to serve Him, or whether we are presently in rebellion against His will. It is both heartening and assuring to read such Scriptures as these: "The EARTH is the Lord's, and the FULLNESS THEREOF; the WORLD and THEY THAT DWELL THEREIN" (Ps. 24:1). God has everything in the palm of His almighty hand. He is sovereign. Jesus is King! Jesus is Lord! Job said, "In whose hand is the soul of every living thing, and the breath of ALL MANKIND" (Job 12:10). The current population of planet earth is more than four and a half billion. For 1990, it is projected there will be six billion, and by the year 2000, it is estimated there will be six and a half billion residents on our planet. GOD GIVES BREATH AND LIFE TO THEM ALL AND THE EARTH IS THE LORD'S AND THE FULLNESS THEREOF.

I will be the first to admit that this world doesn't look very much like something that is owned by the great and good God. But I earnestly pray that God will give a spirit of true humility to all who read these lines, for revelation and understanding are given only to

those who humbly confess their ignorance before God. I am persuaded that the professing Church which so glibly speaks of "the priesthood of all believers" actually knows and understands practically nothing about God's ROYAL PRIESTHOOD. God's express purpose for forming the Royal Priesthood in the earth during this present age is because ALL THE EARTH IS HIS. "Ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto Me above all people: FOR ALL THE EARTH IS MINE: and ye shall be unto Me a kingdom of priests." God is preparing a priesthood because He owns the earth, the whole world, and all they that dwell therein.

Of what value is a priest, anyhow? Well, he does something that no other ministry can do. Speaking not of the valueless priesthood of a pagan god, but the typical priesthood of the Old Testament, the priesthood of Aaron the Levite, Heb. 5:1-3 says: "For every high priest chosen from among men is appointed to act in behalf of men in things relating to God, to offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins. He is able to exercise gentleness and forbearance toward the ignorant and erring, since he himself also is liable to moral weakness and physical infirmity. And because of this he is obliged to offer sacrifice for his own sins as well as for those of the people" (Amplified). If there were no sin against God, and no estrangement from God, there would be no need of a priesthood, particularly a High Priest. Adam in the beginning, in the image and likeness of God, needed no priest. Jesus Christ, the last Adam, was born into a race of sinners, but He needed no priest, for He had a virgin birth through Mary and His life was the life of God. He was born sinless and grew up sinless and remained sinless down to His sacrificial death (I Cor. 15:45-47; Heb. 7:26; 1 Pet. 2:21-24). Because of His sinlessness, He could become a High Priest and offer a perfect sacrifice for all.

While the High Priest of the typical order of Aaron was the representative of the people before God, he was at the same time the representative of God to the people; he blessed them in the name of God; counsel came to them from God by means of the Urim and Thummim which were in his breastplate, and he and his successors taught the people as the immediate representatives of God. He filled a double capacity; he was for the people toward God, and for God toward the people: he laid one hand upon God, and the other upon the people, uniting the two as it were within himself.

The ministry of the High Priest, together with the entire priesthood, was first carried out in the tabernacle God commanded Moses to build in the wilderness. It is called the "tabernacle of witness" in Numbers 17. In Rev. 15:5 it is called the "tabernacle of testimony." It was the one and only place where God witnessed and testified to Israel their duty and responsibility to Him. In Ex. 33:7 we have the expression, "tabernacle of the congregation." This was not the tabernacle we are discussing, but a temporary tent used by Israel while awaiting the construction of the real tabernacle. But the phrase, "tabernacle of the congregation," expresses perfectly the nature of this building. A congregation is a meeting of individuals for fellowship and counsel, and thus, the tabernacle itself was called "the tent of meeting." It was the place where man met God, and God met man. It was the meeting place of God and man, and note well, it was the only place where man could approach God, and where God would meet with man, upon the basis of the sacrifice of the blood. There was no other place of meeting designated in Israel, except the place of sacrifice and shedding of blood in the tabernacle, the place of the ministering of the priesthood unto God and man.

The Lord would not accept any sacrifice, no matter how perfect, which was not brought upon the altar in this one and only tabernacle. In Lev. 17:3-4 we read: "What man soever

there be of the house of Israel, that killeth an ox, or lamb, or goat ... and bringeth it not unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, to offer an offering unto the Lord before the tabernacle of the Lord ... that man shall be cut off from among his people." There was only one place of sacrifice permitted, and that was at the altar in the gate of the tabernacle. It was the sin of Israel in repeatedly sacrificing in other places, in groves and upon high hills, which provoked the displeasure of the Lord and brought judgment upon them, and caused them finally to be dispersed among the nations. There is today still only one way to God, only one place where God will meet with the sinner. This is prefigured by the tabernacle in the wilderness with its priesthood, the ministry of that tabernacle. Our Lord Jesus Christ is the High Priest of this "Meeting Place" as we read in Heb. 4:14-16: "Inasmuch then as we have a great High Priest who has ascended and passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession of faith in Him, for we do not have a High Priest Who is unable to understand and sympathize and have a fellow feeling with our weaknesses and infirmities and liability to the assaults of temptation, but One Who has been tempted in every respect as we are, yet without sinning. Let us then fearlessly and confidently and boldly draw near to the throne of grace the throne of God's favor; that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in good time for every need - appropriate help and well-timed help, coming just when we need it" (Amplified).

The channel through which this ministry flows to the world is the body of Christ, for the entire body of priests under the High Priest is the extension and projection of His own High Priestly ministry. And so we read: "So then, brethren, consecrated and set apart for God, who SHARE IN THE HEAVENLY CALLING, thoughtfully and attentively consider Jesus, the Apostle and High Priest Whom we confessed as ours" (Heb. 3:1, Amplified). The Authorized Version reads, "Wherefore, holy brethren, PARTAKERS OF THE HEAVENLY CALLING, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus." Holy brethren! In the previous chapter the word "brethren" had been used twice. "He is not ashamed to call them BRETHREN." "It behooved Him to be made like unto His BRETHREN." The sacred name is now applied personally: Christ's brethren are brethren in Christ, brethren in His high calling of sonship, brethren in His holy calling of priesthood.

Holy brethren - PARTAKERS OF THE HEAVENLY CALLING! What is elsewhere spoken of as a holy calling is here named a heavenly calling. The calling is that of priesthood. "Seeing then that we have a great HIGH PRIEST, that is passed INTO THE HEAVENS" (Heb. 4:14). "For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, but into HEAVEN ITSELF, now to appear in the presence of God for us" (Heb. 9:24). How awesome the words: "Holy brethren - PARTAKERS OF THE HEAVENLY CALLING!" Co-sharers with Him in His heavenly priesthood! That does not mean a calling from some far-off heaven, or a calling to the heaven, whence the call proceeds. No, there is much more in it. Heaven is not a place, but a state, a mode of existence, a dimension of reality, the life in which the presence and glory of God are revealed and experienced in their unhindered power. And the heavenly calling is that in which the power of the heavenly life works within to make our life heavenly. When Jesus was upon the earth the Kingdom of Heaven was nigh at hand; after He had ascended and received the Kingdom from the Father, the Kingdom of Heaven came to this earth in power, through the advent of the Holy Spirit. The disciples, at Pentecost, were people who by the quickening of the Holy Spirit entered into the Heavenly Kingdom or state of life. And the Kingdom entered into them. And they became PARTAKERS OF A HEAVENLY CALLING, because the spirit and the life and the power of heaven was within them.

The heavenly calling is the calling unto the priesthood of the Christ. Hebrews is very clear about this. "Now the main point of what we have to say is this: We have such a HIGH PRIEST, One Who is seated at the right hand of the majestic God IN HEAVEN, as officiating PRIEST, a MINISTER in the holy places and in the true tabernacle which is erected not by man but by the Lord" (Heb. 8:1-2, Amplified). The message is clear - Christ is the great High Priest of the heavens and we are called to be PARTAKERS WITH HIM in that heavenly calling. It is here - in the spiritual ministry of spiritual priests - that God comes to meet with man in the power of the blood of His Son. It is true, "There is one God, and ONE MEDIATOR between God and men, the man Christ Jesus" (I Tim. 2:5), but it is also true that "God hath reconciled us to Himself by Jesus Christ, and hath GIVEN UNTO US the MINISTRY OF RECONCILIATION. Now then WE are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: WE PRAY YOU IN CHRIST'S STEAD, be ye reconciled to God" (II Cor. 5:18-20). Ah, yes, we are holy brethren, PARTAKERS OF THE HEAVENLY CALLING!

The priesthood of Christ! Is that a dead doctrine? Is that merely something that Christ is and does in heaven apart from us? No, indeed. As Sons of God we are partakers of His heavenly calling. The priesthood has its roots in sonship, for "He that said unto Him, THOU ART MY SON, today have I begotten Thee...saith also in another place, THOU ART A PRIEST forever after the order of Melchizedek" (Heb. 5:5-6). Again, "The law maketh men High Priests which have infirmity; but the word of the oath, which was since the law, maketh THE SON, Who is consecrated for evermore" (Heb. 7:28). The divine life of THE SON is what gives His priesthood its power to bring us into His life, and His life into us. It means that all the love and holiness of God dwells in the Son. Sonship means that when our spirits are quickened by His Spirit and we are made partakers with Christ, we not only get a blessing that is outside but we get the Spirit of the Son within us. Jesus, the High Priest, does His work WITHIN US. He imparts of His own life, power, and ministry. We cannot have the priesthood in full power except as the power of HIS LIFE is fully inworked within us. If we begin to understand that, then we shall see what is meant by the fact that we are called to be priests, because we have the very life of the HIGH PRIEST in us - not only imputed, but the High Priest Himself dwelling powerfully within us and working effectually through us, praise His wonderful name!

What does priesthood mean? Self-sacrifice to death (of self) for God and man. That was the spirit of Jesus, and that is the spirit that Jesus wants to breathe into every priestly heart that is willing to yield itself to Him. Oh, precious friend of mine, He, through the eternal Spirit, gave Himself up to God, a sacrifice without a spot. And when I receive of that eternal Spirit into me, the priesthood of Jesus becomes a reality and the double work that Jesus does becomes my work too. Praise God! it becomes your work. And what is that work, that double work? To take hold of God with one hand, and the creation with the other, bringing the two together into oneness! I said in a previous article that with the priest in Israel there were two thoughts: "He shall stand before My face to minister" and "He shall go out to bless the people." And that is the double work every priest has to do: to live in the presence of God and then go out and dispense HIM to the people.

I know it is the prayer of all who truly receive the call to priesthood: "God, help us that sonship may not be a thing of spiritual self-indulgence. God, help us that sonship may not be to us some kind of elite, exclusive, country-club, holier than-thou-super-duper position. God, help us that we may not be feasting upon the deep revelation of truth while our hearts do not beat for our fellow creatures." God has a firstfruits company who are becoming the LINE OF HOPE FOR CREATION, because they themselves have an

anchor of hope that reaches beyond the veil to find its reality in the all-sufficiency of Christ. So one are we to become in Him, that we shall stand betwixt God and man, the connecting link, the hope of all creation which now groans in travail. While the Sons are reaching forth to the fullness of "the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ" (Tit. 2:13), the "earnest expectation of the creation waiteth for the manifestation of the Sons of God" (Rom. 8:19). How unspeakably meaningful and precious, then, becomes the wonderful promise: "Because all the earth is Mine: YE shall be unto Me A KINGDOM OF PRIESTS!."

A PRIESTHOOD ... TO SHOW FORTH HIS VIRTUES!

A Christian magazine reported the graduation speech of Stephanie Mills given at Mills College, Oakland, California. The title of her address was "The Future Is A Hoax." She said that she saw ahead only an overpopulated world doomed to cannibalism, a horribly disfigured planet with humankind continuing to spread "like an unfeeling, unthinking cancer across the earth." Can you imagine how meaningless life really is to those who are without Christ and without God and without hope in this world? I am reminded of the ephemerid, a small fly-like insect sometimes called the May Fly or the Day Fly. It is a peculiar little insect with four wings but lacks something that most of us like to have - a mouth! Having no mouth, it, therefore, does not eat; and in not eating, lives for only a few hours or a few days. Therefore, it gets its name from the word "ephemeral" which means "passing away." How insignificant their lives must be! What difference does it make what they do? Who knows? Who cares? They are forgotten. They come and they go. They are gone by the millions, day after day, after day, and nobody cares.

On a cosmic scale is it not the same with man? If we are simply the creatures of this life, and this world comes and goes, the day will come when this whole solar system will have fallen into the dark hole of entropy and the second law of thermodynamics will have brought everything to a heat death and the world, as we know it, will be no more. There will be no significance to our lives; there will have been no significance. Significance points to a sign and the sign must be seen. But there will be nobody to see or even read the history. Therefore, our lives will have been nothing but sound and fury, meaning nothing, purposeless. Ah, but Jesus Christ, who opens a portal on eternity, gives meaning and significance to our lives, and to the lives of all mankind, indeed, to the whole cosmic creation of God!

Many, even saints, are worried about this problem-filled world in which we live. We see nations which seem to be on collision courses; it seems inevitable that this world is going up in one great nuclear holocaust. One day the button will be pushed and there will be a great exchange of missiles flying over the whole world. There will be nothing then but the withering wastes of the once verdant land. Ah, but my friend, may I say that Jesus Christ, the King of glory, has come forth from the grave and is riding on His white horse of righteousness and power, going forth conquering and to conquer! All the rulers of this world rule according to His command. He raises up nations and casts them down. He places the wickedest of men upon the thrones of men and they do according to His will, and His will will inexorably come to pass. What peace calms the troubled soul when we know that we know that all is in HIS MIGHTY HAND. I do not hesitate to tell you that His Kingdom shall triumph in all realms, every knee shall bow before Him owning Him as King, every tongue shall glorify God by calling Jesus Lord and serving and obeying Him with a willing heart, because Christ is the sovereign Lord of this world, and His will shall be done.

"Now, therefore, if ye will obey My voice indeed, and keep My covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto Me above all people: FOR ALL THE EARTH IS MINE: and ye shall be unto Me A KINGDOM OF PRIESTS." This is indeed a wonderful word of hope because it comes from Him who is, unquestionably, the hope of the world. He is its ONLY hope! Because all the earth belongs to Christ our Lord He is preparing THE ROYAL PRIESTHOOD to restore all into Him again. There is coming a day - glorious day! - when there shall rise up from the throats of the billions of men and women of every race and tongue and out of all generations and ages the chorus of hallelujah and praise which shall forever be the celestial song of all creation. Glory!

I am reminded of a story of a parson down in the South Seas, a Church of England parson, who was half drunk. When the vessel on which he was sailing ran upon a reef on one of the Fiji Islands, there was great danger that they would all be drowned. The parson had been dining and wining, and as the Captain passed by he said with slurred words, "This vessel has stopped, Captain." "Yes," the Captain said, "it has; stopped on the top of a reef." "Well, Captain Granger," the parson asked through a thick tongue, "is there any danger?" "Yes," replied the Captain very indignantly, "there is a great deal of danger. Our only hope is in God." "My God," the parson said, "HAS IT COME TO THAT?" That is the way with a great many people! When you tell them that their only hope is in God, they say, "My God, has it come to that?" Is it not best to start with God first? That is what we do. God Himself has initiated the whole process of creation and redemption, and it is HE who has declared, "Because all the earth is Mine: ye shall be unto Me A KINGDOM OF PRIESTS." Ever it must be clear - ALL IS OF GOD. If I did not believe in the ultimate triumph of the Kingdom of God; if I did not believe that God has yet a great purpose to be wrought out through His saints on behalf of the world; if I did not believe that there is a ministry coming beyond the limitations of this present age; if I believed that this world was to continue to be misruled and misgoverned as it is; that the vile and abominable and wicked and immoral would continue forever to curse this earth, I should despair of humanity. It is my conviction that it would not be very long before humanity would absolutely destroy itself. But God has a plan! God has never given up. God reigns! Righteousness and Purity, Peace and Power are in God.

With the progressive unfolding of divine revelation the knowledge that God is not producing a remnant of weak-kneed escapists begins to gird up the mind, and childish notions of "flying away to heaven" are happily cast aside for a more pure word of truth. We know that this earth lies under the pollution of its inhabitants, and even this earth shall be cleansed and set to right by His Kingdom. Because ALL THE EARTH IS HIS, we are being constituted a Kingdom of Priests. The covenant is reiterated by the apostle Peter in these words: "But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of Him who hath called you out of darkness into His marvelous light" (I Pet. 2:9). The Amplified Bible beautifully renders, "But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a dedicated nation, God's own purchased, special people, that you may SET FORTH THE WONDERFUL DEEDS AND DISPLAY THE VIRTUES AND PERFECTIONS OF HIM Who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light."

As THE ROYAL PRIESTHOOD we shall go forth among our fellow-men, in all the nitty-gritty of everyday life, to show forth the virtues, the graces, the Perfections, the lovely character of the Christ. Every movement of a royal priest should emit of the fragrance of Christ. Nothing else becomes a member of the Royal Priesthood. To be occupied with myself, to be taking counsel for my own ease, my own interest, my own enjoyment, to be

seeking my own ends, to be caring about my own things, and using the gifts and callings of God for my own advantage, is not the act of a royal priest at all. Christ never did so; and I am told to SHOW FORTH HIS VIRTUES.

As one has so aptly written: "There is to be a declaration, a telling out, a showing forth. It is interesting that the Greek word given for 'show' in our text Scripture has only been used once in the New Testament, it is EK-AGGELLO. EK means OUT OF, and AGGELLO means angel, or literally MESSENGER. Because the message and the messenger become one, all that proceeds from the messenger, be it a message in words, or a life expressed, it is to declare the Perfections of HIM who hath wrought in them so great a salvation. We are to become HIS DISPLAY messengers, living manifestations of His Perfections, of His excellencies, of His virtues, etc. It is not only a telling forth, giving voice, but it is a living manifestation, and the Amplified translation gives, 'that you may SET FORTH the wonderful deeds and DISPLAY the virtues and Perfections of Him...' The producing of His firstfruits is for the specific purpose that they might become the demonstrators of His grace in the ages to come. DISPLAY VESSELS to reveal what God can do, as well as becoming instruments through which the same grace flows out to others. Thus the process shall continue until all have been brought to a saving knowledge of Christ, delivered from the thralldom of sin and decay, and brought into the glorious liberty of the children of God" -end quote.

What a high, holy, heavenly calling! And how reminiscent of Paul's statement in Eph. 2:4-7: "But God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: that in the 'ages to come He might SHOW the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us through Jesus Christ." So vast, so marvelous are the wonders of His grace, it will require the ages to come to continue to unfold these wonders, and He has purposed that there should be A PEOPLE through whom He would give this demonstration. ,, That in the ages to come He might SHOW..." "Show" is from a Greek word meaning "to exhibit, to put on display like a work of art, to demonstrate." The Amplified Bible reads, "He did this that He might CLEARLY DEMONSTRATE through the ages to come the immeasurable (limitless, surpassing) riches of His free grace in kindness and goodness of heart toward us in Christ Jesus." Kenneth Wuest translates, "In order that He might EXHIBIT ... in the ages that pile themselves upon one another in continuous succession the surpassing wealth of His grace in kindness to us in Christ Jesus." Show... demonstrate ... exhibit the riches, of His grace - unto whom? Not to those who already know it - that would be useless nonsense. But to those who do not know it! And not as an expression of God's scorn, ridicule, or cynicism, saying to the multitudes of hopelessly lost men and women, "Just LOOK at what you missed!" That would be no demonstration of the RICHES OF GRACE nor would it be an exhibit of His UNSURPASSED KINDNESS!

Ah, God is preparing a divine show for all the earth, indeed for the entire universe. The mighty Barnum, in describing his circus, said it was THE GREATEST SHOW ON EARTH. True, Mr. Barnum was a great showman and, for its kind, he had a great show, but God is the Master Showman and is preparing to give the world THE GREATEST SHOW IT HAS EVER SEEN. It is a theatrical of MERCY and GRACE in a world of wrath and violence. This will be God's master stroke as the curtain rises on the world's greatest drama God's Great Show - THE MANIFESTATION OF THE SONS OF GOD! Praise His name, once the finishing touch is put on the last stone of His living temple of Kings and Priests, the firstfruits of His redemption, in ages yet to come He shall put His grace and

kindness inwrought in us ON DISPLAY so that the entire creation may walk across the stage of His cosmic theatre and behold and see and finally come to understand and appreciate WHAT GOD HAS PROVIDED FOR ALL MEN IN CHRIST.

ALL WHO HAVE EARS TO HEAR MUST HEAR WHAT THE SPIRIT IS SAYING UNTO THE CHURCHES. Across the land and around the world the Spirit is saying today that He is preparing a people, He is preparing a body, He is preparing Sons who shall be conformed to the image of His Son, who shall be partakers of the divine nature, who shall have the mind of Christ, who shall be brought to glory and who then shall become the very express image of the Father, the very brightness of the Father's glory and the outshining of the Father's person. Even as the first Son, who went into the ground and died as a corn of wheat to produce other Sons in His likeness, bearing His image - He was the brightness of the Father's glory and the express image of the Father's person - and God sent Him to be the Saviour of the world. God is now preparing Sons, God is now preparing a body for that first Son, we are the body of the first Son, the body of the Christ, the body of the King of glory, the body of the great High Priest in the heavens after the order of Melchizedek. We are the body of the Christ and in and through these Sons, when all have been brought to His fullness, His salvation shall be manifested, exhibited, and demonstrated unto the ends of the earth. The Lord is saying to His people in this day: "For this cause have I raised thee up and sent thee to be a light unto the nations and thou shalt be MY SALVATION to the ends of the earth" (Isa. 49:6; Acts 13:47).

While the Royal Priesthood has a mighty ministry manward, even unto "all the ends of the earth" which "is the Lord's," yet, how meaningful these words: "Because all the earth is Mine: ye shall be U-N-T-O M-E a Kingdom of Priests." UNTO ME! God is raising up a people today, Sons who no longer are self-conscious. The secret of Jesus' sonship was, that He paid no attention whatsoever to Himself. "Whatsoever I see the Father do, that is what I am doing; whatsoever I hear the Father speak, that is what I say." The Father said "You are the way, the truth, and the life," so Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life." He was not saying it with His eyes turned inwardly, thinking how important He was, thinking how vital He was to the situation. He was saying it because His heart was set on the Father, on doing His will, on speaking His words. He said, "The Father has given Me the words I should say." "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God." God is raising up Sons in these days, whose eyes are set upon the Father, who will declare, "We are the light of the world," not because of any self-consciousness, but because of a God-consciousness, Who is saying to us, "Arise and shine, for thy light is come and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee" (Isa. 60:1). The Lord said to Paul: "They will not accept thy word; turn to the Gentiles, for I have set thee to be a light to the Gentiles, thou shalt be My salvation to the ends of the earth." If Paul were diplomatic, if Paul were religious, if Paul belonged to the Ministerial Association, if Paul were self-seeking, if Paul were self-saving, he would have kept the revelation to himself and just walked out of town calmly and said, "Well, they do not understand, but really, I have a deeper and greater calling, I will just go off and fulfill it." The Father said to Paul, "I have set thee to be a light to the Gentiles. Thou shalt be My salvation to the ends of the earth." So he said to the people, "For thus hath the Lord said unto us: I have set thee for a light to the Gentiles, thou shalt be My salvation to the ends of the earth!"

When those who treasure the beautiful hope of sonship speak the words the Spirit is speaking to the Churches in this hour, people demand, "Who do you think you are?" When we declare that we are called to be the manifested Sons of God, to grow up into the measure of the stature of the fullness of the Christ, to partake of a greater ministry

than that of the Church-age, to set all creation free and reconcile all things in heaven and in earth back into God, people ask, "Just who do you think you are?" It really makes no difference who WE think we are, but it makes a great deal of difference that we know WHO AND WHAT WE ARE APPREHENDED TO BE IN HIM. Our ears have heard the sound of the trumpet, we cannot - dare not- settle for anything less, we must follow on to know HIM in all His glorious and eternal reality, to become His kings and priests in the earth, a new people prepared for the new day! HE THAT HATH AN EAR LET HIM HEAR WHAT THE SPIRIT SAITH.

Are you willing today, in the presence of God, to hear the word of God: "As the Father hath sent Me, so send I you." Someone says, "How can you declare such things?" Because they did not originate with us, it is the Father who is saying them in us. We are not commissioning ourselves. We are not a group of people who of our own selves have a burden for the lost creation, we have the burden of the Lord in our hearts. And what His burden is, that is what matters. If we were a people with our own burden for the lost, to try and help people, we would say, "We have tried everything else; we have had apostles, we have had prophets, we have had evangelists, pastors, and teachers, we have had gifts of healing, working of miracles, we have had money and missionary programs, we have had everything and it did not get the job done, so let us now try this sonship message."

We are not such a people. God has not put on us the problems of the world - God has called us unto HIMSELF - that we may live unto HIM, that we may be totally committed unto HIM, that He may send us out to bring salvation to humanity. If this thing began with OUR BURDEN, I would be suspicious of it. If we were wondering whether Russia is going to take over the world, and what about Castro down in Cuba, and what about the heathen in Africa, and we must hurry and reach the whole world before the rapture takes place; if we were speaking in that sentimental, religious, humanistic vein, I would be suspicious. But our vision is not turned that way, we are not "need" conscious, or "problem" conscious, or "world" conscious, or "self" conscious - our eyes are turned toward the Father. "Ye shall be UNTO ME a Kingdom of Priests." Jesus never went around looking for that which He could do. Jesus went around looking to see what the Father was doing. God wants Sons today, a Kingdom of Priests, who are not caught in world events, and prophecies of doom and gloom, worried about the antichrist, the tribulation, what kind of food to hoard for survival, who are not occupied with the problems out there, but who are occupied with the Father's work and the Father's words. God is raising up Sons in these days who do not have to explain anything, defend anything, protect anything. God is merciful to us in saying to us, that the reason we can declare this, the reason this commission is coming, is because the burden is not of ourselves, but the Father is sending us. He is saying to us: "I am setting you to be lights. I am setting you to be salvation. I am setting you to be living stones. I am sending you as kings to reign in light. I am sending you as priests even to minister the salvation of God. I am sending you forth as bread to be broken and fed to the hungry multitudes. I am sending you out as a flowing, surging, bounteous river of life.

Let us not sell creation short in these days. Let us not deny the Lord who purchased us to be a Kingdom of Priests. While we seek no glory of our own, there is, nevertheless, great wealth and heavenly glory for all who fulfill all the will of God. You never lose with God. There is an interesting fact relative to the life of the great missionary, Hudson Taylor. Hudson Taylor's brother desired above all things to be famous and so he scorned the Christian life and scoffed at his brother's zeal to pour out his life as a missionary among

the impoverished and ignorant heathen. He went into business and politics to become famous. Over a century has now passed and throughout the whole world the name of Hudson Taylor is well known, and in writings, when it does appear, his brother is referred to as "Hudson Taylor's brother" - Mr. Anonymous - who gave up all to become famous!

The compelling passion of my life is to be filled with all the fullness of God and come into the image of Jesus Christ. The deep cry of my heart is for the satisfaction of knowing that my life counts for God. As God knows my heart, it is not a selfish desire. The reason I want to be like Jesus is because I love Him so, but also because it is the ONLY WAY I can ever be used in the restoration of fallen creation. I see the needs of the world around me, and realize that I am practically powerless to do anything about it. Oh yes, I can pray, believe God, and see occasional conversions, healings, deliverances, and blessings. But anyone who says that they have reached the place where their ministry is meeting the needs of the world is either blind to the needs of man, or a proud hypocrite.

You will never be able to do anything with this old world until you do what the Scottish Highlander did with his gun. He looked at it and said, "She needs a new lock." He looked at it again and said, "She needs a new stock." And he looked at it again and said, "She needs a new barren." Lock, stock and barren - you will have to change the whole thing! And how can it be done? "Now, therefore, if ye will obey My voice indeed, and keep My covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto Me above all people: for all the earth is Mine: and YE shall be UNTO ME A KINGDOM OF PRIESTS."

Ah, dear ones, here is the key to God's priesthood: You will never change your mate, you will never charge your children, you will never change your friends, you will never change your neighbors, you will never change the problems and circumstances which surround you, you will never be able to change THE WORLD until, first of all, YOU HAVE BEEN THOROUGHLY CHANGED! "He that saith he abideth in Him ought himself also to walk, even as He walked." "Again, a new commandment I write unto you, which thing is true in Him and in you" (I Jn. 2:6,8). When Paul wrote to the Ephesians Church, he spoke about "The truth as it is in Jesus" (Eph. 4:21). Initially, the truth was in God, because He is a God of truth. The truth became embodied, personified in Jesus Christ, who said, "I am the way, the truth ' and the life" (Jn. 14:6). The truth was recorded for us in the Holy Scriptures: "Thy Word is truth" (Jn. 17:17). The truth comes to us by the Holy Spirit: "When He, the Spirit of Truth is come, He will guide you into all truth" (Jn. 16:13). Finally, the truth must find its embodiment and expression, its manifestation and revelation, in the body of Christ and through the body of Christ. "Which thing is true," says John, not only in God, in the Scriptures, in Jesus Christ, in the Holy Spirit, but also "IN YOU." This is the whole principle of God's Kingdom economy: If you say you love God, but you do not love your brother, there must be something wrong. The truth of love must find expression not only in that God loved the world and that His love is revealed in the Scriptures, and in Jesus Christ, and in the Holy Spirit, but this love of God must find its dwelling place, its home, its manifestation IN US. Whatever is true in Jesus Christ must be true in us. THIS IS THE MARK OF SONSHIP.

Why tell people things that are only true in Jesus Christ, but which do not work in us? A preacher can do that, but a SON never can. If it is operating in His life, it must come to be operating in our lives. If it is true in Him, it must be true in us, for He is the head of the body, the High Priest of our priesthood. He is come, not only to be our Saviour, but our Lord and our Life. "Be ye holy, as He which has called you is holy." If holiness is true in Him, then holiness must be true in us. "Be ye perfect, as your Father in heaven is perfect"

(Jn. 5:48). If perfection is true in Jesus Christ, then perfection must be true in us. Jesus prayed in His prayer in the 17th chapter of John: "That the love wherewith Thou hast loved Me may be IN THEM, and I IN THEM" (Jn. 17:26). If the love of God is truly expressed in Jesus Christ, then it must be truly expressed in us. "God is spirit and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth" (Jn. 4:24). Jesus Christ worshipped the Father, Jesus Christ loved the Father, Jesus Christ did the Father's will. Thank God that He did find a man in whom His will, His love, His grace, His truth, His holiness, His power, His life could find a dwelling place and expression. But would it not be sad if there were not a people today, the body of Christ, saved by His blood, cleansed by the washing of the water by the Word, indwelt by His Spirit, transformed into His image, in whom that same thing is true that is true in Him? If He loves and we do not love, if He is light and we are in darkness, if He is expressing the grace and mercy of God and we are expressing malice, envy, and strife, then He has not become our life and we have not yet become HIS PRIESTHOOD.

God is forming a people, a priesthood, who, when they stand up and say, "God is love," are not talking about God's love in heaven. No! They will be expressing the God of love in their own person. "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son." Everyone likes a verse like that. But how many would like a verse like this: "God still loves the world so much that He would like to give His Sons, RIGHT NOW." We do not like that. We like to be Sons if God will keep us, bless us, if He will take us to His bosom and never let us go. But what does God do with His Sons? Ah, He GIVES THEM! Jesus said, "As the Father has sent Me, even so send I you." What did Jesus also say? "This is My flesh, My body, which I give for the life of the world." If the Sons are His body, then will He not GIVE US for the life of the world one of these days? "Oh," someone says, "I do not like the kind of religion where I do not get something." Well, that is how it starts, by receiving, but it must not end there. We must come to the place where God can give us! Whatever is true in Him, may God make it true in all of His Sons. Not just for our sakes, but for other's sakes, that they may open their hearts and let God do something in them. "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify God." They will sense the working of the life of Christ in you, and glorify God. If you have been trying to prove something to somebody out of the Bible, LET IT BE PROVED BY YOUR LIFE INSTEAD! That is sonship. That is priesthood.

Do you know what the temple of God is? It is not a temple built with human, sinful hands; it is not a temple built too often by money from the poor, and sometimes from the harlot and the drunkard; but it is the temple that God builds, the temple of which Jesus spoke to the poor, sinful woman at the well of Sychar. She was quibbling, and He said, "Neither in this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, shall ye worship the Father. Ye worship that which ye know not: we worship that which we know: for salvation is from the Jews." And He said, "The hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit (in their own spirits) and in truth."

There is the true temple. And the purification of the temple begins in the spirit. Would you worship God? Oh, not in circling depth, nor height, But in the conscious breast, Present by faith, though veiled from sight, there doth His Spirit rest: Oh, come, thou Presence infinite! And make Thy creature blest.

If you are to worship God in a holy temple, let Him cleanse your spirit, let Him cleanse your soul, let Him cleanse your body, and worship God in the temple of your own Being. God wants that. Therefore it is that God sent His Son, not merely to cleanse the outer

court, but through His death, through His resurrection, through His life, and in the power of His Spirit, to cleanse man FROM THE CENTER TO THE CIRCUMFERENCE. Hence it is that the purification of the Temple of Humanity must begin in your spirit and in mine. "Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of THE FLESH AND SPIRIT, perfecting holiness in the fear of God" (II Cor. 7:1).

I know no definition of God more sublime, outside of the Scripture, than this definition of a philosopher of France, who said, "I conceive God to be Him whose CENTER IS EVERYWHERE, and whose CIRCUMFERENCE IS NOWHERE." The spirit, soul, and body of a purified being is a center of omnipotent God. That God in whom we live, and move, and have our being, and who by His mercy sustains our being, I want you to know, my brother, my sister, no matter how sinful you may have been, He desires to make your spirit a center which shall have no circumference. He wants to make your spirit pure, to make your soul pure, to make your body pure, and to cause the River of all Purity to flow out to all around you, and into the unborn generations before you, and unto the vast multitudes of hopeless men and women who came before you; so that you shall be a CENTER for an omnipotent and omnipresent and a holy God; that is the object of the purification of the temple.

What does it mean to be a CENTER WITH NO CIRCUMFERENCE? Let us use Martin Luther as an illustration. ONLY Martin Luther received the revelation of justification by faith in his day. Yet it was not for him to take that unto himself and use it as his own, a private revelation, a personal experience, but God gave it to him for the enlightenment of the whole Church. Today we all profit, because of God's revelation to Martin Luther. The truth became embodied, personified in Martin Luther's life; then there was a declaration, a telling out, a showing forth. The impact of Luther's life and message has been like the ever broadening ripples flowing out from the center where one small stone was cast into the water. He became a center for the operation of God, and today he has no circumference as the word he proclaimed continues to flow out, affecting creation in greater and greater measures, resounding from the highest heaven unto the lowest hell.

And that is how it is, God must work mightily WITHIN US before He can work effectually THROUGH US. We must become a center before we can have a circumference. The message and the messenger must become one, all that proceeds from the messenger, be it a message in words, or a life expressed, it is to declare the Perfections of HIM who has wrought in us so great a salvation. We are to become HIS DISPLAY messengers, living manifestations of His excellencies, virtues, and glories, not bearing a word about Him, but becoming the living expression of HIMSELF. Oh, beloved, take time to believe this! Take time to worship until your heart is filled. Come now, let us open our hearts wide unto Him. "O my High Priest, breathe Thy Spirit into me! Breathe Thy Priestly Spirit into me! I am a member of Thy body; I have Thy life in me. Like Thee, I am called to be a priest. Lord Jesus, breathe Thy Spirit into me until I am like Thee in all of Thy ways that Thou mayest be glorified and all creation blessed. Make me a center of omnipotent God. May the river of Thy love and grace and power flow, and flow, and flow until the outflow of Thyself from my center knows no circumference, enveloping all creation in Thy life and light and love. May my priestly heart be a center which is everywhere, whose circumference is nowhere!" God will make the reality ours.

Chapter 4

The Making Of A Priest

The book of Revelation is without doubt one of the most important and wonderful books ever written. It is difficult for many people to understand because it is written in highly symbolic language, understandable only to the spiritual mind. When the book of Revelation was written, John was IN THE SPIRIT. This is a fact of supreme importance. The realm of the Spirit is a realm beyond the reach of the natural. Spiritual things are all about us to such an extent that we live and move and have our being in them, yet the natural man can never see them until the Spirit draws aside the dusky curtains of our carnality and opens our eyes to the realities of the spiritual world. Vivid imagery marks the book of Revelation.

There are powerful representations of scenes both in heaven and on earth. The central scene is the THRONE OF GOD. All other things are related to the Throne. In his glorious vision the beloved apostle John saw this truth and describes in intense and picturesque language the majestic drama which passed before his vision. "After this I looked, and, behold, a door was opened in heaven...and immediately I was in the Spirit: and, behold, A THRONE WAS SET IN HEAVEN, and One sat on the throne" (Rev. 4:1-2). "Behold, A THRONE!" This Throne is the very center of the universe. Not the geographical - but the spiritual center! The Throne is a SYMBOL bespeaking that realm of God's absolute dominion and omnipotent power. The Throne is not a literal seat in some far-off heaven somewhere; it is the omnipresent dimension of God's sovereign authority and power. In the book of Revelation all "heavenly things," that is, all SPIRITUAL REALITIES, are revealed in their relationship to the Throne of God. And while the Authorized Version states that "ONE sat upon the Throne," you will note that the word "One" in your Bible is in italics, meaning that the word does not appear in the Greek text but is supplied by the translators in an effort to clarify what they perceive to be the intent of the passage. And while it is true that there is ONE sitting upon the Throne, it is equally evident that that ONE is a CORPORATE BEING - a many-membered body! God is a God of corporateness. Christ is a Christ of corporateness. "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 IS CHRIST" (I Cor. 12:12). While there is only one God and one Throne, yet the God of the Throne shall ultimately and eternally be manifested in corporateness through a vast company of His Sons who are themselves "the FULLNESS OF HIM that filleth all in all." God is a Spirit and he that is joined to the Lord IS ONE SPIRIT. Therefore, He who sits upon the Throne is One - but that One is a Corporate One even as Jesus says, "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). This is that eternal unity of the many-membered FAMILY OF GOD of which Jesus spoke when He said, "That they all may BE ONE as Thou, Father, art IN ME, and I IN THEE, that they also may be ONE IN US. And the glory which Thou gavest Me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and Thou in Me, that they may be made perfect IN ONE" (Jn. 17:21-23).

THE FOUR BEASTS

In addition to the beautiful description of the symbolic Throne with its effulgent glory, our attention is immediately directed to certain objects IN, BEFORE, and AROUND the Throne. Three different prepositions - three distinct relationships to the Throne. Everything in the whole book of Revelation is shown to be either IN, BEFORE or AROUND the Throne. In Rev. 4:6-8 four wonderful beasts are brought into view. "And before the Throne there was a sea of glass like unto crystal: and IN THE MIDST OF THE THRONE, and round about the throne, were four beasts full of eyes before and behind. And the first beast was like a lion, and the second beast like a calf, and the third beast had a face as a man, and the fourth beast was like a flying eagle The word "beasts" is an unfortunate translation, being necessarily associated in our minds with the brute creation and that which is typified thereby. It is not the Greek word THERION which in thirty-five instances in the book of Revelation is translated beast, meaning a "wild and ravenous beast," thus denoting an animal of ferocious disposition. It is, rather, the Greek word ZOON which signifies simply a "living creature" and is so translated in all modern translations of the Bible. In Revelation the word THERION is used as a type of the brutish and tyrannical kingdoms of THIS WORLD, ruled by the carnal, depraved, and vicious nature of unregenerated men. But the word ZOON means LIVING CREATURE, or A CREATURE EXPRESSING LIFE. How significant, then, that these four CREATURES OF LIFE are found "in the midst of the Throne" and "round about the Throne," occupying the central position in the Throne while emanating as a radiance out from the Throne. The picture is clear - these are in some way identified with, and representative of, "HIM that sits upon the Throne." A further key to their identity is found in Rev. 5:6 where we read, "And I beheld, and, lo, IN THE MIDST OF THE THRONE...stood a LAMB as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth." Ah, notice the divine parallel: "In the midst of the Throne...stood A LAMB" and "In the midst of the Throne...were FOUR LIVING CREATURES. In the midst of the Throne! The four "Living Creatures" are four manifestations of LIFE - the LIFE OF THE GOD OF THE THRONE! They are four representations of NATURE - the NATURE OF THE GOD OF THE THRONE! The four Living Creatures are four expressions of the NATURE OF THE DOMINION of the Throne.

If you want to know what the God of the Throne is like, then take a look at the four Living Creatures in the midst of the Throne, for in them is manifest the attributes of the life of the God of the Throne. If you want to know the nature of the rule and power and dominion of the Throne, then understand the nature of the four Living Creatures in the midst of the Throne, for these embody within themselves the character of the dominion of the God of the Throne. But not only do they represent the life and nature of the God of the Throne; not only do they express the character of the dominion of the Throne - they likewise reveal the very life and nature and character of A-L-L WHO SHARE THE THRONE in union with the Christ! Ah, precious friend of mine, if you cherish the hope of the overcomer to "sit with HIM in His Throne," then all that the four Living Creatures represent must be wrought out in your life, their nature becoming your nature, for naught but the nature of the Lamb and of the four Living Creatures can stand "in the midst of the Throne.

It is not my purpose in this Study to unfold the glories typified by the four Living Creatures, but merely to point out that they reveal the nature of the Throne, the realm of God's omnipotent power and sovereign dominion. They bespeak the position and ministry of KINGSHIP. God REIGNS! The Lamb REIGNS! The four Living Creatures

REIGN! The Overcomers REIGN! All are IN THE THRONE! And if you would share that Throne as a KING, dear one, then the nature of God, which is the nature of the Lamb, which is the nature of the four Living Creatures, must become YOUR NATURE, too! "And...the four Living Creatures and four and twenty Elders...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 us to God by Thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and nation; and hast made us unto our God KINGS AND PRIESTS: and we shall reign on the earth" (Rev. 5:8-10).

THE MULTITUDE "BEFORE" THE THRONE

After this I beheld, and, lo, a GREAT MULTITUDE, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood BEFORE THE THRONE, and BEFORE THE LAMB, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; and cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God, which sitteth upon the Throne, and unto the Lamb. And one of the Elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they? And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said unto me? These are they which came out of great tribulation (pressure) and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore they are BEFORE THE THRONE of God, and SERVE HIM day and night in His temple: and He that sitteth upon the Throne shall dwell among them" (Rev. 7:9-10, 13-15).

This is the great company of the redeemed of all ages who wash their robes and make them white in the blood of the Lamb. But note their location relative to the Throne: "After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude which no man could number... stood BEFORE THE THRONE, and BEFORE THE LAMB." The four Living Creatures are IN THE THRONE - KINGS reigning with the Christ! But the great multitude is not in the Throne; it is "before" the Throne, "serving" Him who sits upon the Throne. These do not rule or reign, but they are redeemed, washed in the blood of the Lamb. These have been delivered out of the sin and death and travail of this present evil age, and receiving the life, joy, and victory of Christ's redemption are "servants" of God. These did not "grow up into Him in all things," they did not qualify for the HIGH CALLING of God as KINGS AND PRIESTS UPON HIS THRONE, but by His matchless grace they believe on Him and find their place "before" the Throne and "before" the Lamb and "He that sitteth upon the Throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst anymore...for the Lamb which is in the midst of the Throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes" (Rev. 7:15-17).

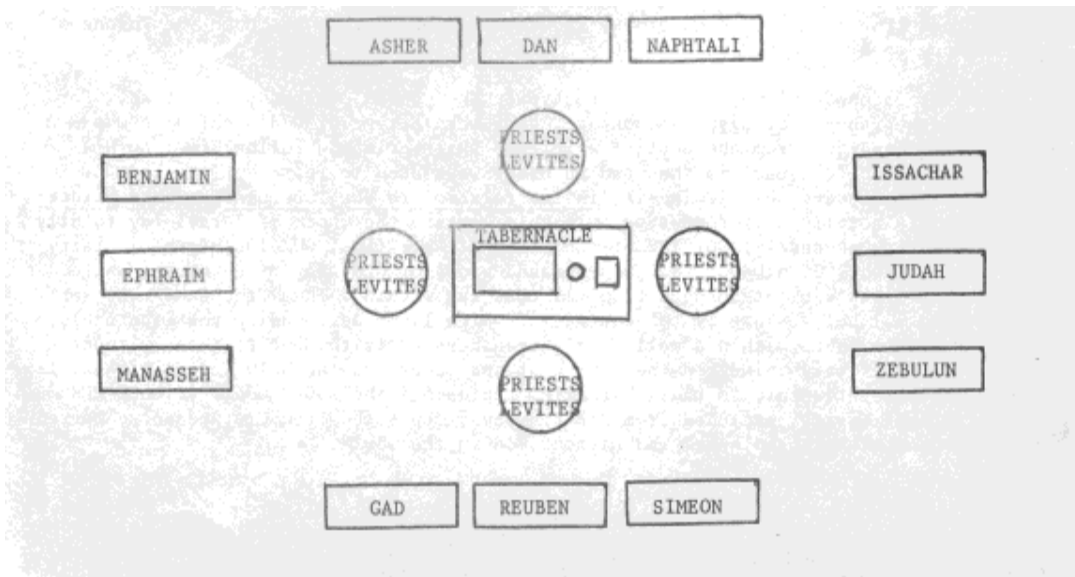
The great mass of Christians of all ages, and the multitudes yet to bow in humble submission and loving adoration before Him in the ages to come, belong to this great company. The imagery is drawn in allusion to the encampment of the children of Israel in the wilderness. God is represented as sitting upon His Throne in the Tabernacle of Moses, within the Most Holy Place. There "before" His Throne camped the tribes of Israel, three tribes on each side of the Tabernacle, and He that sat upon the Throne dwelt among them. Israel is used in many instances to typify the Church, the body of Christ. For instance, when they left Egyptian bondage, they were a type of God's children who hear His call to come out from the bestial spirit of this world and follow Him into His Kingdom. But while Israel is thus and in other ways used to represent the body of Christ, yet as we are now viewing it, in its relation to the Tabernacle in the Wilderness, it is a totally different type. In this setting the whole of Israel lay totally OUTSIDE of the

Tabernacle, OUTSIDE of the place of sacrifice, OUTSIDE of the ministry of the priesthood, OUTSIDE of the presence and glory of God, separated by the white curtain of Christ's righteousness from all that lay within. Thus "the Camp" was separated from all holy things by the curtain of white linen surrounding the Tabernacle, representing to those within a wall of righteousness by faith, but to those without a wall of unbelief which hindered their view of and access to the holy things within.

Israel, in its relationship to the Tabernacle, represents the WHOLE WORLD OF LOST MEN who are outside of Christ, excluded from His promises, separated from His presence, barred from His glory, having no hope, and without God in the world. The "Outer Court" of the Tabernacle represents the condition of justification, entered through faith in Christ, the "gate." There was only one gateway into the Court, the type thus testifying that there is but one way of access to God - one "gate" - Jesus. "I am the way...no man cometh unto the Father but by Me." "I am the door by Me if any man enter in he shall be saved" (Jn. 14:6; 10:9). It was at this gate that the sin-offering was slain, and it was on behalf of the WHOLE CAMP that the blood was sprinkled upon the mercy seat of God's Throne in the Most Holy Place on the day of Atonement. The Camp of Israel represents, on one hand, the whole world of lost mankind and, on the other hand, the great multitude of the redeemed which no man can number that stands "before" the Throne and "before" the Lamb, "serving" God. Someone will surely inquire, "How can the same Camp represent both the lost world and the redeemed saints?" Simple! We were all sinners before we became saints. J. Preston Eby was once a sinner; now he is redeemed: the same man, but transformed into a new state of being, with a new relationship to God. The "Camp" before the Tabernacle-Throne typifies the world outside of God, but drawing nigh unto God, receiving the gift of life, becoming the people of God. "To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling THE WORLD unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them" (II Cor. 5:19). "But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ" (Eph. 2:13).

THE TWENTY-FOUR ELDERS And ROUND ABOUT THE THRONE

Were four and twenty seats: and upon the seats I saw four and twenty elders sitting, clothed in white raiment; and they had on their heads CROWNS of gold" (Rev. 4:4). "Twenty-four other thrones SURROUNDED THE THRONE and seated on these thrones were twenty-four Elders, arrayed in white clothing, with Crowns of Gold upon their heads" (Amplified). The twenty-four Elders bear a special signification for they are represented as distinct from both the four Living Creatures "in the midst" of the Throne and the great multitude "before" the Throne. These Elders occupy a unique position described as "round about" the Throne - yet UPON THRONES! In order to fully appreciate the scenery here drawn by the Spirit we need to go back and examine one particular of the order established by God among the people of Israel after they came up out of the land of Egypt. It is important that we get a clear idea, not only of the structure of the Tabernacle of Moses, but also of the arrangement of both the people and the priesthood in relation to it. Below I give you a diagram of that arrangement.



In this arrangement we see the same typical picture, under different symbols, as that presented to us in chapters four and five of Revelation. The Most Holy Place was the abode of the God of Israel among His people. When the Tabernacle was set up as described in Exodus chapter forty, then the Shekinah, the Cloud of God's Presence, covered the Tent of the Congregation, and the glory of the Lord filled the Tabernacle. It is interesting to observe that while the Cloud of God's Presence rested upon the entire Tabernacle complex, the glory of the Lord "FILLED the TABERNACLE," thus designating the Sanctuary Place as the DWELLING PLACE or the TABERNACLE OF GOD. Later God said to Moses, "Speak unto Aaron thy brother, that he come not at all times into the Holy Place within the veil before the mercy seat, that he die not: for I WILL APPEAR IN THE CLOUD UPON THE MERCY Seat" (Lev. 16:2). Isaiah rectified, "O Lord-of Hosts, God of Israel, that DWELLEST BETWEEN THE CHERUBIM, Thou art God" (Isa. 37:16). God was IN the Cloud, He APPEARED in the Cloud, He SPOKE out of the Cloud, He LED Israel by the Cloud, and in the Cloud He DWELT IN THE HOLY PLACE. Thus, the Tabernacle was in very fact GOD'S THRONE among Israel from which HE RULED OVER THEM! The Most Holy Place is, then, an earthly picture of the Throne of God - the realm of God's manifestation in power and dominion. The Most Holy Place prefigured CHRIST THE KING together with all those holy Sons of God who reign with Him. It is the glory of KINGSHIP. Armed with the understanding that the Tabernacle constituted God's Throne among His people, let us remember that there is "before" that Throne a "great multitude" of people receiving the blessings and benefits of His Kingdom ministered through the typical sacrifices and ritual of the Tabernacle service. As you will note in the diagram, the arrangement of the Tabernacle, the Priesthood, and Camp of Israel into three distinct divisions, sets forth the three-fold economy of God in His redemptive processes.

The Tabernacle is the dwelling place of God - His Throne, His sphere of activity, the center of His power and glory. The Camp of Israel, the great multitude "before" the Throne, is the whole world of mankind outside of God, estranged from the life that is in Him. But there is a third company - the CAMP OF THE PRIESTS - situated, as it were, "round about the Throne," directly BETWEEN the "Throne" and the "great multitude." The Lord said to Moses and Aaron, "The Israelites shall encamp each by his own tribal standard or banner, with the ensign of their fathers' houses, opposite the Tent of Meeting and facing it on every side. Then the Tent of Meeting shall set out, with the CAMP OF

THE LEVITES IN THE MIDST OF THE CAMPS" (Num. 2:1,17. Divine infinite purpose lies behind this whole arrangement and the moment the wonderful significance of this dawns upon your spiritual understanding, you will see that God has placed a PRIESTHOOD COMPANY between Himself and the world of mankind! A priest or priesthood infers that there is a reason why such has been called into play. It denotes that there is an estrangement between God and His creatures and the priest ministers to bridge that gulf and bring about peace and at-one-ment.

As I have explained in a previous article, Webster's dictionary defines priest as: A mediatory agent BETWEEN God and man. In the Old Testament the word priest is translated from the Hebrew word COHEN, the root meaning of which is "one who stands up and draws nigh for another." The Greek word, in its root, means "to minister." Thus, a priest is one who "draws near and ministers on behalf of another." And the priest always draws nigh and ministers in TWO DIRECTIONS - drawing nigh to God on behalf of the people and drawing nigh to the people on behalf of God. The priest STANDS BETWEEN. He reaches forth with one hand and takes hold of God; he reaches out with the other hand and takes hold of humanity; and brings the two together by virtue of his priestly ministration. This great truth reveals why God placed the Camp of the Priests directly BETWEEN Himself and the people of Israel. It should be clear to every thinking mind that the Priesthood camped "round about" the Tabernacle corresponds precisely to the twenty four Elders seated "round about" the Throne in Revelation chapter four. You will remember the account in I Chronicles twenty-four of how, under David, the Levitical Priesthood was divided into TWENTY-FOUR COURSES under the headship of TWENTY-FOUR ELDERS. The twenty-four courses or orders of the Priesthood were chosen by families according to the twenty-four grandsons of Aaron the High Priest. Each course was named for one of these twenty-four grandsons and the male descendants of each grandson constituted one of the twenty-four courses throughout their generations.

We are inclined to lightly pass over many profound statements of Holy Scripture. The Priesthood was divided into twenty-four orders for this stated purpose: "This was their order for coming on duty to serve in the house of the Lord, according to the procedure ordered for them by their forefather Aaron, as the Lord God of Israel had commanded him" (I Chron. 24:19, Amplified). The Priesthood numbered thousands. Of course, all those priests could not go into the temple at one time, so they were divided into courses and assigned to work shifts, each "course" of Priests and Levites came on duty for a week, from one Sabbath to another. When a "course" was on duty, all its members were bound to appear in the temple, and the service of the week was subdivided among the various families which constituted a "course." The point I wish to emphasize here is this: It took all twenty-four courses to MAKE UP THE ENTIRE PRIESTHOOD OF GOD! As the Father unfolds these truths to the inner man, we become convinced that as the four Living Creatures "in the midst of the Throne" reveal the glory of KINGSHIP, so the twenty-four Elders "round about the Throne" reveal the glory of PRIESTHOOD KINGS AND PRIESTS! A KINGDOM OF PRIESTS! PRIESTS THAT SIT UPON THRONES! REIGNING PRIESTS! This is the great truth revealed in the four Living Creatures and the twenty-four Elders. John the Revelator summed up in three short verses the wonderful truth of which I now write: "And when He had taken the book, the FOUR BEASTS and FOUR AND TWENTY ELDERS fell down before the Lamb, every one of them having harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of the saints. And THEY (the four Living Creatures and the twenty-four Elders) 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 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. 5:8-10).

The four Living Creatures - KINGS! The twenty-four Elders - PRIESTS! Together they bow low before the great King of kings and High Priest of the heavens, intoning this NEW SONG - "Thou hast MADE US unto our God KINGS AND PRIESTS: and we shall REIGN over the earth!" Ah, beloved, those are not mere words, God's meaning of a "song" is "message; revelation." All songs are meant to convey a message. Man calls anything a song, any weird beat, any unnatural accents, any harmonic dissonance, any melodic discord, the ba-ba-bu of the jungle and the raucous racket of rock music is merchandised as a song. A "new song" in spiritual language means a NEW REVELATION, a NEW MESSAGE, a NEW EXPERIENCE in God. A new song is born when men experience the inworking of a new message, the message and the messenger so becoming one until the messenger BECOMES THE MESSAGE.

I am reminded of Cartwright, the backwoods preacher of a past century, who used to sing a hymn as he went through the woods: "No foot of land do I possess. No cottage in the wilderness" and one day a man presented Cartwright with a cottage and a piece of ground, and he went on his way singing: No foot of land do I possess, No cottage in the wilderness; and he stopped and said, "Joseph Cartwright, that is a lie; you have got a cottage and land; YOU CANNOT SING THAT HYMN!" Every time the Spirit of God unfolds new dimensions of truth to our hearts, effecting further transformations into His image, and the fulfilling of His will in our lives, a NEW SONG is born. The old song was good and true in its time, but we can sing the old song no more, for a new day has dawned, a new glory has arisen, a new reality is birthed within, praise His name.

God is even now preparing a people, overcomers, a Royal Priesthood, a Kingdom of Priests, and while the Church world continues on with its time-honored traditions and childish delusions, singing about cabins in the corner and mansions over the hill-top, a people is arising in the earth with a new and wonderful vision - to become Kings and Priests unto God their hearts vibrating with the melodious strains of a NEW SONG, the song of a people with a purpose, a company gathered out of all generations, joined unto the Christ, which in due time shall be led forth to be the manifest expression of His image, character, and nature, the revelation of His power and glory, with an outflow of His life and light and love for all mankind. For these the whole creation groans, and they are in the process of preparation, BEING MADE, in the skillful hands of the Great Potter, a KINGDOM OF PRIESTS.

God knows every detail of His plan for His Kings and Priests, and precisely the work to be wrought upon each one to conform them unto His own priestly heart. Ah, those who receive THIS CALL, who cherish THIS VISION, being motivated by THIS HOPE, indeed sing a NEW SONG which can be learnt by none but those apprehended ones, the firstfruits of His redemption. This is the ineffable, preeminent Song; ineffable because it strikes a chord, the vibration of which cannot be discerned by the carnal man; preeminent because it is the Song of the Lamb that stands in the midst of the Throne, the King of kings and the High Priest of OUR PROFESSION, who in all things has preeminence! THOU HAS MADE US PRIESTS "Thou...hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and has MADE US unto our God KINGS AND PRIESTS" (Rev. 5:9-10).

This passage is one of rare beauty. It is like a precious diamond, the effulgence of whose radiance dazzles the mind. It is a drop of pure distilled essence, whose fragrance fills the rooms of the heart of every man and woman who has received the call to sonship. It is a joy forevermore and a challenge to all who comprehend its message. It must be engraved deeply upon every heart of God's Royal Priesthood. It exalts and glorifies the Lord Jesus Christ. "THOU hast MADE US!" THOU ! There is so much depth to that text that I am afraid that we often do not perceive it. It is like a beautiful star-studded sky on a bright clear night and one cannot even begin to grasp the vast depth that lies above us. So it is with these marvelous words: "Thou hast MADE US TO BE KINGS AND PRIESTS!" Can you say that? As we plumb its depths a little more I hope that you will ask yourself the question more carefully, "Am I being MADE a PRIEST unto God? Is the process of transformation into the priestly nature taking place in my life?" My deepest desire for you, dear one, is that you will come to be able to experientially say these words: "Jesus Christ is MAKING ME A PRIEST!" Not in the sweet bye and bye - but HERE AND NOW!

A great and important truth is contained in that declaration, and one which most Christians deny. Theoretically all Christians believe that in a sense "we are God's workmanship," but in practice most of them deny it by all their self-effort to MAKE THEMSELVES. In other words, most Christians live as though the responsibility of their own development and perfection rested entirely upon themselves. My earnest prayer is that the blessed Holy Spirit will help us to understand this most absolute and literal truth: We do not have anything to do with our own "becoming" excepting to "yield ourselves unto God" (Rom. 6:13). Listen: "THOU hast redeemed us by Thy blood ...THOU hast made us unto our God Kings and Priests." THOU! Oh God! the work will surely be done, and done well, for it is Thou that doest it. Jesus, the High Priest of our profession, does His work WITHIN US. He imparts of His own life, power, and ministry. We cannot have the priesthood in full power except as the power of HIS LIFE is fully inworked in us. If we begin to understand that, then we shall see what is meant by the fact that we are called to be priests, because we have the very life of the HIGH PRIEST in us - not only imputed, but the High Priest Himself dwelling powerfully within us and working effectually through us, praise His wonderful name!

The quality and power of this indwelling life of Christ is spoken of in Heb. 7:15-17. "And it is yet far more evident: for that after the similitude of Melchizedek there ariseth another priest, who is made, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the POWER OF AN ENDLESS LIFE. For He testifieth, Thou art a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek." The wonderful priesthood of Jesus is after the power of an ENDLESS life. We now come to what is implied by the word "endless." This is the Greek word AKATALUTOS meaning indissoluble or permanent. The power of an endless life is the power of an indestructible life - eternal life. To understand what kind of life this is we must connect it to God, the eternal One. Eternity is an attribute of God and His divine life and has its true existence only in fellowship with God's life which is the life of eternity. These precious words are the key to the life of Sonship! Jesus lives in the Spirit as High Priest in THE POWER OF AN ENDLESS LIFE. And as He lives, so He works in that power. Each work He works within us He is able to do in the power of an endless life. What He works within us is INDESTRUCTIBLE. He works it within Us AS A LIFE, as our own life, so that it becomes our very nature to delight in God and do His WILL. He is not a Priest-in the House of God in some far-off heaven somewhere, but a Priest in the House of God WHICH WE ARE. His Priesthood acts as an inner life within us, lifting us up, not in theory or thought, but in Spirit and in Truth, into a vital knowing of God. He breathes His own life

in us. And He works it in as THE POWER OF LIFE, a life that is pure and holy, full of vitality and strength, unchangeable and indestructible, because it is HIS LIFE.

The sole object of this indwelling and inworking life is that God may reveal His Son in us in all His beauty and glory and power a Priesthood to minister Himself to His creation. However clearly we see by the eye of revelation and faith the truth of this realm of Kingship and Priesthood, however earnestly we desire it, however firmly we think we grasp it by faith, all will not avail - GOD HIMSELF MUST DO IT! God Himself must admit us to His presence, and make His face to shine upon us. And as the path to Priesthood, God Himself must write His law in our hearts, give us the new divine nature in such power of the Holy Spirit, that it is HE that works WITHIN US both to will and to do. God Himself must by the Holy Ghost so shed abroad His love in our hearts, that to love becomes as natural to us as it is for the dove to be gentle. God Himself must by the Holy Ghost so fill us with the nature of righteousness that to be righteous becomes as natural to us as breathing. God Himself must by the Holy Ghost so clothe us with the mind of Christ, that to think the thoughts of God becomes as natural to us as are the self-serving thoughts and desires of the unregenerated man. God Himself must by the Holy Ghost so make us vessels of mercy that to be merciful becomes as natural to us as the emotions of anger and retaliation are to the carnal nature.

Consider, dear brother, sister, is it not GOD HIMSELF who has faithfully directed all your steps, who has initiated every circumstance of your life, who has given sight to your poor blind eyes and caused you to behold the majesty of HIS PURPOSE? Is it not GOD HIMSELF who has led you out of the blinding traditions and enslaving bondage of Babylonian religion, and nurtured you and brought you to the place in which you stand in the Christ today? I do not hesitate to say that no more than you can SAVE YOURSELF can you MAKE YOURSELF an overcomer, BRING YOURSELF to perfection, or OF YOURSELF apprehend the beautiful ministry of Priesthood unto God. What man by taking thought can add a cubit to his stature, Jesus asked. What part by self-effort does a man take in accretion, in digestion of food, in the reflex actions of the body? Men need only reflect on the automatic processes of their natural body to discover that this is the universal Law of Life. What does any man consciously do, for instance, in the matter of breathing? What part does he take in the circulating of the blood, in keeping up the rhythm of his heart? What control has he over growth or the physiological change at producing maturity? What man ever came into the world by his own will? In point of fact man is born by the will of another, every organ of his body GIVEN HIM, every function arranged for him, brain and nerve, thought and sensation, will and conscience, all provided for him ready made. And yet he turns to his spiritual life AND WISHES TO ORGANIZE THAT HIMSELF!

Oh preposterous and vain man, thou who couldest not make a finger nail of thy body, thinkest thou to fashion this wonderful, mysterious, subtle soul of thine after the ineffable Image? Wilt thou ever permit thyself TO BE conformed to the Image of the Son? Wilt thou, who canst not add a cubit to thy stature, submit TO BE raised by the Divine Life within thee to the perfect stature of the Christ? Ah, it is truer "THOU HAS MADE US to be Kings and Priests unto God: and we shall reign over the earth." All of us have this treasure in earthen vessels, and we are continually being changed from glory to glory. For years God had put me on His potter's wheel and made me a certain shape. For years I was an evangelist and, whenever the Lord wanted to move in the soul-saving, evangelistic realm, I was right there. No problem at all. I was in the evangelistic shape. My whole mind was conformed to that ministry, my whole thought, everything. All about

me was conformed to that. But if God wanted to move any other way through me, He could not. That was my shape. If He came in that shape I said, "Come, Lord Jesus." If He came in another shape I couldn't handle that, so I said, "Go, Lord Jesus." Most of us have had a certain shape and we have been hardened to that. The only way the Lord could appear to us and appear in us and appear through us, would be in that form. It has been the "Baptist" form, the "Pentecostal" form, or the "Charismatic" form. It has been the "evangelistic" form, the "apostolic" form, the "divine order" form, the "healing" form, the "deliverance" form, the "miracles" form, the "tongues-speaking" form, the "prophesying" form, or a hundred other forms. But the highest glory of the ministry of Christ is embodied in these two wonderful Offices: KING and PRIEST.

He is indeed "the King eternal" and "a Priest forever" after the order of Melchizedek. And while we truly praise God for all the manifestations and ministries of this present "in part" realm, so graciously bestowed, yet our hearts cry out mightily for a GREATER REALITY and a HIGHER MINISTRY for the blessing and deliverance of the groaning creation. Our deepest desire is that He may so thoroughly transform us into HIS IMAGE, so completely CHANGE OUR SHAPE until we fully BECOME all that Kingship and Priesthood mean. A friend has so beautifully written of this truth "Kings and priests - the magnitude of this calling is far beyond the outreach of the natural mind, how God shall receive into Himself a people through whom He shall execute His judgments and His mercies. A people that shall 'rule with a rod of iron,' and yet shall 'comfort all that mourn; to appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness' (Isa. 61:3).

Although there are those who would dare to presume to announce 'themselves' as Kings and Priests today, that they might usurp control over the people, and exalt themselves above measure, we are firmly persuaded that 'no man taketh this honor unto himself, but he that is called of God' (Heb. 5:4). HE THAT IS CALLED OF GOD - that is the qualifying statement, for whom God apprehends He also thoroughly disciplines and purifies, yea, 'whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth' (Heb. 12:6). For 'a pupil is not superior to his teacher, but every one WHEN HE IS COMPLETELY TRAINED, READJUSTED, RESTORED, SET TO RIGHTS AND PERFECTED will be like his teacher' (Lk. 6:40, Amplified). "In many of its aspects 'haste' is a mark of immaturity. To those who are now becoming spiritually mature, there is also 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.

"That the preparation process has been extreme, its requirements to the UTTERMOST, is readily seen as most necessary in view of the tremendous calling to be realized. This is not a position to be filled by a novice, one that is undeveloped, untrained, one that is still of a 'double mind' - torn between his own will and the will of God. The challenge of the calling is such that it demands complete conformity to HIS DEATH, ere we are to partake of His more abundant life, and to be able to freely give that life to others. TO HIM THAT OVERCOMETH, to him that has gained the victory '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). Yes, in the making of kings and priests through whom to 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.

"When God quickens these revelations to our spirit, deep inside, even if the flesh would like to cast it aside, this quickened truth doesn't let go of you. You say, 'It cannot be for me, I'll never qualify.' But that does not change it at all. For the gifts and the callings of God are without a change of mind on God's part. He knows exactly where He will bring you, the exact route to get you there, and it matters not how devastating it seems betimes. Be assured that God is bringing you by the easiest route possible for Him to fulfill His purpose in you. HE maintains the proper pressure, the exact heat of the fiery trial, and the length of time for its processing. But He will not allow you to be tested beyond that which you are able to bear. He will press you to the far limit to accomplish that for which He has apprehended you. In ourselves we are not sufficient for these things, 'but our sufficiency is of God, Who also hath made us able ministers of the New Testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit' (II Cor. 3:5-6). The CHRIST WITHIN is equal to it all, so we cast all our cares upon Him, while He brings us through to ultimate victory. 'Faithful is He that calleth you, who also will do it' (I Thes. 5:24)" - end quote.

For years we thought that the manifestation of the Sons of God would be the manifestation of what some people could do - raising the dead, emptying out the hospitals, asylums, and so on. John said, "These are written that Jesus IS" - not Jesus HAS, or Jesus CAN DO - "Jesus IS the Son of the living God; and that believing ye might have life through His name" (Jn. 20:31). He IS a wonderful Saviour, Healer, Baptizer, and HAS all power and can DO anything. But it is not only what Jesus HAS, nor what Jesus can DO. "That ye might believe that Jesus IS!" If you believe and confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus, WHO HE IS, you will be saved. We are not changed one iota by believing what Jesus HAS, or what Jesus can DO. The power is in WHO AND WHAT HE IS. The unveiling of the Sons of God is not the revelation of some people that can DO something. No, it is the unveiling of some people that have BECOME something. "To as many as received Him, to them gave He power to BECOME the sons of God" (Jn. 1:12). "Thou hast MADE US unto our God Kings and Priests." If Jesus IS who He IS, then certainly He can DO all things, but the doing is incidental, merely a by-product of the BEING. If you are BECOMING what HE IS, the signs will follow automatically, you cannot help it.

But we are not following signs. We are "following on to KNOW THE LORD." Our hearts are set on HIM. We are not becoming occupied with ourselves, we are occupied with what He has said that He would MAKE US, for HIS sake. "This people have I formed FOR MYSELF." "Ye shall be UNTO ME a Kingdom of Priests." When the light of God comes and shines into your heart, you become a light. When you feed on the Bread of heaven, you become living bread. When you drink of the water of the Spirit, out of your innermost being shall flow rivers of living water. You are what you eat, and if you are feeding on Him, you become like Him, being changed into whatsoever HE IS. If you still have any self-consciousness, you are in trouble. Jesus had no self-consciousness. When He read that Scripture ' "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me," He did not say, "But I cannot see how it could be Me, being born in a stable, My mother being reproached, and all that." "He has anointed Me to preach." "But I do not understand it, not being of the tribe of Levi, and never having attended the seminary." "He has sent Me to proclaim liberty to the captives." "But I have no college degree, and everybody knows that no good thing can come out of Nazareth however the Bible says it, I believe it, and that makes it true!" That

would be the mark of a false prophet, false to Him that sent him, presumptuously claiming a dead letter Scripture with no quickening of the Spirit, appearing as an angel of light, as a minister of righteousness, but with all kinds of apologies: "I am not much" - all taken up with self!

Once God has you, it is up to Him to MAKE YOU whatever He desires you to be. He can make the vessel as it pleases Him. If He wishes to make you a healer, that is not your business. If He wants to make you an evangelist, or a deliverer, or a teacher, or a King-Priest after the order of Melchizedek, let Him MAKE YOU whatever He wants to make you! And when the revelation of His calling bursts within your bosom, embrace the calling with all that is within you, yielding to all the processings necessary to bring it to pass. Do not drown the high purposes of God in a flood of false humility. Set your face as a flint, turn neither to the right hand nor the left, consider not your own weakness, faults, inability or insufficiency, for YOUR SUFFICIENCY IS OF GOD! HE WILL MAKE YOU! And there must be no other-people consciousness, being occupied with what other people think. The only thing that matters is that you have the thoughts of God and do the will of your Father. "We have the mind of Christ" (I Cor. 2:16). Those who cherish the hope of sonship are no longer people-conscious. We are no longer world-conscious. "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: who...made Himself of no reputation" (Phil. 2:5-8). When you have no reputation, what does it matter what anybody thinks? Whether they think good or bad does not make any difference. God wants a people in whom the mind of Christ is so fully formed, that all they have is a GOD CONSCIOUSNESS.

So He has made us Kings? That is His business. All glory be to Him! He has made us Lords? All glory be to Him! He has made us sit in heavenly places? All glory be to Him! He has made us Priests? All glory be to Him! He has made us Saviours? All glory be to Him! For so many years we have sold ourselves short, thinking, "God will be lucky, when the trumpet blows, if three of us are ready." For such a long, long time we have glamorized everything else but the name of the Lord. God must have a people today who do not care one whit whether they were born in a stable or raised in Nazareth, or have any natural abilities whatever according to this world's standards - a people who are walking in fellowship with Him, a people who are living in such total yieldedness to Him that whatever He wants to make them, He can make them. However He wants to reveal Himself, He can do it. Whatever He wants to accomplish through them, He can do it. Do you see how this takes all the strain out of us? If you are a King and a Priest, if He gives you authority over all the power of the enemy, if He says, "Whosoever sins you remit, they are remitted unto them; and whosoever sins you retain, they are retained," if the full authority and His own life is manifested in you because HE is manifested, then you can go into a city and they bring out a dead boy and you stop the procession and say: "Young man, arise!" and when he arises you can hand him back to his mother and keep going about the Father's business without a picture for the magazine and without taking up an offering.

What was the secret of Jesus' ministry? He could perform any miracle and walk away from it. The miracle was incidental. Raising the dead, feeding the multitude, or preaching a sermon, all was incidental, He never tried to learn how to raise the dead or perform a miracle, He sought only to KNOW THE FATHER AND DO HIS WILL. When He rode into Jerusalem His mind was taken up with the Father, NOT WITH THE HOSANNAHS. And when they crucified Him He paid no attention whatsoever. God is preparing a people who will pay no attention to anything but the WILL OF THE FATHER, If men say, "You are

wonderful," that is God, and if they say, "You are a devil," it is also God. If the crowd cries, "Hosanna!" you will be unaffected, no inflating of the ego, and if they crucify you, you will be unaffected, with no retaliation, no claiming of your rights. SONS are not interested in anything but the Father's will - the manifestation of His glory, the outworking of His purpose. God will have a body through the earth in these days, a people walking in God terrible as an army with banners - whose only purpose is that the Father may be glorified, a people formed for Himself, through whom He can reveal and manifest Himself in all His wonderful fullness. Oh, beloved, come, let us now open our hearts wide to Him. Come, and as we gaze upon this glorious ministry and its life-flow unto all the peoples of the earth, let us yield ourselves unto God that He may work HIS WONDROUS WORK in our lives, bringing us into such union with Jesus, the HIGH PRIEST of our profession, that we BECOME in nature and power His ROYAL PRIESTHOOD in the earth! May God grant it in these days.

Chapter 5

Compassionate Priests

"Thou...hast redeemed 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" (Rev. 5:9-10). This passage is one of rare beauty. It is like a precious diamond, the effulgence of whose radiance dazzles the mind. It must be engraved deeply upon every heart of God's Royal Priesthood. It exalts and glorifies the Lord Jesus Christ. "THOU hast MADE US!" THOU! There is so much depth to that text that I am afraid that we often do not perceive it. It is like a beautiful star-studded sky on a bright clear night and one cannot even begin to grasp the vast depth that lies above us. So it is with these marvelous words: "Thou hast M-A-D-E U-S TO BE KINGS AND PRIESTS!" Can you say that? As we plumb its depths a little more I hope that you will ask yourself the question more carefully, "Am I being MADE a PRIEST unto God? Is the process of transformation into the priestly nature taking place in my life?" My deepest desire for you, dear one, is that you will come to be able to experientially say these words: "Jesus Christ is MAKING ME A PRIEST!" Not in the sweet bye and bye - but in the nasty HERE AND NOW!

THOU HAST CREATED ALL THINGS. There is a wonderful contrast drawn in Rev. 4:11 and 5:10, wherein it is stated, "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for Thou hast CREATED ALL THINGS, and for Thy pleasure they are and were created...and hast MADE US unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign upon the earth." O Child of God, consider how great and full of meaning these words are! "Thou hast CREATED all things...Thou hast MADE us." There is a world of difference between the terms "create" and "make." Away back yonder in the dim and distant ages that are gone it was written, "And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it He had rested from all His work which God CREATED AND MADE" (Gen. 2:3). The phrase "created AND made" is a faulty translation, and it is so pointed out in the margin of some Bibles. It should read, "...which God created TO make." Young's Literal Translation renders this verse, "And God blesseth the seventh day, and sanctifieth it, for in it He hath ceased from all His work which God had PREPARED FOR MAKING." Another translation says, "And God proceeded to bless the seventh day and make it sacred, because on it He has been resting from all His work that God has CREATED FOR THE PURPOSE OF MAKING." In other words, God created the whole vast universe for the purpose of forming or making it into something He still had in mind!

The word "create" literally means, in Hebrew, "to select for a formative process." The New Webster's Dictionary defines its meaning as: To bring into being; produce; specifically to evolve from one's own thought or imagination. "Thou hast created ALL THINGS." We do not live in a world made up of a single ball of solid matter. Our earth is but an infinitesimal part of a marvelous and complex system. Since the dawn of history man has marveled at the mystery and grandeur of the heavens. On a clear night, our own galaxy, the Milky Way, can be seen as a star-studded ribbon circling the sky. Our earth is a massive sphere some 8,000 miles in diameter; yet the sun has a diameter 100 times larger than the earth. Viewed from afar, our solar system - the sun and nine revolving

planets - would appear as a disc in space nearly eight thousand million miles across. And now consider this - three hundred and fifty million solar systems are reported with their suns, planets, and satellites in our galaxy alone! Then beyond all this, far beyond our Milky Way are additional THOUSANDS OF MILLIONS OF GALAXIES - as common as blades of grass in a meadow! So far, using the largest and most sophisticated telescopes, astronomers have probed the universe to a distance of over one hundred thousand million million miles. If we could ride on a beam of light at the speed of 186,000 miles a second, it would take some ten thousand million years to travel this distance! Still, astronomers have been unable to find the edge of the universe. Perhaps it is endless; no one knows. With this in mind, how great are the words of inspiration: "Thou hast CREATED A-L-L T-H-I-N-G-S!"

The Bible opens with one of the simplest and yet most profound statements ever penned by human hands. "In the beginning - GOD!" How awesome to realize that there was a time when there was nothing - absolutely nothing - but GOD! There was no earth, no moon, no planets, no sun, no stars, no galaxies, no angels, no devils, no men, nothing anywhere but God Himself. And yet there was such a time. Paul caught something of the sublimity of this eternal and self-existent One and wrote to the saints at Colosse: "For by Him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible...all things were created by Him, and for Him: AND HE IS BEFORE ALL THINGS; and by Him all things consist" (Col. 1:16-17). Let me emphasize this wonderful and important truth. "He is before all things" means that He is not Himself one of the "things." He is B-E-F-O-R-E ALL THINGS. And just as sublime is the truth that "by Him ALL THINGS CONSIST." Young's Literal Translation renders this literally from the Greek: "Because IN HIM were the all things CREATED...and Himself is before all, and the all things IN HIM HAVE CONSISTED."

This raises an important question. If God was "before all things," then OUT OF WHAT did God CREATE all things? When I was a boy we had a "Sunday School" definition of the word create. "To create," I was told, 'means to make something out of nothing.' To my young and unlearned mind that sounded altogether logical. After all, I thought, if God is God, and God can do anything, then surely it is no problem to God to MAKE SOMETHING out of NOTHING! But as I grew older and learned something of the laws of physics, I discovered a simple but demonstrable fact, namely, that out of nothing - nothing comes. Also, out of something you get no more than that thing is able to contain. You cannot take a gallon of milk out of a pint bottle unless you refill the bottle again and again. You cannot put a hundred dollars in the bank and take out a thousand. The man who seeks to take out of the bank far more than he put in will find himself a recipient of free board and room for many months to come! This, then, is a fundamental point of natural law. We recognize that out of nothing, nothing comes. And even God, in all His omnipotence, DOES NOT MAKE SOMETHING OUT OF NOTHING!

If there was ONLY GOD, and absolutely NO THING other than God, what kind of material did God have at His disposal out of which to construct all things? If you were standing completely alone, with nothing but your own being existent, what material would be available for making something other than yourself? The answer is, of course, YOU WOULD HAVE TO MAKE THE "THINGS" OUT OF YOURSELF! And friend, this is precisely what God did. Now we can understand the full import of those words inspired by the blessed Holy Spirit through the apostle Paul: "Because IN HIM were the all things created...and Himself is before all, and the all things I-N M-I-M HAVE CONSISTED" (Col. 1:16-17, Young's Literal). God couldn't create the world from dirt, because dirt is part of

the "things" He created. He couldn't create it from magma, for magma is part of the "things" created. He couldn't create it from gases, for all the gases in the universe are among the "things" created. I trust you can see, dear reader, that since God was BEFORE ALL THINGS, and since it was IN HIM that all things CONSISTED, it is abundantly clear that the very source and substance of things IS GOD HIMSELF! Of the energy and substance of His own Being God brought forth and created all things - OUT OF HIMSELF! "Because OUT of Him, and through Him, and for Him are ALL THINGS. To Him be the glory for the ages" (Rom. 11:36, Diaglott).

To create means to form the visible from the invisible, taking that which is not seen and fashioning it into something that can be seen, taking the inaudible and making it audible, causing the intangible to become tangible. This is why artists and musicians are said to "create" paintings and music. They draw from the invisible and indiscernible emotion, imagination, and inspiration of their OWN SOULS and produce upon canvass or as a musical composition the exquisite beauty, form, and harmony of that which existed only in the invisible realm of thought. Inventors, in a certain way, are creators. The visible out of the invisible - that is CREATION! THOU HAST MADE US PRIESTS. We have noted that God created TO MAKE. Create and make are not the same thing at all. God both creates and makes. In creation He has produced all visible things from the invisible properties of energy inherent eternally within Himself. But to "make" bespeaks the taking of that which is already visible, created, and CHANGING OR ALTERING ITS FORM so that it acquires a new identity and state of being in the visible world.

The New Webster's Dictionary defines "make" as: To bring into being by SHAPING a portion of matter or by combining parts or ingredients. As I write this article I sit before a hugh oak desk. This desk was one time a tree. Men took the tree, chopped it down, sawed it into boards, planed, sanded, and shaped the boards, and built them into a desk. Long millenniums ago the oak tree was CREATED, but the desk was MADE. God CREATED oaktrees, and men took the tree and MADE the desk. The tree, in creation, came from the invisible mind and mighty power of God; but the desk was fashioned, shaped, and made from the already created tree.

In the beginning God created man, formed him of the dust of the ground, lowering him into the realm of carnality, frustration, limitation, and futility. In pursuing his own self-hood instead of the Spirit of God, man fell even further into sin, sorrow, and depravity. If we want tangible evidence of the wreckage that sin has made in the world, we do not have to go further than our own selves to discover that when the CHRIST DOMINION is gone, there follows the unleashing of every carnal and devilish thought, attitude, and action. Man has been weakened to such a degree that instead of ruling the animal world, the ANIMAL NATURE rules in him! Sin and self choke the virtue from his soul, and Satan laughs him to scorn, while unclean spirits and every vile thing parade about upon the stage of his mind and body. Because of the weakened state of our being through sin, the terrors of life frighten us, the pressures fray our nerves, and our hearts fail. The cares of this world turn our lives into a pressure cooker and so overwhelm us until our emotions erupt in fear, anger, hostility, or depression.

The nature of the natural man IS ANYTHING BUT THAT OF A PRIEST! And now comes the word - "Thou hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood...and hast MADE US unto our God kings and priests." Ah, "things" are created, but "priests" are MADE! If you are a priest, there is something about you that is not ordinary; you have distinct and distinguishing characteristics. You are no longer part of the problem you have been so

thoroughly transformed from the spirit of self and of this world until you have become in your very state of being THE SOLUTION TO THE PROBLEM. What is a priest? Who are the priests today? They are those who are indwelt by the Christ and are living in the Christ and by the Christ to manifest the Christ. It does not matter what you do or what your job is. You may be a school teacher, a businessman, a doctor, a nurse, a student, a housewife, a mechanic, or a preacher. The essential and basic thing is that Christ lives in you and that you live in Christ, experience Christ, walk in Christ, and manifest Christ in all your life. This makes you a priest.

Consider the sons of Aaron when they were brought to Moses. What did Moses do? He removed their clothes and put upon them the priestly garments. What are the priestly garments? They are the manifestation of Christ. Christ manifested upon you is the robe of the priest. What the priests eat represents Christ, what they wear represents Christ, and all their living and doing represents Christ. To be a priest you must live in Christ and serve with Christ. When you teach in school, you teach in Christ; when you do business, you do business in Christ; when you take care of your home, you do it in Christ; when you speak with your neighbor, you speak as Christ; when you touch men, you touch them with Christ; when you meet your enemy, you love with the love of Christ; whatever you handle, you will handle with Christ; whatever you do, you will do with Christ. You are in the garment of a priest. You are equipped with Christ, you are adorned with Christ. You will manifest Christ. You will minister Christ. Ah, beloved, this is the ministry of priesthood. And only God can MAKE US priests! "Make" means to ALTER THE FORM OR CHANGE THOROUGHLY.

There can be no priesthood without first a thorough change. Sin, self, greed, hatred, criticism, retaliation, ego, unconcern, immaturity, pettiness, unrighteousness, all must be dealt with. Thus, we are not seeking just a salvation experience, the forgiveness of our sins, covering over the past, and hoping for the best in the future, but we desire that the Spirit of God, working mightily within, shall bring a thorough change in us, until every word, will, attitude, action, and reaction shall flow from HIS HEART unto all about us. You can be a believer and die and go to heaven without such a thorough change, but you can NEVER BE A PRIEST WITHOUT IT! You can speak in tongues, prophesy, see visions, fall out under the power, and be an apostle without such a thorough change, but you can NEVER BE A PRIEST WITHOUT IT!" It is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure" (Phil. 2:13). "GOD working in you." What a marvelous expression!

We know how combustion works mightily in the cylinder, forcing up and down the piston, giving power to the engine. We know how sap works mightily within the branches, forcing itself out in leaf, blossom, and bud. We know of incidents where men were so possessed of devils that they spoke and acted as the inward promptings compelled them. These express but weakly the idea of the "inward working" of God, which towers infinitely beyond. Have we not all been conscious of some of these workings? We have known them when the breath of holy resolution has swept through our natures; every sigh for the will of God; every strong and earnest desire to be like Him; every determination to leave the nets and fishingboats to follow Jesus; every appetite for spiritual things; every impulse to live and sacrifice and give for others; every aspiration to love and lift and restore the groaning creation; every prayer lifted heavenward in intercession for weak, needy, suffering and sinful humanity; every effort to bless those about us - all these are the result of His inworking and the promise of the Priestly Ministry!

COMPASSIONATE PRIESTS

The wonderful book of Hebrews is literally packed full of mysteries, types, shadows, and allegories, all pointing to the ministry of God's Royal Priesthood, which are only unfolded by the Holy Spirit as we are able to bear it. Hebrews chapter five sets forth five qualifications that the High Priest must possess. All the members of the Royal Priesthood who are, with Him, "partakers of the heavenly calling," must have the qualifications, but the High Priest in particular." For 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 with infirmity. And by reason hereof he ought, as for the people, so also for himself, to offer for sins. And no man taketh this honor unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron" (Heb. 5:1-4). Here we have defined the intrinsic nature of the priestly office. The verses just quoted contain a general description of the Levitical High Priests. Five things are here said concerning them. First, he must be "taken from among men," that is, he must partake of the nature of those on whose behalf he acts. Second, he acted not as a private individual, but as a public official: "is ordained for men." Third, he came not empty-handed before God, but furnished with "gifts and sacrifices for sins." Fourth, for he himself was not exempt from infirmity, so that he might the more readily succour the distressed. Fifth, he did not presumptuously rush into his office of himself, but was chosen, prepared, and approved of God.

Let us look at two of these more closely. "For every High Priest taken from among men..." First, then, his humanity is insisted upon. Greek mythology abounds in stories of gods who walked the earth giving the impression that they were men. They looked like men. They acted like men. But when the need arose they cast off presence, put forth their powers, and revealed their divinity. They were not really men, but gods in disguise. Many Christians have thought of Jesus in this way. He was God, looking like man, but not really man. But Jesus knew Himself to be a man, as His response to the first temptation shows, "MAN shall not live by bread alone" (Mat. 4:4). He was subject to all the limitations that compass our mortal frame, He knew weariness (Jn.. 4:6), hunger (Mat. 21:18; Lk. 4:2), and thirst (Jn.. 19:28), Bodily life has its joys and its sorrows, and He knew them both. But human life includes more than bodily experiences. Our emotional lives are a very important part of our being. And, as we can see, Jesus had emotions just like all other men. He could be joyful (Jn.. 15:11), or sorrowful (Mat. 26:37). He experienced love for others (Mk.. 10:21), and compassion (Mat. 9:36). It was astonishment which marked His reaction to the faith of the centurion (Lk.. 7:9) and to the unbelief of the men of Nazareth (Mk.. 6:6). On occasion He was indignant (Mk. 10:14). And at times He could be angry and grieved (Mk. 3:5). All this is important as constituting one of Jesus' qualifications to be our High Priest.

A High Priest must know and experientially understand the limitations of those he represents. "Who can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way; FOR THAT HE HIMSELF ALSO IS COMPASSED WITH INFIRMITY" (Heb. 5:2). On three different occasions Matthew tells us that our Lord was "moved with compassion" on the multitude. Frankly, when you read the New Testament you read of Jesus doing miracles, healings, signs and wonders, but Christ never went around looking for a miracle to perform. HE WENT ABOUT DOING THE FATHER'S WILL. The Father brought Him to a place where His heart could be moved with compassion. Coming to a town He sees a funeral procession and as a Son, developing the nature of a Priest, He is filled with compassion when He sees the widow and her dead son. There was no social security in

those days, and the boy was the only person to look after the widow, so He stops the procession, raises the boy, hands him over to the mother, and goes about the Father's business.

I find that the basis of the ministry of Christ was not power - IT WAS COMPASSION! When He saw the multitude He was moved with compassion. They were hungry, and He said, "Let us feed them." When He met the leper He was moved with compassion and He laid His hands on him and healed him. He could have said a word to heal him by the spoken word, but that man needed the touch of somebody's hand on him, he had been separated from people so long, he needed more than to be healed from his leprosy, he needed the sense of the hand of God upon Him. When Jesus looked upon the careworn faces of the toiling, tax-ridden multitudes - taxed by cruel priests; taxed by Herod; taxed by Pilate; taxed by their own sins and sorrows; wearily burdened, wounded at heart, and heavy laden - He was moved with compassion. "Who can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way; FOR THAT HE HIMSELF ALSO IS COMPASSED WITH INFIRMITY." The condition which develops compassion in us, is that WE OURSELVES get compassed - surrounded, hedged in - by the problems, the difficulties, the needs that are going to be represented in the people to whom we minister. So many of us are intolerant in certain areas of our lives because we have not gone through the pressure, we have not been compassed by that particular infirmity or weakness or need.

Priesthood demands suffering, trial, testing, tribulation, and pressure. Sonship demands relationship with God. He sends the Spirit of the Son into our hearts and we cry, "Abba, Father!" Maturity and development in God come through chastening and all the dealings of God. Now God intends that all of us should be Sons of God, and that all of us should be a Kingdom of Priests, a Royal Priesthood unto God. But you may be a Son and still not be a Priest! Rev. 20:4-6 says, "And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them...they shall be PRIESTS of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years." Here you see that it is not the Sons who are reigning - it is the PRIESTS! What about the Sons? "He that overcometh shall INHERIT ALL THINGS; and I will be his God, and HE SHALL BE MY SON" (Rev. 21:7). The Sons inherit, for they are heirs of God and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ (Rom. 8:17). Who, then, is destined to reign? THE SONS WHO ARE PRIESTS!

Christ was a Son before He was a Priest. He was not a Priest during His years in the flesh, but He was a Son. Christ as a Son, in order to fulfill His present ministry on the right hand of the Father' is not fulfilling it simply as the Son of God. As a Son He came to die to provide redemption, but to provide the priestly ministry on the right hand of the Father "we have a great High Priest, that is passed into the heavens." The Son had, as a Son, to go through the experience that was necessary to perfect Him for the understanding heart of the Priesthood. "We have not a High Priest which cannot be touched with the feelings of our infirmities; BUT WAS IN ALL POINTS TEMPTED LIKE AS WE ARE, yet without sin" (Heb. 4:15). "Though He were a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered; and being made perfect, He became...AN HIGH PRIEST AFTER THE ORDER OF MELCHIZEDEK" (Heb. 5:8-10). "Every High Priest...must be compassed with infirmity." Consider now that the Christ was tempted in all points like as we are - so that He might be a High Priest touched with the feelings of OUR INFIRMITIES. "But EVERY MAN is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust (desire), and enticed" (James 1:14).

Anything, to be a temptation for us, must excite something within us that responds to the temptation. That for which we have no desire, can never tempt us. I used to think, as many do, that Jesus was so high and holy that He could not be affected by the things that affect us. He was high and holy, but not to the extent that He could not be touched by the same infirmities, weaknesses, and feelings that touch us. He knows how the person feels who is tempted to lie, curse, steal, murder, or commit adultery. There had to be the desire in His flesh to answer the temptation, but, blessed be God ! HE OVERCAME IT ALL! He was tempted in every point as we are, YET WITHOUT SIN. He overcame all temptation and in the one instance of the desire to go His own way, He resisted even unto blood. He was the first to do this AND HE ENTERED INTO PRIESTHOOD.

There is something diabolical about temptation, something satanically bewitching and bewildering. It stirs up our senses and excites our emotions and passions. For the time being the forbidden thing seems more important than anything else in the world. It weakens our powers of judgment, both moral and spiritual. People who are otherwise very intelligent will in a brief season of temptation commit wholly unthinkable follies which they often live to regret a whole lifetime afterwards. It paralyzes our will. Our many good resolutions melt like wax in the hour of temptation. All this temptation frequently does simply by being permitted to press in upon us. It is like chloroform. If it gets too close to us, it will deprive us of the very possibility of offering resistance. But, praise God, "God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation make a way of escape, that ye may be able to bear it" (I Cor. 10:13). Ah, Jesus could have been a SON without being so totally compassed with infirmity, but HE COULD NEVER HAVE BEEN A 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 succor 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 have been 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.

"Who can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way." The High Priest could not be a hard-nosed business man. And he could not be a legalist, one who would take the law and hew unto the very line with it. He could not be a tyrant, enforcing his own will and desires and purposes. HE HAD TO HAVE COMPASSION ON THOSE WHO WERE IGNORANT. The word translated here "have compassion" is rendered in the margin "reasonably bear with" and means to be moderate in passion, or to moderate one's own feelings. The point stressed seems to be that of mental and emotional balance, neither coldly distant nor uncontrollably excited. One without feeling, on-the one hand, or one all torn up by the problem, on the other hand, could not minister as a Priest. He had to be moderate in passion - gentle, pitying, sympathetic, merciful, gracious, kind, helpful. That is why God told Ananias: "Go lay your hands upon Saul," for Saul needed the hand of somebody laid on him in mercy and forgiveness and grace and compassion, because his hands were red with the blood of the martyrs and he had come up to Damascus to torture and kill again. Paul came into union with God through Jesus Christ, and in union with the body of Christ through the hands which Ananias laid on him, for there was the mercy and the grace of God on a level that could reach him.

That is what the Royal Priesthood is for, it is so that Christ who is in the heavens, full of compassion, can have a body here on the earth level wherein He can meet the needs of

people. When God wanted to deliver Israel out of Egypt by the hand of Moses, He said, "I am come down to deliver them." Ah - GOD came down, but He came down in the ministry of Moses! To save us He came down in the person of Jesus Christ, and now the Christ is coming as King and Priest in His body of KINGS AND PRIESTS. God always moves on the level of the enablement of reaching people. Now that Christ is enthroned in the heavens with all the power and compassion humanity needs, He needs somebody down here on this level so that compassion and grace and mercy can reach people where they are.

Who was a good Priest? Paul! Paul was a great Priest because he was a consoler, he knew how to minister comfort. "By the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God. For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ" (II Cor. 1:4-5). Suffering is a part of Priesthood. "And whether we be afflicted, it is FOR YOUR CONSOLATION AND SALVATION, which is effectual in the enduring of the same suffering which we also suffer: or whether we be comforted, it is FOR YOUR CONSOLATION AND SALVATION. And our hope of you is stedfast, knowing that as ye are partakers of the sufferings, so shall ye be also of the consolation. For we would not, brethren, have you ignorant of our trouble which came to us in Asia, that we were pressed out of measure, above strength, insomuch that we despaired even of life. But we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead: who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver: in whom we trust that He will yet deliver us" (II Cor. 1:6-10). In every situation Paul found himself limited, compassed about, hedged in by suffering and difficulty. For years I prayed, "Lord, anoint me, empower me, send me that I might go forth and do signs and wonders and miracles and build the Kingdom of God." But God said, "No, I will put bands upon you." It is a strange thing about God - when you want to be free He binds you. But then He said, "When I want you to go, then you can go and do My will." All of us kick at that and want to be turned loose to perform miracles, cast out devils, do exploits, and bring in the Kingdom. But the people who are going to have the ministry in these last days are not the Sons with power, but the PRIESTS, the Sons who are being compassed about with infirmity, stripped, processed, who are now learning the ways of COMPASSION.

There is such a yearning within - "O God, bring me to that place where I can become a comforter to those that need comfort." Again and again we read it in Isa. 40:1, "Comfort ye, comfort ye My people." And yet it seems we do not have enough to say, we don't know what to do, or how to do it. Ah, that is why He is working now in us, filling up all that we lack of THE SUFFERINGS OF CHRIST, that now and in the ages yet to come we might become the vessels of His grace and mercy and compassion, so that we might bring comfort and healing and restoration to those in need. There have been those precious folk who have said to me, "Brother Eby, I don't understand. Since I came into this sonship message things have gotten worse - all hell has broken loose." That is just what you need - IF YOU WOULD BE A PRIEST! Have you not known some beautiful saints to whom you naturally betake yourself in time of trial and sorrow? They always seem to speak the right word, to give the very counsel you are longing for; you do not realize, however, the cost which they had to pay ere they became so skilful in binding up gaping wounds and drying tears. But if you were to investigate their past history you would find that they have suffered more than most. They have watched the slow untwisting of some silver cord on which the lamp of life hung. They have seen the golden bowl of joy dashed to their feet, and its contents spilt. They have stood by ebbing tides, and drooping gourds, and noon sunsets; but all this has been necessary to make them

comforters and healers; THE PRIESTS OF MEN. The only persons on earth who really understand our sorrow are the persons who have travelled the SAME VALLEY of despair. Only those who have been bereaved know what bereavement really is. They alone can shed the sympathizing tear and intercede in power with God, for they alone truly understand. Others may kindly and with feeling offer their condolence, but they can do little more than that, for they have not experienced the pain and loneliness of our loss.

The reason our blessed Lord is TOUCHED WITH THE FEELING OF OUR INFIRMITIES is that HE KNOWETH OUR FRAME. He remembereth that we are dust. He Himself was a "man of sorrows and ACQUAINTED WITH GRIEF." He knew what it was to be despised, afflicted, and rejected of men. He knows what it is to be misunderstood, to be dragged from prison and judgment with NO MAN to declare His generation. He knows what it is to be tempted in all points as we are tempted, and, though He knew not sin and no guile was found in Him, yet the sympathizing tears flow from His eyes as He extends His nail-pierced hand to lift us from the shades of our gloomy night to the ineffable light of the plane on which He dwells. You say you have had troubles enough? Only if you have no passion to be a Priest! If you come into the office on Monday you are just as tired as the other fellow, you have the same flu, the same problems, the same limitations, you have no secret formula to save you out of them, because every Priest has to be compassed, shut up, hedged in with the same infirmities, so that he can have an understanding heart for all of humanities problems. If you are going to be a manifested Son you must first get bound because God wants His Sons to be Priests, kingly Priests who show forth both authority AND redemption. You must not only have the authority of Kingship, but also the compassion of Priesthood. Paul says in effect: "If I give all my goods to feed the poor, but I do not love the poor, I still have no power to help them," because IN GOD, POWER IS BASED UPON COMPASSION AND LOVE AND MERCY.

God wants to fill us with that love, and inwork that compassion, and when you love the people that you are working with, you find that when you have the compassion to love them, and want to minister to them as a Priest, you are enthroned, you have the power to do it also. There has been too much ministering based on POWER that was not based on COMPASSION. I do not mean sentimental, mushy, soulish pity, but the compassion that floods our heart and comes from God, so that we can love the unlovely. After many years of walking in divine health, blessing, and victory, why is God today lifting His hand from many precious saints and allowing sickness, pressures, and tragedies to seize upon them? Because He intends that people, to BECOME PRIESTS, those through whom His compassion and mercy and love and power, will come to humanity. Have you not noticed that many great healing and deliverance ministries of the past were birthed into being by servants of God who themselves had been at one time in great physical need. We also see this principle exhibited in those who manifest a great love for the saving of lost souls in the truth that "he who is forgiven much, the same also loves much" (Lk. 7:47)

Let me say now, I DO NOT RECOMMEND THE PRIESTHOOD - I RECOMMEND SONSHIP! When you are a Son you have an inheritance, great wealth, blessings from the Father's hands, and freedom. "Whom the Son sets free, is free indeed." As a Son you have power to do things, but the moment you become a Priest, they put you in chains: compassed, surrounded, hedged in, pressed on every side by infirmity. Infirmity is weakness. I pray that as God deals with us in these days that we will not despise our limitations, our infirmities, and our sufferings, knowing that "He was in all points tempted, like as we are." Christ was tempted as a Son, but after that there came a temptation in testings that had nothing to do with Him, but were preparing Him for the perfection of the

Priesthood. As Sons of God, with full inheritance, we should be blessed beyond measure, we should have no problems, by rights we should be in perfect health, have good jobs, money in the bank, and everything coming to us. Most Spirit-filled Christians today choose to walk only in their sonship privileges of BLESSING, HEALTH AND PROSPERITY. And they do not know it, but they SHALL NOT REIGN WITH CHRIST.

Ah, it is the PRIESTS that reigns and to the Priests God says, "No, I am going to limit you here, put you through pressure there, subject you to suffering, hedge you in and compass you about with infirmity, not because you have no rights, but that it will work a compassion, an understanding, a mercy, a grace, work something in you so that out of that will flow a river of love, forgiveness, pardon, redemption, and then a flow of power, an enabling, an ability. Oh! may God's consuming fire consume all the self-pity which may be left in some of us. Some could have made better progress, but just at the time God was perfecting them in the priestly nature they began to feel sorry for themselves. Like children in school they think they have a hard time, till they become teachers themselves and find that it is harder on the teacher. Many young people, instead of getting their schoolwork done, complain, and then they fail and wonder what is wrong. When God's consuming fire begins to work in us and the trials and pressures overtake us, if we then feel sorry for ourselves and drown in a pool of self-pity, we are disqualified. O my brother, my sister, lay hold on God's grace which will so do a work in you that when you meet some poor soul in the same place you have the answer: the grace and the mercy and the power of God is sufficient for him also! But if you do not let it work in you, it will not work through you. If God would deliver us from all our troubles we would never help anybody, never understand the other fellow's dilemma; and that is why God keeps us the way we are and plagues us and puts us under pressure, not because we are not Sons, not so we will complain, and not that we will despair or faint, but that we say, "Lord, let it work in us that divine grace and longsuffering and compassion that will then flow out to minister to others."

When the suffering is completed, and we are perfected In the PRIESTLY NATURE, then we can walk in the fullness of our inheritance and His glory shall be revealed in and through us, praise His name! Let me share with you an illustration by Charles Spurgeon that I think says it so eloquently: Suppose it was one of the times when a great plague comes upon the city of London. The plague rages most furiously across the town and land, decimating the population and causing all men to board themselves up in their homes lest they be exposed to the contagion, filling the hearts of all with great fear and terror at the sight of death all about them. Suppose that in that town there dwells a man of noble lineage with his son, who is a wonderful physician. They determine to give themselves over to reclaiming the sick in this plague-ridden city. The son, who is a great physician, unbars the great front gate of their home and makes his way out into the byways and streets of London where all about him are the dead and the dying. Finding those who are still alive, he picks them up in his arms and brings them back to his father's house where gradually he exercises his marvelous skill upon them and begins to restore them to wholeness again. The father smiles benignly upon his son in whom he has such great delight who is exposing himself to dread circumstances and grievous dangers by going out into the city at a time like this. He goes out over and over again, bringing back the victims of the plague. Let us suppose that you are just such a one and he finds you lying in the street contorted with pain, experiencing the virulence of this horrid disease as it makes its way through your body. He picks you up tenderly in his arms and carries you back to the house. There he bends over you to begin his medical ministrations.

Unless you have experienced that healing balm and unless your life has been restored, you will not be able to sympathetically enter into an understanding of what is being done, of this great enterprise of tremendous moment which is being accomplished, as in the house of this great man and his loving son. You allow him to touch your body and you feel the health restored to your limbs. You begin to find that life once more pulses throughout your frame and again, you know the restoration to health and soundness. But even still you will not yet be fully able to enter into that fellowship. You must come to some sort of a sympathetic understanding of what is really happening around you. You must see that there is nothing in London; there is nothing, indeed, in all of England, nor in all the world, which begins to compare in significance to this tremendous work which is going on right here in the house before your eyes. So, day by day, as you watch the work of this great father and son you become more impressed with the tremendous consequences of what is happening. You realize how this is the only hope of this city and you enter in sympathetically and understandingly to what they are doing. Yet, if you would enter into the fellowship of this great man and his son, you must go further than this! You must come to the place where you say timidly, "Sir, is it possible that such a one as I could have some small part in this great work that you are doing?" You are then given the task of carrying basins and bringing towels and having some small part in the work that is being done. You begin now to understand more fully and to have some part in the fellowship and communion that goes on between these two in this great enterprise in which they are engaged, which now has become a part of your life. Yet, still, you are not ready to fully understand and enter into that fellowship until you come to that day when you say, "Sir, I want not only to have some small part but I see that this is the only thing in life which is really worthwhile, I want to give my whole self over to it. I yield myself body and soul. I want to go out and join your son in bringing in the ill and expose myself to the dangers and to the taunts of even those who do not understand. I am willing to give even my life for this cause."

At that point, my friend, you begin to enter in and understand the deep mystery of the fellowship of the father and his son. Just suppose that one day in that great house you meet a young man who announces that he, too, is one of those who has been brought in and healed and restored and has been adopted into the family. You find out a little bit about him. You notice that he is dressed in a sporting way. He has a tennis racket under his arm and he is on his way out the door. As he comes to the drawing room near the front door, he peers in and says to the son, "How is it going with the plague today? How many was it this week?... Oh, that is splendid! I'm delighted to hear it. I'm on my way to the courts to have a game." Would such a one as this ever be able to enter into the fellowship of the father and the son? Never! Or, perhaps, you meet another man not nearly so frivolous or flippant as the first. He is dressed in a three-piece suit, his umbrella is under his arm. You find that he is on his way to the Board of Trade. "Well, you know, business has to go on even in the most difficult of times, and in times like these it is possible one can make a good profit if one keeps his eye open and his nose to the grind." He, too, stops by the drawing room, tips his hat to the father and son and says, "Glad to hear that the work is going well. I left a check on the table in the hallway to help continue the work. How is that poor soul there doing? My, he does look bad. But I must run along now. Business first." And he is on his way. Can such a person as this ever enter into that mystery of fellowship between the father and the son? That will remain ever as alien to him as someone from another planet! Ah - there are no arm-chair Priests in the Kingdom of God! There are no country-club-elite Priests. There are no playboy Priests. There are no honorary Priests. There are no theoretical, self-appointed Priests. We view the Priests of old arrayed in their garments of glory and beauty and think how noble and prestigious

their office! But the priesthood was a dirty, sweaty, bloody business with cattle stomping about filling the air with clouds of choking desert dust, throats cut, blood splattering, carcasses butchered, the stench of burning flesh insulting the nostrils. All of us want to deliver the creation at a distance, delivering eloquent discourses in our gatherings, uttering lofty platitudes, issuing spiritual-sounding decrees in the atmosphere of the praise and worship of the saints, while our hands are still clean and there is no blood or mud or guts on our garments! Moses said, "Lord - if Thou wilt not forgive Israel's sin, blot me, I pray Thee, out of Thy book" (Ex. 32:32).

God wants Priests who are so willing to be numbered with the transgressors, so identified and touched with the feelings of people's infirmities, whose bowels of compassion are so moved, that they are willing to be one with the people they are sent to deliver. That, dear ones, is why some of you have never known what the mystery of the fellowship of the Father and the Son is. You are an alien to the greatest undertaking in the history of the universe - the healing and redemption and restoration of the whole creation! Your heart is estranged. You would rather stop the world and get off. You would rather go to heaven and play harps and flutter about with angels. You are even now busy, busy, busy about many things, but that which rests heavy upon the heart of God and of His great Son, the Great Physician and High Priest of the heavens, is foreign to you. Oh! would that God could open your eyes to what is going on in the world...to what is really important in the world...to what is really of eternal significance in the world...that you may see the great plan and work of the Father and His Son; that you might submit yourself to God to enter in and become one with those things that beat most intently in their hearts.

"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...for in that He Himself hath suffered being tempted, He is able to succour them that are tempted. Wherefore, holy brethren, PARTAKERS OF THE HEAVENLY CALLING, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus; for we have not a High Priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin" (Heb. 2:17-18; 3:1; 4:15). "If ye will obey My voice indeed, and keep My covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto Me above all people: for all the earth is Mine: and YE SHALL BE UNTO ME A KINGDOM OF PRIESTS" (Ex. 19:5-6). "Thou...hast redeemed 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). Oh, beloved, come, and as we gaze upon this glorious MINISTRY OF COMPASSION and its life-flow unto all the peoples of the earth, let us yield ourselves unto the intense processings of God that He may work His wondrous work in our lives, bringing us into such union with Jesus in the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, that we BECOME in nature and power HIS ROYAL PRIESTHOOD in the earth!

Chapter 6

Partakers Of The Heavenly Calling

"WHEREFORE, holy brethren, PARTAKERS OF THE HEAVENLY CALLING, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus" (Heb. 3:1)

It has been said that when, in the Scriptures, you read a "wherefore" or a "therefore" you ought to know what it is THERE FOR! Though that statement contains a bit of humor, it embodies an obvious and important truth. With this verse the third chapter of Hebrews begins, and that "wherefore" hinges what the writer now says upon all that has been established in the previous two chapters. Wherefore means "for what or which cause or reason" - that is, seeing that the facts before presented are true, for that cause, for that reason, because of that - let this action now be taken.

The book of Hebrews begins in chapters one and two with a glorious declaration as to how God speaks or reveals Himself to us. Once He spoke through prophets. But now He speaks or reveals Himself to us in Sonship. Moffatt's and Phillips' translations and the Amplified New Testament are especially beautiful and revealing in this portion of Scripture: "Many were the forms and fashions in which God spoke of old to our fathers by the prophets, but in these days at the end He has spoken to us by a Son - a Son whom He has appointed heir of the universe" (Moffatt). "God, who gave to our forefathers many different glimpses of the truth in the words of the prophets, has now, at the end of the present age, given us the truth in the Son" (Phillips). "In many separate revelations - each of which set forth a portion of the truth - and in different ways God spoke of old to our forefathers in and by the prophets. But in the last of these days He has spoken to us in the person of a Son, whom He appointed Heir and lawful Owner of all things" (Amplified).

In the first chapter the angelic order is contrasted with the realm of Sonship and we are made to know how much better Sonship is than the angelic realm. "Being made so much better than the angels, as He hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they" (Heb. 1:4). Being made so much better! A better nature, a better name, a better authority, a better inheritance, a better relationship with the Father. Verse seven tells us that angels are created beings, and are made winds (spirits), and His ministers (servants) a flame of fire. But verse eight goes on to tell us that the SON has a throne which is forever and ever (to the age of the age). Sonship is a relationship to Deity that angels cannot know. Heb. 1:10 shows that the first-born Son was the creator of heaven and earth. God Himself became human substance brought into this world of sin. When the first-born came into the world of men the angels were told to worship Him. "When He bringeth in the first begotten into the world, He saith, Let all the angels of God worship Him" (Heb. 1:6). Why? Why did they have to be told to worship Him? Because He was so much in the likeness of man. Mortal man was lower than the angels and angels would not worship man. They had to be told that this man was more than a man, that He was more than angels, He was Deity veiled in humanity. I am sure that many of my readers would tremble in awe in the presence of a mighty angel. Yet, the realm of Sonship is HIGHER

FAR THAN THE ANGELS WILL EVER ATTAIN TO. This is the place Jesus walked and overcame every enemy.

Chapter two shows how that Jesus identifies with sinful humanity in a way that He never did with angels. He never left the realm of omnipotent and omnipresent Deity to take on the nature of angels. He descended much lower than that. "For a little while" He was made lower than angels. The term in verse nine "made a little lower than the angels," is a time phrase, and means that He was "made, for a little while, lower than angels." When He took upon Him the seed of Abraham and was in all things made like unto His brethren, He descended far, far beneath the dignity of the great Archangel. But only for a little while. All this was necessary that He might become through association with our needs, a merciful and faithful High Priest, to make reconciliation for the people.

Taking upon Him the seed of Abraham, means that He laid hold of their needs for the purpose of helping them. Gal. 3:16 & 29 show clearly that we who are the called of God are the seed of Abraham. We are his brethren. Heb. 2:16 in the Amplified reads, "For, as we all know, He (Christ) did not take hold of angels - to give them a helping and delivering hand; but He did take hold of the fallen descendants of Abraham - to reach them a helping and delivering hand." The Clementson translation says: "For verily, not of angels doth He take hold, but He taketh hold of the seed of Abraham." In the Interlinear Greek-English New Testament it is worded: "For not indeed of angels takes He hold, but of the seed of Abraham He takes hold." The old song "When He Reached Down His Hand For Me" is so meaningful here. He came down to LAY HOLD OF US. He APPREHENDED US. He CHOSE AND ORDAINED US.

And how does He take hold? There is no way in which God can take hold of a creature other than by entering into him with His life and spirit, so imparting His own goodness and power, and bringing him into union with Himself. So did Jesus take hold of man. He entered into humanity and became one with it. And so He takes hold of individual souls by entering with each into personal union and fellowship. Notice the closing verses of this beautiful chapter: "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. For in that He Himself hath suffered being tempted, He is able to succor them that are tempted" (Heb. 2:17-18).

The laying hold implied His identifying Himself with them, and this again was impossible without being made like them in all things. So only could He save them. It was indeed needful, so that He might become a merciful and faithful High Priest. Here we have for the first time, the word High Priest - a word which is used in no other book of the New Testament of our Lord Jesus Christ, but in this Epistle is its central thought. The message is clear - Christ became man, not merely to die and atone, but that in doing this, He might be a faithful and merciful High Priest. His relation to us was to be a personal one. He must Himself minister to us the salvation He worked out. Everything would depend upon His winning our confidence, getting possession of our heart and love, and as a living Leader guiding us into the path to God. It is this which makes His human life on earth so precious to us. It proved Him faithful: we dare fully trust Him. It found Him merciful: we need not fear coming to Him. He was made in all things like unto His brethren, that He might become a merciful and faithful High Priest.

PARTAKERS OF THE HEAVENLY CALLING

WHEREFORE! "WHEREFORE, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus." Wherefore - seeing how true it is that the Christ came into man's world and fully shared his weaknesses and sorrow; seeing how true it is that the Christ is now exalted as High Priest to the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens - as PARTAKERS IN THIS HEAVENLY CALLING let us CONSIDER JESUS, the APOSTLE and HIGH PRIEST of OUR PROFESSION. An apostle is the first advocate and initiator of a new order. A High Priest is an intercessor between God and man. Jesus is the Apostle of our profession. He is the sign Son, the first begotten Son, the pattern Son. He is the Apostle and High Priest of an entirely new order of Priesthood. All who are to come to Sonship and Priesthood through the ages shall come into that same wonderful image of Jesus Christ. It is time now, above all times, for us to mightily stress these truths. I see no possibility of any long delay until the hour of the MANIFESTATION OF THE SONS OF GOD becomes a reality. We do not attain the realities of Sonship by thumb twiddling or presumption. They appear as a great vision before our understanding and we attain them through surmounting faith, patience, endurance, testing, and eternal vigilance.

As our APOSTLE Jesus Christ proclaims and opens up the way before us, and as our HIGH PRIEST He reconciles us fully to God that we may walk in the calling ordained for us. And what is that calling? TO BE PARTAKERS WITH HIM IN HIS OWN HEAVENLY CALLING! Here are indeed great words! "Calling" here, as always in the epistles, has reference not to an invitation to go to some far-off heaven somewhere, but to a PRESENT heavenly state of being. For New Creation men, according to Col.1:12, have already been made "meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light," and our "citizenship IS in heaven" (Phil. 3:20), and God hath "raised us up together, and made us sit together IN THE HEAVENLIES in Christ Jesus" (Eph. 2:6).

The heavenly calling is the calling unto the Priesthood of Christ. Hebrews is very clear about this. "Now the main point of what we have to say is this: We have such a HIGH PRIEST, One Who is seated at the right hand of the majestic God IN HEAVEN, an officiating PRIEST, a MINISTER IN THE HOLY PLACES and in the true tabernacle which is erected not by man but by the Lord" (Heb. 8:1-2, Amplified). Hear it! O ye Sons of God, Christ is the great High Priest OF THE HEAVENS and we are called to be PARTAKERS WITH HIM IN THAT HEAVENLY CALLING.

The notion, held by the vast majority of evangelical Christians, that the Priesthood of the Christ is an INDIVIDUAL, SINGULAR PRIESTHOOD exercised by Himself alone in some far-away heaven, is an absurdity. The term "High Priest" is a relative term, "high" being translated from the Greek word ARCHIEREUS, meaning "chief" in order or rank. It is the same word translated "chief priest" or "chief priests" in numerous passages. It is a title denoting the CHIEF OR HEAD OF AN ORDER such as the terms "Chairman of the Board," "Archangel," "Chief of Police," "Speaker of the House," "King of Kings," etc. It should be clear to every thinking mind that you cannot have a High Priest without a Priesthood any more than you can have a Chairman of the Board without a board for the Chairman of the Board to be chairman over. You cannot have a High Priest without a Priesthood any more than you can have an Arch-angel without an order of angels for the Arch-angel to be leader of. You cannot have a High Priest without a Priesthood any more than you can have a Chief of Police without a police force for the Chief of Police to be chief of. You cannot have a High Priest without a Priesthood any more than you can have a Speaker of the House of Representatives without a House of Representatives for the Speaker of the House to be speaker for. You cannot have a High Priest without a

Priesthood any more than you can have Jesus as King of Kings with no kings for Him to be the King over. High Priest! The High Priest in heaven! Ah, yes, and we are holy brethren, PARTAKERS OF THE HEAVENLY CALLING, having Received the vision of becoming ONE IN HIM, to share in this heavenly Priesthood, and as we follow on to know HIM in all His glorious fullness we shall see a ministry unfold before us which leads to deliverance and restoration for all God's creation. Our task will not be left undone, for we shall have the ages before us to carry it through to victory, and to HIS praise!

In the Old Testament, although there was a work for the whole priesthood to do, there was one specific work to be done by the High Priest, that no other priest could perform. This work of ATONEMENT that the High Priest performed once each year, could be done only by himself, but the whole priesthood would manifest that work through the whole year. We read in Heb. 8:1-2, "Now 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 of the true tabernacle which the Lord pitched, and not man." Paul makes the definite statement in this passage that we NOW possess such a High Priest

Now Peter tells us that WE ARE A ROYAL PRIESTHOOD. Under the law the High Priest went into the Holy of Holies once a year and made atonement for the people. THEN HIS WORK WAS DONE until another Day of Atonement came around, at which time he would go through it again. But for the year, THE PRIESTHOOD ministered to the people. The priesthood ministered to the people THAT WHICH THE HIGH PRIEST HAD DONE BEFORE GOD IN THE HOLIEST. The sinner would bring his offering for the sin he had committed and turn it over to the priest. Then the priest would offer it and there was nothing the priest could do but go to the sinner and say, "YOUR SIN IS FORGIVEN." Now all that the priest had done WAS TO MINISTER THAT WHICH THE HIGH PRIEST HAD ACCOMPLISHED IN THE HOLIEST. With great earnestness I pray that God will open your understanding, for that, precious friend of mine, is precisely what the Royal Priesthood is commissioned to do to minister to a lost and dying world that which our great High Priest has accomplished through the power of His precious blood in the heavens! The entire body of Priests under the great High Priest is the extension and projection and fulfillment of His own High Priestly ministry. The Lord Jesus lived here on earth under a deep consciousness of having a mission from His Father to fulfill. He continually used the expression, "The Father hath sent Me." He knew what this mission was. He knew the Father had chosen Him, and sent Him into the world with the one purpose of fulfilling that mission, and He knew the Father would give Him all that He needed for it. Faith in the Father having sent Him was the motivation and power for all that He did. In earthly things it is a great help if an ambassador knows clearly what his mission is; that he has nothing to do but to care for its accomplishment; and that he has given himself undividedly to do this one thing For the members of the Royal Priesthood it is of no less consequence that they should know that they have a mission, what its nature is, and how they are to accomplish it.

Our heavenly mission is one of the most glorious parts of our conformity to our Lord. He says it plainly in the most solemn moments of His life: "As My Father hath sent Me, even so send I you" (Jn. 20:21). After the Lord had fulfilled His mission on earth He ascended into heaven, and became to the world the Unseen One. And now He has given over His heavenly mission to HIS ROYAL PRIESTHOOD, having entered into them in mighty spirit power to perform it. They must so represent Him, the Invisible One, that from seeing them men can judge what He is. Every Priest must so be the image of Jesus, must so exhibit in his person and conduct the same love, grace, and power, as animated the

Christ, that from them the world may know what Christ is like, and be touched by Him. Oh, my soul! take time to realize these heavenly thoughts: The purpose of the Royal Priesthood is to reveal glory and minister the work of the great High Priest of the heavens.

His seed has come into us, we have been born of the Spirit of God, God is having a people in whom is the Spirit of His Son, so that there is a relationship with the Father and a forming and a revelation and an outflow of the Father's character, mind, and will. For what reason? So that God can appear IN THE MIDST of His apprehended ones and so that God can appear THROUGH His people at any time He wants and in any form He needs to appear. "When He shall come to be glorified IN HIS SAINTS, and to be ADMIRERD IN ALL THEM THAT BELIEVE in that day" (II Thes. 1:10). Long centuries ago the prophet Malachi asked the burning question, "Who may abide the day of HIS COMING? and who shall STAND when HE APPEARETH? for He is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap: and He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and He shall purify the sons of Levi (the priesthood), and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness" (Mat. 3:2-3). Jesus Christ wants to reveal Himself, not only as Saviour. You know the old story: "Jesus is my Saviour, Healer, Baptizer, Sanctifier, and thank God - I rejoice over this more than anything else - He is my coming King." Is it not because we have not been sure whether we wanted this Man to RULE over us? We do not mind Him ruling over Castro and the devil and the millenium, but we have not wanted to be totally conquered and ruled by Him. That is why we have kept Him coming. The Lord wants to be King NOW. But He wants to be more than that. You first have to know Him as King. We have sung through the years a little chorus that goes like this: "Oh King of glory, We bow before Thee, Take Thy throne and reign within our hearts." We first have to know Him in His Kingship, in His authority, in His government. 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 in us, just to make us kings. But He is establishing 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" - He is making us kings in order that He shall now 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 in pride or use the power for your self-interest when you become a king. "Oh, when I become a king I will..." 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. I want to tell you that that is a life-changing concept, yet, some of you have never even begun to touch the hem of its garment. Our Captain, our King, has WON the victory! He has conquered death! He has conquered hell! He has conquered US! And now, we partake of His victory. We need to know that we can never conquer with Christ until we have been conquered by Him. We will never reign with Christ until we are REIGNED OVER by Him.

"Well," you say, "why does He not appear as King of Kings?" Because most of us are beggars. "Oh, God, please bless us; Lord, do this, do that; give us this, give us that." And if He appeared as King of beggars, we would be ashamed before Him. In all our poverty, in all our need, in all our self-pity, in all our limitation, foolishness and carnality, should suddenly the Majesty of the heavens, the blessed and only Potentate appear, why right

away we would fall with our faces in the dust in shame before Him. But if we are standing as kings in the presence of God, reigning in life, undefeated and victorious, overcomers and conquerors in all things, rejoicing because His throne is in our hearts, then we welcome the King of Kings in the midst of the kings.

"Who shall stand when He appeareth?" I tell you in truth that it is those who have been MADE ONE IN HIM in that in which He is appearing. Those are able to stand with Him when HE appears. God is teaching us the way of overcoming, the reality of His authority and Lordship. Why is He establishing that authority and that Lordship in the hearts of His people? Because He is the Lord and the Head of the body, the Church. Of course you will never know His Lordship, except by the Holy Spirit: "No man can say that Jesus is Lord, but by the Holy Ghost." The Lordship of Jesus Christ must be set up in our hearts, where His will becomes our delight. Why does He want us to come into lordship and authority? So He can appear in the midst as the LORD OF LORDS! If we are not lords, He cannot come as Lord of Lords. He is not Lord of Slaves. He is Lord of Lords. Why is God bringing Sons to glory? That in the midst of all Jesus Christ might appear as the pre-eminent One, THE SON among the Sons!

Do we love His appearing? Do we want God to make us a people for Himself, so that in whatever form He desires to appear, He can appear in the midst? The inspired apostle John has taught us that when HE APPEARS, WE MUST BE LIKE HIM. It says, "We shall be like Him," but it also means, "We must be like Him." Can we not see that if we are not like Him in the way He wishes to appear, He cannot appear in that form? We are the body, the vehicle, the expression and manifestation of the Christ. Because we are HIS BODY, whenever He manifests Himself, He will manifest Himself in the form of that body, in what ever form the body is. Among the saved He appears as Saviour. Have you not noticed that the only manifestation of the Christ through saved people is salvation? Go to any Church on any corner where all the people have experienced of Christ is the gift of salvation, the forgiveness of sins, and what will they be preaching and ministering? Why, salvation, of course! He appears there as the Saviour. But go among people who have found Him in healing power, and in what form does He appear in the midst? Why, as the Healer! Among those baptized in the Spirit, He appears as the Anointed and the Anointer, the Christ, and His anointings are manifest in power and glory.

But there is one form in which He will and must appear in these last days and throughout the ages to come. If He must appear as Saviour, He must appear among Saviours. If He must appear as Deliverer, He must appear among Deliverers. If He appears as the Chief Cornerstone, He must appear among living stones. If He appears as the Son of God, He must appear among many brethren conformed to His image. If He comes as Lord, He must be Lord among other lords. If He comes as King, He must be King among other kings. If He is going to be revealed as God, He must be revealed among the gods (Ps. 82:2,6). And if ever creation is to see and know Him as the great High Priest of the heavens, HE MUST BE REVEALED AMONG THE PRIESTS!

"Who shall stand when He appeareth?" When He appears as King, only the kings can stand with Him, everybody else has to fall before Him. When He appears as Lord, only the lords are able to stand with Him, the rest will bow before His appearing. When He appears as Judge, only the judges (I Cor. 6:2; Dan. 7:22) can stand with Him, all the rest will cringe before Him. And when He appears as High Priest, only the priests, those elect saints born of a priestly heart, possessed of the priestly nature, are able to stand with Him! But because His priests are polluted, corrupted, undeveloped, and immature, He

comes first to "SIT as a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap: and He shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness" (Mal. 3:2-3). Ah - He sits among those being purified and prepared as His Royal Priesthood, He appears among those being refined as the great Refiner, But in due time, praise His name, He appears among them as the High Priest and they stand with Him unto the blessing of all the ends of the earth!

THE HIGH PRIEST AND THE PRIESTS

The priesthood of Aaron foreshadows Christ in a very striking way. The honour of being High Priest is not open to man's ambition. No man can take it to himself (Heb. 5:4). The High 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 do this work, and no one else could have done so. In the same way, "Christ glorified not Himself to be made an High Priest"(Heb. 5:5). He was a High Priest because God made Him so. He was "called of God" (Heb. 5:10) to this office.

It is inspiring to meditate upon the thought given us in Ex. 28:1: "And take thou unto thee AARON THY BROTHER, AND HIS SON"; with him from among the children of Israel, that HE may minister unto Me in the priest's office, even Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar, Aaron's sons." God chose five men, Aaron and his four sons, and then referred to them in the singular pronoun "that HE may minister." The ministries of these five men were inseparably wrapped up in each other, so that God saw them as one. Aaron did not minister without the priests (except on the Day of Atonement), and the priests could not minister without the High Priest. This is all very wonderful, for Christ does not minister alone. God has called us to be priests that we might share in the ministry of reconciliation. We, too, like the priests of old, cannot minister apart from our great High Priest upon whom we depend at all times. The Father has called us unto Sonship that we might stand with Him and cry, "OUR VERY OWN Father!" He is apprehending many for the authority of Kingship that He might be "the King of Kings." He is making many to be Priests after the order of Melchizedek that He and they may stand in ONE MINISTRY unto the Father - satisfying the heart of the Father for the fellowship of Sons through whom He may reveal His person unto the whole creation. And even now, all creation is standing on tiptoe to behold the glorious sight of God's Sons coming into their own. And because of the wise and gracious councils of God from eternity, Christ now has no identity APART FROM US, the fullness of Him that filleth all in all. The Father looks at His Son AND His Sons, His High Priest AND His Priests, and says, "that HE may minister unto Me!"

In my meditations upon the Order of Melchizedek, I find it impossible to separate between the High Priest and the Priests. Under the Aaronic Order the HIGH PRIEST was the one who went into the Holy of Holies. He passed through the veil and entered into the place unseen by all others. The PRIESTHOOD did not do this. But, precious friend of mine, if you think that Jesus is keeping all the glory of that realm to Himself, then you just haven't read Heb. 6:19-20. "Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, 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." Let me repeat - the only person permitted an entrance BEYOND THE VEIL was the High Priest.

While manifested on this earth plane, Jesus Christ left us His personal example that we might follow in His footsteps. It is a way that leads BEYOND THE VEIL into the glories of the Father. It was necessary that He tread all the course that we might be able to follow all the way into divine fullness. HE IS THE WAY unto the Father, and by our union with Him we find it is first a way of humiliation before it becomes a way of exaltation. Thus we humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God, assured that in due time HE will lift us up, and we shall live in His sight.

A FORERUNNER is one who goes ahead of others. He goes ahead as a sample of those who are to follow. Jesus is our FORERUNNER, which clearly indicates that others are expected to follow on into the same realms of glory. Christ, a Priest forever after the Order of Melchizedek, is our FORERUNNER, He went first, and where He went, we are to go. The Forerunner blazed the trail all the way, and we rejoice in this fact, but then He also came back, by HIS SPIRIT, to escort us all the way into the glory beyond the veil, the glory of a PRIESTHOOD AFTER THE ORDER OF MELCHIZEDEK. Full well He knows the route, for He has traveled it all the way through to victory, and now is able to guide us down the same path into the glorious victory which He obtained. It is HIS daily enabling that gives us strength to carry on until the consummation is reached.

WE HAVE A HOPE. That hope is the anchor of the soul. Our hope in the Christ is the anchor of that life both sure and firm, and it has entered into the veil, taken there by our FORERUNNER, even Jesus. He is the Forerunner. He ran ahead of, or before us. This being true, it is evident that WE ARE GOING TO RUN ALSO. What He entered into we also will come into. He simply has opened the way for us and He is the ANCHOR or the HOPE of that LIFE which is behind the veil. This is all an accomplished fact.

Let us remember, however, that in the Old Testament order it was only the High Priest who could enter into the Holy of Holies. None else could enter, and even the High Priest would enter in with fear and trembling and only after much preparation and vested with special garments. But how glorious the word! "And having an High Priest over the house of God, LET US draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water" (Heb. 10:21-22). In verse nineteen of this same chapter we read, "Having therefore brethren, BOLDNESS TO ENTER INTO THE HOLIEST by the blood of Jesus." We, the Royal Priesthood, DO HAVE BOLDNESS TO ENTER IN. We need not wait, and we do not have to go to some far-off heaven somewhere. This thing is taking place WITHIN US right at this time, blessed be HIS wonderful name! For us it is a glorious privilege to enter in because Jesus Christ, our High Priest and Forerunner, has opened the way and bids us enter. Multitudes know Jesus Christ as their Saviour, Baptizer, Healer, Sanctifier and Blessor, but do you know Jesus as your Forerunner? Do you know Him as the Forerunner of the MELCHIZEDEKIAN PRIESTHOOD? Now we hear the word to us and it is that we are to come in with BOLDNESS. Come right into the Holy of Holies. Come right into the presence of God. Come right into the glory of God. Come right into that high and holy realm that only HIGH PRIESTS enter! We need not be afraid, for we have a High Priest who is NOW appearing in the presence of God FOR US, not IN OUR PLACE, but ON OUR BEHALF, for that is the true sense of the words "for us." This wonderful High Priest ABIDES in the presence of God and we are to come right in.

Yet many stand without. Some dwell in the Outer Court while others tarry in the Holy Place. The High Priest continues to invite us to come in. We have been standing outside and we have said to one another, "Isn't that wonderful and glorious and mighty - that

place within the veil!" Multitudes do not dare because of fear to even look into the place. But the word is to come right in, even into the Holy of Holies. Sit down in the presence of the living God. Sit down with the Christ as a Priest upon His throne. For the great High Priest is there ministering, and we are to minister with Him, the Royal Priesthood, those who are made PARTAKERS OF THE HEAVENLY CALLING. If we can ever see this, if we somehow by God's grace and the quickening of the Holy Ghost can get ahold of it, we will not hesitate to yield ourselves unto the call of God to the PRIESTHOOD OF CHRIST.

God has a people in the earth today who are not ordinary people. They are not people of this earth, but people of the Celestial Kingdom. They are God's dwelling place and they dwell in God. The High Priest, the One after the Order of Melchizedek, HAS ENTERED THE HOLY PLACE NOT MADE WITH HANDS. He is there appearing in the presence of God for us, on our behalf. The great invitation to God's elect now is, "COME IN." After such an awesome revelation as this we find it impossible to RETURN to the old way. The old religious systems, the old preaching of manmade doctrines and creeds and petty religious traditions has become an abomination, it holds nothing for us. We can have nothing to do with such things. The ways of babylon are the ways of death to us. WE HAVE A HIGH PRIEST OVER THE HOUSE OF GOD. The High Priest is NOW ministering over the house of God, WHOSE HOUSE WE ARE. You will find the High Priest ministering in His temple, and know ye not that YE ARE THE TEMPLE OF THE LIVING GOD? He is appearing in the presence of God for us, and IT IS ALL GOING ON WITHIN US, in our experiencing of God.

PRIESTS INDEED

I must emphasize with all solemnity, beloved, that when God chooses men to be Priests He means for them to BE PRIESTS. Priesthood is not an honorary title, a gift, a reward, or some emotional blessing to be worn like a merit badge for show. Priesthood is real. Priesthood is ministry, to God and to men. Priesthood is work. Priesthood is caring, loving, touching, interceding, forgiving, healing, changing, transforming, teaching, and doing all necessary to bring lost and dying, sick and sorrowing, tormented and hostile men back to God. Priesthood is praise and worship and consecration and holiness unto the Lord. The priesthood of Aaron was set apart, sanctified unto the Lord, that they might serve in holy things. There was to be no life of luxurious IDLENESS, of worldly EASE and COMFORT. They were, it is true, to lack nothing, for we find that full provision was made for all their needs; but their life was to be A LIFE OF SERVICE, and that service in the very presence of God. I am convinced that great numbers of people today think that Sonship is a matter of the head; that it is believing theoretically and intellectually certain "end time truths." These kind of folk want a constant diet of exotic "revelations," but no inworking or outworking of His life. "What is your latest revelation, Eby?" "Give us something rich," is their cry., But they are not the least bit interested in BECOMING THE REVELATION. You can believe all the "Kingdom Message", and be on the highway of the devil, just as in the Churches today a man can be a first-class theologian and be the bondsman of a first-class devil. You can know all the points of Calvinism and never know God. You can know all the answers in the Catechism and never touch God. And you can know intellectually all the "deeper teaching" of this hour and be spiritually bankrupt. You can understand theoretically the whole thing and never possess anything. You are like a man who has a beautiful picture of a magnificent estate, and all the title deeds to that estate, but they are not in his name. He has no rights of property there at all. There are multitudes of people today who describe, and truth can fully describe, many great and wonderful things connected with the Kingdom of God, but they do not possess any of

them. What is the use of talking about a thing unless you possess at least something of it? What is the use of talking about a religion that does not possess you? Why talk about a God and a realm that is afar off, and does not possess you? What is the use of talking about a calling and a ministry that is mere theological theories? That may do something for a moment, but a theory never did anything until it was put into some practical form. You may have a very fine theory, and it may, if properly applied, become a very powerful thing; but as long as it remains a mere theory, what is it? Of no use at all.

I know men who are theoretical engineers, and practical fools. I know men who are theoretical educationalists, and do not know how to teach anybody anything. I know men who are theoretical financiers, and they have not a dollar to bless themselves with. I know men who are theoretical politicians, and could tell President Reagan and his Cabinet how to manage the nation, and they cannot manage their own families. What is the use of a theory that is not embodied in practice? What is the use of a revelation that cannot be demonstrated in a tangible shape? That is the question.

I am very glad that I am living in a practical age. The world understands practical things quite well, thoroughly well. It is far better than the Church is. Jesus said, "The sons of this world are for their own generation wiser than the sons of light." They are wiser, far wiser for their own generation. They do not talk theories. They do not take any stock in the man who does not reduce the thing to practice. Has any man down town taken time to waste on a fellow who comes into his office, gassing and talking? They say, "Have you anything practical to tell us? If not, get!" If they were to say that on Sunday morning to their ministers, how many ministers would have to get!

I do not hesitate to tell you that there are no arm-chair Priests in the Kingdom of God! There are no Country-Club elite Priests. There are no playboy Priests. There are no honorary Priests. There are no theoretical, self-styled Priests. If you have received the call to the Royal Priesthood then God is very practically inworking into your life something of the priestly nature and life. It is real. It works. It works right here and now, and in the nitty-gritty of everyday living. Priesthood is mercy. Priesthood is compassion. Priesthood is forgiveness. Priesthood is blessing. Priesthood is love, divine love. Priesthood is reconciliation. Priesthood is healing. Priesthood is tenderness and sympathy and the power of HIS LIFE to change things. Ah, your dog will know it, if you are a Priest! I do not need to ask God, my brother, my sister, whether you are a Priest; I need only to ask your wife, your husband, your children, your neighbor whose dog killed your cat, your boss, your associates, yes, and your enemies!

Priesthood is the spirit of the High Priest. Jesus lives, and Jesus has loved us, and has Himself cleansed us in His blood. He bestows upon us the disposition of priesthood by His indwelling. His indwelling is but the first step, then follows the INWORKING by which we BECOME that which has first entered into us as an embryonic life. The spirit of Priesthood is love. Love is the queen of all the graces of the Christ life. Love is the passion of self-giving. It never stops to ask what it can afford, or what it may expect to receive in return; but it is ever shedding its heart's blood. It will pine to death if it cannot give. The love of Christ, which went out so tenderly to those who walked and talked with Him when He was upon earth, is no less far-reaching and eternal to usward. It is this fathomless love of Christ that conquers; and His all-conquering, boundless love, is the banner unfurled in the lives of His Kingdom of Priests. O precious love divine, higher than the heavens, deeper than the abyss, broader than all the ages of time! O mighty love that reached through countless ages and brought Christ down from the bosom of the Father

to redeem creation; which brought Him to the tomb; which brought Him back to the right hand of God, as the High Priest of the heavens who ever liveth to make intercession for us; which is now shed abroad in OUR HEARTS by the Holy Ghost!

"Love your enemies," said Jesus. Can you not love even your enemies with the love of God which is perfected in you? Not with your own love, but with God's love. God loves the world - and gave His Son to die for it. He loves the world, notwithstanding its vileness and sin and hostility. It is easy enough to love that which is amiable, pleasing, and lovely; but true Love - the Love of God - surpasses that, and loves the unlovely and the loveless, and if you are a Son of the Highest, possessing His Love, you will love like Him and thus demonstrate your divine lineage. You shall be a fitting representative of your Father which is in heaven, for He makes His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust and is kind to the unthankful and to the evil.

Love is bound to triumph in the end and all humanity, however rough and coarse now, is but the raw material out of which the great Master Workman makes beings higher than the angels. Blessed is the man who has come near enough to the heart of God in His plans and works to see in the rudest and most unsightly block of unfinished humanity "the Perfect Man" - and to love and serve that ideal - God's finished man regardless of his present stage of development. Viewing all humanity thus, out of the heart of God, and out of the heart of God's great High Priest, you, as a child of God, and a member of the Royal Priesthood, can afford to treat all mankind, irrespective of their attitude toward you, or God, with the most magnificent and lavish generosity, for you have the infinite resources of your Father to draw upon. It is no wonder that the natural man cannot love his enemies, since he has a very slim stock of love anyway, even for his friends, and what he has is a very inferior article, the blemished love of an unregenerated heart. It is not likely that he is going to bestow any of this stuff upon those who hate and curse and abuse and persecute him. Nor is it any great loss to them either! But you - a child of God ~ a Priest of the Most High - with the same nature as Him who is Love - with an unlimited supply of perfect love to draw upon - you can afford to love everybody. You can be a perfect spendthrift in love and never fear of exhausting the store. Love your enemies? Why, of course you can! God your Father loved YOU when YOU were HIS ENEMY!

I love the story of Leonardo da Vinci. According to the legend, some lads were visiting the famous artist. One of them knocked over a can of paint. It upset the artist because he was working very quietly and sensitively. He became angry, threw his brush, and hurled some harsh words to the helpless little fellow who ran crying from the studio. The artist was now alone again. He tried to continue his work. He was trying to paint the face of Jesus, to portray in that face the strength of His character, but he couldn't do it. His creativity had stopped. Leonardo da Vinci put down his brush. He went out and walked the streets and the alleys until he found the little boy. He said, "I'm sorry, son. I shouldn't have spoken so harshly. Forgive me even as Christ forgives. I have done something worse than you. You only spilled the paint. But I, by my anger, blocked the flow of God in my life. Will you come back with me?" He took the boy who sat in the studio with him. They smiled as the face of Jesus came quite naturally from the Master's brush.

"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. 2:17). As Jesus is a faithful and merciful High Priest in things pertaining to God, so His body must be the same. A merciful Priesthood! How this world needs mercy, and how little of it there is! So He is raising up a

new creation Man who is merciful. Many are concerned about the qualifications necessary to be a part of this new creation Man. Some seem to think that you must have great revelation, or gifts, or abilities. Not so! But you must have mercy. The unmerciful man shall not be a part of this Priesthood.

"Blessed are the MERCIFUL: for they shall obtain mercy," is one of the principles of the Kingdom of God. 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 holding 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. Those who would be Priests of God and of Christ must exercise that mercy. When you exercise mercy it must be in great tenderness; not grudgingly, not by force, but because you desire to do it.

"The quality of mercy is not strained." Gentle and heavenly mercy is of God. When God speaks of mercy, He uses a figure which is of the sublimes" 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.

"I say to thee, do thou repeat, To the first man thou mayest meet, In lone highway or open street, That he and we and all men move Under a canopy of love, Broader than the blue sky above."

Mercy is a jewel. 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 children there is no brighter gem. He sets a crown of forgiveness and tender mercies upon our brows. When we are merciful and kind and compassionate, we are most like God. This mercy must extend in all directions and in connection with all things. It must extend to the lower creation, which is a subject we do not, perhaps, sufficiently touch. Man is placed in a position of great power and can exercise great kindness or great cruelty. God says the merciful man is merciful even to his beast.

When mercy is given and kindness is shown to the lower creation, how they respond to it! How oftentimes a kindness shown to a dog, for instance, has been the means for saving a life! A child is kind to a dog and cares for it. How many lives have been saved by grateful and faithful dogs! Ah - that is why I say your dog will be among the first to know when your heart is imbued with the priestly nature. All about you will know. If men were merciful how different the world would be! Wars would cease, strikes would cease, crime would stop, the divorce rate would drop to zero, greed and envy of men would disappear, and none would speak ill of another. It is the man without mercy; it is the unkindness and cruelty of the unregenerated nature which has made this world so sad. Thank God! through the Christ sin shall pass away and the earth shall be filled with the glory of God. The Royal Priesthood is but the firstfruits of this wonderful redemption, the harbinger of glorious things to come as that which is first wrought out in them is in turn ministered unto the creation until all things are made new in the Christ. Praise HIS name!

Chapter 7

Qualifications For Priesthood

"Now when these things were thus ordained, the priests went always into the first Tabernacle, accomplishing the service of God. Which was a figure for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect...which stood only in MEATS AND DRINKS, AND DIVERS WASHINGS, AND CARNAL ORDINANCES, imposed on them until the time of reformation" (Heb. 9:6,9-10).

The priesthood of Aaron foreshadows Christ and the Royal Priesthood in a very striking way. The services of the Aaronic priesthood were carnal ceremonies dealing with the outward manifestations of the flesh - gifts and sacrifices and divers washings, "...the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the PURIFYING OF THE FLESH" (Heb. 9:13). The numerous external rituals performed by the priests all pointed to various aspects of the PROGRESSIVE WORK of salvation, sanctification, and perfection wrought out in the life of the believer. The sacrifice slain by the priest at the Tabernacle gate typified our justification by the blood of Jesus Christ. The brazen laver, wherein the priests washed their hands and feet, represented the cleansing of our walk from the sins of the flesh by the washing of water by the Word. The golden candlestick in the Holy Place, by whose light the priests ministered, bespoke the Holy Spirit of Truth which illumines our lives as we "walk in the Spirit." The table of showbread, of which the priests partook, symbolized the communion of the body of Christ as we minister HIM one to another, for "...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" (I Cor. 10:16-17). The golden altar of incense stood for the prayer and praise ascending day and night from the consecrated hearts and sanctified lips of God's people. The birth, anointing, consecration, ministry, and garments of the priesthood all foreshadowed the spiritual development of the Royal Priesthood.

All of this sets forth the PROCESS of redemption whereby God's chosen ones are progressively changed from Adam's carnal nature into the image of the Son of God. Thus, the priesthood of Aaron IN NO WAY PREFIGURES THE GLORY OF THE PRIESTHOOD OF THE CHRIST AFTER THE ORDER OF MELCHIZEDEK. The Aaronic priesthood typifies the long and tedious PROCESS by which men BECOME PRIESTS, while Melchizedek is the PATTERN of the HEAVENLY PRIESTHOOD when the process is complete. Melchizedek points toward the ULTIMATE GOAL of priesthood - the glory that is now Christ's; whereas the Aaronic priesthood characterizes the MEANS to that goal - the dealings, purgings, changes, transformations, furnishing, and equipping that bring us finally to the Melchizedekian glory. The Aaronic priesthood reveals the qualifications which must be met, and the prescribed order by which they can be met, while Melchizedek reveals the majesty of the FINISHED PRODUCT. Aaron signifies PROCESS; Melchizedek signifies ORDER. If you want to know how to become a priest, give yourself to a reverent and prayerful study of the Aaronic priesthood, following on to experience all it signifies. If you want to know what is the glory of the priesthood once all

the qualifications have been met, look unto Jesus the High Priest of the heavens after the order of Melchizedek.

"Thou art a priest forever after the ORDER of Melchizedek" (Heb. 7:17). Melchizedek is a priesthood of order! Jesus Christ was made a priest forever after the ORDER of Melchizedek. The word "order" in this passage is from the Greek word TAXIS meaning "regular arrangement; fixed succession of rank and character; official dignity." The verse can well be paraphrased: "Thou art a priest forever according to the arrangement rank, character, dignity, and order of Melchizedek." The word "order" is something like the word "order" we use when we speak of various religious orders, such as the Franciscans or the Dominicans within the Roman Catholic Church. Well, the Bible says that Jesus Christ is a priest of the MELCHIZEDEKIAN ORDER. And that was a very startling statement when it was first 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.

"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 arise 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. For He of whom these things are spoken pertaineth to another tribe, of which no man gave attendance at the altar. For it is evident that our Lord sprang out of Judah; of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood. And it is yet far more evident: for that after the similitude of Melchizedek there ariseth another priest. Who is made, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life. For He testifieth, Thou art a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek" (Heb. 7:11-17).

Perfection could not be obtained under the Levitical priesthood, for under it the people received the law, and "the law made nothing perfect", rather it was to serve to bring the people into the knowledge of sin - "that sin by the commandment might become exceedingly sinful" (Rom. 7:13). The knowledge of sin then brought the people under the sentence of death, for the soul that sinneth, it shall die - and sin is the transgression of the law. Thus this ministry of law, under the Levitical priesthood, was a ministrations of condemnation leading into death.

This is why Jesus had to be a different and higher kind of priest. He had to have the MELCHIZEDEK CONNECTION. It is not my purpose here to explore in detail the glories of the Melchizedek priesthood - I must save that for another time. But having established that the Melchizedek priesthood is an order, let us also know that the order of Melchizedek is THE ORDER OF THE SON OF GOD. Melchizedek was himself "made like unto the Son of God" (Heb. 7:3). And of Jesus it is written, "He that said unto Him, Thou art My Son, today have I begotten Thee...saith also in another place, Thou art a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek" (Heb. 5:5-6). If you, dear reader, would know the glories and grandeur of this great order of Melchizedek, then look directly unto Jesus THE SON OF THE LIVING GOD. The order of Melchizedek is the PRIESTHOOD OF SONSHIP. The one "made like unto the Son of God" bears the name of this wonderful order, and the firstborn Son of God is Himself OUR FORERUNNER into that order. He went first, and where He went we are to go, praise His name! All who come into sonship through the ages shall come into that same wonderful image of Jesus Christ and shall reign with Him as priests in the order of Melchizedek. Ah, precious friend of mine, would you learn how to become a priest? Meditate deeply upon the ministry of the order

of Aaron - for therein is contained in symbol, type, and shadow the mystery of the path to priesthood with all its processings and qualifications. Would you know the glory which lies ahead when the processings are complete? Look unto Jesus the prototype - the first sample and pattern of the FINISHED PRODUCT!

PRIESTS AND LEVITES

With the ever-deepening desire within us to be filled with HIS fullness, that the realm of the "in part" be swallowed up into "that which is perfect," there is this continual reaching out for the realms beyond. Glimpses of revelation touch our spirit, and we thrill to that which He has prepared for them that follow on to know Him. And how we yearn to have it all RIGHT NOW! Yet we realize that it is a PROCESS, a going "from strength to strength" and "from faith to faith" and "from experience to experience" while we are being "changed from glory to glory." So by His grace we settle down to walk it out day by day, yielding to Him that He might bring us to that prepared place and position where we are truly His Royal Priesthood in all that that means.

"At that time the Lord separated the tribe of Levi to bear the ark of the covenant of the Lord, to stand before the Lord TO MINISTER UNTO HIM, and to bless His name, unto this day" (Deut. 10:8). I would point out that God chose the ENTIRE TRIBE of Levi to be His ministers. As God moved through the camp of Israel, He selected the tribe of Levi to become His ministers, not only to minister FOR Him to the people, but also to minister directly TO HIM. Because of this separation from his brethren, we read in the next verse that "therefore Levi hath no part nor inheritance with his brethren, THE LORD IS HIS INHERITANCE, according as thy God hath promised him." When Israel finally arrived in the "promised land" there was divided out to each tribe their portion, but Levi was not given a natural possession, for in the Lord alone he was to find his inheritance Levi was to minister to the Lord, and the Lord in turn would make sure all his needs were met.

While the whole tribe of Levi was chosen to be the ministers of God, only one family of Levites (the house of Aaron) was chosen to the priesthood. I would draw your attention to the important fact that all priests were Levites, but not all Levites were priests. The Mosaic legislation made a sharp distinction between the priests and non-priests or ordinary Levites. The priests must belong to Aaron's family; the Levites belong to the larger family of Levi. Priests were consecrated; Levites were purified. Levites were considered a gift to Aaron and his sons. The fundamental difference consisted of this: ONLY THE PRIEST HAD THE RIGHT TO MINISTER AT THE ALTAR AND ENTER THE MOST HOLY PLACE. The rebellion of Korah, a Kohathite, against the uniqueness of Aaron's priesthood illustrated, in the way the rebellion was subdued, the heinous nature of attempting to enter the priesthood without the necessary prerequisites. Priestly duties were confined to the male members of Aaron's family, with the Levites, the rest of the tribe, acting as their assistants. This arrangement began with the setting up of the Tabernacle, as before this no particular family or tribe was assigned to minister in the things of God.

The children of Israel pictured the dealings of God with mankind in a very striking way. In the wilderness the whole camp of Israel lay totally OUTSIDE of the Tabernacle, OUTSIDE of the place of sacrifice, OUTSIDE of the ministry of the priesthood, OUTSIDE of the presence and glory of God, separated by the white curtain of Christ's righteousness from all that lay within. Thus "the camp" was separated from all holy things by the curtain of white linen surrounding the Tabernacle, representing to those within a

wall of righteousness by faith, but to those without a wall of unbelief which hindered their view of and access to the holy things within. Israel, in its relationship to the Tabernacle, represents the WHOLE WORLD OF LOST MEN who are outside of Christ, excluded from His promises, separated from His presence, barred from His glory, having no hope, and without God in the world.

As Israel typified the world, so the Levites typified the "household of faith," or all believers who are justified by faith in Jesus Christ. All Christians today, irrespective of denominational affiliation or the lack thereof, who truly know Christ in the forgiveness of sins and the washing of regeneration, are prefigured by the Levites who were the ministers of the Lord, His inheritance. But the house of Aaron, the priesthood, one body under one Chief or High Priest, was typical of the "little flock" which follows on to know the Lord in all His glorious and eternal reality, the overcomers, gathered out of all ages, who through faith, patience, and obedience qualify to sit with Christ upon His throne as a Kingdom of Priests unto God. This company with its Head, or High Priest, is a Royal Priesthood, the members of which, after the present time of processing and preparation, shall be kings and priests unto God reigning over the earth. These constitute the government of God for the ages to come, destined to bless all the families of the earth and restore creation back into union with God again.

How obvious it should be to every thinking saint that all Christians, while spiritual Levites, are not part of the elect company of the Royal Priesthood. That is because the vast majority of believers live in the Outer Court of spiritual experience in their relationship to God. In spite of all their noisy profession, and constant flurry of religious activities, they inhabit that realm where the natural man understandeth not the things of the Spirit of God. Deep spiritual things are foolishness unto them; neither can they know them, for they are spiritually discerned. These are comfortably at home with the lifeless forms, static doctrines, empty ceremonies and repetitious activities of Outer Court religion, and have not the foggiest notion of what the Royal Priesthood is about. The harlot system has sapped and sucked away their spiritual life and left them in spiritual poverty, void of understanding of the high and holy purposes of God, and like little children they wait expectantly for the thrills that await them in that far-away Disney World in the sky with its mansions and harps and wings!

I must emphasize again that in the type of the Levites and Priests, all Priests were Levites, but not all Levites were Priests. So in the antitype all members of the Royal Priesthood are redeemed men, but not all redeemed men are part of the Royal Priesthood. To deny this would mean the destruction of all the typology of the Old Testament. In Israel there were Priests who were of the Aaronic order, and anointed, serving in the Tabernacle; and the Levites, the whole tribe of Levi, not anointed, and serving in the Outer Court as assistants to the Priests. In all these respects there was a difference between Israel and the tribe of Levi; between the tribe of Levi and the family of Aaron; and finally, between an ordinary Priest and the High Priest, who most fully typified our Great High Priest, Jesus the Son of God. My earnest prayer is that the Holy Spirit of Truth will take these things and make them wonderfully and gloriously real to your heart!

AARON AND HIS SONS

As we proceed with our study, we will observe that when Aaron is considered alone, he represents the High Priestly ministry of our Lord Jesus Christ. Aaron with his sons typifies the priestly ministry of the Royal Priesthood - the Kingdom of Priests - while Aaron and

his tribe (Levites) illustrate the ministry of the whole household of faith, the Church of God. It is inspiring to meditate upon the thought given us in Ex. 28:1: "And take thou unto thee AARON THY BROTHER, AND HIS SONS with him from among the children of Israel, that HE may minister unto Me in the priest's office, even Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar, Aaron's sons." God chose five men, Aaron and his four sons, and then referred to them in the singular pronoun "that HE may minister." The ministries of these five men were inseparably wrapped up in each other, so that God saw them as ONE. Aaron did not minister without the priests (except on the Day of Atonement), and the priests could not minister without the High Priest. This is all very wonderful, for the Christ does not minister alone. God has called us to be priests that we might share in the ministry of reconciliation. We, too, like the priests of old, cannot minister apart from our great High Priest upon whom we depend at all times. The Father has called us unto sonship that we might stand with Him and cry, "OUR VERY OWN Father!" He is apprehending many for the authority of kingship that He might be "the King of kings." He is making many to be priests after the order of Melchizedek that He and they may stand in ONE MINISTRY unto the Father - satisfying the heart of the Father for the fellowship of Sons through whom He may reveal His glorious Person unto the whole creation. The Christ now has no identity APART FROM US, His body, the fullness of Him that filleth all in all. The Father looks at His Son AND His Sons, His High Priest AND His Priests, and says, "that HE may minister unto Me!"

QUALIFICATIONS FOR PRIESTHOOD

There were three primary qualifications for priesthood in the order of Aaron: (1) birth (2) freedom from blemish (3) maturity. The very first requirement was that one must be A SON OF THE HIGH PRIEST. A man might be the brightest and most capable Levite, but if he was not the offspring of Aaron he was prohibited from serving in the office of the priesthood. One could be the son of the High Priest, however, and still not be qualified for the priesthood IF THERE WAS SOME BLEMISH IN HIM - any kind of disease, deformity, or physical impairment. Furthermore, one might be the son of Aaron, and a perfect physical specimen, at that, and yet, he could not assume the office of priest until he reached the age of maturity. Priesthood was not for babes, nor for children, nor for adolescents - maturity being the ultimate requirement. With all the reverence and respect of my ransomed soul I must tell you that these are the same requirements laid upon all who aspire to be a part of God's wonderful Royal Priesthood!

God's people make a serious and fatal mistake when they cling to the tradition taught them at the beginning of their walk with God. When they do this, they shut the door for God to teach them anything. Their tradition is at best but a fragment of the whole. The life of a Christian should be a continual progression in God, but he cannot progress without spiritual revelation, and revelation will greatly modify and often times completely break the chains of human tradition. While the boast of some men may be that they already possess by faith, and as part of their limited experiencing of God, all that God intends for them upon this earth, let us rather glory in the fact that as the light of His love grows brighter, we are being CHANGED INTO THAT SAME IMAGE from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord. And let us with the great apostle Paul bask in the sunlight of the hope of THE PRIZE which he called THE PRIZE OF THE HIGH CALLING OF GOD IN CHRIST JESUS, and like him, not settling for our present "in part" attainment in Christ, "forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before...press toward the mark for the PRIZE of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 3:13-14).

One of the most damning errors ever taught God's people is the senseless notion that simply by virtue of the new birth ALL BELIEVERS ARE MEMBERS OF THE ROYAL PRIESTHOOD and automatically rule and reign with Christ. This error is believed and taught by countless millions, but it is nevertheless an untruth. The Bible nowhere teaches that. To the contrary, the burning and challenging word of Christ to the Churches is: "To him that OVERCOMETH will I grant to sit with Me in My throne, as I also OVERCAME, and am set down with My Father in His throne" (Rev. 3:21).

The twenty-four Elders in Rev. 4:4 are beheld seated upon priestly thrones and they have on their heads CROWNS of gold. The most common term rendered "crown" in the New Testament is the Greek word STEPHANOS. The popular name "Stephen" is derived from this word, and this crown was usually a laurel wreath woven of fragrant branches, or the like. It was granted to winners in the Panhellenic games and also as a token of public honor for distinguished service - especially of military leaders who had been victorious over their enemies on the battlefield. It was also given at marriage feasts, especially in royal families, to celebrate the joy of the bridegroom in having "won" the maiden for his bride. This crown always denotes a VICTOR'S CROWN - the crown of an OVERCOMER!

How appropriate that we should read of the Royal Priesthood: "And round about the throne were...four and twenty elders sitting, clothed in white raiment; and they had on their heads CROWNS (stephanos) OF GOLD" (Rev. 4:4). Golden Stephanos! Golden Victor's Crowns! Gold is a symbol for the divine nature. And how true that we are only able to fully overcome by being made partakers of HIS DIVINE NATURE! To be "crowned" means to be given kingly authority. As the kingly authority and dominion of God's divine nature ascends the throne of our lives to rule within us - we are CROWNED, RULED OVER by God, but more than this, MADE RULERS, not after the carnal concepts of the flesh, but in the love, justice, and glory of God's own character!

Of course the crowns of fragrant branches won by the Greeks in their athletic contests were short lived, for they soon wilted and became dead and brittle. In contrast to this OUR STEPHANOS are incorruptible crowns which will never fade away - for the Royal Priesthood is of the MELCHIZEDEKIAN ORDER - after the power of an endless life. In the Theatre of Ephesus there was found an inscription which read: "He fought three bouts, and was crowned two times." In like manner the Sons of God will soon be rewarded for their bouts with "principalities and powers" which have their rule in the darkness of the carnal mind. God is even now bringing forth an INCORRUPTIBLE people, OVERCOMERS! Who shall overcome ALL THINGS. And of them, finally, it shall be said: "They fought many, many bouts, and were crowned EVERY TIME!" No more weakness and failure. No more flunking two tests and winning one. Overcoming ALL THINGS! A Royal Priesthood. Priests reigning in God's own nature, love, and power. Reconciling the world. Subduing all things. As kings they are seated IN THE THRONE; as priests they sit ROUND ABOUT THE THRONE: from this intermediate position becoming the bond between the God of the throne and the creation desperately needing HIS LIFE. Hallelujah!

AARON AND HIS SONS

Priesthood BEGINS with the new birth. But being born again no more makes one a priest than being born into Aaron's house made one a priest. Right birth was the first requisite - but merely the first step down a long path of preparation. The story goes that a group of tourists visiting a picturesque village saw an old man sitting by a fence. In a rather

patronizing way, one of the visitors asked, "Were any great men born in this village?" Without looking up the old man replied, "No, only babies." The greatest men were once babies. The greatest saints were once toddlers in the things of the Spirit. Priests are not born. Saints are born to be priests, but become such only after the divine process has been completed.

Aaron was High Priest. Aaron's sons were priests under, and in association with him. Aaron and his sons constituted a priestly family. One of the greatest books about the priesthood is the book of Exodus. Everything in the book of Exodus is presented in a progressive way. From the starting point of enjoying Christ as the Passover lamb, the children of Israel went on until one day the Tabernacle was reared up among them. It was then that they experienced Christ as the testimony of God, and at that stage some among them could take responsibility for God as priests. This is the book of Exodus. Following Exodus, we come to Leviticus, where Christ is seen as so many offerings to be enjoyed and experienced. God's people may thus enjoy Christ in a much fuller way than before. They can then bear the full responsibility of the priesthood and realize all the regulations concerning the priestly life. The thought or line of the Holy Spirit in the record of the Holy Scriptures is always progressive, always improving. From the first to the second, to the third, there is a steady improving, expanding, increasing, solidifying, and deepening. Not many of the Lord's people ever follow on to realize the priesthood. Is priesthood being wrought out in your life? Take time to consider the three qualifications one by one. Then you will know where you are!

The first qualification for priesthood is birth. You must be the son of the High Priest, the offspring of His priestly nature. To qualify everyone must give his pedigree, his genealogy. We must have a spiritual genealogy. The priests of Israel had to state their pedigree. They had to declare their father and to what family and tribe they belonged. If they could not make such a declaration, if they could not give their pedigree, they must stand back; they could not enter the priesthood (Neh. 7:64). You must have spiritual life. You must be born of a priestly nature. Have you been born with a priestly heart? Then give us your pedigree. At least you must tell the name of your father. This means you must check your rebirth. Are you a real priest? Or are you merely a proselytizing agent of Mystery Babylon, trying to drum up a few more members for your Sunday School class, denomination, movement, or ministry? We must be assured that we are the offspring of the Great High Priest of the heavens who is a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek.

If we were to live a thousand years twice told, and spent all that time working, we could not work ourselves into the position of holy priests; but the moment we believe in Jesus - the moment we come to Him in simple faith - the moment we give Him the full confidence of our hearts, we are born anew into the family of holy priests, and are then privileged to grow in grace and stature that we may draw nigh and do the priestly ministry. How could anyone, of old, have constituted himself a son of Aaron? Impossible! But being born of Aaron, he was thereby made a member of the priestly house. I speak not now of capacity, but simply of the position and the potential. This latter was reached not by effort, but by birth.

Since we inherit our priesthood from God the Father, we take on His character and traits. God has a priestly nature and we inherit this spirit from Him. Someone will surely ask, "But if we must be the offspring of our High Priest, Jesus Christ, how then are we born of God, who is our Father? How can both the Father and the Son be OUR FATHER?" To

which I ask another question: "Who is Jesus Christ?" The Scripture says of Him: "And when even was come, they brought unto Him many possessed with devils: and He cast out the spirits with a word" (Mat. 8:16). That word was not Christ's word at all. I do not believe that Christ ever cast out a devil. I do not believe that Christ ever healed anybody. I believe what Christ Himself said: "The words that I say unto you I speak not from Myself: but the Father that dwelleth in Me, HE doeth His works" (Jn. 14: 10). Who did the works? The Father! Did Jesus do them? No! He never said He did. He said: "My Father worketh even until now, and I work" (Jn. 5:17). He gave the glory to the Father. The words which came from the Christ's lips were not the words of Christ at all. It was the Word of the Father. Christ never said to a sufferer, "Brother, be of good cheer." ALL CHRIST'S WORDS AND WORKS WERE THE WORDS AND WORKS OF THE FATHER. He always said, "Son, be of good cheer." Was that not the Father's Word? Was it not the Father talking in Him? He said to that woman, "Daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole." Did He say "sister"? No! Was it our Brother or our Father, who was talking? I do not hesitate to tell you that it was our Father, as the prophet said, "His name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, The Mighty God, THE EVERLASTING FATHER, the Prince of Peace" (Isa. 9:6). Remember that it is our Father who works; that He sends forth His Son; that He sends forth His Spirit. I do not hesitate to say that the words Christ spoke were the words of His Father, His Father speaking in and through Him.

The Father was IN the Son; Deity was IN humanity. Paul clarifies the matter by writing, "But unto us there is but one God the Father..." (I Cor. 8:6). Not one God the Father, and another God the Son, and yet a third God the Holy Spirit! God IS SPIRIT and invisible, without flesh and blood. Therefore, He robed Himself in human flesh (I Tim. 3:16) in order to have blood to shed for the sins of the world. And this Man Emmanuel, God with us - the Son of God - who is He? Jesus Himself answered the question when He spoke these immortal words: "If ye had known Me, ye should have known My Father also: and from henceforth ye know Him, and HAVE SEEN HIM. Philip saith unto Him, Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us. Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet thou hast not KNOWN ME, Philip? HE THAT HATH SEEN ME HATH SEEN THE FATHER; and how sayest thou then, show us the Father? Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of Myself: but the Father that dwelleth in Me, HE doeth the works" (Jn. 14:7-10). Oh! my brother, if you have seen the Christ you have seen the Father and, if you have been born again of the incorruptible seed of the Word of God which is the Christ, you have also been born of the Father.

We hear of the new birth and we think we understand it. Faintly we hear the truths of sonship and imagine we are already Sons of God. We have seen through a glass darkly, but face to face we behold all things as they are. The mists that have hung like shrouds upon the distant majestic peaks are fleeing away before the rising sun of righteousness that we may know as we are known. In the true and eloquent words of another: "Believers of all ages have sold themselves woefully short on all the great promises of God. We have been content to say that every believer was born again and needed but to wait until some distant day when he would fly away to heaven either by death or by rapture. I remember seeing this sign vividly portrayed by the public highway: Except a man be born again, he CANNOT GO TO HEAVEN. That statement, I fear, has been the sum and substance of Christian belief, but we have missed the true meaning of the truth given to Nicodemus so long ago. To be born from above is to be BORN FROM A HIGHER REALM. Spirit is higher than flesh even though both should grow together in one body. To be born of the flesh is one thing, for there you are born into a NATURAL

REALM capable only of partaking of NATURAL THINGS. But to be BORN OF THE SPIRIT is to be born into a new and higher realm where the ETERNAL THINGS are CLEARLY SEEN before us even as natural things are seen by the natural man. Without the birth from above it is IMPOSSIBLE to see the kingdom of God, for NATURAL MEN have not been given the power to see spiritual things.

"The realm of the new birth is the REALM OF SONSHIP. It is the realm where Jesus Christ, the Son of God, LIVED AND MOVED and HAD HIS BEING. Not that He was born again, for He had never sinned nor died and needed not the regeneration of ordinary men. But He lived and moved in the REALM OF SONSHIP full and complete. He lived and moved in the REALM OF THE KINGDOM which He came to proclaim and which for three years or more He demonstrated in small part. As Moses led Israel to Kadesh Barnea where they could actually see the promised land but through unbelief turned back to the wilderness, so Jesus led the whole world to a sort of spiritual Kadesh Barnea where the glory of the Kingdom came into full view only to be lost sight of in a spiritual wilderness in which we have wandered for almost two thousand years. Jesus Christ, the Son of God, lived in a realm above and beyond the realm of ordinary men, for while we have lived as sons of men, He lived as the Son of God. While we have been FROM BENEATH, He was FROM ABOVE. While our kingdoms have been of the earth, He was not from hence. While all this is undeniably true to any honest man, yet, praise be to the eternal purpose of God, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, became the Son of man that we who were born sons of men might become Sons of God" end quote.

Regeneration, new birth, sons of God - these are all terms with which most Christians are familiar. The beautiful ANALOGY is accepted by everyone. But all this means to the average Christian is that he conjures up the nice spiritual feeling of thinking of himself "as if" he were a "real" Son of God, as Jesus is. The average Christian has absolutely no idea of the transcendental implications of this new birth into the family of God. Most think of being a child of God as sort of an "honorary" title conferred on them by an indulgent God who accepts them as "little adopted human children" to whom He plans to give as their reward for accepting His gift of eternal life, a beautiful park, a celestial playground called "heaven." This heaven is designed for them to enjoy for eternity, playing, loafing, running, shouting, rejoicing, visiting, playing harps, waving palm branches, and doing what ever other sinless thing their hearts may desire.

But let us understand what it really means to actually be BORN into the very family of GOD. I like to turn the phrase "the family of God" around, in order to better catch its significance. Instead of saying that we are born into the family of God, it is just as correct to say that we are born into the GOD FAMILY! I may say, by way of illustration, that I was born by natural birth into the family of Eby. But this also means that I was born into the EBY FAMILY. I am of the EBY KIND. I AM EBY. Not only are men born into the family of God, but they are born into the GOD FAMILY. Not only are we birthed into the Kingdom of God, but we are birthed into the GOD KINGDOM. We are of the GOD KIND. And startling as it may be, this GOD KINGDOM, or GOD FAMILY, is the ELOHIM of the Scriptures! And to be born into THIS FAMILY means that we have the potential to become ALL THAT HE IS!

The new birth is nothing less than the birth of a God-being, the birth of a Christ creature, who becomes "Christ IN YOU the hope of glory" (Col. 1:27). There is no new birth outside of the actual birth of an actual Spirit Being, who becomes the "inner man," the new "me." It is MY SPIRIT quickened by HIS SPIRIT, God birthing of His own divine life into me thus

making me alive from the dead, a new creature on the Celestial Plane. So many Christians glibly talk about a born again "experience," or a "change of heart," being wholly ignorant as to what must transpire to produce this change, to implement this experience. Our Lord said, "Ye must be BORN," not now of the flesh, but of the Spirit. Religionists, both then and now, are incapable of grasping this greatest of all truths and its astounding implications. And so they fail to understand that as a woman gives birth to a son, bringing an actual child into the world as a living, breathing, personality with an individual identity, nature, mind, and will, so does GOD GIVE BIRTH, delivering out of His own loins the offspring of Himself, of His own kind, of the GOD SPECIES, to grow up into the fullness of His own divine Being. The new birth is nothing less than the birth of an actual divine, heavenly Being, a Son of the Father, who is as ageless and deathless as is his immortal Parent, a brother by birth of our Lord Jesus Christ; like Him in every phase of His Being, differing only in development and rank

How wonderful are these things! They are far beyond our expression or the ability of the most eloquent to describe! It is a marvelous fact that the very life of God is communicated to the believing heart via the new birth. But what is the life of God? It is the content of God and God Himself. All that is in God and all that God Himself is are in the life of God. All the fullness of the Godhead is hidden in the life of God. The nature of God is contained in the life of God, and His wisdom, knowledge, will, power, and glory. Every facet of what God is and can do, is included in the life of God. With any kind of living thing, all that it is rests within its life. All its capabilities and functions issue out of its life, and all of its outward activities and expressions originate from its life. It is that kind of living thing because it has that kind of life. Its being rests in its life. God is the supreme living Being, and all that He is, of course, is in His life. All that HE IS - whether truth, holiness, light or love - is derived from His life. All His expressions - whether goodness, righteousness, mercy or forgiveness - are derived from His life. His life causes Him to have such divine capabilities and functions inwardly and such divine actions and expressions outwardly as well. The reason that He is such a glorious and powerful God is that He has such a glorious and powerful life. Hence His being God rests in His life.

Armed with this knowledge can we not now see that it is in the new birth that the PRIESTLY SPIRIT of our Father is first imparted as a divine seed into our lives? Jesus Christ is the KING-PRIEST SEED! The harvest is always just exactly what was planted! Priests, by reason of SONSHIP, inheriting God's nature, inherit all the varied virtues of that nature. Obviously the very basis of the receiving of this priesthood begins with being BORN FROM ABOVE. There is a begettal, fullness of birth from above, of those "which are born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, BUT OF GOD" (Jn. 1:13). For 'of His own will begat He us with the Word of Truth, that we should be a kind of FIRSTFRUITS of His creatures (literally, the creatures of Himself)" (James 1:18). These are a chosen race, a kingly, royal priesthood, developed, processed, trained until they fully OVERCOME, and then at His appointed time, are received into Himself, to share His throne.

In closing this article I am impressed to share from the writings of the late Douglas Wilson:

Not long ago we were reading from chapter twelve of Hebrews concerning the true sons and the bastard. We had often meditated on the fact that the child known as a bastard child COULD IN NO WISE help or change the circumstances of his birth. We knew well there was a stigma attached to the child, under the Old Testament especially. We were

never quite able to reconcile all that we were told concerning such children, until just recently the Lord put a thought in our minds that settled the whole question. We quote now the passage from Heb. 12:5-10. "And you have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh to you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of Him; for whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement whereof all (sons) are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons. Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence; shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of SPIRITS and live? For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but He FOR OUR PROFIT, that we MIGHT BE PARTAKERS OF HIS HOLINESS."

In the above quotation we find two kinds of sons. At least in one sense of the word they are sons. There is the son that receives chastening of the Lord, and there is the bastard son who does not. In one sense of the word, the bastard or as some translations put it, the spurious son, is as much a son as the true son. It can make no difference whether the spurious son knows who his father is or not, HE HAS ONE, just the same as the legitimate son. We have come to see there is something in this and related passages that we would like you to consider. May we first of all examine some reasons why children are brought into the world. Let us remember always that the child itself has absolutely nothing to say about being brought into this life. It has nothing to say about its color, nationality, birth place, sex, or anything else. We may say that at least some of these things are determined by the laws of nature, but we would rather say they are determined by the laws of God working ALL things according to the counsel of His own will, and that applies to all people.

The first and basic reason for the birth of children is for the preservation and increase of humanity. Humanity has no other way of preserving itself except through the birth of children. Whatever other reasons there may be, and there are several, they will all rest upon this basic one, the inherent instinct for self-preservation in humans. The savage in the jungle, or the highly educated and refined person in the highest strata of society, must return to this basic principle in order to perpetuate himself and the rest of the human race.

We suppose that the greatest NATURAL reason for bringing children into the world is because they are desired and wanted for themselves. The love of husband and wife, combined with the father and mother nature, is designed and given to humanity to cause them to want and desire to bring children into being, simply because they DO LOVE AND DESIRE THEM. The principle and greatest desire in the lives of such parents is to have a family, to provide well for that family, and to see that each member of that family is started into his or her life with the best possible advantage and preparation that the family can provide. Some children are very, very fortunate and blessed of God, for they enter into a loving family circle and have parents who desire the best for them. The atmosphere is conducive to the best development of the children, and in that love and care there runs the vein of discipline, given to cause the children to develop into the men and women that the parents have in mind they are to be.

Another group of children are brought into the world through ignorance. Many of these children are unwanted and the care they receive is minimal. Sometimes they are abandoned or given away. In yet another group of children we find those who are born

into this world only because of the sexual desire of the parents, married or unmarried, and these children are unplanned for and unwanted. These are illegitimate children, humanly speaking, the children without a father and many times deserted by the mother. Many of them are absolutely not wanted and they become the shame of the family into which they are born. The stigma of their illegitimate birth follows them continually. These children are the victims of the uncontrolled passions of their parents and these are children that are born entirely WITHOUT A PURPOSE. They are merely the result or the effect of two people fulfilling their uncontrolled desires. These children are looked down upon by society and yet, they CAN IN NO WISE HELP THEIR CONDITION OR THEIR BIRTH.

But now let us look at the group that we are most concerned with. In this last group we want to consider those children who ARE BORN FOR A PURPOSE. Their birth is not in any sense "accidental." The conception and birth are the result of planning by the parents to bring a child into the world to accomplish a certain purpose. There is the knowledge of a need, a work that must be done, and the child is deliberately brought into the world to do that specific thing. Even before the birth, the child may be given by the parent over to that work, as Samuel was given to the Lord by Hannah, and all efforts are made to bring that child to the very highest capabilities to accomplish this purpose. THIS IS A CHILD BORN FOR A PURPOSE and trained for it. SUCH HAVE BEEN THE KINGS OF NATIONS AND THE PRIESTS OF THE ORDER OF AARON. Such ones stand out from others and their lives are different than the lives of their fellows. Some know from their early childhood that they are destined for a major role in the life of this world. These are children BORN FOR A PURPOSE even in the flesh.

But let us see something about the CHILDREN OF GOD. How loosely we have used that term! Any church member, or church attendant calls himself a child of God. Yet we can observe that there is ABSOLUTELY NO SPIRITUAL PURPOSE IN THEIR LIVES. We find multitudes of religious children, brought forth in one manner or another, filling the churches, but we can discern no spiritual purpose or destiny in their lives. They believe they are saved from hell and the devil and someday will fly away to have nothing to do but go to church and wait for the coming of the Lord, and in heaven they will have nothing to do, no responsibility, no constructive ministry, just eternity to dance, sing, and shout. Yet these have no conception of eternity, nor yet of the great and wonderful plans and purposes of God for His creation. They are children BORN ENTIRELY WITHOUT A PURPOSE, or in the language of this article, they are bastard children.

These children cannot help their condition, neither can they do anything about it. The church system that was responsible for bringing them forth, took no forethought as to why they would bring these children into being. In all probability it was to increase the population of the church and benefit the church budget. But for the most part they "just happened." What we haven't seen in the past, but are now beginning to see, is that the true child of God IS A CHILD BORN FOR A PURPOSE, and trained to the highest degree of ability to fulfill that purpose. We emphasize again that even the bastard has a father, but he is a child born without a "father purpose." He is just brought into the world to make out as best he can. He receives no chastening (training) for any specific purpose, but just grows up in whatever may come his way. But behold the wonder, the glory, the thrill, the expectancy of a CHILD BORN TO FULFILL A PURPOSE! A true son, fulfilling the purpose of the Father in the great work that is yet to be done throughout the ages to come.

We think of Jesus the Christ in this particular. Surely none will deny that JESUS WAS A SON BORN FOR A PURPOSE. He was the Lamb of God SLAIN FROM THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD. He gave Himself BY THE ETERNAL SPIRIT to fulfill the purpose of God in the work of redemption and recreation of the world. God has a plan. He always has had a plan, even from before the beginning. And just as God had a Lamb, a Firstborn, a Captain of our salvation, from the beginning, BORN FOR THE PURPOSE of fulfilling His mission on our behalf, so does God have other sons BORN FOR THE PURPOSE OF GOD in their mission and work. Just as Jesus learned obedience by the things He suffered, so will all the other sons learn obedience by the same means, for there is a world to come that will be under the jurisdiction of those sons as Kings and Priests, and they must be trained.

Now we can begin to see this passage about bastards and sons in a far different light than ever before. Now we see the bastard, not as one condemned forever from the presence of God, but simply as one BORN WITHOUT PURPOSE, yet one who in due time will be cared for by those sons BORN FOR A PURPOSE. Surely this makes a division in God's people, it elevates some above the rest, but ALL CANNOT AND WILL NOT BE KINGS AND PRIESTS. But there does rest upon the Kings and Priests a great and awesome responsibility, and for that responsibility the sons MUST BE CHASTENED, having already been BORN FOR A PURPOSE. Please keep always in mind that this chastening is training for the place prepared for the son. - end quote.

Ah, beloved, do you not sense in the depths of your ransomed spirit a sense of divine destiny - that you were indeed BORN FOR A PURPOSE? Have you heard the sound of the trumpet thundering out the message: YE SHALL BE UNTO ME A KINGDOM OF PRIESTS! truly we have received the call to sonship, to kingship, to priesthood, and the plan of God overwhelms my spirit and my soul rejoices in His unfailing purpose!

Chapter 8

Qualifications For Priesthood

(continued)

Levi was the third son of Jacob. Normally the eldest son would have received the priesthood, but Reuben was disqualified because of immorality. Simeon, the second son, was disqualified because he did not protect the younger son, Joseph, when it was in his power to do so when Joseph was in the pit. Therefore the priesthood was given to the third son, Levi. Levi received the choicest of all the promises made unto Abraham. It is possibly the greatest promise any man or woman can receive from Almighty God. In Gen. 15:1 the word of the Lord came unto Abram in a vision, saying, "Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, and THY EXCEEDING GREAT REWARD." God said, "I am thy reward, Abram." There is no gift so great that a man can offer than his own person. So God was promising to Abraham the greatest possible gift He could give unto him - "I myself am thy exceeding great reward." In Mal. 2:4-5 God says, "And ye shall know that I have sent this commandment unto you, that My covenant might be with Levi, saith the Lord of hosts. My covenant was with him of life and peace; I gave them to him for the fear wherewith he feared Me, and was afraid before My name." Here God gives His reasons why Levi received the priesthood. There are qualifications for every ministry.

In previous Studies of this series I pointed out the truth that Israel, in its relationship to the Tabernacle in the wilderness, represents the WHOLE WORLD OF LOST MEN who are outside of Christ, excluded from His promises, separated from His presence, barred from His glory, having no hope, and without God in the world. As Israel typified the world, so Levi and his tribe typified the HOUSEHOLD OF FAITH, or all believers who are justified by faith in Jesus Christ. Levi, when chosen of God, had to see himself as one that was, in God's account, DEAD, as we read, "for they (the Levites) are wholly given unto Me from among the children of Israel; instead of such as open every womb, even instead of the first-born of all the children of Israel, have I taken them unto Me: for all the first-born of all the children of Israel are Mine, both man and beast: on the day that I smote every first-born in the land of Egypt, I SANCTIFIED THEM FOR MYSELF; I HAVE TAKEN THE LEVITES FOR ALL THE FIRST-BORN OF THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL" (Num. 8:16-18).

The Lord passed through the land of Egypt with the sword of justice unsheathed, to smite ALL the first-born, nor would Israel's first-born have escaped, had not the sword fallen upon the neck of the spotless victim and thus, as someone has beautifully observed, "There was death in every house, not only in the houses of the Egyptians, but also in those of the Israelites: in the former, it was the DEATH OF EGYPT'S FIRST-BORN; in the latter, the death of God's Lamb." The Levites, then, were taken INSTEAD of those upon whom the sword of the destroying angel should have fallen; or, in other words, THE LEVITES WERE, TYPICALLY, A DEAD AND RISEN PEOPLE, and thus were no longer looked at in the same light as the other tribes of Israel, but of NEW LIFE through grace, in

which they were placed by God Himself. And here let me observe that this is the path which every sinner must travel if he would know experimentally anything of what Levi typifies.

There is no other way in which to escape from the judgment of the law on the one hand, or from the horrid workings of indwelling corruption on the other, than simply to see ourselves dead to both, and "alive unto God through Jesus Christ." "How shall we," says the apostle, "that are dead to sin live any longer therein? Know ye not that so many of us that were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death? Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death; that, like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life" (Rom. 6:2-4). And, again, "Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ, that ye should be married to another, even to Him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God" (Rom. 7:4).

All Christians today who truly know Christ in the forgiveness of sins and the washing of regeneration, are prefigured by the Levites who were the ministers of the Lord, His inheritance. But the house of Aaron, one family among the Levites, the priesthood, one body under one Chief or High Priest, was typical of the "little flock" which follows on to know the Lord in all His glorious and eternal reality, the overcomers, gathered out of all ages, who through faith, patience, and obedience qualify to sit with Christ upon His throne as a Kingdom of Priests unto God. I cannot emphasize too strongly that although Israel as a nation numbered well over a million at Sinai, and although a whole tribe of Levites, whom God forbade Moses to number, were called for spiritual service, nevertheless five men only (and their descendants) from the tribe of Levi (AARON AND HIS FOUR SONS) were then called to stand "in the PRIEST'S office" and minister on a higher level unto God in the Aaronic order, in the highest calling in Israel under the Old Covenant.

In addition to setting these few special individuals in the Priest's office or the HIGH CALLING of the anointed Aaronic order in the Old Testament dispensation, God also called the Levites to be separated servants of the Israel nation. They were all endued with a certain measure of understanding, knowledge, and wisdom, and all possessed a spiritual ministry in some capacity; but they are always called "Levites," NOT "Priests." The Scriptures continually show a two-fold calling unto Himself out of Israel, speaking of "Priests AND Levites." This difference (under the Old Covenant) was revealed by such passages as Num. 18:1-7, where we read: "The Lord said unto Aaron...thy brethren also of the tribe of Levi, the tribe of thy father, bring thou with thee, that they may be joined unto thee: but thou and thy sons with thee shall minister before the Tabernacle of witness. And they (the Levites) shall keep thy charge, and the charge (upkeep and general running and service) of the Tabernacle: only they shall NOT COME NIGH THE VESSELS OF THE SANCTUARY AND THE ALTAR...thou and thy sons with thee shall keep your PRIEST'S OFFICE for everything of the altar, and WITHIN THE VEIL; and ye shall serve. I have given you the priest's office as a service of gift."

Aaron and his sons were "anointed" with the "holy anointing oil"; and they alone were called to the HIGH CALLING of priesthood. They alone passed through the first veil into the Holy Place of the Tabernacle to minister within the Tabernacle and burn incense before the second veil. They only could enjoy the fuller light of illumination and revelation from the seven-branched candlestick. And whereas all Israel and the Levites could eat the heavenly "manna" in the wilderness, only Aaron and his sons could eat the shewbread

made of the finest wheat in the secret place of the Holy. The Aaronic priests foreshadowed those holy sons of the great High Priest of the heavens whom God would later call in an outstanding manner under the New Covenant, anointing them above their fellows by giving unto them the Holy Spirit "without measure", and leading them under their High Priest into the fullness of God in the priestly order of Melchizedek. Those called to enjoy the counterpart of this high calling of Aaron and his sons today must not only be "anointed" into office, but must also pass under the first veil of death to self before they can finally enter the ultimate Holiest Place where the full Melchizedekian Priesthood awaits them at the manifestation of the Sons of God, after the power of an endless life.

QUALIFICATIONS FOR PRIESTHOOD

There were three primary qualifications for priesthood in the order of Aaron: (1) birth (2) freedom from blemish (3) maturity. The very first requirement was that one must be A SON OF THE HIGH PRIEST. A man might be the brightest and most capable Levite, but if he was not the offspring of Aaron he was prohibited from serving in the office of the priesthood. The first qualification for priesthood is birth. You must be the son of the High Priest, the OFFSPRING OF HIS PRIESTLY NATURE. Here we have a most wonderful thought connected with Aaron. God made Aaron High Priest in such a sense that his life carried priesthood to all his descendants. Through fifteen hundred years the descendants of Aaron were priests, because they were sons of Aaron. The life of Aaron carried the blessing. And, oh, the life, the divine life, of my High Priests. Do you think that that would carry less blessing than the priesthood of Aaron? Verily no. Priesthood BEGINS with the new birth. But being born again no more makes one a priest than being born into Aaron's house made one a priest. Right birth was the first requisite - but merely the first step down a long path of preparation and qualification. In the book of Leviticus, we have the offerings, the priesthood, and many kinds of regulations. Leviticus can be divided into these three parts: the first, dealing with the offerings, is from chapter one through seven; the second, dealing with the priesthood, is from chapter eight to ten; the third, from chapter eleven through the end of the book, deals with many regulations including offerings and priesthood. There are all kinds of regulations typifying the life that glorifies God. We cannot go into detail now regarding them all. If we could, we would see how interesting, how sweet, how powerful, and how pregnant with meaning they are. There are many regulations about what is clean and what is unclean, about what is separated and what is not separated from common and worldly things, about how to act and how not to act. All these are requirements for a holy life.

The second qualification for priesthood is found in Lev. 21:16-24. "And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto Aaron, saying, Whosoever he be of thy seed in their generations that hath any blemish, let him not approach to offer the bread of his God. For whatsoever man he be that hath a blemish, he shall not approach: a blind man, or a lame, or he that hath a flat nose, or any thing superfluous. Or a man that is brokenfooted, or brokenhanded, or crookbacked, or a dwarf, or that hath a blemish in his eye, or be scurvy, or scabbed, or hath his stones broken; no man that hath a blemish of the seed of Aaron the priest shall come nigh to offer the offerings of the Lord made by fire: he hath a blemish; he shall not come nigh to offer the bread of his God. He shall eat the bread of his God, both of the most holy, and of the holy. Only he shall not go in unto the veil, nor come nigh unto the altar, because he hath a blemish; that he profane not My sanctuaries: for I the Lord do sanctify them."

One could be the son of the High Priest and still not be qualified for the priesthood IF THERE WAS SOME BLEMISH IN HIM - any kind of disease, deformity, or physical impairment. The regulations laid down in Leviticus twenty-one show that in Israel the ministry of priesthood called for its best and finest sons. This was a more demanding task than others, and its call for a special holiness imposed a considerable degree of dedication and self-denial upon those who entered upon it. Only a man who was physically fit and whose life was not marred by anything which could have been regarded as a blemish was to serve the altar - serving God and man in this highest of all ministries. No special disqualification's for the Levitical office existed, but it was otherwise with the priest's office.

The book of Leviticus deals with the old Aaronic priesthood of the natural Israel. Today we are dealing with a SPIRITUAL PRIESTHOOD, as it is written, "Ye also, as lively stones are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ" (I Pet. 2:5). Physical handicaps do not disqualify anyone from entering into the high and holy things of God reserved for those who follow on to know Him. The material and bodily of the Old Testament is always the type and symbol of the spiritual in the New Testament; thus, in this case the spiritual purity and perfection of him who would draw near unto God in the priest's office is prefigured by the physical regulations laid upon the Aaronic priesthood. Ah, matters not beloved, whether you are blind or cripple, male or female, Israelite or Gentile, rich or poor, educated or uneducated, or anything else in the natural. If you possess the SPIRITUAL QUALITIES in Christ that are required by the Spirit, you can minister in the priesthood of the Son of God. Raise your sights to HEAVENLY TRUTHS! Eph. 2:6 tells us that we have been "raised up together...in HEAVENLY PLACES in Christ Jesus." So we must look at these natural handicaps in Leviticus, and tier what they mean in the SPIRITUAL REALM in which we walk. As there were dwarfed and blinded sons of Aaron, so are there not a few Christians who are spiritually dwarfed or deformed or blind and these continually take hold of the bread of God and serve up a garbled mess of man-made tradition and confusion. Its being done all the time in thousands of churches across the land, and flooding the air waves day and night. My deep and earnest prayer is that God will open your eyes to see what it takes to have a pure ministry, and deliver a pure word as the priests of the Lord in these momentous days.

"Whosoever...hath any blemish, let him not approach to offer the bread of his God" (Lev. 21:17). A blemish is a FLAW IN CHARACTER. Webster defines blemish as: Any deformity, physical or moral; flaw; disfigurement; to mar or disfigure. It speaks to us here of a weakness of character. I have met a number of preachers who have a good knowledge of Kingdom Truth, eloquent delivery, and great ability to influence people toward the purposes of God, but you cannot trust them. They cannot be counted on to keep their word. They will not live within their means, nor pay their honest debts. They leave a trail of unpaid bills and questionable dealings wherever they go. Some live loose lives and have been caught repeatedly in immoral affairs. They have a weakness which they blame on heredity, their environment, or their circumstances. They show no sign of godly character. They may have a flaw of nature such as a violent temper, strange lusts, weird and unscriptural doctrines, disorderly home life, love of money, desire to control other people's lives, love of pleasure, drunkenness, two-facedness, laziness or pride. They feel they just have to learn to live with such things, for that is just how they are. Not so! Not, that is, IF THEY WOULD BE THE PRIESTS OF GOD.

Ah, you can be a Christian (Levite) and have some flaws of character. You can speak in tongues and have such flaws. You can prophesy and have such flaws. You can fall out under the power and see visions and have such flaws. You can heal the sick and perform signs and wonders and have such flaws. Ask the Corinthians if this is not so! You can be an elder or an evangelist or, perhaps, even an apostle and have such flaws. But I do not hesitate to tell you that YOU WILL NEVER BE A PRIEST AFTER THE ORDER OF MELCHIZEDEK WITH SUCH FLAWS! In the order of Aaron one might be a son of Aaron - leprous, palsied, mad, or blind, not knowing his father - but nevertheless a son; and because a son, never to be forsaken by his family or his God. But he was not permitted to enter the inner sanctuary of the Tabernacle, nor to offer the bread of his God, nor to approach the altar of his God, nor to officiate as a priest in any of the high and holy things of Yahweh.

In the days of Christ there was a court of inquiry instituted by the Sanhedrin whose function was to investigate and confirm the qualifications of all new candidates for the priesthood. This court sat daily in "the Hall of Polished Stones." Their first inquiry was into the genealogy of the candidate. If he failed to satisfy the court about his perfect legitimacy, the candidate was dressed and veiled in black, and permanently removed. If he passed that ordeal, inquiry was next made as to any physical defects which disqualified for the exercise of the priestly office. The third inquiry was about the age of the candidate. Those who had stood the threefold test were dressed in white raiment, and their names properly inscribed. To this pointed allusion is made in Rev. 3:5 where the Christ declares, "He that OVERCOMETH, the same shall be CLOTHED IN WHITE RAIMENT..." Thus received, and afterward instructed in his duties, the formal admission alike of priest and High Priest was by investiture. OVERCOMERS! WHITE RAIMENT! RIGHTEOUSNESS! Oh, brethren, beloved of God, such are the qualifications for the priesthood.

The transcendent essential factor is PERFECT SPIRITUAL CHARACTER. Character springs from nature. Character and nature are not the same. Webster defines nature as: The INHERENT TENDENCIES directing conduct...what a thing really is...quality...essence. As a degenerate human of Adam's fallen race we were, one and all, born with a nature just the opposite of God's holy nature. Paul describes our former nature in Eph. 2:2-3: "...in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: Among whom also WE ALL had our conversation in times past in the lusts of the flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by NATURE the children of wrath, even as others." Yes - we were by NATURE, INHERITED TENDENCY, the children (offspring) of wrath!

But now, praise God, as children (offspring) of GOD, Peter says, "According as His divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness (Godlikeness), through the knowledge of Him that hath called us to glory and virtue...that.. ye might be partakers of the DIVINE NATURE, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust" (II Pet. 1:3-4). Ah, we are now made partakers of GOD'S DIVINE NATURE. This has been effected through the NEW BIRTH, for nature is INHERITED. Being born of God we now share HIS NATURE. And from this divine nature is developed DIVINE CHARACTER. Hearken, my beloved, you who would understand the mysteries of the Kingdom of God. Nature is INHERITED, but character is DEVELOPED. Character is progressively formed out of nature. The human baby who is born with a degenerate, sinful nature does not possess a SINFUL CHARACTER until through several years he

has established a pattern, of behavior dictated by his inherent tendencies, his nature. In the same way, at the moment the believing man or woman is born of God his nature is changed, a new one acquired, the very nature of God his Father, but, divine character must now be developed out of that nature by experience, learning to daily yield to the urgings of the Holy Spirit who Himself is the active ingredient in the DIVINE NATURE!

CHRIST THE HEALER

This brings before us the holiness required of "the priests, the sons of Aaron." The nearer one comes to God, the more essential it is to maintain holiness. A degree of separation that might suffice for the congregation, or for the Levites, would not be suitable for the priests. "Christ also loved the Church, and gave Himself for it; that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that He might present it to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and WITHOUT BLEMISH" (Eph. 5:25-27). Thank God! there is deliverance in Zion. A saint is disqualified to offer the bread of his God until he has been cleansed and delivered. A brother in Christ has written: "God is dealing very strongly in the body of Christ today about the question of godly character. This has always been a priority with the Lord, but never so urgent as in these last days. And seldom has there been such a lack of this quality in men of God who claim to be His end-time messengers. Many do not like to hear this message because it deals with that area which they may be ashamed of, or feel that they cannot conquer. But there is victory in Christ. To heal a blemish means to go to the cross, to suffer a death-blow to the self-life. And some cannot face that." Therefore, they are disqualified for the Royal Priesthood.

So perfect, whole, clean, and clear, without blemish, they were to be, those priests of the Old Covenant, that offered those outward things, in the outward Tabernacle or Temple. How much more perfect, whole, clean, and clear, is Jesus Christ, our High Priest, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, who offered up Himself to God, without spot or blemish, for the sins of the whole world, and gave His holy flesh for the life of the whole world, abolishing forever all those offerers and offerings of the Old Covenant. And therefore all the members with Him in the Royal Priesthood, must be just as perfect, whole, clean, and clear, without blemish, as their glorious Head. So He cleanses away the inward brokenness, crookedness, scurviness, scabbedness, blindness, deformities, lameness, and blemishes, that every member of the order of Melchizedek might offer their spiritual sacrifices in holiness and honor and praise unto God, blessed be His name!

T. Austin-Sparks wrote, "The highest purpose of God in the salvation of the believer is to bring forth in him the fullest manifestation of Christ in every aspect of his character." A "defect" is not necessarily a man's own fault; it might be the result of bad teaching, Defilement acquired from the harlot church system, the spirit, or doctrines, or methods of "Babylon" which cling tenaciously to ones spirit who has outwardly "come out" of Babylon. Sometimes a "defect" is the result of one's own lack of spiritual diligence. Peter speaks of some being "blind, shortsighted," and he accounts for it by their lack of diligence to make their calling and election sure. Heb. 12:13 speaks of some being "lame," but states that they may be "healed." Thank God! Have the flaws in your own character, precious friend of mine, been magnified in your eyes until you despair of ever qualifying for the High Calling of God in Christ Jesus? Today, dear one, I point you to JESUS CHRIST THE HEALER.

There is no use telling a man he is a sinner, unless you tell him how to get out of his sin. Oh, how good of God, convicting men of sin in order to show them the path of salvation! There is no use telling saints of their disqualifying "flaws" and "blemishes," unless you tell them how to get rid of their defects. Jesus said, "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Mat. 11:28). And they came. His hands touched them and the fever fled, the spirits went out, and every form of disease and sin and uncleanness departed, and they were made whole.

Come, see a little girl whom He healed - come with me to Galilee. It was yesterday, only God's yesterday, that this happened. Come, I want to lead you along the streets of Capernaum, and take you into this house. See that little daughter, but twelve years of age, lying there. See the father, who is a rabbi, bending over her, and the little maid is whispering, "Father, go and get Jesus to come and heal me." "I dare not, my daughter, if I do the rabbis of the Great Council in Jerusalem will strike my name from the roll of rabbis; they will curse me in the Temple of my God. Oh daughter, I dare not do it." And the maid replies, "Then I shall die; no doctor can heal me." Said the rabbi, "Daughter, you shall not die." "Yes, my father, I shall; for you cannot get Him to come and heal me unless you go to Him and worship Him." And the rabbi cries, "Then I shall worship Him; you shall not die." Away speeds the rabbi, and he searches through the streets of the city for Jesus, and cannot find Him. Then he is told He has gone to Gadara, but is coming back today. He watches for Him beside the sea, and the moment that Jesus appears he falls at His feet and worships Him, and cries, "Lord, my little daughter lies at the point of death; come and lay Thy hands upon her and she shall live." Jesus says He will go. Away through the streets He goes with the rabbi. On the way a woman touches the hem of His garment and is immediately healed. He turns around and addresses words of comfort to her. Then they go on. Suddenly a messenger comes to the rabbi and says, "Your little daughter is dead; do not trouble the Master." But Jesus said, "Be not afraid, only believe. Did I not say I was going to heal her?" "Yes." "Then I am going to do it." Then they go into the house and into the room and there they find the beautiful little girl dead! Oh, she is dead! But the hand of the Christ is laid on the head of the child and He says, "Talitha cumi! Maid, arise!" In a moment the spirit has come back into the body and the maid arises and looks into the face of Jesus. She lives! She is well! Blessed Jesus! That was done by Thee, yesterday, and Thou art just the same today!

Think not for one moment, my brother, sister, that Jesus Christ is the healer only of diseases of the body. He has come to cleanse His Church, to sanctify and purify His people, to purge and refine and make every whit whole His priesthood, and I declare to you today that HE IS THE HEALER AND THE RESTORER OF THE PRIESTHOOD. Listen! The great and wonderful mercy of the Christ receives those who have blemishes, and His power heals all who humbly bow before Him, calling upon the name of the Lord. "For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called" (I Cor. 1:26). Saints who SEE THEIR CALLING - their high and holy calling in Christ - find neither room nor time to live slipshod, careless lives. Rather they, SEEING THEIR CALLING, give all diligence to make their calling and election sure by daily surrendering all into the loving hands of God in unending devotion and prayer. Searching the Word and digesting it as the enlightening rays of the Holy Spirit fall upon them, they add to their faith with godly diligence every spiritual grace. To faith they add God's virtue; to virtue, knowledge from on high; to knowledge, temperance control and restraint in all things; to patience, godliness; to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, love - not the wretched, abhorrent thing the world calls love, but that love which is of God, the fruit of the Holy Spirit dwelling in a bloodwashed heart.

Those who thus SEE THEIR CALLING are healed of all blemishes, made perfect, clean, clear, whole.

Do you want to be a priest? Then "clean up your act," get rid of the blemishes! The Holy Ghost is closely examining candidates for this ministry. The qualifying time is NOW. The "in part" ministries of the church age may get by with blemishes, as did the Levites, but the King-Priest ministry destined to deliver the whole creation from its bondage to corruption must itself first be freed from every vestige of carnality, weakness, limitation, sin, and death. How is this thing going to be done? "And the very God of peace SANCTIFY YOU WHOLLY; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved BLAMELESS (without blemish) unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Thes. 5:23). If you are to be cleansed, made whole, and preserved without blemish there is only one way, and that is shown you in the verse that follows the one quoted above:

"Faithful is HE that calleth you, WHO ALSO WILL DO IT." What a word! Well, then, why do you not come to HIM to do it?

There is enough water in the Crystal River to make the whole state of Florida clean, but there are some people in Florida who do not like soap, and they do not like water. They do not like to be clean. The Great God can take men who are filthy and vile, and if you will submit to His hand, He will scrub you and boil you and sterilize you and strain you, and He will scourge you into shape, and you will come out clean. But it takes God Almighty to do it. And He says He "will do it." O Father! Thou hast come to Zion as Thou didst come to Jairus' house in that long ago. Cleanse Thy sons, heal Thy priests, purge the sons of Levi that they may offer unto Thee an offering in righteousness!

THE BLIND MAN

The very first blemish which the Holy Spirit has signified as disqualifying one for the priesthood is blindness. Please understand that these defects were applied naturally and physically to the Aaronic priesthood, but they bear a deeper spiritual meaning for us today. A man who is physically blind is not disqualified to follow on to know the Lord, but a man who is spiritually blind and who cannot see the truths of God now being revealed by the Spirit, is not to minister unto men nor unto God as a priest.

Bill Britton has aptly written on this point: "You would not want a blind cook in a restaurant preparing the food for your body. He might accidentally dump rat poison into the pot instead of baking soda. He certainly would not be able to balance the ingredients properly. So much more should we avoid having a blind man feed us spiritual food for our souls. It is tragic how many blind cooks we have feeding the bread of God today! They can remember the size, shape, and feel of the products of yesteryear when they had their vision. But if any new product comes along, they are in immediate confusion. Their only action is to throw out the new truth, because they are not familiar with it.

The problem is that some poisons come in the same size and shape packages as old familiar truths. If they are spiritually blind, they are in danger of feeding poison to God's people under the heading of "old familiar traditional doctrine." There are poisons such as sectarianism, the escape rapture theory, the Christmas folly, the false theory of 'Satan was once a holy and beautiful angel called Lucifer, the choir leader in heaven and guardian of God's holiness.' These are being set forth as good old safe and solid traditional doctrines. This is an example of the blind feeding the blind. Saints whose sight

is being restored are escaping from such ministries. If you cannot see the present truth God is unveiling today, then you are disqualified to feed the people of God. Go to the Healer and have your eyesight restored. The problem in many cases remains that 'they have eyes, but will not look.' 'Awake thou that sleepest...and Christ shall give thee light" - end quote.

Over and over during the last months of His life did our Lord tell the disciples that He must suffer and die. Most tenderly did He warn them that the hour of His departure was approaching; but how unconscious they were that the sun had commenced to go down and the night of His death was closing in upon them. Although Jesus knew that His hour had come, none of His disciples discerned the shadows that were already gathering around them. Jesus saw that the disciples did not discern that His earth ministry was drawing to a close and that the hour was at hand when they would be left alone. He would not have His beloved disciples unprepared, and He gently pointed out to them the deepening shadows, and intimated that the Bride would not always have the Bridegroom with her; but they could not understand. They could not take in the import of His words, which so plainly set forth His death and warned them that the time was at hand. Notwithstanding all He said to them concerning His sufferings and death, His words were forgotten. Even as they traveled to Jerusalem, where the ignominy and suffering of the cross awaited Him, and where the night of His absence awaited them, they strove as to who should be the greatest in His kingdom, which they thought He was about to set up on the earth plane.

How plain were His words if their understanding had not been darkened, and if their eyes had not been blinded by their preconceived ideas. If they had taken in His sayings by the spirit of revelation, they could have been prepared for the end that was so close upon Him and them; but they were blind and could see no signs of gathering shadows. For over three years did Jesus Christ walk with His disciples, teaching and talking with them. From time to time, He told them: "The Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders and the chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and the third day be raised up." "But they did not understand this saying, and were afraid to ask Him what it meant." We wonder at the dullness of the disciples, and we cannot understand why they could not take in His words and be prepared for His death.

Child of God, is it any different with you and me? For years the truth of the manifestation of the Sons of God has been going forth around the world. Especially during the last two decades has the message of the Kingdom sounded forth as a trumpet and multitudes have heard the sound thereof. Thousands upon thousands of saints have heard the voice of the Spirit exhorting them most insistently to divorce themselves from the harlot church systems that steal their strength away and devote themselves to Christ, and to Him alone. It is this harlot church system that keeps prospective SONS from coming into vital union with Jesus Christ. I never cease to be amazed when I see saints who claim to treasure the beautiful truths of sonship and the Kingdom of God, yet they never cease from dragging this holy vision into the harlot's house, subjecting it to the filthy abominations and uncleanness of that den of iniquity, Sunday after Sunday and week after week.

From infancy men have been taught that they must be faithful to their church, which, if they only knew it, is not THE CHURCH at all, but a sect or a denomination or a system that has become a winking whore that steals their heart away from true relationship with Christ, robs them of union with those precious ones who have been born of a priestly

heart, and leaves them like prodigal sons far away from the Father's house, sitting in filthy garments, defiled, hungry, destitute, and companions of swine. You say that you long for a closer walk with Christ. Then pour the ointment of your love upon HIS HEAD, bathe HIS FEET with your tears of brokenness and repentance, and fill HIS HEART with your praise and worship and adoration; and know of a surety that all who come aside from defilement and pour such fervent love upon HIM will in a short time find themselves walking in a RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD that they never dreamt was possible, for "if any man love Me...We will come and make Our abode with him." Though the Spirit of God has been declaring the glory of A NEW DAY for some years now, the same dullness is upon many to this hour, and even many who preach and teach it, are living as though it were not so as they continue on in their old religiousness. Let us take heed lest we, too, are unable to discern the wonderful things God has prepared for His Sons in this hour; lest the same dullness and blindness happen to us as were upon the disciples in that long ago.

To be BLIND means simply to have NO VISION of what the Father desires. The natural mind is very dark and without understanding. Only the Holy Spirit can awaken it. Human efforts to enlighten men to the deep spiritual things of God will always fail. ONLY TO CHRIST IS POWER GIVEN TO OPEN THE EYES OF THE BLIND even as the scales fell from the vision of Saul when Jesus purged them away. This explains why the Bible remains to a great degree a closed book to the most educated but unconverted or unanointed man, while it is an open book to many of the most ignorant of believers. This explains why a man may be educated and trained to hold all the theological degrees that all the theological seminaries in the world can bestow upon him, and yet be utterly blind to the great spiritual revelations of the Word of God, while a poor, simple, uneducated saint will see truths and revelations of infinite depth and eternal glory in the pages of this blessed Book of Books which are absolutely unintelligible to others. This explains why carnally minded men who have read the Bible and studied it through and through, and know the Hebrew and Greek, will yet fail to find the living Christ or the transforming power of the Holy Spirit or the glories of the Kingdom of God or the wonderful hope of sonship to God within its pages. "Except a man be born again he cannot SEE" these things, for they are spiritually discerned. Spiritual truths are for spiritual people, and must be spiritually discerned. Therefore, without the quickening power of the Holy Spirit men are spiritually as blind as bats and it is impossible for the natural man to behold these wonders. At the same time, the most humble and unlearned saint who abandons all to God has no difficulty in finding all these glorious truths, and a thousand more, as plain as the noonday sun in the Word of God.

The following story came in the mail some time ago and it is so real and worthy of quoting. A missionary saw this fellow sitting on a porch. He spoke to this man, and said, "Are you lost?" The man replied, "Why, no, I have lived here for forty years." The missionary said, "I mean, have you found Jesus?" "I did not know He was lost," the man responded. "I am here to find out if you are a Christian man," the exasperated missionary tried again. The man answered again, "There is a Bill Christian who lives three or four miles over the ridge." The missionary, being flustered, said again, "I mean, are you ready for the judgment day?" "When is it?" asked the man. The missionary replied, "Well, it may be next week or next month, we do not know those things." "Well," the man answered, "when you know about them things, let me know."

True, a bit of humor is in that story, but the plain truth is that the understanding of the holy truths and the deep mysteries of the Spirit of God are just as misunderstood and darkened by the natural mind of the unspiritual man, as were the simple questions of the

missionary by the poor ignorant and unchurched man rocking away on his porch. The vast majority of the teachings of the churches with their time-honored traditions, carnal creeds, and empty ceremonies have no more to do with the Kingdom of God than do the incoherent babblings of a mad man with the intellectual philosophies of Socrates, Plato or Aristotle. I pity the Christian who walks through life having no understanding of WHAT THE SPIRIT IS SAYING. The fresh air of revelation never breathes upon his spirit, but he stumbles along through life attending his church, listening to insipid sermons, singing of a beautiful land on a far away strand, mistaking the myriad traditions of the elders for the sublime truths of God, but never being able to grasp the truth the Spirit is unfolding right now for those who follow on to know the Lord in deeper measures. These partake of the wine and wafers in the communion service Sunday after Sunday, but never discover the wonderful truth that the Christ desires now to DRINK IT NEW WITH THEM IN HIS FATHER'S KINGDOM. Millions of Christians argue and debate over forms and formulas for baptism in water, and never in their lifetimes comprehend what it means to truly be BAPTIZED INTO CHRIST BY THE SPIRIT OF GOD (I Cor. 12:13); washed with natural water but not yet discerning the washing of water by the Word, even that Word that was made flesh but returned to the Father, into the Spirit realm, and is now come revealing disclosing, uncovering Himself to the inner man by the faith of the operation of God.

Men gaze steadily into the skies looking for Jesus to come flashing across the heavens to snatch them up and carry them away to some far-off heaven somewhere, but their spirits have never been enraptured with these enlightening words: "Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and HATH TRANSLATED US into the kingdom of His dear Son"(Col 1:13). Is that not an illuminating statement? And while the preachers rant and rave and speculate about a "rapture," displaying their carnal charts complete with pictures of automobiles wrecking, trains derailing, and airplanes crashing while the bodies of the saints soar away through the atmosphere, there are some humble sons of the High Priest who have EYES TO SEE and have discovered a spiritual process NOW TAKING PLACE in every believer who is earnestly pressing toward the mark for the prize of the High Calling of God in Christ Jesus. From the far distant mountain peaks of revelation the inspired voice of Paul clear as the morning song of the meadowlark sounds forth the message: "Even when we were dead in sin, He HATH QUICKENED US TOGETHER WITH CHRIST, and HATH RAISED US UP TOGETHER, and made us sit together IN HEAVENLY PLACES in Christ Jesus" (Eph. 2:5-6). Praise God!

O what potent words were penned by Paul when he prayed fervently for the Ephesian saints "that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him: THE EYES OF YOUR UNDERSTANDING BEING ENLIGHTENED; that ye may know what is the hope of His calling, and what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of His power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of His mighty power, which He wrought in Christ when He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places" (Eph. 1:17-20).

I do not doubt for one moment that the great apostle Paul directed this prayer to the heavenly Father because he knew, as perhaps few men have known, that ONLY GOD CAN OPEN THE EYES OF THE BLIND. Whenever God comes, whenever God bestows mercy, the light of His countenance is our light, His appearing is our vision, and His presence is our heaven. If we just touch Him, we see light. The moment He hides His face from us, we are immediately in darkness. No matter how much we strive for light, it is of no use; regardless of how much we struggle, it is in vain. It is not that you are a little

loose, so you cannot see light, and that I am a little pious, therefore light comes; or that you are a little lazy, so you cannot see light, and I am a little diligent, therefore I see light. Enlightening the eyes of our understanding does not depend on our striving and struggling, but on the mercy and power of God. Alas, how many there are today who make their own light by lighting lamps and kindling fires. When darkness comes, they do not wait till dawn, till the sun rises, till God moves afresh by His Spirit; they themselves go to kindle a fire, to stir up something soulish by self-effort, to make light themselves. God says that all those who kindle a fire to enlighten themselves shall end in sorrow. This is God's decree. What a serious matter this is! May we submit ourselves to fear God and look to HIM for wisdom and revelation from on high.

As one has written, "In the midst of turmoil Job cried, 'I know that my Redeemer liveth, and He shall stand in the latter days upon the earth, and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I SEE GOD: Whom I shall SEE FOR MYSELF, and MINE EYES SHALL BEHOLD, and not another.' He was positively sure in his own mind that in some distant future day he would SEE GOD, but what he did not know was that AT THAT VERY MOMENT God was leading him into the coveted experience. Within a few days he would shout with ecstatic joy, "NOW MINE EYES SEETH THEE!" (Job. 42:5). It is easy to put off spiritual experience for the milleniums to come, but God would have us enter them now. 'That I may KNOW HIM' was the ceaseless longing of Paul's heart (Phil. 3:10). Too many sermons are preached ABOUT GOD, but too few people come to KNOW HIM personally. You can never know people by hearing about them even from their closest friends. You must see them, know them, and understand them personally. However vivid a description may be given of an individual, you could still pass him on the street without knowing who he was or even live in the same house with him without knowing he was the person in question. So also it is with God. You will know many things about Him by hearing, but you will only KNOW HIM when your eye SEES HIM. 'No man can see God and live,' but that does not mean that he will give up the ghost and die. It means that he will never live the same anymore, but will live as God lives in the Spirit."

Ray Prinzing wrote: "The Scripture is clear that 'where there is no vision, the people perish' (Prov. 29:18). Literally, the people are 'naked,' for our vision is our covering until we are swallowed up into the reality of its fulfillment. But we are also learning the tragedy of having a vision and then not progressing on to BECOME the fulfillment of that vision, but rather to get entangled in substitutes, and things of the world. Our earnest prayer therefore is that we might have 'open eyes' to see as God sees, of all that He hath prepared for them that love Him, and then to be progressively developed and prepared for its consummation. It is also self-evident that THE OPENING OF OUR EYES TO SEE, IS A PROGRESSIVE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. He reveals, quickens, unfolds according as He has also worked in us to prepare us for the reception of that vision, and then He imparts the ability to go on and become its fruition. 'For it is God Himself whose power creates within you both the desire and the power to execute His gracious will' (Phil. 2:13, Weymouth).

"The purpose of 'seeing' looks toward BECOMING, not simply to satisfy a curiosity, or just to fill a present need. Seeing is knowing, and knowing is becoming. To see is to become what you see, for one is transformed into the image of what he sees. Thank God, there have been those occasions when it seems as if the veil has been drawn back a little, and we receive glimpses into the realms of reality in Christ. These rare 'visions' begin to work in us, so that we might be purged, purified, and prepared for more sight.

And how we groan as we find this heaviness of the veil of flesh still upon us, to blur and make hazy that which we would behold more clearly. The carnal mind cannot see God! 'The world was made by Him, but the world knew Him not. He came unto His own, and His own received Him not' (Jn. 1:10-11). They saw Him as a 'man,' but they could not see Him as God. In fact we even read, 'Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory' (I Cor. 2:8).

"Even His disciples, after walking with Him for three years, found it hard to look beyond the natural realm of the physical, so that 'Philip saith unto Him, Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us. Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet thou hast not known Me, Philip? He that hath SEEN ME hath SEEN THE FATHER' (Jn. 14:8-9). "'When thine eye is single, thy whole body also is full of light' (Lk. 11:34). Yes, you become what you see! The more evil we see in one another, and then dwell upon it, talk about it, feed on the negative, the more evil we are guilty of becoming. Our eyes become more negative, and then next time we see that person we'll see even more negative things in him. 'Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judges: for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest doest the same things' (Rom. 2:1). Certainly God cannot impart to us, unveil the vision of higher dimensions in Him, so long as we still have the allure of the world imprinted as stars upon our eyes. The transition, to focus our eyes upon HIM has been a process, it is not an instant revelation complete. True, the fresh glimpses come suddenly, as a burst of light, but we do not yet fully see" - end quote.

Ah, God is calling out a people in our day, the age of lukewarm, self-satisfied Laodicea, to know Him and walk with Him as priests in His Kingdom. To these He is saying, "I counsel thee to buy of Me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and ANOINT THINE EYES WITH EYESALVE, THAT THOU MAYEST SEE" (Rev. 3:18). And may I with all reverence add that if your eyes do see the precious truths and calling of God for this hour, then lift up holy hands in praise and thanksgiving and worship to HIM who has called and chosen you by His grace. Rail not upon those precious believers who are now blind to these wonderful things - they are your brethren, fellow Levites, though they stand not among the company of the Royal Priesthood. No blind man can approach to offer the bread of his God, no blind man can serve as a priest.

Chapter 9

Qualifications For Priesthood

(continued)

There were three primary qualifications for priesthood in the Aaronic order: (1) birth (2) freedom from blemish (3) maturity. The very first requirement was that one must be A SON OF THE HIGH PRIEST, the OFFSPRING OF HIS PRIESTLY NATURE. Here we have a most wonderful thought connected with Aaron. God made Aaron High Priest in such a sense that his life carried priesthood to all his descendants. Through fifteen hundred years the descendants of Aaron were priests, because they were sons of Aaron. The life of Aaron carried the blessing. And, oh, the life, the divine life, of my High Priest! Do you think that that would carry less blessing than the priesthood of Aaron? Verily, no! Thus priesthood BEGINS with the new birth. But being born again no more makes one a priest than being born into Aaron's house made one a priest. Right birth was the first requisite - but merely the first step down a long path of preparation and qualification.

The second qualification for priesthood is found in Lev. 21:16-24. "And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto Aaron, saying, Whosoever he be of thy seed in their generations that hath any blemish, let him not approach to offer the bread of his God. For whatsoever man he be that hath a blemish, he shall not approach: a blind man, or a lame, or he that hath a flat nose, or anything superfluous. Or a man that is brokenfooted, or brokenhanded, or crookbacked, or a dwarf, or that hath a blemish in his eye, or be scurvy, or scabbed, or hath his stones broken; no man that hath a blemish of the seed of Aaron the priest shall come nigh to offer the offerings of the Lord made by fire: he hath a blemish; he shall not come nigh to offer the bread of his God. He shall eat the bread of his God, both of the most holy, and of the holy. Only he shall not go in unto the veil, nor come nigh unto the altar, because he hath a blemish; that he profane not My sanctuaries: for I the Lord do sanctify them."

One could be the son of the High Priest and still not be qualified for the priesthood IF THERE WAS SOME BLEMISH IN HIM - any kind of disease, deformity, or physical impairment. The regulations laid down in Leviticus twenty-one show that in Israel the ministry of the priesthood called for its best and finest sons. This was a more demanding task than others, and its call for a special holiness imposed a considerable degree of dedication and self-denial upon those who entered upon it. Only a man who was physically fit and whose life was not marred by anything which could have been regarded as a blemish was to serve the altar - serving God and man in this highest of all ministries. The blemished one must not serve at the altar, at either of the altars, the brazen or the golden, nor be admitted to attend or assist the other priests in offering sacrifice or burning incense. He could eat, he could receive of the BLESSING of the Lord, but he could not SERVE.

The book of Leviticus deals with the old Aaronic priesthood of the natural Israel. Today we are dealing with a SPIRITUAL PRIESTHOOD, as it is written, "Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ" (I Pet. 2:5). Physical handicaps do not disqualify

anyone from entering into the high and holy things of God reserved for those who follow on to know Him. The material and body of the Old Testament is always the type and symbol of the spiritual in the New Testament; thus, in this case the spiritual purity and perfection of him who would draw near unto God in the priest's office is prefigured by the physical regulations laid upon the Aaronic priesthood. Ah, matters not, beloved, whether you are blind or cripple, male or female, Israelite or Gentile, rich or poor, bond or free, educated or uneducated, or anything else in the natural. If you possess the SPIRITUAL QUALITIES in Christ that are required by the Spirit, you can minister in the priesthood of God. Raise your sights to HEAVENLY TRUTHS! Eph. 2:6 tells us that we have been "raised up together...in HEAVENLY PLACES in Christ Jesus." So we must look at these natural handicaps in Leviticus, and discover what they mean in the SPIRITUAL REALM in which we walk. As there were dwarfed and blinded sons of Aaron, so are there not a few Christians who are spiritually dwarfed or deformed or blind and these continually take hold of the bread of God and serve up a garbled mess of man-made tradition and confusion. Its being done all the time in thousands of churches across the land, and flooding the airwaves day and night. My deep and earnest prayer is that God will open your eyes to see what it takes to have a pure ministry, and deliver a pure word as the priests of the Lord in these momentous days.

THE LAME MAN

"Whosoever...hath any blemish, let him not approach to offer the bread of his God" (Lev. 21:17). A blemish is a FLAW IN CHARACTER. Webster defines blemish as: Any deformity, physical or moral; flaw; disfigurement; to mar or disfigure. It speaks to us here of a weakness of character or a spiritual lack. The second blemish which the Holy Spirit has signified as disqualifying one for the priesthood is lameness. Please understand that these defects were applied naturally and physically to the Aaronic priesthood, but they bear a deeper spiritual meaning for us today. A man who is physically lame is not disqualified to follow on to know the Lord, but a man who is spiritually lame and cannot walk out the life and truths of God now being revealed by the Spirit, is not to minister unto men nor unto God as a priest.

To be lame indicates one who does not walk worthy of the vocation wherewith he is called. Bill Britton has written so pointedly and powerfully on this subject that I am compelled to share his-words here. "Now we are dealing with a priest who has good eyesight, but is lame. He can discern what God is doing in this hour, he sees beautiful revelation truths. He can thrill your heart with the message he preaches with great anointing. But he is lame. He cannot walk in what he sees. He sees it, he talks it, but he can't walk it. There is a weakness in his ability to follow the footsteps of Jesus. He cannot set a good example before the people. He can tell them of the victorious Spirit filled life, but he cannot demonstrate a life of victory. He is lame. There is a weakness. In Acts chapter three we find Peter and John encountering a man who had no strength to walk. From his birth he had never walked properly. How like a lot of Christians today! From the time they were 'born again,' they never made a full commitment to God, and never had the strength to walk a clean Christian life. Oh, they believed in Jesus, they wanted to go to heaven. They just could not seem to walk in holiness of life.

"The lame man looked at Peter and John, expecting some of the treasure he thought they might give him. But they saw that he had a greater need than treasures. So they ministered to his need to walk and be strong. So many today are begging for truths, spiritual revelations, and end-time doctrines. They want to fill their purse with all these

treasures. Their head knowledge is powerful, but their walk is weak and a reproach to the Kingdom of God. What a reproach this lame man was to Israel, sitting right at the gate of their temple. They claimed to have a God of power and healing (Ex. 15:26; Ps. 103:3; Gen. 20:17). And yet daily this man was carried to their temple gate, and no one could give him strength to walk. And what a reproach it is to have people who can preach the sonship message, know the Scriptures well, and yet cannot walk it out! You begin to exhort them to walk in holiness, and they say: 'Oh, we've heard all that before, how about sharing some deep end-time mysteries with us?' And if you don't tickle their itching ears, they will go elsewhere until they find someone who will. Heal the lame, Oh Lord, and give us men of God to feed us who can walk what they preach! When the man was healed, he not only walked, he leaped! Give us leaping leaders today who can live and walk super triumphantly!" - end quote.

Sons of the High Priest! The members of the Royal Priesthood are the offspring of the Greater Aaron, the High Priest of our profession, Jesus Christ the Son of God. He is the pattern and prototype for all who would follow after. Because the leg is a symbol of strength, God did not suffer the soldiers to break the legs of our Lord Jesus when He died. "The Jews therefore, because it was the preparation, that the bodies should not remain upon the cross on the Sabbath day besought Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away. Then came the soldiers, and break the legs of the first, and of the other which was crucified with Him. But when they came to Jesus, and saw that He was dead already, they break not His legs: for these things were done, that the Scripture should be fulfilled, A bone of Him shall not be broken" (Jn. 19:31-33, 36). Not a bone was broken of this One who so perfectly walked out the nature and will of the Father all the way to the cross, this strong One, the Captain of our salvation.

The lovely Shulamite in the Song of Solomon made this wonderful statement about her King, who is the type of our Lord Jesus Christ: "His legs are as pillars of marble, set upon sockets of fine gold" (S. of S. 5:15). The feet, spiritually speaking, refer to walk or movement; but His legs are mentioned here and they signify the power and strength behind the walk. One ancient authority translates this: "His legs are pillars, or columns, of Persian marble." This was the whitest, purest, and best - that from which the Grecian statues generally were formed. It is interesting to note that the word for "marble" is exactly the same as that which is translated in other Scriptures as "fine linen" and this points to the Christ's inherent righteousness. Thus the Shulamite speaks of her Beloved in all that He was in Himself, and all that He established in the strength of His righteousness, as having inexhaustible strength and stability. There was nothing in His life or ministry which could be the least bit shaken or wearied. His legs were not the uneven legs of the lame, as were those of all other men, but they were perfect, white, strong, and steadfast, a type of unflinching strength.

All who came before Him fell short, but He has never failed. There was some weakness or frailty in the walk of all those blessed saints, patriarchs, and prophets who walked with God, even with those who were the nearest to Him and seemed to be making straight tracks, as Abraham, Moses, and David. Though for a long time they might walk steady and straight, at times there would be mistakes, blunders, falls, a crooked step or a back step, which showed that their legs were not equal - the harmony of their natures with HIS NATURE was not perfect. They needed more dealings, additional processings, and further transformations. Then the Christ of God came, the High Priest of a new order, and dwelt in the body that God had prepared for Him, the body which was as wrought ivory encrusted with sapphires. As He came leaping upon the mountains of separation and

skipping upon the hills of praise and holiness, we praise God that His legs were not unequal; neither were they lame as He unswervingly walked out the will of His Father in wisdom, righteousness, and power. They were pillars of marble!

"His legs are as pillars of marble, set upon sockets of fine gold" (S. of S. 5:15). Three times in the Song of Solomon the Shulamite mentioned "fine gold," as at different times she referred to the thoughts of His mind, and the works of His hands, and now here to the character of His steps. The gold in Scripture is always indicative of the DIVINE NATURE. The sockets of fine gold are His feet. As a pillar is set in a socket to make it steadfast, His legs are represented as being made steadfast in the power of God's nature. Thus we are led to see that it was God who was expressing Himself through the Son, sustaining Him in all His ways, and finding full satisfaction and delight in Him through His perfect yieldedness as He WALKED OUT the strength of the divine nature in human flesh. How meaningful then these words of inspiration: "He that saith that he abideth in Him OUGHT HIMSELF ALSO SO TO WALK, EVEN AS HE WALKED" (1 Jn. 2:6). It is true that "He was in all things made like unto His brethren" (Heb. 2:17). The other side of the truth also holds good: THE BRETHREN ARE IN ALL THINGS MADE LIKE UNTO HIM. They are called to live like Him. They are called to walk like Him. This is not demanded from them without their having the same power. This power is the Holy Spirit dwelling in us, whom we have of God. Even as Jesus was filled with the Spirit, and then led by the Spirit, so must we be also filled with the Spirit and enabled to walk in the Spirit. Thank God! He is raising up a MANY BRETHREN COMPANY, a ROYAL PRIESTHOOD among whom there is NO LAME, a people born of His Spirit, the offspring of His priestly heart, with power to walk out His life here upon earth as the revelation of HIMSELF to mankind. These, like their glorious Head and High Priest, have legs as pillars of marble, set upon sockets of gold!

THE FLAT NOSE

The third blemish which the Holy Spirit has signified as disqualifying one for the priesthood is a flat nose. This seems very strange. But it speaks not of a flat nose as a racial characteristic; it has absolutely nothing to do with a "pug nose" as against a "hook nose" or a "pointed nose" or a "prominent nose"! The idea in the original has to do with disfigurement. The New International Version and the Jerusalem Bible both render it simply as "disfigured," while the Amplified Bible translates "a disfigured face," and another version says "one with his nose slit." It is talking about a nose that is disfigured, deformed, or mutilated.

Our nose is our smeller, the way we discern whether something is fresh or rotten, pure or defiled. It is the instrument of discernment. The importance of discernment is pointed out by the fact that God put our nose in the middle of our face, right out front. In the beginning the vital, life-giving breath of God was breathed into the nostrils of the man whom He had formed, vitalizing the body made of dust, giving living expression and function to every member thereof. Have you considered the truth that lies hidden in the divine fact that the breath was breathed into Adam's NOSTRILS, the first part of the human body to be mentioned in the Holy Scriptures? Wonderful indeed is the statement made by Job wherein he says, "The Spirit of God hath made me, and the breath of the Almighty hath given me life" (Job. 33:4). Earlier Job said, "All the while my breath is in me, and the spirit of God is in my nostrils; my lips shall not speak wickedness, nor my tongue utter deceit" (Job 27:3-4). Centuries later the Apostle Paul, in his great message

given on Mars Hill, confirmed that God giveth to all life and breath (Acts 17:25). Just one puff of His vital breath and man has life.

The nose is the most important feature of the human face. Its size and shape have much to do with how a person looks. The nose is most important, however, because the sense of smell is located there and because it is wonderfully constructed for taking in and cleaning the air we breathe into our lungs. A wall inside the nose separates it into two channels. These channels begin at the nostrils and go up through the nose and become one channel again at the top of the throat. Within these nostrils of ours the Creator has placed a marvelous network of receptors. With wonderful instruments scientists have studied the construction of the human nose with amazement. As odor-carrying air passes through the nose, it is examined by many extremely sensitive nerve endings inside the membranes of the nose. These nerve endings are the outposts or sentries of a pair of important nerves called the "olfactory nerves," which lead to the brain. There are probably as many as twenty million of these nerves in the pattern, all linked up with the trigeminal nerve, the largest of the cranial nerves. Whatever is smelled by the nose is passed along on the olfactory nerves like messages on a telephone wire. When these messages get to that part of the brain that understands, sorts out, and identifies all the many smells the answer comes back, revealing that we have smelled a rose or a vegetable stew or whatever else it may have been. Scientists have estimated that of the multitude of tiny receptors built into this marvelous system, as little as ten of them with a simple two-way response could differentiate between literally hundreds or even thousands of odors. It has been asserted that possibly as many as sixteen million distinct odor patterns can be identified.

The word "aroma" comes to us from the Greek language. It is derived from the word "airo" which means to "lift up" or by implication to take up and away. We are told that the spikenard sends forth the smell thereof (S. of S. 1:12), just as if it had been sent out on a mission. Such a mission would be vain unless some receptor captured the fragrance and classified its odor to give it a value. Similarly, we could boldly say that there are many delightful fragrances emanating from the presence of the Lord, only to lose themselves, so far as we are concerned, undetected by the defective smelling apparatus of the carnal mind and smothered in the choking smog of the worldly activity that encompasses us.

The nose means quick of scent, quick of discernment; able to discern not only good, but also evil. A flat or disfigured nose indicates, spiritually, one that does not have a sense of discernment by the Spirit. Of all the virtues needed by God's elect in this treacherous hour, methinks that discernment is among the serious. Ps. 115:6 tells us that "noses have they, but they smell not." That's the way it is with people who talk about being overcomers, manifested sons of God, priests after the order of Melchizedek, and deliverers of creation, yet they themselves cannot discern soulish things from spiritual realities, fleshly manifestations from divine operations of the Spirit of God, money-hungry and kingdom-building preachers from a true prophet of God, or truth from error.

I am often appalled at the vast number of saints I find across the land who treasure the beautiful hope of sonship to God, but who at the same time are ignorantly devouring books published by occult publishing houses, authored by deceivers of the first magnitude who deny the Lord that bought us, rooted in eastern philosophies, laced with damnable pagan heresies like reincarnation, science of the mind, white magic, masters of the far east, extra-sensory perception, psychic phenomena, alpha waves, astral projection, clairvoyance, pyramidology, so-called metaphysical Christianity, etc. etc.

There are many like that today flat nosed ones, who cannot DISCERN truth from error! I care not how profuse your knowledge or how abundant your revelations of Kingdom Truth, if you have a flat nose, lacking in keen spiritual discernment, you are disqualified for the high calling of God's Royal Priesthood. You stand in need of a mighty healing!

There is placed in every true Son of God an inward sensitiveness to spiritual things. We are made conscious, by this sensitiveness, to the spiritual atmosphere about us, of our own relationship to God, of the tone of meetings, of the spirit of truth or error, and of attitudes and actions that either exalt the Lord or grieve the Holy Spirit. This faculty is our SPIRITUAL NOSE. Perhaps its most important function is that which has to do with our personal contact with God. In this we are made aware of the presence of God and convictions are given to us as to His will and ways. So little are we taught about this and so little do we understand, that often we disregard the "still small voice" within. It is soon quenched and the Holy Spirit is grieved, and this inner sensitiveness is lost. This inner voice is closely related to our communion with God. If it is lost, we need to repent and earnestly pray that there may be a restoration of that which is lost.

Likewise, by this inner sense we are told of the spiritual quality of a ministry, whether prophecy, preaching, teaching, testimony, prayer, or worship. By this same operation of the spirit within one is made aware of the motives in ministry. Among the things that are sensed are love, humility, righteousness, gentleness, dependence on God, or, on the negative side, pride, self-esteem, envy, strife, carnality, deceit, kingdom building, uncleanness. This inner spiritual sense is DISCERNMENT. It is a "knowing" not derived from the physical senses, natural knowledge, observation or suspicion. John Wesley called it "inner witness"; George Fox called it "inner light." It is a divinely imparted ability to the senses of the spiritual mind which enables one to perceive the spiritual states and motives of men, though to the natural man this knowledge may be hidden. There is also a natural intuition, perception, and cognition that are of the soul, and not of the Holy Spirit. How necessary it is to walk close to the Lord and take care that we do not mistake the natural for the spiritual! By a careful guarding against critical, suspicious, uncharitable attitudes, and a concern for God's glory alone, we will be kept from error in this realm. Many people have a keen sense of natural discernment by which they detect conditions, but this is not discerning by the Spirit. As a result they may think that which is of the natural is of God and be mistaken. Natural discernment fails when it comes to the great mysteries of the spiritual realm and activity. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit," for they are spiritually discerned.

Some years ago a preacher and his lovely wife appeared in a Convention we held in Florida. This man possessed a dynamic personality, was wonderfully articulate, and had a fantastic testimony. At the invitation of the brethren I was associated with at that time, he spoke to the Convention in one of the evening sessions. The audience sat spellbound and the whole atmosphere was charged with excitement as he related how God had poured out upon him a powerful and supernatural baptism in the Holy Spirit while pastor of a Baptist Church in the state of Michigan. Some strange and awesome things transpired in his ministry at that time, and he began to preach the power of the Holy Spirit in that Church. But many rejected the new thing, and even his own family did not understand the unusual manifestations of the Spirit in his life. Misunderstanding, opposition, and hostility arose, he said, and the battle raged until finally his persecutors were successful in having him committed to the State Mental Hospital. On and on the story went, climaxing with his sensational escape from the asylum on a bicycle, and the dramatic dealings of God which propelled him into a vibrant ministry for the end-time. The

people were deeply moved and the ministers were ecstatic. But deep within my spirit as I listened attentively that crisp January night, a bright red flag was hoisted by the Holy Spirit. I knew by that Inner Voice that something was wrong - seriously wrong. When he finished his message, amidst great rejoicing and praising God, I turned to my wife and said, "I don't believe a word that man has said!"

But the brethren received him with open arms and opened numerous doors for him across the land. They flew him and his companion to the mission station in Haiti. While there his wife received an astounding vision of the judgment soon to come upon America. The Full Gospel Business Men's Fellowship took him up and scheduled him to give his testimony before many chapters of their organization. He soared to higher and higher heights as the days swiftly passed. Then, suddenly, six months later - the lid blew off. A precious prophet of God discerned that something was amiss. He traveled to the town in Michigan where this man said he had been the pastor of a Baptist Church, and made an intensive investigation. What he found out was startling. He discovered that this preacher had indeed been the pastor of a Baptist Church there, but he was dismissed, not for preaching the things of the Spirit of God, but for gross immorality. Furthermore, it was true that he had spent time in a mental institution, but definitely NOT because of having received the Holy Spirit! He had a wife and several children back in that town whom he had abandoned, and the woman now traveling with him was not his wife at all, she was his mistress!

The brethren confronted him with the truth and he promptly confessed that his whole testimony was a fabrication, a lie, and his ministry a fraud. When asked why he did it, he replied, "God has raised me up in this hour TO SEE HOW MANY OF HIS PEOPLE CAN BE DECEIVED!" And when that news reached me, the Spirit within witnessed, "Amen!" But what an indictment! How terribly awesome! For out of the thousands of saints and ministries exposed to this fraud, only one prophet and myself (so far as I know) had discerned him!

Judgment begins at the house of God. God is setting judgment in the midst of His elect today. We are not playing games. God is not playing games. Sonship and revelation of the holy mysteries of God are not playthings for the entertainment of the saints. There are qualifications for every ministry, and the council is set, the Holy Ghost is closely examining candidates for this ministry. The qualifying time is NOW. I care not how many wonderful acts of God you can perform, or how many great visions and deep revelations you have received. It is impossible for a man or woman devoid of DISCERNMENT to be a priest of the Lord! There are no flat-nosed priests in the Kingdom of God - you can count on it! Sadly I confess that the land is filled today, as in times past, with those excitable souls who love the excitement of gifts, prophecies, visions, meetings, conventions, and new and deeper revelations without number, but who have not an ounce of spiritual discernment. These gullible souls swallow every ridiculous absurdity peddled in the name of "deeper revelation." Tell such starry-eyed super spirituals that not everything they see or hear from so-called end-time ministries is the truth, or of God, and they will gaze upon your ignorance with the sympathetic understanding generally reserved for a lunatic.

I shall never forget a Convention I attended once. It was sad - a monstrous mixture of flesh and spirit, of truth and error, of the precious and the vile. Assembled was a great host of people, some very spiritual, others exceedingly fleshly. There were true prophets of God there, and others who were merely pretenders, prophesying vanities off the top of

their heads. There were profound truths of God ministered, while others consumed the valuable time rambling about in a multitude of meaningless absurdities. The pastor's wife arose to receive the offering. She declared that God had revealed to her that there were twelve persons present who were to give \$10.00 each, and seven people who were to give \$20.00 each. These she instructed to bring their offering to the front where she would lay hands upon them and confer "the apostle's blessing" on the twelve, and "the deacon's blessing" on the seven. For an hour it dragged on, pleading, coaxing, appealing, and finally she gave up without getting the entire number.

Deeply grieved in my spirit I was about to rise, walk to the pulpit, and read the Scripture, "Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money" (Acts 8:20), after which I purposed to walk out of the Convention. At that instant the Holy Spirit thundered in my spirit, "No, you don't!" I sat still. Back in the audience a prophetess arose weeping, and began to anointedly prophesy the Word of the Lord, saying, "Yea, My people, it is time that you learn the difference between that which is of God and that which is of man. It is time that you know the difference between that which is of the flesh and that which is of the Spirit. It is time that you discern the difference between that which is truth and that which is error."

As the Spirit traaveled through this dear sister, my eyes were suddenly opened to behold by the Spirit the wonder and awesomeness of what the mighty God was doing in that place that day. HE had assembled His people together from far and near. HE had drawn both the babes and the mature, the tares and the wheat, the men of God and the pretenders, the fleshly and the spiritual, the true and the false. HE had set them side by side, the Sons and the bastards, drawing forth a manifestation from each. And judgment was set in the midst! How terrible! The Lord would then and there test, try, and prove His people, that it might be known WHO AMONG THEM COULD DISCERN between flesh and Spirit, light and darkness, and truth and error. Those able to discern went home justified, prepared to press forward into deeper depths and higher heights of His glory. But those who could not discern, the flat-nosed ones, were disqualified, and went their pitiful ways to sink ever deeper and deeper into the bottomless muck of fleshiness, fruitlessness, delusion, and darkness.

Someone has written, "Job tells of the one who smells the battle afar off (Job 39:25). You cannot deceive him about the enemy. The battle does not sneak up on him or catch him unawares. Those who live in a realm of darkness cannot see where they are going. But we are not the children of darkness, so that day shall not take us unawares (I Thes. 5:4). There is a ministry in the land, anointed of God, who have sharp discernment in the things of God. Some are afraid of any new truths or end-time revelation, knowing that they have no discernment. They fear that they might be deceived if they launch out past what others have already determined to be safe. So they have a bland, tasteless, fearful realm of teaching. And they produce fruit like unto themselves. God help the body of Christ! And He is. There is a ministry, qualified to feed God's people, because they have the ability to discern between good and evil, the precious and the vile, truth and error. And they are not afraid to speak what the Holy Spirit is revealing. Glory to God!" - end quote. And never forget, dear reader, that the greatest lack of discernment in this great hour is not the lack of being able to discern the errors that present themselves among God's people, but the inability to discern the TRUTH! The land is literally filled with a great crop of flat-nosed priests today who serve up to God's people a garbled mess of foolishness about getting "raptured" away before tribulation, the sin of Adam being

stronger than the redemption of Christ, spending eternity in heaven playing harps, who they think the antichrist is going to be, etc. etc. Oh God! give us priests with keen noses!

Beloved soul, you may be asking, "How can I learn to discern?" The answer is very simple. When the spiritual scent has been exercised through obedience and communion with the Lord, and through dwelling in His presence, to discern the odors of HIS OILS and detect HIS FRAGRANCE afar off, we shall need no other training to prepare us to be quick of scent in discerning evil and the approach of the adversary. Our spiritual scent is not trained, but destroyed, by going about and smelling all the evil odors of the flesh and the enemy; for evil odors appear like pure air to the one who smells them too continuously. When the dead flies of folly have caused an evil odor in our oils, and we live in the stench of the flesh (or fleshly religion) until we are accustomed to it, all spiritual discernment is destroyed. If we would discern the enemy afar off, we must dwell in the holy atmosphere of our Father, we must abide in close touch with our Beloved, we must ever smell the perfumes of His graces and attributes and breathe the pure atmosphere of His presence. As we smell only HIS OILS AND PERFUMES and have them upon us, we shall discern the least approach of any odor other than His; and this will be a preparation for keen discernment. The presence of God! Ah, abiding there intimately and continuously is where we learn to distinguish between the scents!

The least sound of the flesh is like a harsh clatter upon our spiritual ears if we are dwelling in the stillness of His presence. If we have been seeking Him with our whole hearts, closing our ears to the world and to the flesh, we become still enough to hear His voice whenever He speaks; and we detect the voice of the enemy instantly because it is harsh and rasping. When we have His fragrance upon us, the approach of flesh is like a vile odor within a sanctuary. Child of God, have you been asking God to give you discernment? The first step that you must take, is to be able to discern yourself; for God cannot trust you to discern others until you can discern yourself. That which prepares you for all discernment, is to draw so near to God that you will see yourself first of all, then see everybody and everything from His viewpoint. You must dwell in His presence and smell His odors until you will instantly detect any strange odor that comes near your life. You must be in such submission to Him, that you will discern the least uprising within yourself, or any temptation thereto when it is afar off. You must become so quiet as to your own self-effort and fleshly activities, that your life is like still waters; and any strange sound will alarm and arouse you to prayer and watching. No less important is the need to come apart from the false odors of the harlot, the strange scents of religious Babylon, man-made creeds, fleshly methods, empty ceremonies, soulish excitement, and fanciful distortions for none can learn discernment in the harlot's house.

Ray Prinzing penned these inspired words of edification: "And God said unto Solomon, Lo! I have done according to thy word, - lo! I have given unto thee a wise and understanding heart, so that like thee hath been none before thee, and after thee shall rise up none like thee' (I Kings 3:12, Rotherham). This prayer of Solomon which God so graciously answered, is truly becoming the prayer of His people in these days. With such confusion everywhere, teachings that sound true according to the letter of the Word, and yet not witnessing to the Spirit within us, we find ourselves crying out for the ability to be able to discern and to know the way wherein we should go.

"But these, as natural brute beasts, made to be taken and destroyed, speak evil of the things that they understand not; and shall utterly perish in their own corruption... sporting themselves with their own deceivings while they feast with you...for when they speak

great swelling words of vanity, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, through much wantonness, those that were clean escaped from them who live in error. While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption: for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought into bondage' (II Pet. 2:12-13, 18-19).

"There are so many things stated in this passage, which the discerning heart is able to see in many of the religious hucksters of our time. But one phrase especially catches our attention: 'sporting themselves with their own deceivings.' 'Sporting' is the Greek verb ENTRUPHAO - to live in luxury, to revel in. They deem it their right to live a luxurious life off the money they get from those whom they lead astray into false doctrine. Their hearts are trained in covetousness, lust, greed, and their doctrines are for prosperity so that they might ensnare others - alluring them through the lusts of the flesh also. Like ostriches, with our heads in the sand, we have refused to acknowledge the open, flagrant manifestations of the flesh, and then allowed the Spirit to work in us a separation from such a system.

"For those who are quickened by the Spirit, there is a quick discernment of that which rules BY FEAR, and which is not of God. Since this is so common we need not amplify it at length - they prophesy troubles upon you if you do not give to their work, or attend their many services every time the door opens, and how the blood of the heathen is upon your hands if you do not support their program to save them. Surely God's elect are coming to know that is NOT OF HIM. It is so contrary to the truth HE is causing them to KNOW by the Spirit, that truth is causing them to discern the utter bondage of man's kingdom building program" - end quote.

I well remember sitting on the platform at a large Charismatic meeting in El Paso, Texas. A well known minister from a large Charismatic Church on the west coast was the guest speaker. After giving his testimony, he called those with needs to the platform for prayer. With great flourish he entered into his "word of knowledge" ministry by which he told various ones what their problems were. I had sensed, all through the ministry that night, something strange. Like a lightning bolt from the sky the Spirit spoke to me, and said, "This is not of Me - this man is operating in a PSYCHIC GIFT, NOT in the power of the Holy Spirit!" Then followed this piercing inquiry - "What are YOU doing here?" At that moment I would have welcomed a trap door to open underneath me, permitting me to just quickly and silently disappear from my position! At this rebuke from the Lord, from that day to this, I have never again participated in any meeting of that realm of mixture.

Oh! what need there is for spiritual discernment! How our "noses" need to be healed! There is no area where discernment is more needed in this hour than in the spirit realm. This brings us to the territory even of familiar spirits. In many of the "deliverance ministries" which I have been privileged to witness in previous moves of the Spirit, there has been that true working of the gifts of the Spirit, in a word of knowledge, a word of wisdom, a discerning of spirits, etc. But there has also been, especially in recent times, that which was a psychic counterfeit, and even the operation of a familiar spirit. On occasions when a ministry had revealed many things about an individual, and yet there was no true deliverance nor victory, I asked the Lord, "Why?" And He revealed so clearly that it was the work of ANOTHER SPIRIT - it was by a familiar spirit, or a "family" spirit, a spirit which attaches itself to a family or location, having much knowledge about those persons, and though many secrets were revealed about the person's life, there would be no true and lasting deliverance, for only to the Son of God has power been given to make men free and "if the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed" (Jn.

8:36). It was an important lesson, and taught some much needed discernment. "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they be of God" (I Jn. 4:1).

I would be remiss if I did not close this thought by sharing these words of a friend: "The Pharisee in men judges by the APPEARANCE OF THINGS, and that is fleshly judgment, a carnal forming of opinions. The Christ in men judges righteous judgment. Well, now, what is righteous judgment? Whatever it IS, we certainly know what it ISN'T! It ISN'T judging by externals. 'For God,' the Scriptures say, 'looks NOT on the outward appearance, but upon the heart' (I Sam. 16:7). That is, God does not judge the outer manifestation of a man's life. He judges the man's HEART INTENT, his ATTITUDES, his MOTIVES. If we cannot see that, by what standard can we judge? If we cannot see the heart, we have no basis upon which to judge. If we cannot see the intent, the motivation, the inner thought behind the deed, we have not a shred of information upon which to base our opinions. None whatsoever!

"That's why Jesus said, 'I judge no man.' Then He turned right around and said, 'But if I do judge, My judgment is true' (Jn. 8:15-16). Did He contradict Himself? No. What He was saying is this: 'I have flesh and blood on Me the same as you do. That flesh and blood has a mind of its own. If I allowed Myself, I could do just what you are doing. I could take the Scriptures and run a sword through men with fleshly accusations. But I refuse to do that. I refuse to allow the mind of the flesh to have a voice in My opinions of other men. In My flesh, in My humanness, in My natural thought, I JUDGE NO MAN. I have put the false judge to death!' 'However,' He went on to say, 'since that is true, since the carnal mind has been put to death in Me and I have no self-life out of which to judge, then if I do get around to judging, My judgment is true.'

"Jesus formed opinions about the Pharisees, did He not? On what basis did He form those opinions? By the RIGHTEOUS JUDGE that was in Him, by the Word of God that was His inner STATE OF BEING. Jesus listened to the voice of the Father. Thus He fulfilled what Isaiah prophesied of Him when the prophet said, 'There shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse and a Branch shall grow out of His roots. And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him...and shall make Him of QUICK UNDERSTANDING in the FEAR of the Lord. He shall NOT judge after the sight of His eyes nor reprove after the hearing of His ears: but with righteousness shall He judge the poor' (Isa. 11:1-5).

"In the Hebrew, that word 'quick' means 'smelling.' He possesses, this Christ of God, SMELLING UNDERSTANDING. He does not use some concrete set of rules and regulations to judge the cases brought before Him. He 'SMELLS' out the truth. He 'SNIFFS OUT' righteous judgment. That is, He DISCERNs the spirit of the thing, the attitude behind it, the motivations that lie deep in the heart of man. The Christ has no concrete, inflexible 'knowledge of good and evil.' He is not bound by such rules and regulations, nor does He need to be. He can SMELL the good regardless of the external appearance in which it is carried. He can also SMELL the bad regardless of the external appearance it may carry. Christ pays no attention whatever to external evidence. He smells out the condition of a man's heart, the motivation behind his acts, the secret intents behind his words and from that and that alone does the Spirit of the Lord make His judgments.

"Would we be like Him? Would we be conformed to His image? We must learn to do the same. That means we must, step-by-step, situation-by-situation, dethrone the Pharisee spirit which judges 'by the appearance of things' and reinstate the Christ Spirit to the

throne of judgment that has been usurped in us by the carnal mind. The apostle encourages us to develop this spirit of discernment - this spirit of SMELLING UNDERSTANDING - when he tells us that those who use milk (the letter of the Word) are unskillful - have no real experience, the Greek says - in the word of righteousness. But 'strong meat' this man of God says, 'belongeth to them that are of full age' (Heb.5:14).

"Does that mean that those who use milk do not have the Spirit of Christ? Not at all. It means that they have not learned all His ways yet, have not matured into Him yet. We are invited in another passage to GROW UP into Him who is the head (Eph. 4:15). The kind of discernment about which I speak belongs to those who are of 'full age'. It is a sign of spiritual maturity, of the heart-righteousness toward which all who believe are pressing in their walk with God. Those who are of 'full age' did not learn this discernment overnight. The apostle makes this fact very clear, for he says that these are those who 'by reason of use (Gk: habit) have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.'

"These mature ones have been put through spiritual EXERCISES where they were given the opportunity to learn by experience to smell out, to discern, what is profitable and unprofitable. The Lord shall make Him - and those who manifest the fullness of His Spirit - of SMELLING understanding. Jesus discerned what was not immediately apparent to men in the lives and hearts of the Pharisees. He SMELLED THE STENCH coming from their spirits, seeping around the walls of their legalistic morality, drifting through the air behind their Scripture-quoting words. He smelled the aroma of death. That's why He called them graves, tombs, and whited sepulchers. Something very dead was lying behind the white-washed walls of their religious lives.

"Did you ever have a dead rat somewhere in your house? If you have, you know that you did not need to see it to know that it was there. Just recently, the White House in Washington, D.C. had a plague of mice. When one died behind the walls of the Oval Office no one needed to tell the secretary a dead mouse was somewhere around. Nor did she need to see it with her eyes. The smell permeated the air. She smelled it. She discerned it. In like manner, Jesus did not have to catch the Pharisees in some external sin to know what spirit they were in, to know whether they were keeping the intent of the law or not. He had SMELLING understanding. He caught a whiff of something dead coming from within the dead letter! Thus He said, 'You are graves, full of dead men's bones. Men walk over you unawares' (Lk. 11:44).

"MEN walked over them unawares, because MEN judge by the external appearance of things. But Jesus didn't walk over them unawares. He was very much aware. He SMELLED the unrighteousness of their hearts. After all, He was the Word of God, and the 'word of God is living and powerful, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit...and IS THE DISCERNER OF THE THOUGHTS AND THE INTENTS OF THE HEART!' (Heb. 4:12). The true Word of God (which according to Rev. 19:10 is the SPIRIT of prophecy) is a DISCERNER of what is unseen, a manifestor of what is hidden. It can smell evil hiding behind good; it can smell good hiding behind what MEN count evil. It can smell hidden meaning behind words that say the opposite of what they mean and it can discern the purposes of God behind the efforts of men. It does not judge by the appearance of things. It judges righteous judgment.

"Judge by the letter and we prove ourselves carnal, immature in the Lord. Smell by the Spirit, and we prove ourselves in touch with HIS Spirit. If we don't know how to do it, we need to learn. For I believe that the Judge Himself is at the door, and as we judge, so

shall we be judged - by God, by life, by men. Let us dethrone the false judge and enthrone the true. Self must die that Christ may live!" - end quote.

Ah, my friend, you can be a Christian and have a flat nose. You can be a preacher and have a flat nose. You can speak in tongues and have a flat nose. You can sing in the Spirit and prophesy and have a flat nose. You can understand end-time truth and have an intellectual conception of deep Kingdom mysteries and be flat-nosed. But I do not hesitate to tell you that **YOU CAN NEVER BE A PART OF THE ROYAL PRIESTHOOD AND HAVE A FLAT NOSE!** To fall short in spiritual discernment as a priest would mean the destruction of the priesthood. Those elect Sons destined to deliver and restore all creation must **KNOW BY THE SPIRIT** what they are doing at all times, perceive what lies in the hearts of men, discern the motivations and intents behind all things, judge nothing by the outward appearance, but speak, decree, judge, and rule by the grace, wisdom, and power of the Lord. Without such discernment how oft would we curse what God has blessed, and bless what God has cursed! We would soon be "taken in" by every crafty serpent in the garden and God's Kingdom would again fall into chaos. Not this time! For thousands of years, through the deserts of testing, the hot furnaces of affliction, and the lush vineyards of His presence and glory God has prepared a company, a Royal Priesthood, to lead all men back to God. May His grace be multiplied unto you to make you a **PRIEST** unto God!.

Chapter 10

Qualifications For Priesthood

(continued)

In the last three articles of this series I have written concerning the three primary qualifications for priesthood in the typical Aaronic order of the Old Testament, namely, birth, freedom from blemish, and maturity. We have seen that the first requirement was that one must be a son of the High Priest, the offspring of his priestly nature. The second qualification was that every priest must be without blemish, free from any kind of disease, deformity, or physical impairment. The regulations about this are laid down in Lev. 21:16-24. "And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto Aaron, saying, Whosoever he be of thy seed in their generations that hath any blemish, let him not approach to offer the bread of his God. For whatsoever man he be that hath a blemish, he shall not approach: a blind man, or a lame, or he that hath a flat nose, or anything superfluous. Or a man that is brokenfooted, or brokenhanded, or crookbacked, or a dwarf, or that hath a blemish in his eye, or be scurvy, or scabbed, or hath his stones broken; no man that hath a blemish of the seed of Aaron the priest shall come nigh to offer the offerings of the Lord made by fire...he shall not go in unto the veil, nor come nigh unto the altar, because he hath a blemish; that he profane not My sanctuaries: for I the Lord do sanctify them."

The book of Leviticus deals with the old Aaronic priesthood of the natural Israel. Today we are dealing with a SPIRITUAL PRIESTHOOD, as it is written, "Ye also as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ" (1 Pet. 2:5). Physical handicaps do not disqualify anyone for entering into the high and holy things of God reserved for those who follow on to know Him. The material and bodily of the Old Testament is always the type and symbol of the spiritual in the New Testament; thus, in this case the spiritual purity and perfection of him who would draw near unto God in the priest's office is prefigured by the physical regulations laid upon the Aaronic priesthood.

SUPERFLUOUS THINGS

A blemish is a FLAW IN CHARACTER. Webster defines blemish as: Any deformity, physical or moral; flaw; disfigurement; to mar or disfigure. It speaks to us here of a weakness of character or a spiritual lack. The fourth blemish which the Holy Spirit has signified as disqualifying one for the priesthood is having in one's body something "superfluous" (Lev. 21:18). The Hebrew word here is SARA meaning "to prolong, i.e. to be deformed by excess of members." Many translations render SARA simply as "deformed." But the deformity here is of a particular kind, not merely a misshapen member, but an EXCESS OF MEMBERS, a greater quantity than is wanted or needed, something over and above what is necessary. Some such deformity you will see occasionally is a foot with six toes, a hand with six fingers, or other growths that don't belong on the body at all. Sometimes you will see a piece of superfluous flesh growing on

a person's face, neck, or some other part of their body, or hair growing where it is unattractive and uncomely. Superfluous things are things that are not needed. They are things that are not wanted. They serve no purpose. They add nothing to the body, and are often ugly and grotesque, detracting not only from the person's appearance, but from his physical agility as well. So it is with the ministry of the body of Christ! Early in the history of the Church there arose those who sought to ADD SOMETHING to the life and work of the Holy Spirit in the body of Christ. God imparted a beautiful ministry of life, light, and power to His body, but these men ADDED man-made creeds, laws, regulations, traditions, ordinances, rituals, rites, ceremonies, holy days, holy orders, methods, techniques, organization, offices, human talent, personality, programs, vestments, education, theology, etc. etc. None of these things came by the Holy Ghost, and none have anything whatever to do with what God is doing by His Spirit. They are a deformity. They are things added by man to the divine order of God in the body of Christ. They are flesh added to the anointing of God. All these are superfluous flesh, and contribute nothing to the ministry of the Holy Spirit. They are ugly, unnatural, and grotesque. They are empty and fruitless. Yet men give their lives and spend their entire ministry promoting these things. And God just keeps eliminating the deformed ones from His Royal Priesthood!

Originally the New Testament Church was filled with truth and reality and spiritual power. The book of Acts gives an account of those glorious days. Unnumbered multitudes of men and women have experienced a supernatural encounter with God since that wonderful day 1900 years ago when the first one hundred and twenty disciples were assembled in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost. Suddenly a sound was heard like the rushing of a mighty wind coming straight down from the sky, and flaming tongues of divine fire crowned the heads of those humble saints gathered there. This little band of believers, filled with the Holy Spirit, was ushered into the glory, the awe, the reverence, the holiness, and the power of the Kingdom of God as Christ the Lord returned to them in mighty Spirit, to indwell their believing hearts and reign upon the throne of their yielded lives. How they sang the songs of deliverance! How the praises of God echoed down the corridors of their souls and re-echoed among the battlements of celestial realms! With what power, signs, and wonders did they bear witness to the living presence of the Christ! God through them began to shake the entire world. The Word of God, anointed by the Holy Spirit, swept the world like a prairie fire. It encircled the mountains and crossed the oceans. It made kings to tremble and tyrants to fear. It was said of those early Christians that they had turned the world upside down! - so powerful was their message and spirit. In spite of persecution it grew and multiplied, for God dwelt mightily in the midst of His people. The knowledge of the glory of the Lord covered the earth as the waters cover the sea. Day after day, month after month, year after year the celestial wonder continued, thousands upon thousands came to drink at the ever flowing fountain of life, and it looked for a time as though all the kingdoms of men would be broken down, and the whole world would come marching to Zion.

But, alas! the Church had progressed only a few years into the dispensation of the Spirit when THE FLESH began to rear its ugly head and men began to add THINGS to the pure flow of HIS LIFE. I do not believe there is any way to explain, imagine, or understand the many ways THE CARNAL MIND works. Even before the apostles had passed from this life, a spirit and system had set in among the saints of the Lord and many people were wearing the Babylonish garment. They were instituting rules and regulations, formulating creeds, observing days, establishing sacraments and ordinances, elevating human government, becoming disciples of Paul, of Apollos, of

Cephas, and of many others. The babble had begun and a whole multitude of SUPERFLUOUS THINGS was making its appearance upon the body of Christ.

Before too many years had passed men began to set themselves up as "lords" (today it is called "pastor," "shepherd," etc.) over God's people in place of the Holy Spirit. Instead of conquering by the power of the Spirit and by truth, men began to add in THEIR ideas and THEIR methods. Soon the glory and power, the presence of God in the morning time Church began to be eclipsed, degraded and debased by the idolatrous inventions of carnal minded men. Consequently, man's carnal understanding was put upon the Scriptures, and the Word of God took on an ugly, distorted, warped, and bizarre appearance. The powerful, mighty, glorious manifestation of the indwelling Spirit was corrupted by endless ritual and ceremonial cleansings and outward observances of feasts, holy days, communions, robes, shrines, cathedrals, holy orders, seminaries, catechisms, incense, organization, etc. etc. That which had once been beautiful and glorious became unsightly, illshapen, deformed, uncomely, disfigured, hideous, monstrous, and loathsome. As these deformed priests ministered among the people of God the Spirit of Christ fled from their midst and the pure vision and experience of CHRIST LIVING AND REIGNING IN HIS BODY was lost to them.

And why was the anointing lost? Because any man who has a blemish - some superfluous thing - IS DISQUALIFIED TO MINISTER AS A PRIEST OF GOD! The apostle Paul was getting to be a very old man when he penned these immortal words: "Though I might also have confidence in the flesh. If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more: circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee; concerning zeal, persecuting the Church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless. BUT WHAT THINGS WERE GAIN TO ME, THOSE I COUNTED LOSS FOR CHRIST. Yea doubtless, and I COUNT ALL (these superfluous) THINGS BUT LOSS for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ" (Phil. 3:4-8).

If any man who ever lived had natural ability and talent, it was certainly the apostle Paul. From a very young man he had been brought up at the feet of the learned Gamaliel. There was no article of the law of Moses that he did not know; and when it came to the keeping of the law, he pronounced himself blameless. He was an Hebrew of the Hebrews, of the tribe of Benjamin, a strict Pharisee, having obeyed all the ritual required by the law. In his zeal for what he positively knew was right he had zealously persecuted and put to death all who he felt were opposed to God's way. But for all this his soul was an empty void that could not be satisfied with form and ceremony, for the heart of man is a golden temple not made with hands, expressly formed for an habitation of Jesus Christ by the Spirit. But these are not the things on which he depended nor in which he gloried. In fact, he placed the correct value upon all those fleshly things, counting them but dung, and amputating them all out of his life, that he might be the image and expression of CHRIST ALONE. Paul was a great priest, and he was a man without blemish before God. "And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God" (I Cor. 2:4-5). There were no SUPERFLUOUS THINGS in either Paul's life or his ministry. He allowed God to operate on him and remove from him every superfluous thing that he might WIN CHRIST. Ah, anything that is ADDED TO Christ, or the anointing, is superfluous. Some Christian Jews try to add to Christ the value

of their Juiciness. Some talk about being "completed Jews," what ever that is supposed to mean. I do not hesitate to tell you that there is no such thing! If ANY MAN (Jew or Gentile) be in Christ, he is A NEW CREATURE, for "there is NEITHER JEW NOR GREEK...for ye are all ONE in Christ Jesus" 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." There are neither converted Gentiles nor completed Jews in the body of Christ, there is only the ONE NEW MAN, AN ENTIRELY NEW CREATION IN CHRIST JESUS. Any other virtue we may seek to add to that is a superfluous thing which will disqualify us for the priesthood.

How easy it is to be deformed in our ministry! The carnal mind loves any kind of a "method" or "technique" by which to enter into some supposed realm of spirituality. The natural mind ever seeks for a simple "formula," "seven easy steps" to a new experience in God, some way to claim the blessing and receive the promise apart from the sovereign power of HIS TRANSFORMING LIFE! A dear brother once said that if the Holy Spirit were to be withdrawn from the face of the earth, most of all church activity would continue on without notice anyway. But God is preparing a people whose spirit is so at ONE with the Spirit of Christ that they are indistinguishable. He is preparing a company of Sons to stand in the earth and say as Jesus has said, "I can do nothing of Myself, but as My Father has taught Me, I speak those things and I do always those things that please Him."

If all the multiplied SUPERFLUOUS THINGS employed by the churches today WERE SUDDENLY SWEEPED AWAY, it would in all probability CEASE TO FUNCTION! If all the preachers and priests were compelled to lay aside their robes and their trappings and stand before the people in ordinary street clothes, they would lose much of their glamour and most of their prestige. If they had to tear down their altars, their elevated platforms, their statues, lay aside their professionalism and showmanship, and throw out the candles and the prayer books, their services would appear very "lack-luster," losing their sense of beauty and pageantry. If the churches had to drop all their rituals, forms, programs, and ceremonies; all their confirmations, baptisms, and communion services; all their special singing, organ music, and altar calls, they would feel as though they had been stripped naked and could not serve God in any way. All this simply demonstrates the terrible fact that the faith and dependence of the churches IS NOT IN GOD, but is in the trappings that they have accumulated to themselves throughout the centuries. The thought that God is perfectly able and fully willing to run His Church without the aid of anything in the way of man's contributions, is found abhorrent to the average church member.

For those walking in the sunlight of HIS GLORY those things hold nothing anymore, for they are to us as a sixth finger or a third foot, a deformity, superfluous things! Does it really matter to the Holy Spirit whether the choir has on robes, whether the windows are of stained glass, or whether the physical body consumes a bit of bread and wine? Ah - there are a few simple tests by which any saint of God can try a thing whether it be a true part of the ministry of the body of Christ, or merely some superfluous thing. Anything one practices in his spiritual life or ministry which can be eliminated WITHOUT AFFECTING OR DIMINISHING THE POWER AND OPERATION OF THE INDWELLING SPIRIT - is superfluous. Anything one has participated in or leaned upon which DOES NOT STAND IN THE POWER OF CHRIST - is superfluous. Anything that LOSES ITS FORMER PRECIOUSNESS once we enter into more intimate relationship with the Lord - is superfluous.

There are many superfluous things that present themselves as we press forward into deeper depths in God. Right here I could name a dozen different doctrines and practices that are added to this end-time move of the Spirit of God, but which contribute nothing to what God is doing by His Spirit. Oft times I have been told that this doctrine or that teaching or some other ordinance or experience is "the key" to entering into the life of sonship. Most of these did not come by the Holy Ghost, and do not belong in the body of Christ. They are superfluous. They are a deformity.

Well do I remember the day when I was instructed that if only I would be re-baptized by a CERTAIN FORMULA, with just the right words called over me, the Lord would then be more real to me, my spiritual life would be greatly blessed and my ministry mightily increased. As the years passed, as I grew in grace and wisdom and in the knowledge of God I did, indeed, experience the Lord in deeper measures and my life and ministry were blessed beyond my wildest dreams. But as I look in retrospect I can plainly see that none of this glorious reality came as the result of a preacher dunking my frame in a tank of water, however correct the formula may have been, but because that the eternal Father had, by His infinite grace, called and separated me from my mother's womb to reveal His Son in me.

On another occasion I was told that if I would be re-baptized yet again for THE CIRCUMCISION OF THE HEART, the sin-nature would, by that singular act, be completely eradicated from my life. Another group wanted to baptize me yet a fourth time for the immortality of the body! These, dear ones, are subtle deceptions which lead men to believe that because they perform some EXTERNAL CEREMONY they are thus initiated into a new experience or deeper realm in God. It is amazing to find how many people are daily deceived by this enthusiastic line of BLESSING BY RITUAL, PERFECTION BY FORMULA!

It has been my spiritual observation through many years that those apprehended as Sons of God today have been baptized many different ways, and some not at all, and GOD HAS PAID NO ATTENTION WHATEVER TO ANY OF IT. If it were very important to Him He would withhold His blessing until the condition is met. But He doesn't! He just pours out His presence and revelation and glory upon those He sovereignly chooses irrespective of how they have been baptized, or whether they have even been baptized at all! The prophets and great men of God I have been privileged to know through my lifetime, came from many diverse backgrounds, and I testify that God raised them up by His sovereign hand and used them mightily REGARDLESS OF HOW THEY WERE OR WERE NOT BAPTIZED. Yet men traverse land and sea proclaiming that if you want God to open His heavens to you then you must submit to them to be baptized by their pet formula. I do not hesitate to tell you that all such doctrines are SUPERFLUOUS THINGS and disqualify one for the priesthood.

A friend has written: "There is always another program initiated by some man which will claim to get you into the fullness of God faster if you go his route. But we are reminded of the word of the Lord through Isaiah, 'Who is among you that feareth the Lord, that obeyeth the voice of His servant, that walketh in darkness, and hath no light? LET HIM TRUST IN THE NAME OF THE LORD, AND STAY UPON HIS GOD. Behold, all ye that kindle a fire, that compass yourselves about with sparks: walk in the light of your fire, and in the sparks that ye have kindled. This shall ye have of Mine hand; ye shall lie down in sorrow' (Isa. 50:10-11) Others will be very busy kindling their fires - and it does seem betimes that they have more illumination than we, and are DOING so much more than

we, and they have 'sparks' flying every where. But the end result of all their efforts, God says, they shall lie down in sorrow. They shall be forced to confess, 'We have been in pain, we have as it were brought forth wind, we have not wrought any deliverance in the earth: neither have the inhabitants of the world fallen' (Isa. 26:18).

"The preacher came along waving his torch, assuring the people that there was a new baptism which would place them into the kingdom, or into immortality, etc. and some people have been baptized in water for so many things the poor souls are practically waterlogged. Yet for all this they remain unchanged. Then another comes along teaching for a different experience, you must feel the fire, and they have hot flashes from their sparks going all over the place. (Let us make it clear, we know that betimes there is a genuine experience from God, be it of the fire, or whatever, which He witnesses to some in their natural body, but experiences of various true gifts and graces are not the ultimate, and they are often turned into perverted doctrines). So the sincere believer who has never felt the fire, nor been baptized again and again, is caused to feel that he has missed out, and will never see the fulfillment of the vision. What a gross distortion of the truth! When God has imparted a vision, even if we are currently walking in darkness and have no light, LET US TRUST IN THE NAME OF OUR GOD, AND STAY UPON HIM. HE, and never man, is the AUTHOR and the FINISHER of our faith. HE is the Fulfiler of the vision. We shall be obedient unto Him - and by virtue of our faithfulness to Him, prove that we are worthy of this calling" - end quote.

It is a great fact that God apprehends and separates and blesses and uses men and imparts the revelation of His plans and purposes to them entirely APART FROM what day they may or may not keep as the sabbath, how they define the Godhead, whether they call God Yahweh, Jehovah, or Lord, whether they are of the Anglo-Saxon or some other race, or what they believe about a great number of doctrines. The Spirit of God has directed me to stay clear from all these superfluous issues. I do not like deformities. God does not like deformities. If we expend a great deal of energy on things which the Lord obviously ignores, then we become deformed. Can we not see that God imparts of His glory to men on all sides of these issues - paying no attention to them at all! The one group does not have more Christ-likeness or power with God than the other. While men debate the correct spelling and pronunciation of the name of God and Jesus Christ, God just goes right on saving souls, answering prayer, healing the sick, casting out devils, and doing signs and wonders in the name of Jesus Christ! HE COMPLETELY IGNORES THE DEBATE. While men pride themselves that they have some spiritual advantage because they pertain to a certain tribe or race, the Holy Spirit faithfully reaches out into all the nations of the earth, separating a people unto Himself, imparting the vision of His purposes, transforming into the image of the Son, and forming them into a Kingdom of Priests praise His name! "Thou hast redeemed us unto our 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).

God's Royal Priesthood is not contaminated by deforming superfluities. There is a little flock, there is a body of Christ, neither Jew nor Greek, neither bond nor free, neither male nor female, and its members are scattered abroad and almost invisible to the great religious Babylon. They are the seven thousand who have not bowed the knee to Baal, and they are the called and chosen and faithful who follow the Lamb. They are those who have turned to God from all the religious idols, to serve the living and true God, and to wait for the glory that shall be revealed when all God's Sons come into their own. They are those who have not the FORM, but the POWER of godliness, those who keep

themselves unspotted from the world, overcoming all things by faith. Its ministers are not robed in material robes of scarlet and gold; they are robed in the righteousness of Christ. They are not trained in the seminaries and teachings of men, but by the Spirit of grace and wisdom and revelation from God on High. They are not busy interpreting the doctrines of the church systems; their very lives are the interpretation of the Christ enthroned in their hearts. They have no interest in persuading people to believe WHAT they believe; their whole ministry is to bring people into intimacy of fellowship and vital union with GOD and His CHRIST.

In other words, GOD IS SUFFICIENT for the priests He is raising up in the world of men! Because God is sufficient, because the Christ within is All-in-all, this priesthood is left entirely free from all encumbrances to pursue the vision God has given it. Let all who treasure the call to the Royal Priesthood know that CHRIST WITHIN I-S S-U-F-F-I-C-I-E-N-T! All else is superfluous, a disqualifying deformity. The truth that is set like a diamond in the pages of God's Word is the absolute and total SUFFICIENCY of the Christ within. To say that the Christ Himself is not sufficient for our whole life as Sons of the Most High, that the indwelling Spirit is not enough, that there is something we must do to add to, supplement, or improve on what HE IS WITHIN US is an insult to God and an affront to our Lord Jesus Christ. Yet we see men doing this on every hand. The carnal mind is never able to take God at His word! It continually seeks to initiate some additional actions or services or qualifications on the natural plane to supplement pure spiritual reality. It is all a deformity. It is all superfluous.

Men do not need religion. They need Christ. They do not need to know creeds. They need to KNOW HIM. They do not need to perform ritual. They need to EXPERIENCE CHRIST. Tradition can do nothing for them but cause them to walk in blindness, but Christ is the light of men and the light of the world, and all who follow HIM will not walk in darkness but have the light of life. Can we not see that this demands a ROYAL PRIESTHOOD WITHOUT BLEMISH, a people not deformed by anything superfluous, to show forth His glory and His glory alone, until all men can see Him as He is.

THE BROKEN FOOT

The fifth blemish which disqualifies one for the priesthood is a broken foot. This speaks to us of a permanent injury to one's foot, that is, to his WALK in God. The brokenfooted man cannot walk strong, he cannot walk straight, and is continually up and down in his walk. You can never tell where he is going spiritually for his foot is broken, and he leaves deceptive looking tracks.

Bill Britton has said it well: "I'm not sure what disadvantage this had in the Levitical priesthood, but it presents a serious problem today. A man has been injured in the ministry, and now he walks crooked. He no longer can walk with his brethren. He is disqualified for this spiritual priesthood. I knew of a radio evangelist who traveled over the nation, and seemed to be doing well. Until one night he arrived home unexpectedly and found his wife with another man. From that time on he would not walk straight. He took up with women in about every city he visited. He used deceptive means to get money from his radio listeners. He had been injured, he had a broken foot, his walk was crooked, and he was of no more use to God in the ministry.

"The man with a broken foot has to walk alone. He cannot keep step with others. He has been injured, and he does not trust anyone else. Everyone else is wrong somewhere, he

alone has the true message. He will not let anyone get close enough to him to hurt him again. He walks alone. And he is disqualified for the ministry of feeding God's people. Yes, there are many disqualified still active today, but they will not be in that body of the Melchizedek order which is without blemish.

"If you don't stand for something, you'll fall for anything. What does the man with the broken foot stand for? You don't really know. One foot points in one direction, and the other foot points in another. His foundation is weak. He may fall at any time. He may fall for a strange doctrine, or a pretty girl. You never know if he will still be walking in a straight walk this time next year or not. For his foundation is weak, and his walk is not straight. He has a broken foot. We have a lot of 'ninety day-wonders' who have read books, listened to tapes, taken a three month course in how to be a son of God. They go out like a blaze of fire, ready to turn the world upside down and win nations to God. And some people wonder why their dear old pastor can't be like that But follow their trail, look at their footprints, and see how many of them are brokenfooted. When you see a minister who has walked straight for many years, fought demonic powers and a multitude of temptations, continued on in the unfolding revelation of God's end-time purposes, and is still standing tall and solid, then you know he doesn't have a broken foot. He will feed the people good bread" - end quote.

Oh, how we need stability in our walk in God! But stability comes only from intimate relationship and vital union with God. It means a partaking of God's very own nature. This is the nature of the Christ. The nature of Christ is the nature of the Spirit that indwelt Him - the Spirit of His Father. Many millenniums ago the prophet Isaiah uttered one of the most wonderful statements of truth concerning sonship to God, saying, "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because He hath anointed me..." (Isa. 61:1). Turning to the prophecy from which this quotation is made, we read there in the Hebrew, "The Spirit of the Lord JEHOVAH is on Me, because JEHOVAH hath anointed Me to proclaim good tidings to the humble." It was the "Spirit of Jehovah" that was upon Jesus the Head, and it is thus the "Spirit of Jehovah" which is communicated from the Head to the elect members of His body.

To properly understand what is meant by THE SPIRIT OF JEHOVAH, we need to understand the meaning of the name. Jehovah is the modern English form of the ancient Hebrew word "Yahweh." In the King James Version of our Bible the Hebrew word "Yahweh" is mistranslated "LORD" in capital letters. The Hebrew word is correctly translated "Jehovah" in the American Standard Version and in a number of other modern translations. Some contend that we should use the name in its Hebrew form, but we do not speak Hebrew here in the United States of America, we speak English, and we do not bring anybody else's name over from the Hebrew. Thus, whenever you see the word "LORD" in capitals, it should be Jehovah. Jehovah is the name of God most frequently used in the Old Testament, occurring some 6,823 times!

The thing of importance is not the spelling or pronunciation of the name. God never gave Himself a name because it sounded nice. God's purpose in a name is its MEANING! I know many 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 CHAYAH 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. 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. Any being whose existence is dependent in any manner upon another, or upon conditions such as food, light, air, etc., or even upon some cosmic influence, is not SELF-EXISTENT. This quality inhered originally in Jehovah God alone, as it is written, "The Father hath life IN HIMSELF" (Jn. 5:26). That means that His existence is not a derived one, nor a sustained one; not derived from anything nor dependent upon anything, but inherent and eternal within Himself. The verbs "to be" and "to live" from which the name Jehovah comes denote both ESSENTIAL LIFE and a STATE OF BEING. Hence, God is not only eternal Himself, but every aspect of His nature and all His characteristics are as eternal and unchangeable as is His life!

Anything that is absolutely eternal is not only unending, but is also UNCHANGEABLE. Anything that changes in any way is not eternal, for in the change some characteristic is left behind and a new one acquired. In every change something ends and something else begins, at least in form. That which dwells in an eternal state knows NO CHANGE. Change is possible only in that which is limited, imperfect, or not fully developed. Jehovah declares of Himself, "I am Jehovah, I CHANGE NOT" (Mat. 3:6), and the inspired apostle says of Him, "with Whom there is no VARIABLENESS, neither shadow of turning" (James 1:17). God is never surprised. God has not learned anything this week, nor last year, no- in the last several trillion years. If God learned one thing today, it would destroy Him. He would no longer be the omniscient One knowing the end from the beginning, for known unto Him are all His works from the creation of the world. God does not experiment. God does not become stronger, mightier, or increase Himself in any way. God is the omnipotent, omniscient, and eternal One. He CHANGES NOT. He eternally is all that He is without any decrease or increase or fluctuation whatsoever. Ah, He is the ETERNAL GOD, JEHOVAH - the SELF-EXISTENT ONE!

It is a great and blessed fact that Jehovah is the eternal God. Transition, adjustments, change - these words seem to be constantly with us, until we fain would grasp for something that seems to be stable, solid, enduring. Much of the inner drive for change is simple evidence that man is not satisfied, has not found his completeness in Christ, for "beloved, NOW are we the children of God, and it doth not yet appear WHAT WE SHALL BE: but we know that when HE shall appear, we SHALL BE LIKE HIM for we shall see HIM AS HE IS" (I Jn. 3:2). Here is stability - immutability - the quality of His nature remains the same, HE IS THE ETERNAL! And this is the nature of which we would be a partaker, the fullness of which we find in Christ, and through union with Him with which we shall BE CHANGED until we become changeless in the absoluteness of that which He is. He who is eternal cannot be influenced, affected, moved, changed, altered, damaged or destroyed in any way. He cannot grow tired or old. The character of God is eternal, changeless, unaffected. The love, joy, peace, righteousness and power of God do not rise and fall, rise and fall, rise and fall. Matters not what happens or what men or devils say or do, the love of God, the nature of God, the purpose of God, and the power of God are steadfast, unmoved, unquenched, unaffected, without fluctuation. The eternal existence of God is certain for He is the source of all life. Death cannot touch Him for He is not dependent upon the sustaining power of another, He is Jehovah, the SELF EXISTENT ONE.

The origin and meaning of the name Jehovah are especially brought out in relation to Israel. When Moses at the burning bush says to God, "Behold, when I come to the

children of Israel, and say unto them, the God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say to me, What is His name? what shall I say unto them? And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you" (Ex. 3:13-14). The origin of this name, I AM THAT I AM, is exactly the same as that of Jehovah - being, existence - and denotes the One who always has been, is, and always will be: personal, continuous, absolute existence.

I AM THAT I AM reveals God as the UNCHANGING One. And while some have shared interesting insights into the original of this phrase, the fact remains that in this name Jehovah is saying to Moses and the children of Israel, "What I am, I ALWAYS am. I have never been anything but what I am. I never will be anything other than what I am. What I WAS - I AM. What I AM - I SHALL BE. I am what I am unchangeable, irrevocably, and Invariably! Tell the people of Israel that the eternal, self-existent, unchangeable One has sent you. Tell them that what I was to Abraham - I AM! What I was to Isaac I AM! What I was to Jacob - I AM! What I was to Joseph - I AM! And throughout all your days, in every situation and circumstance, even to the end of all times, when you shall seek My face and call upon Me you will find that I WILL BE, even then, WHAT I AM!" Long centuries later Jehovah spoke to the prophet Malachi these words: "I am Jehovah, I CHANGE NOT" (Mal. 3:6). Of Him who came into the world as the embodiment and personification of Jehovah in the flesh it is written: "JESUS CHRIST THE SAME yesterday, and today, and for ever" (Heb. 13:8). The apostle James witnessed of Him: "Every good gift...cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is NO VARIABLENESS, neither SHADOW OF TURNING" (James 1:17).

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.

The exceeding great wonder of all is that not only did Jesus possess the self-existent life of God, 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 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 this has been wrought in us we are enabled now to know and express THE INNER STABILITY OF THE CHRIST, praise His name!

Jesus is the altogether lovely One. When He walked this earth in human form He was altogether unlike anyone who had ever lived before. He was quite different in so many ways - many that perhaps you have never thought about. For example: Did you ever notice that Jesus never withdrew a word or modified a statement in His life? Which of us can say the same? He never apologized for anything He said. Which of us can make the same claim? There was no misstatement, no half-truth. Why? What He uttered was truth itself because HE WAS THE INCARNATE TRUTH. Did you ever notice that Jesus never

sought advice? Even Moses the lawgiver had his counselors; and Solomon, the wisest of them all, had those from whom he sought counsel and advice. But Jesus had none. In fact, He never went to any school of higher learning. That which He had received of His Father He gave unto us. Occasionally, someone had the temerity to offer Him advice which was peremptorily refused on every occasion. Yet, does not the Bible say that in the multitude of counselors there is wisdom? Yes, when one is as ignorant as we are, so ignorant that we have no earthly cure for our ignorance, then, indeed, we need counselors. But Jesus is INCARNATE WISDOM. "Behold, a greater than Solomon is here," He said (Mat. 12:42). Can you imagine that? Solomon? The wisest man that ever lived? Jesus very calmly said it in such a way that few people even so much as raised an eyebrow because from Jesus' lips the words seemed absolutely natural.

Jesus never confessed a sin. This is absolutely astonishing! It is axiomatic in the spiritual realm that the holiest of men have been those who were most conscious of their sin and guilt. Job was brought to absolute desperation when God appeared to him. Isaiah abhorred himself when he saw the living God and said, "I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips" (Isa. 6:5). Peter said, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man" (Lk. 5:8). And Paul said, "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief" (I Tim. 1:15). Jesus confessed no sin for one very simple reason: Unlike anyone of us He had none. Though tempted in all ways such as we are, He was yet without sin.

Further, Jesus never troubled to explain any of His frequent ambiguous conduct. When word was brought to Jesus that Lazarus, His good friend, was sick, what did He do? Did He rush to his side to help him? No, He remained right where He was for three days, until Lazarus died. Then belatedly, He appeared and His appearance evoked from the broken heart of Lazarus' sister these heart-rending words: "Lord, if Thou hadst been here, my brother would not have died" (Jn. 11:21). No explanation. No apology. Not a word! "Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God?" (Jn. 11:40). "Lazarus, come forth!" (Jn. 11:43). He just allowed time and the unfolding plan of God to justify all that He did. Jesus was asleep in the back of a boat in the midst of a storm with waves breaking over the railings, filling the ship. "Master carest Thou not that we perish?" No word of explanation, just the command, "Peace! Be still!" and the waves ceased their raging.

Jesus never asked and never permitted prayer for Himself. You may recall the time in Gethsemane on the night before His crucifixion. He gathered together His apostles and asked them to pray. But note well, my friends, His words: "Watch and pray (for yourselves) that YE enter not into temptation" (Lk. 23:40). Why did He not ask for our prayers? Why did He never permit anyone to pray for Him? Why did He not even pray with His disciples? Why did He always go off to pray alone? Very simply: He did not need anyone's prayers! He did not need them and He did not want them. Why? Because Jesus of Nazareth is THE SON OF THE LIVING GOD! As the Father has life in Himself, so has He given to the Son to have life in Himself.

Can you imagine Jesus, on the road to Samaria, sitting down on a rock by the wayside and calling to Peter, James, and John, saying, "Boys, I want you to come over here and pray for Me. I really need to be ministered to today, I need help, I need your strength. Ever since we left Galilee the old devil has really been after me. This depression has hit me and I want you to lay your hands upon me and rebuke this thing. It started last week when the Father showed me that Judas is going to betray me. I've been so upset ever

since, Satan wants to use that to beat me over the head. Some other things have been bothering me lately and this physical condition isn't helping any. If I don't get the victory soon I won't be able to minister in Samaria, but I know it's just the devil fighting me!" Do you think those disciples ever had to encourage Jesus, or lay hands on Him, or counsel Him, or rebuke the devil from Him, or minister to Him? Jesus said, "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. 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, not requiring sustenance, not derived from another, not drawing from anything, all-sufficient, abundant and unchanging life!

My spirit rejoices today in thankfulness to my Father in heaven that many years ago He let me hear a secret from His own heart, a secret that few in our generation have understood. When He breathed into my listening heart, my whole being was charged and my entire life and ministry changed, for I could never be the same after hearing His words: JESUS IS THE PATTERN SON! I was thunderstruck by these words because they revealed to my spirit that the purpose of God is not to save us from hell and take us to heaven, but to bring a vast company of Sons into vital relationship with the Father, conforming each and every one of them into the same image of that firstborn Son, TO BE LIKE HIM IN EVERY RESPECT. "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" (Rom. 8:29).

LIKE HIM? CONFORMED TO HIS IMAGE? ARRIVING AT THE MEASURE OF THE STATURE OF THE FULLNESS OF THE CHRIST? A SON OF GOD? O our Father! be pleased to open the eyes of Thy children that they may see to what a high and holy calling Thou hast called them in Thy Son. Ah - if Jesus did not change, then these Sons must come to the place where they do not change. If Jesus never apologized, because He never spoke or did anything wrong, the Sons must also come to the place where they do no wrong. If Jesus received all His wisdom and knowledge from the indwelling Father, the Sons, too, must receive all wisdom and knowledge from the Father within. If Jesus did not sin, the Sons must not sin. If Jesus never needed to be encouraged, the Sons must become so triumphant in His life that they do not need to be encouraged. If Jesus did not need to be prayed for, or ministered unto, the Sons also must so grow up into Him, needing not to be continually ministered to, but ministering and pouring out HIS LIFE to those about. If Jesus always had the victory, the Sons, too, must always have the victory. If Jesus lived every moment by the life of the Father, then the Sons must also live victoriously by the life of the Father.

The PATTERN SON. How awesome! LIKE HIM. What a challenge! What were the strong points of this Pattern Son? He did not have any...not a one! To have a strong point you must have a weak point and Jesus did not have any weak points. Other men are noted for some one faculty or talent. Moses was the meekest of all men. Job was the patient one, but Jesus was altogether lovely in every way...the meekest, most humble, most patient, most loving, most gracious, most courageous, firmest, wisest, everything. The incomparable symmetry of the perfections of Jesus Christ. What a balance He had! And this glorious Personage is not something unique in the universe, He is the PATTERN by

which your life and mine is being designed! He is the firstborn of an entirely new race of men, the SONS OF THE LIVING GOD. He is the High Priest of our profession, the Head of a great Kingdom of Priests unto God! "He that saith he abideth in Him ought himself also so to walk, even as He walked" (1 Jn. 2:6).

How can you identify a Son of God? How can you pick one out of a crowd of Christians? How can God's Royal Priesthood be known? I will tell you! They HAVE LIFE IN THEMSELVES! Only one who has life in himself, only one who is the offspring of Jehovah, the self-existent One, can be an overcomer. There was One who perfectly walked in this realm and OVERCAME ALL THINGS. Upon Him rested the fullness of the Spirit of Jehovah, the Spirit of SELF-EXISTENT LIFE. He walked like Jehovah. There was no broken-footedness about Him.

Let me present this glorious company of overcomers, the priesthood of God, even those who have life in themselves. These are they who have discovered the river of life flowing from deep within their own beings, life full, abundant, and triumphant! They are never discouraged by any situation, nor upset by any circumstance. They are constant - not "up" one day and "down" the next. You do not find them standing in anybody's prayer line. They are always encouraging others, but never needing to be encouraged. They pray for others, but never have prayer requests of their own. They minister to many, but do not stop to be ministered to. They are not offended by what others say or do. They are not depressed or burdened. They are not fearful, worried, or confused. They are not upset or angry with anyone. They don't quit when the going gets rough. They do not tell you how the old devil has been fighting them, in fact, they don't talk about the devil at all, for he no longer exists for these victorious ones! They don't talk about their problems. They are not sad, sorrowful, or downcast – regardless of how dark things seem. The word of Christ dwells in them richly. They have been given a new song, even praise unto their God! They walk daily in wisdom and understanding, in confidence and faith, in the conscious awareness of the Father's plan and will, they always have the victory, are always positive, always rejoicing in the Lord. They walk tall and strong. They walk straight. There are no ups and downs in their walk. They are constant. They press forward toward the goal, rejoicing in expectation of the glory of God. They are not brokenfooted. They are without blemish, these priests of God! Ah, you can be a Christian and be brokenfooted, you can even be a Spirit-filled Christian and have a broken foot. You can teach Sunday School, pass out tracts, win souls, and do many wonderful works and have a broken foot. BUT YOU CAN NEVER BE A PRIEST WITH A BROKEN FOOT!

How can one minister bring deliverance to another if he is bound himself? How can one furnish encouragement if he is himself discouraged? How can one impart joy when he is sad? How can one supply faith when he is fearful? How can one lift another when he is himself bogged down in the slough of despondency? How can peace be bestowed by a soul filled with anguish? How can righteousness be communicated by one with an evil heart? How can victory be given by the defeated? How can strength be ministered by the weak? Oh! the world so desperately needs priests! All creation groans for a people who can manifest and demonstrate IN THEIR STATE OF BEING the life and love and nature and power of God. My reader! as in the presence of God, who has said unto you, "Ye shall be unto Me a kingdom of priests," and of Christ Jesus, who gave Himself that you might apprehend this high calling of God, I charge you that you do not refuse the call of God's messenger, but enroll yourself among those who accept it: "Thou hast made us unto our God kings and priests, and we shall reign over the earth." Only such a priesthood can restore all back into God again, delivering creation from the bondage of

corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. Arise, O Sons of God, let us not sell creation short!

Chapter 11

Qualifications For Priesthood

(continued)

"Speak unto Aaron, saying, Whosoever he be of thy seed in their generations that hath any blemish, let him not approach to offer the bread of his God: for whatsoever man he be that hath a blemish, he shall not approach: a blind man, or a lame, or he that hath a flat nose, or any thing superfluous, or a man that is broken-footed, or brokenhanded, or crookbacked, or a dwarf, or he that hath a blemish in his eye, or be scurvy or scabbed, or hath his stones broken: no man that hath a blemish of the seed of Aaron the priest shall come nigh to offer the offerings of the Lord made by fire: he hath a blemish; he shall not come nigh to offer the bread of his God" (Lev. 21:17-21).

THE BROKEN HAND

As we continue our study in the blemishes which disqualify one for the priesthood, we come next to the one who is "broken-handed." The hand always represents the outer actions, service, and ministry. The hand of the Lord is recognized as being His manifest power and His ministry in the earth. The hand is the servant of the body. The important jobs, and the most menial tasks are done by the hands. From clipping one's toenails, to flying the most sophisticated war-plane, to carrying one's sick neighbor a bowl of soup, the hands are the servants. So the hand speaks to us of ministry, serving. Jesus said that he who would be great must be the servant of all. When one has a broken hand, the body is in trouble. One's work will suffer, for much that needs to be done will not get done. The broken hand will want to be ministered to, rather than ministering. It feels a need to be pampered and cared for. To be broken-handed means to minister deceitfully, ungraciously, inconsistently, or not at all. A broken hand will not be able to wield the sword of the Spirit properly, and there will be no flow of life to those about. The man or woman who has nothing to share with others, nothing to impart, who cannot or will not serve the people, is broken-handed. And he is disqualified to offer the bread of God, to feed the bread of life, to minister as priests of God unto the creation.

Notice the sublime statement of the prophet Jeremiah: "Blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is. For he shall be as a tree planted by the waters, and spreadeth out her roots by the river, and shall not see when heat cometh, but her leaf shall be green; and shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit" (Jer. 17:7-8). BLESSED is the man, there is no lack, his supply is sufficient, drawing from that river of divine life, "O wonderful and bountiful supply." But there is also an effect of being so blessed, he shall never cease from yielding fruit. There is a constant blessing brought forth from this life that is being ever so blessed by God. Thus, by this one, shall others be blessed.

"For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many" (Mk. 10:45). A great fact is here stated concerning the Son of man. The speaker is our Lord Himself, who in this, as in all matters, left an example for every son of God, that we should follow in His steps. The incident that gave rise to His words is a sad one. Two of His disciples, James and John, wanted to be ministered unto by being granted the chief places in His glory (Mk. 10:35-37). When the others heard it, they were highly indignant, for they wanted to be ministered unto by having the chief places themselves. But out of the ferment the Lord brought forth a word concerning the principles of the Kingdom of God. He made it an occasion to remind His disciples that they were not of the bestial system of this world, and that their distinguishing mark must be lowliness and readiness to serve one another.

"Jesus called them unto Him" (Mk. 10:42). Notice the tenderness and pathos here. He had been telling the twelve about Himself - of the awful betrayal, the cruel sufferings and indignity, the shameful death that awaited Him at Jerusalem. Surely their hearts melted? Nay! they seem unable to think of Him. They begin to quarrel among themselves as to who should be the greatest. Picture their flushed faces, their angry tones, their violent gestures! "But Jesus called them unto Him," and gently quelled the storm. Carnal, earthly rulers, He tells them, exercise lordship over others: "But so shall it not be among you: but whosoever will be great among you, shall be your minister; and whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all. For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom" (Mk. 10:42-45).

Ah, Christ Himself was the greatest among them. He said, "I am in the midst of you as he that serveth." He was the humblest, and, therefore, the greatest, but had He no authority? He had authority in heaven and on earth! Because He takes the place of deepest humility, does that strip Him of His kingly authority? No! It intensifies and magnifies it. "And whosoever would be first among you shall be your servant." "Bondservant" is the meaning of the word servant in the original Greek. The man who is to be the greatest amongst God's kings and priests must be the SLAVE of all. The man who will be the greatest, the "primes," or first, will be the man who is, as it were, the very bondservant; willing to serve his brethren and all men as if he were their slave with a deep and true humility: for Christ's sake. Jesus Christ died the death of a slave. Amongst the Romans, crucifixion was the death reserved for a bondservant. No Roman citizen could be crucified, but the slaves were punished in that manner. Christ was the greatest, yet He took the place of the lowest.

The attitude of God's apprehended ones ought ever to be that of being a servant, A LOVE SLAVE OF JESUS CHRIST. And nowhere is there a greater example of this, than in our Lord Himself. He who is the HIGHEST of the order, above all principalities, powers and dominions, also became the most servant of servants, as He "made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant..." (Phil. 2:7). He revealed, as it had never been revealed, the blessedness of subjection to our true and heavenly LORD, our Master WHO TRULY SERVES A-L-L. He sends His rain upon the just and upon the unjust and He causes His sun to shine upon the righteous and the unrighteous. HE IS KIND TO THE UNGRATEFUL AND THE WICKED - serving, freely giving. And they who are SONS OF THE HIGHEST will be as their Father, and as The Son who revealed this true nature of the Father. Though He is calling us to become a Kingdom of Priests unto the Most High, yet our inner attitude must be that of a servant, that we might freely minister, loving, doing good, even without hope of return. Merciful to the unthankful and

the evil. To minister as a priest unto the Most High will require this love-nature, that gives to the uttermost, joyfully, freely, seeking only to fulfill HIS WILL.

That is why the Christ today exercises all authority in heaven and on earth. He now takes the highest place. He is the greatest. He that would rise to be the highest, Must first come down to be the lowest, And then ascend to be the highest, By keeping down to be the lowest. It is only when you really keep down to be the lowest that you can be a power. That is something to learn. A bondsman is one who serves because he loves. "He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love" (1 Jn. 4:8). True love always seeks to serve; this is its invariable characteristic and chief distinction, and thereby may it always be identified. The one who seeks to be greatest or whose highest ambition is to RULE, is not yet made perfect in love; indeed he has scarcely the first rudiments of such a character. Self is a boss; love is a servant. The service of love makes us most like God and especially so when in love, you remember also that in thus serving the creature you serve the Creator in the creature.

It is when we come to this thought of SERVANTS that there arises a great deal of misunderstanding among the Lord's people. When we speak of servants, some boast that this calling does not apply to them, for they are no longer servants, but sons. That is true in the spirit in which Paul argues in Gal. 4:6-7: "And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father. Wherefore, THOU ART NO MORE A SERVANT, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ."

It is far from the truth, however, to say that there in no sense in which those who are sons are also servants. Paul is speaking of OUR RELATIONSHIP TO GOD, THE FATHER. Under the Old Testament the people of God had not received new birth by the Spirit and so were not, by birth, the children of God. They were a house of servants (Heb. 3:5). Their relationship TO GOD was that of servants. They were not sons. They were not related to God in sonship. Now, bless His name, He has redeemed us from the curse of the law that we might receive placement as sons, and He has breathed into our believing hearts the Spirit of His Son, the Spirit of sonship, whereby we cry, "Abba, Father!" This has brought a change in our relationship to God. Unto Him we are no longer servants, but sons. The sons are God's kings and priests, and as kings and priests we are not only related to God, but also have a relationship to men. It is here that we must be very clear in our understanding. Unto GOD I am a son; but unto MEN I am a servant, serving on behalf of God. I cannot be a servant TO God, for I am a son. And I cannot be a son TO men, so I must approach unto men in a relationship through which I can minister to them the life of the Son who abides within me. The only way by which I may minister Christ unto men is as a SERVANT. To minister means "to serve," and both minister and servant are a number of times translated from the same Greek word.

Can a son be a servant? Hear the words of the Pattern Son! "Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto (served), but to minister (serve), and to give His life a ransom" (Mat. 20:28). Jesus was a Son to His Father, but He came as a servant unto men. It is the SON who SERVES! The Son is a servant-Son. The very same Jesus of whom the Father witnessed, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased," of Him the Father also witnessed, "Behold My SERVANT, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom My soul delighteth; I have put My Spirit upon Him: He shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles" (Isa. 42:1). Matthew 12:15-21 points out clearly that this SERVANT of the Lord is JESUS. The Son came as a servant-Son. The beloved John understood this great

truth, for the same John who wrote in I Jn. 3:1, "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called THE SONS OF GOD," later stated, "The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto Him, to show unto His SERVANTS things that must shortly come to pass; and He sent and signified it by His angel unto HIS SERVANT JOHN" (Rev. 1:1). Paul also understood this truth, for the very same Paul who wrote in Gal. 4:7, "Wherefore, thou art no more a servant, but a son," also said in Ram. 1:1, "Paul, a SERVANT of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle." Is Jesus a son or a servant? Was John a son or a servant? Was Paul a son or a servant? And lest we exalt ourselves above Paul or John or Jesus, we further find the 144,000 in the book of Revelation, that glorious company of the sons of God who follow the Lamb on Zion's holy hill, and of this many-membered body of overcoming sons it is written, "Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the SERVANTS of our God in their foreheads" (Rev. 7:3). Ah - the sons are the servants! Not servants UNTO GOD, by any means, but SONS OF GOD who are SERVANTS UNTO MEN, humble ministers of the grace and the mercy and the love of God.

May the Spirit of God graciously enlighten the eyes of our understanding that we may see the Mighty Son in the form of a servant! All had been prepared for the last supper, including even the very water with which to wash the feet of the guests, according to the custom. But in this upper room there was no servant to do the work. Each one waits for the other: none of the twelve considers humbling himself to render even this service. Even as they sat at the table they were full of other, loftier, thoughts - who should be the greatest in the Kingdom they were expecting (Lk. 22:26-27). Suddenly, Jesus arises, lays aside His garments, girds Himself with a towel, and begins to wash their feet. O wondrous spectacle! upon which mighty and powerful angels reverently gazed with adoring wonder. Christ, the Creator and King of the universe; Christ, the Mighty God and Father of the ages, the movement of whose hand would summon untold legions of angels ready to serve Him, who might with one word of love have attracted throngs of loyal followers who would have delighted to do the work, - Christ Jesus takes the servant's place for His own, takes the soiled feet of carnal and weary men into His own holy hands, and washes them! "If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, YE ALSO ought to wash one another's feet" (Jn. 13:14). No establishing of a ritual here to be performed in Church upon men who have already thoroughly washed and deodorized their feet! Rather, the establishing of the law of the Kingdom - he who would be the greatest, let him be the servant of all. "I am among you as He that serveth" (Lk. 22:27).

In taking the form of a servant, Jesus proclaims the divine order of the Kingdom of God, the House of Sons. The higher one wishes to stand in the Kingdom, the more it must be his joy to be the servant of all. The higher I rise in the consciousness of being like Christ, the High Priest of the heavens, the deeper shall I stoop to identify with and minister to all around me. As sons, there we must live, moving about among the sorrow and tragedy of humanity as the servants of all. No condition is too wretched, no hell too low for us to stoop to serve, to bless, to lift, to redeem, not caring one whit for our own honor or interest, if we can but impart the blessing of the Kingdom of life, love and light. What blessedness, what value has sonship without the outpouring into the depths in which men dwell? The whole purpose of sonship is that God may be expressed and communicated to men even unto the lowest hell. Sonship is not some country-club set of super-spiritual-elite-gods who spend their time polishing up their halos while basking in the meretricious brilliancy of their own self-importance.

A servant counts it no humiliation, and is not ashamed of being counted inferior: it is his place and work to serve others. The reason why some who call themselves "SONS" so often have no desire to bless others is that they think of themselves as superior in rank and blessing. These are broken-handed, and they shall never reign as priests. If, upon our road to sonship, we first learn to identify with the creation which we are destined to deliver, to associate with the lowest of men and the humblest of saints in the blessed spirit of a servant, what a blessing we shall become to the world! Thus is the Royal Priesthood SENT FORTH INTO ALL THE EARTH. Try, my beloved brethren, above all to understand that it is only as a son you can truly be a servant, for only the sons possess that life that can quicken all things. It was as the Son that Christ took the form of a servant. Walk among men AS SONS OF THE MOST HIGH GOD. A son of God is in the world only to show forth His Father's glory, and only as a servant can this life be communicated to the creation.

Sons and servants! Kings and priests! Can you see the parallel between these two? It is the king that reigns and the priest that serves. But, like the horse and carriage, and love and marriage, YOU CAN'T HAVE ONE WITHOUT THE OTHER! It is the priests that reign (Rev. 20:6). "For Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed 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 over the earth" (Rev. 5:9-10).

You will never be a priest without the servant-nature. The story is told of a farmer who had just sat down to the table and prayed: "Oh Lord, bless the poor people in this neighborhood, and feed them." Very soon after, there was a knock at the door and a poor neighbor came in and asked the farmer for a bushel of potatoes. The farmer began to make all kinds of excuses. He had fifty bushels of potatoes, and his little boy said, "Papa, there is a chance to answer your own prayers." That is the servant nature, and the spirit of priesthood. So many in this hour want to be sons and kings and priests while living in their own little world, studying the deep revelations given by the Spirit, singing beautiful end-time choruses, but never having any practical outworking of the servant-nature in the nitty-gritty of everyday living where the needs of creation are met. May the Spirit of God make very real to our hearts the great truth that the person who does not serve is broken-handed. And there are **NO BROKEN-HANDED PRIESTS IN THE KINGDOM OF GOD!** "For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life" (Mk. 10:45). The sons come for the same purpose.

What a blessing there is in giving! Even on the natural plane it is a part of the makeup of everyone that they feel good when giving or helping others. But in many people, and even in some who aspire to be priests of God, this attribute is never developed into becoming a part of their way of life and so the opposite takes place. However many wonderful people spend their lives in giving service to others. When analyzed, the servant-nature is the most prized possession of the human race. What a joy is the restaurant waitress who gives true service. To be a real nurse requires this above all else. The secretary in an office can be an inspiration to everyone through her ability to be of help and support in every situation instead of merely doing just what is required of her. Then there is the teacher who is vitally concerned for every member of her class. In such as these is the servant-nature revealed even on the earthly level. Serving those about you will never of itself make you a priest of God, but **YOU CAN NEVER BE A PRIEST WITHOUT THE SERVANT-NATURE!** HE makes us kings and priests! O God! let the hands be healed quickly, cleanse Thy priesthood from the blemish of broken-handedness and give us the **NATURE OF A SERVANT.**

THE HUNCHBACK

The seventh blemish which the Holy Spirit has signified as disqualifying one for the priesthood is the "crookbacked" as the Authorized Version states it, or "hunchback" as most modern translations render. This man does not have a strong, straight backbone. He suffers from a crippling abnormal concave curvature of the spine which reduces height by forcing the spinal column into a horizontal bulge, as though it were pulled out of place by a mighty hand. It is no wonder that "backbone" has come to describe anything that provides primary stability and support. The spine is, in every sense, the backbone of the body.

Now we are not talking about physical disfigurements today, we are dealing with the spiritual meaning of these deformities. And we are all acquainted with Christians and ministries who do not stand tall and straight in God, who do not take a stand for the truth as God reveals it, and who cannot get under the load and bear the burden of the Lord. They have no backbone. They are weak. They are deformed.

As Bill Britton has written, "They do not have firm principles for which they stand. 'Wishy-washy' is the term generally used for them. Eph. 4:14 says they are tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine. Last year they were chasing after some nice-sounding doctrine, but today they are going in the opposite direction. Next year they may be changed again, never standing firm for anything. That does not mean that new revelation will not come. It does not mean that a preacher who drops old tradition for new truth is spineless or hunchback. I am talking about those who are tossed to and fro, always jumping back and forth. This principle is also true concerning our moral lives, as well as our doctrine. The preacher who is up today, down tomorrow, in and out of sin, and always seeking help and deliverance for his weaknesses is not fit to feed the bread to God's people. Some have a backbone like jello, always trembling, and ready to bend any way the pressure is put on. The man who cannot stand against the pressure when he knows what is right, should not be teaching the people of God how to live their lives. He is hunchback" -- end quote.

Every man who is coming into the priesthood that God has ordained must stand straight and tall in the Spirit and in the vision God is giving in this hour, fulfilling the beautiful type in the Song of Solomon wherein it is stated, "This thy stature is like to a palm tree" (S. of S. 7:7). The palm tree never grows earthward, but heavenward. No pressure nor weight, however great or heavy, that is laid upon the palm tree, can bear it down or hold it near the earth. It will not be bound down, neither will it grow crooked; but in spite of all opposition, it keeps its face looking upward, and pursues its heavenward course. This characteristic of the palm tree brings deep conviction to our hearts as we remember how the weights of temptations, testings, and tribulation have many times borne us down. How we have grown earthward because of the attraction of the flesh and the pull of the spirit of this world. How many times we have bowed down beneath the pressures and powers the enemy has sent against us. We blush as we recall how the world, the adversary, our friends, our family, and even our fellow Christians and the religious systems have fastened weights upon us, so that in the place of growing straight upward in the purposes of our God, we have bent and bowed and have become crooked or deformed in some way or place.

But it shall not be thus with God's Royal Priesthood! No weight of earth, however heavy, shall be able to hold them down. Though the weight of influence and expediency should

cling to those that will make up the Royal Priesthood, though the fear of man and the desire to please man should strive to impede their way, none of these weights shall be able to hold down those who have set their faces steadfastly to go all the way with God, and to become overcomers to the glory of his Name. Though all hell should strive to turn these palm trees of God downward, it shall not avail; though every foe and every earthly friend should conspire together, it shall but make the priests of the Most High keep their faces more constantly and prayerfully fastened upward. As these look away from all else to Jesus, they grow heavenward! heavenward!

I testify to you today that every time I have taken my stand in God as His truth has unfolded within my spirit, I have become stronger in the Word of the Lord and have been blessed and made a blessing beyond my wildest expectations. When the Spirit, many years ago, led me out of the Pentecostal denomination I was raised in and ordained with, the adversary hissed in my ear that there would be no open doors for ministry outside of the denomination, and that I would starve to death. But I stood firm in my convictions, resigned my pastorate, and turned in my credentials, to pursue the HEAVENLY VISION. And God opened doors all across the land, increased our ministry many fold, and led us in paths of blessing, revelation, and glory. Several times, through the years, I have stood at that same crossroad, constrained by the Spirit to withdraw from former associations in the gospel in order to FOLLOW ON TO KNOW THE LORD. Each time the adversary has been there with the sly suggestion that our ministry would collapse if we didn't stay within the safety of the beaten path. Each time he lied. And each time we gained the victory, hallelujah!

When we have sent out some controversial message on sonship, the end-time purposes of God, the kingdom of God, the antichrist, the origin of Satan, the reconciliation of all things, or against the blinding traditions and static creeds of the harlot church system, I have counted the cost beforehand, preparing myself to lose half of the people on our mailing list. And I was quite willing for that, if that was the price for declaring the whole counsel of God to His apprehended ones. But it never happened! We have never lost more than a dozen people from the mailing list due to controversy. It would not have greatly surprised me if many hundreds would have forsaken us when we began to publish "The Saviour of the World" booklets, but although we have mailed out many thousands of these to date, only four negative letters have been received, and two of those were from the same person! The positive response has been astounding, some weeks it has taken up to three days to answer the mail as many hundreds of letters have poured in to our office praising God for the truth of reconciliation with comments like, "God revealed that truth to me many years ago;" "I have always felt it must be that way, and now it is so clear;" "I haven't seen this before, but my spirit witnesses with it;" "I was opposed to the teaching, but you leave me no choice - praise God, it's true!" etc. etc. etc. The tide of God's beautiful truth is sweeping like a mighty ocean, boundless, fathomless, across the land and around the world. And instead of this ministry diminishing, we are sending out more messages today than ever before! Ah - when we are 100% sure that our word is based on the solid rock of God's Word, witnessed beyond any shadow of doubt in the deepest recesses of our spirit by HIS SPIRIT, and confirmed by many precious brethren who are walking in the Spirit in humility, holiness, wisdom and revelation, then we must stand tall and strong with backbones like saw logs, proclaiming the present truth without fear or favor. The man who cannot stand tall and strong in the battle should not be teaching the people of God how to walk in the Kingdom. He is hunchback. And no hunchback can minister as a priest of the Lord!

ENTER THE DWARF

A little baby is born and the relatives and friends gather around in admiring wonder. "Isn't he precious?" "Look at those tiny little fingers." "Oh, aren't those ears cute?" "Isn't he adorable?" And they go their way and time passes. A month goes by. The friends stop by to see the little child who still is very much like he was before. "My, isn't he cute?" "I think he is going to be a little one, but he is a darling, isn't he?" Three months go by and he hardly changes at all. "What are you using in the formula, my dear? Perhaps you really should talk to your pediatrician." Six months go by. Again, virtually no change and the smiles are gone. There is no more of the "coochie, coochie, coo." Now there is a sense of sadness. Something is wrong. After a year, two years, it is plain to all that this is a dwarf child. There have been those who have endured and by the grace of God have risen above such experiences, which fortunately in the physical world are not too frequent.

In the spiritual realm, however, that which I have described happens all too frequently. One of the tragedies is that many people who are ten or fifteen or twenty years old in the Lord and who have grown but little beyond a babe, do not even recognize their dwarfish nature. And their pastors and denominations don't recognize it, either!

In the natural there are many little people who are very fine men and women, normal in every way except for the size of their body. But under Old Testament economy they could not have qualified for priesthood because they could not reach up to the altar's height. Their low stature impeded their ability to function normally in various of the priestly duties. Near the base of the skull is the pituitary gland, sometimes called the master gland because it not only sends messages to bones and other tissues but controls other glands to some extent as well. The pituitary secretes a growth hormone, without which calcium, phosphorus and other elements could never unite to form bone. If the pituitary secretes too little growth hormone, it can produce a dwarf. Today there is a spiritual meaning. We see those who have none of the other blemishes mentioned. But there is a lack somewhere in their spiritual life. And this lack prevents them from ever growing up into the full measure of the stature of the Son of God. These dwarfs have many other fine qualities. They love God, and are sincere and zealous in their Christian life. They attend Church regularly, and are active in its various programs. But the faith, wisdom, revelation, victory, love, and power of God never mature in their lives. They know nothing of deeper revelation and God's ultimate intention is foreign to them. They fall short of going on to perfection and being conformed to the image of the Son. They never really get the complete victory over the world, the flesh, and the devil. Most remain shackled in chains of tradition in some denominational or religious system.. They may even read articles and books on the deeper truths of sonship and the Kingdom of God, but the import of the message never penetrates deeply into their hearts, so they are not drawn to a total commitment to the high purposes of God for this hour. They have some fruit for their labors, but it is always on the dwarf level. I do not hesitate to tell you that we live today in an almost completely dwarf society. The churches are literally packed each Sunday with untold millions of spiritual dwarfs! There are dwarfs in the pulpit. There are dwarfs in the Choir. The musical instruments are played by dwarfs. The deacons are dwarfs. The Sunday School teachers are dwarfs. It is a dwarf-world!

There are certain evidences of whether or not we are growing up into the measure of the stature of the fullness of the Christ. If we are growing, one of the fruits will be graciousness, the becoming like Him who is the all-gracious, all-loving God, having an unselfish concern for the needs of others, and an undying love for all God's creation. If

you are judgmental in your spirit, breathing out fire and damnation against men for whom Christ died; if the teaching of the reconciliation of all men to God troubles you because you are afraid that somebody might not get every thing they deserve, then forget about the Royal Priesthood - its not for you! Another sign is strength. Another is faith. Another one is stability. The active ingredient in stability is trust. Do you trust God for the things of this life, natural and spiritual? You can tell by whether or not you fuss and fume and fret and worry and have anxiety. All of these are big signs that go up and say, "YOU DO NOT TRUST GOD." A true son will trust the Father in A-L-L things! What a wonderful thing it is to see that you are growing in grace when you thank God for the terrible things that happen; for the problems, for the setbacks, for the difficult things, in the blessed knowledge that ALL THINGS DO INDEED ALWAYS WORK TOGETHER FOR GOOD TO THE SONS OF GOD. Do you do that? Many people, because they do not really TRUST God, find that their lives are falling apart because they have not developed those qualities of character, those beautiful characteristics of the Christ that create the image of God in us. Ah, you can fall short of this full stature of Christ and still be a Christian. You can come short of the fullness of God's glory and still speak in tongues, prophesy, testify, and do many wonderful works. but never forget, precious friend of mine, that you cannot come up short of the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ and be a priest! Some people are larger than others in their spiritual development, but it is the deformity of being a dwarf that causes God to set a man aside from the Royal Priesthood.

A BLEMISH IN THE EYE

The word "blemish" used in connection with the eyes is from the Hebrew CALLUS denoting a disease of the eyes, namely, cataracts. Cataracts have obscured the vision of more people throughout the ages than any other affliction of the eye. Beginning as minute cloudy spots in the lens of the eye, cataracts eventually pervade the whole lens, turning it a milky yellow white, scattering incoming light and blocking vision. People with cataracts see the world as if they were looking through a waterfall, the reason ancient Greeks gave the disease its name.

The eye is the figure of knowledge and understanding. The apostle Paul penned these meaningful words: "That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him: the EYES OF YOUR UNDERSTANDING being enlightened; that ye may KNOW what is the hope of His calling, and what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints" (Eph. 1:17-18). The man with cataracts has eyes to see, but he has something in his eyes which causes them to lose focus and perspective so that the vision is blurred. A blemish in the eye bespeaks of an IMPAIRED VISION, some block hindering the viewing of the full truth and reality of God. The man with a blemish in his eye is disqualified to be a priest as the prophet has said: "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that THOU SHALT BE NO PRIEST TO ME: seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God" (Hos. 4:6).

The phrase, "the eyes of your understanding," reveals that spiritual sight or spiritual understanding is an ability and faculty of the mind. Without mind there can be no understanding. A man's understanding corresponds precisely to the condition, development or quality of his mind. Every created life form possesses mind and the understanding of the creature is limited by the quality of its mind. Quality of mind is, basically, an inherited characteristic. For instance, a cat thinks like a cat, knows as a cat, understands as a cat and acts like a cat because it was BORN a cat - therefore

possessing the brain and mind of a cat. Through the years we have had cats in our home. I have noticed that the cat will come and sit in the living room while I watch the evening television news. While I am very interested in the news, the cat has positively no interest at all! He couldn't care less what is happening in Central America, the Middle East or the Persian Gulf! It is not that he doesn't see the pictures flashing across the screen. He sees them, alright, but he doesn't understand them, so he just curls up on the carpet and goes to sleep. It is simply impossible for cats to understand things human. Humans are of a different and higher order than are cats. Cats may see men, and observe their movements, yet there is no common ground of knowledge. The cat has no comprehension of what it sees. It discerns only things pertaining to its own realm. It has positively no understanding of the ways of man, or of the meaning of his movements, or words, or habits. Cat minds function on the level of cat nature, while human minds function on the level of human nature.

Likewise, God is of a different and higher order of life and nature than are humans. The mind of man functions on the level of human nature, whereas the mind of God functions on the level of the divine nature. There is no common ground of knowledge or understanding between the two. Therefore, the natural man is totally incapable of comprehending that which pertains to the realm of God. For natural minds to comprehend things spiritual is equally as impossible as for cats to comprehend things human. And so, until men receive of GOD'S SPIRIT - the Spirit that KNOWS and UNDERSTANDS on the GOD LEVEL - it is impossible for them to have any understanding either of God, of His Word, or His ways. With what truth did Paul write to the Corinthians: "For who could really understand a man's inmost thoughts except the spirit of man himself? How much less could anyone understand the thoughts of God except the very Spirit of God? We have now received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit of God Himself, so that we can UNDERSTAND something of God's generosity towards us" (I Cor. 2:11-12, Moffat).

And then after men receive God, the depth of their knowledge and understanding is wholly in proportion to the measure of the indwelling Spirit. Of the Pattern Son it is written, "In Him dwelleth ALL THE FULLNESS of the Godhead bodily" (Col. 2:9). Jesus did not receive the Spirit by measure as do we (Jn. 3:34). He has A-L-L the fullness of God. And therefore He has all the discernment and understanding of heaven! But we faltering mortals cannot claim in fullness what Christ possessed until we stand upon Zion's holy hill, totally transformed, and completely conformed to the image of the Son of God.

We will never, in this age, be fully able to comprehend the boundless power of the mind of man. The natural mind, though it understands not the things of the Spirit, is capable of astonishing wonders. All the marvelous inventions of the world have proceeded from the mind of man, yet that natural mind RECEIVES NOT any of the things of God. As heaven is higher than the earth, so are God's ways higher than man's, and God's thoughts higher than man's. The man who receives of God's life is renewed in the SPIRIT OF HIS MIND, that is, he takes on a new mind originating in the new spirit-life, so that he thinks and acts as an entirely new creation, a new man, a new kind of creature. If he follows on to know the Lord he will find that his darkened mind will completely give way to this new creation mind which is the MIND OF JESUS CHRIST. Paul wrote, "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus." The mind that was in Jesus was the Father's mind. Because He was fully possessed of His Father's mind, He was able to say, "I and the Father are one." The mind that was in Christ Jesus is freely offered to every man who believes on

His name that he might be ONE WITH CHRIST and ONE WITH THE FATHER. Let us never forget that in those glorious ages to come it will be the mind of our heavenly Father that will rule the universe. The Father has decreed that He will rule the universe by HIM whom He has chosen, and those sons, the many-membered Son, every one, will be possessed with the Father's mind. God the Father has given His mind to His Son, Jesus Christ, and He in turn has given that same mind to us. As the hands and the feet of a healthy body act in harmony with the head, so every member among the sons of God acts in harmony with the Head, even Jesus, because ONE MIND DWELLS IN THEM ALL. Hallelujah!

Learn this, O man, and you will know a great truth: Darkness is IGNORANCE. To be in darkness means to be in ignorance. To be blind means to be in ignorance. To have the vision obscured and fuzzy means to be in partial ignorance. To have a blemish in the eye means to have one's spiritual vision impaired by partial SPIRITUAL IGNORANCE. Ignorance is a condition of the MIND, in which the mind lacks knowledge and understanding. Paul tells us in Eph. 4:17-18 that men have their "understanding darkened" because of the "ignorance" that is in them!

True, the light of the Christ has now shined into our hearts, yet I am confident that none of us have yet, at this present time, experienced the fullness of that light. When we were first saved just enough light shone in to reveal Jesus to us as Saviour. We joyfully embraced the glory revealed in that light, but what a great darkness prevailed even yet in so many areas of our lives! The pen of inspiration wrote, "We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and THE DAY STAR ARISE IN YOUR HEARTS" (II Pet. 1:19). God has shined into our hearts (II Cor. 4:6) but now the DAY STAR MUST ARISE in our hearts as the brightness of the noon-time sun, dispelling all darkness and driving away all shadows. But how many of the Lord's people are satisfied with that initial shining which brings the dawn of their spiritual experience but never FOLLOW ON to know the full arising of the Sun of Righteousness who would flood their whole being with the majesty of the glory of the Lord. All the carnal church systems which hold men in such horrible darkness were built by men who received just a little light from God, and then out of the overshadowing gloom of darkness yet untouched in their carnal hearts they proceeded to build upon the foundation of Christ every kind of grotesque structure of tradition, error, fleshiness, great towering edifices of hay, wood, and stubble in which the Lord's people grope about as blind men.

Let us not forget that UNDERSTANDING is the KEY to everything in God! Faith comes by UNDERSTANDING the will of God. This is why Paul wrote: "Brethren, be not children in understanding: howbeit in malice be ye children, but in UNDERSTANDING be men" (I. Cor. 14:20). Paul prayed for the Ephesians to this end: "The EYES OF YOUR UNDERSTANDING being enlightened, that ye may KNOW what is the hope of His calling" (Eph. 1:18). Again, "For this cause we also do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the KNOWLEDGE OF HIS WILL in all wisdom and SPIRITUAL UNDERSTANDING" (Col. 1:9-10).

Faith comes by UNDERSTANDING. How many of my readers were saved BEFORE you came to UNDERSTAND that you were dead in trespasses and in sins, but that Jesus died to give you life? Was it not when we came to UNDERSTAND the Gospel that faith was evoked in our hearts unto salvation? Show me a man who doesn't UNDERSTAND that the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord and I will show you a man

who isn't saved. Show me a man who doesn't UNDERSTAND that God has provided a glorious baptism in the Holy Spirit and I will show you a man who has not been filled with the Spirit. Show me a man who doesn't UNDERSTAND that Jesus Christ is the Great Physician and I will show you a man sitting in the doctor's office with no hope of recovery beyond the skill of the surgeon's knife. Show me a man who doesn't UNDERSTAND that saints are supposed to GO ON TO PERFECTION and I will show you a carnal Christian who is experiencing nothing of the deep processings of God that produce perfection. Show me a man who doesn't UNDERSTAND that the hope of all creation is the MANIFESTATION OF THE SONS OF GOD and I will show you a man who is still waiting to be whisked away to some far-off heaven somewhere to strum a harp but who knows absolutely nothing about the deep and vital dealings of God which conform men into the image of Jesus Christ. The degree of our faith is always proportionate to the degree of our UNDERSTANDING. Our spiritual understanding always corresponds to the amount of LIGHT and TRUTH that has illuminated our hearts by the Holy Spirit. We will be filled with light (understanding) to the same degree that our new creation MIND has been developed.

Have you ever prayed that God would OPEN THE EYES OF YOUR UNDERSTANDING that you might know what is the hope of His calling and what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints? Ah, how much better this would be than to seek the passing vanities of this present world to the detriment of your devotion to God; and how much more grand and glorious is the hope of sonship and the deliverance of all creation in those wonderful ages yet to come, than the cheap tinsel of tradition's mansion over the hilltop. Walk no longer in the VANITY of your mind, HAVING THE UNDERSTANDING DARKENED, while alienating yourself from the life of God through ignorance. Never spend your days seeking the things of this carnal life, for they make themselves wings and fly away, never to yield any eternal reward.

We are further exhorted: 'Be not children in understanding; howbeit in malice be ye children, but in UNDERSTANDING be men" (I Cor. 14:20). I greatly fear that for long centuries the Lord's people have been men in malice and children in understanding! The pages of church history show that from time immemorial the church has been a vast feuding ground of malice, envy, bitterness, strife, full of pettiness, peevishness, whisperings, debate, deceit, backbiting, and evil speaking: men in malice and children in understanding! "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart and LEAN NOT UNTO THY OWN UNDERSTANDING," saith the Lord (Prov. 3:5). Yet how often God's people are found leaning to their own understanding and generally their own understanding is nothing more than the faulty understanding of other men whose traditions, interpretations, and deductions they have accepted. Human understanding is so terribly limited! It is limited because human understanding contains absolutely nothing of GOD'S UNDERSTANDING and is, therefore, as faulty as is the nature of man. Just as the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom so THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE HOLY IS U-N-D-E-R-S-T-A-N-D-I-N-G (Prov. 9:10). Understanding will never be yours by following the traditions of the dead church systems, for they know nothing of the things of the Spirit. All their traditions are cataracts in the eyes of the people, disqualifying them for the priesthood of God.

It has always, from the very beginning, been Satan's policy to misrepresent the truth, to distort and carnalize the Word of God, in order to hinder mankind from seeing the beauty and majesty of God's purpose of the ages. The more absurdities the enemy can get interwoven into man's doctrines and concepts respecting God, the Church, eternity, the

destiny of man, etc. the better he will succeed in separating men from God. Thus for centuries the great adversary has been working most successfully and has covered and hidden some of the most precious and wonderful truths under the most specious and repulsive errors, and the progress of the saints has been correspondingly slow.

Even in this end-time move of God there are many preachers who have serious blemishes in their eyes and they confuse a lot of people with strange and distorted teachings. They think they have divine revelation, and because they see SOMETHING deeper in God they are hard to convince that they are in error, and need help. The real truths of sonship, reconciliation, and the Kingdom of God are all out of focus before their eyes. Their vision is fuzzy. Out of one side of their mouth they proclaim that the manifested sons of God are destined to set ALL CREATION free from the bondage of corruption, while out of the other side of their mouth they teach that the vast majority of men who have lived and died upon this planet will spend eternity writhing in the flames of hell, cursing, blaspheming, and defying the God of love and power who died for them all. Such teaching is contradictory, distorted, twisted, and fuzzy. This brings reproach on the real truth, for they use the same terminology, and claim to be sons of God with the message of the Kingdom, yet everything they preach is still garbled with tradition and laced with error. But, thank God! we are now living in the time when the veil of ignorance and error is being dissolved, and when the members of the Royal Priesthood are having the eyes of their understanding enlightened. Almighty Father! heal the blemished eyes of Thine elect people that there may be a mighty company of priests of the Most High God come forth in this hour with a pure word from the throne of God!

Chapter 12

Qualifications For Priesthood

(continued)

"Speak unto Aaron, saying, Whosoever he be of thy seed in their generations that hath any blemish, let him not approach to offer the bread of his God: for whatsoever man he be that hath a blemish, he shall not approach: a blind man, or a lame, or he that hath a flat nose, or any thing superfluous, or a man that is broken-footed, or broken-handed, or crookbacked, or a dwarf, or he that hath a blemish in his eye, or be scurvy or scabbed, or hath his stones broken: no man that hath a blemish of the seed of Aaron the priest shall come nigh to offer the offerings of the Lord made by fire: he hath a blemish; he shall not come nigh to offer the bread of his God" (Lev. 21:17-21).

SCURVY

The tenth blemish which the Holy Spirit has signified as disqualifying one for the priesthood is "scurvy." Scurvy is a sickness that is caused by not eating an important food element called Vitamin C. Vitamin C is found in fruits, especially oranges, lemons, and grapefruits, and in vegetables. Persons who do not eat these foods may get swollen, infected gums, and their teeth may become loose and even fall out. In children, scurvy may cause the bones to grow crooked. Scurvy is especially dangerous to babies. It makes them have loose bowels and fever, and lose weight. It can also cause loss of blood by internal bleeding. Sailors in olden days often had this problem, not being able to get fresh fruit or vegetables. They had to eat a lot of canned food and salted meat. After months at sea, fresh fruit, vegetables, and meat to form a balanced diet was hard to get. Scurvy is quickly cured when the sick person is given the missing Vitamin C.

Today we see vast multitudes of Christians who have spiritual scurvy because they are fed a constant diet of canned sermons and dead letter-of-the-Word salted down meat. Scurvy is the result of an insufficient, unbalanced diet, the outward manifestation of an inward lack. When men or women are sick in body or mind, there is always some simple underlying cause for their illness, and, when that is discovered and the problem corrected, health and life will flow into the body as waters flow when an obstruction is removed. Most doctors today merely treat symptoms but remove the cause of the sickness and the body is well. The human body is the most marvelous mechanism of all God's wonderful creation on earth. The body of man embodies, as an essential element of its nature, a conservative or healing power, which is, under all conditions and circumstances of life, in ceaseless, though silent operation, preserving in a perfect manner the vitality of the organism and withstanding and neutralizing to a very great extent, all of those powers which operate to weaken and destroy it. So efficient and powerful are its conservative and reparative powers that it takes great and long continued abuse of the sound organism to produce serious disease in it. The normal and regular tendency of the body toward health is a very powerful one, so powerful indeed, that the

great majority of people succeed in maintaining a tolerable degree of health most of the time in spite of their repeated sins against health and life. The body is self-correcting and self-healing. Give the body a prolonged rest (fast) and it will perform a general house cleaning. It will expel accumulated toxic wastes and morbid matter built up from years of consuming harmful and destructive foods, chemicals, and other substances. It will free burdened organs so they can function normally again. The body heals itself when the causes of its problems are removed. Treat the symptoms and the malady remains.

Countless thousands are at this minute facing a painful death from lung cancer because they insist *on* filling their lungs with tobacco smoke. They need neither medicine nor operation; all they need to do is discard the unholy cause of their illness. Long centuries ago the glorious Lord gave His people Israel a set of physical health rules, and with them He also gave a set of spiritual laws, telling them plainly that, if they observed those things, they would endure none of the diseases of the Egyptians (Deut. 7:15). So true and faithful was His word that King David, exulting later in the wonder of God's faithfulness, said, "He brought them forth also with silver and gold: and there was not one feeble person among their tribes" (Ps. 105:37).

As one has written, "When our minds grasp the significant fact that two million, five hundred thousand men, women, and children wandered in that burning wilderness for forty years without a doctor, a hospital, an ambulance, a stretcher, a pharmacy, an aspirin, or even a crutch, then we can better understand how meaningful is obedience and faithfulness to God's command, and necessary it is to discover the root of all our trouble and remove it out of the way as a man would dig up and remove from his pathway a stumbling stone that often had hurt his feet and distressed him by many a fall" - end quote.

It is not my purpose here to deal with physical diseases or divine healing, but if by God's grace He will open our eyes to see that all sickness and disease is the result of either an inward lack or abuse, then we shall see the path of life and our spiritual health and growth in Christ, our progress in wisdom and understanding, in grace and glory and in righteousness and power will be multiplied exceedingly. And now I will venture to say that stagnation and spiritual disease have overtaken millions of Christians because, whether they realize it or not, they have been fed a steady diet of JUNK FOOD! Their spiritual gums are swollen, their spiritual teeth are falling out, their spiritual bones have grown crooked so that they are deformed and dwarfed in spiritual stature, they are weak and pale and dizzy and itchy because their spiritual diet is unbalanced and insufficient. They have scurvy. **AND NO MAN WITH SCURVY CAN MINISTER AS A PRIEST OF THE MOST HIGH GOD.** He is disqualified.

In the Churches today you hear the constant drum-beat that Christians are saved to go to a blissful heaven and, failing that, men are doomed to the torment of a blistering hell. One would think, from all the preaching, that the two primary themes running through the Word of God are heaven and hell. Not so! You will have to tear the Bible all to pieces and re-write literally thousands of passages if you say that the great themes of God's blessed Book are heaven and hell. The truth is that God is not primarily concerned with where we are going, but He is vitally and eternally concerned about **WHAT WE ARE BECOMING.** Man does not need to be saved mainly because he is going to hell; he needs to be saved because of his awful, hopeless **CONDITION.** It is man's **STATE OF BEING** that is wrong, he is **DEAD**, the Scripture says; a Christless death in which he is dead to God, dead to Christ, dead to virtue, dead to truth, dead to purity, dead to righteousness, dead to peace,

dead to joy, dead to reality, dead to promise, dead to hope. DEAD! He abides in this death throughout all the decades, centuries, or millenniums of his existence until Christ comes into his heart, making him alive, and beginning the long and tedious process of growing him up into the image of Him who created him.

If saving men from hell is God's primary concern then we must make the Bible say that, if that is what God meant. We must make the Bible say, "And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely be HEADED STRAIGHT FOR HELL" (Gen. 2:16-17). We must correct the Word of God so that it says, "The soul that sinneth, it shall surely be TORMENTED IN HELL" (Eze. 18:4). Jn. 3:16 must be made to correctly read, "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not GO TO HELL, but GO TO HEAVEN." If going to hell is the main concern for the sinner then Rom. 5:12 must be made to say, "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and hell by sin; and so the torment of hell passed upon all men, for that all have sinned."

On the other hand, if some far-off heaven of golden streets and magnificent mansions is the goal and reward of the Christian life, then we must re-write the Bible from Genesis to Revelation. We must make the Bible say, "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that when He shall appear, we shall GO WITH HIM TO HEAVEN" (I Jn. 3:2). But is that what it says? Nay! "We know that when He shall appear, we shall BE LIKE HIM!" It is not talking about going to a place, it bespeaks of a CONDITION or STATE OF BEING. The question is not, my friend, WHERE are you GOING, but WHAT are you BECOMING! "Except a man be born again, he cannot get to heaven," is how the preachers love to quote it; but the Holy Spirit faithfully records, "...he cannot SEE THE KINGDOM OF GOD." I do not hesitate to tell you that there is a whole universe of difference between "going to heaven" and SEEING THE KINGDOM OF GOD. "If any man be in Christ he will go to heaven..." they tell us. Oh, no, my brother, my sister, if any man be in Christ HE I-S A NEW CREATURE. HE I-S! Not place or location, but condition and state of being is unalterably and unceasingly the emphasis of the almighty Creator and Redeemer. We could continue citing hundreds of passages proving that God's great and eternal purpose is not concerned with taking us someplace, but with MAKING SOMETHING OUT OF US.

What purpose would there be if the heaven men preach is naught but a resting place, a celestial Disney-World of thrills and shouting and strumming harps, of swimming in celestial waters and lazing about in a palace with nothing to do and all eternity to do it in; and what purpose if the hell they declare is but a place of torment where unbelievers have nothing to do but scream and blaspheme and suffer excruciating torments eternally? To me it is no great wonder that Christians become spiritually weak, anemic, diseased, and apathetic, and the world is full of backsliders and unbelievers on such a pitiful diet as that!

Scurvy! It comes from an unbalanced and insufficient diet, a lack of something vital to health and well-being. A preacher who has no balanced diet for the saints he feeds disqualifies himself from feeding the bread of God, from serving as a priest. And any saint who eats that unbalanced diet is disqualified for the Royal Priesthood. He will never in a million years share in the Melchizedekian Priesthood. How we praise God for the tremendous revelation coming forth in these last days, how our hearts are enraptured by the wonderful truths now being revealed by the Holy Ghost! How bountifully the table has

been spread with His presence, with divers gifts of the Holy Spirit, with truth and revelation, with the gracious unfolding and unveiling of the deep mysteries of the Kingdom of God kept hidden from ages and from generations! And the ministers of God who do not take advantage of this great feast will cheat their people of many glorious things.

But the practice of trying to come up with some profound revelation EVERY TIME one ministers, instead of giving some good solid balanced teaching ALONG WITH deep truth, can also cause the people to have spiritual scurvy. Such a one is disqualified to minister the bread of God. I have been in meetings where all the ministers were competing to see how far each one could top the far-out revelation of the one preceding him. True ministry will provide a balanced diet. Good foundational teaching and inspirational preaching should not prevent the people from hearing new truths and eating liberal portions of the strong meat of the Word. Many preachers and teachers shy away from strong revelation teaching for fear of "not having good balance." But these are among the most UNBALANCED and end up with their own particular brand of scurvy, causing multitudes of hungry saints to be weak and sickly from being fed their weak, watered-down, over-cooked, warmed-over, half-spoiled, so-called "balanced message." UGH! What more can I say?

Lest there be many who would imagine me to be cynical, we will leave the negative way of looking at things while together we go to explore the ineffable glory of the feast now prepared for the sons of God. And this feast, being the last, the feast of tabernacles will bring perfection and will give strength to the laborers to go forth and accomplish great and mighty things for the Master. As we leave this feast in great strength, those who will be in control of this planet from that time forth will be abiding in the fullness of Resurrection Life and will be free from the curse. It is impossible to corrupt one who is incorruptible by nature. So apostasy and shame shall have had its day and never shall it raise its ugly head in God's perfected body anymore! These mighty sons of God, the king-priests of the Most High, terrible as an army with banners, shall march forth with one purpose only, that the Father may be glorified, revealed, and manifested to creation in all His glorious fullness, bringing a life-flow unto all the peoples of the earth, reconciling all into God, bringing an end to sin, sickness, sorrow and death throughout all realms for evermore, praise HIS wonderful name!

If you would be free from scurvy, if you would be a priest after the order of Melchizedek, if you would offer the eternal, living bread of God to benighted creation, then take the shoes from off your feet, bow low in humility and holy brokenness before the High Priest of your profession; come, and hear His tender voice entreating, "If ANY MAN hear My voice and open the door, I will come in to him, and sup with him, and he with Me" (Rev. 3:20). Precious Lord! how oft have we heard Thee knocking at the doors of our hearts; not only when we were sinners, but after we had tasted and knew that the Lord was good, and had proved Thine infinite love. How often have we heard Thy tender voice beseeching us to open to Thee that Thou mightest sup with us, that we might sit at Thy table and sup with Thee. How often have we chosen the flesh pots of our own desires, and the companionship of others; when, if we had hearkened and opened unto Thee, we might have sat at Thy table and feasted with Thee!

"Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies...my cup runneth over," sang the sweet singer of Israel, and it is only when we hasten forward toward the sound of His voice, casting all else aside in our eager desire for Him and Him alone, that

our souls are thrilled with unimaginable prospect, our spirits lay hold of the eternal promises and joyfully we strip off every weight that with patience, endurance, and faithfulness we may run the race that is set before us. Jesus Christ, the eldest and tallest brother in our family, is the author and finisher of that faith which turns our eyes to the "Mt. Everest" of our hope, 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. 6:19-20).

The man who will pause long enough from his activity to become gripped by the force and eternal significance of these ten words: YE SHALL BE UNTO ME A KINGDOM OF PRIESTS, will find a table spread before him, and will see the Captain of his salvation sitting at His table; he will find himself sitting with Him in sweet fellowship and communion, partaking of the rich wisdom and knowledge and glory and power which grace His table. Why don't you take off the rest of the hour, or perhaps the rest of the day, just to let the Holy Spirit fill your mind with the wonderful significance and the everlasting importance of what it means to be a PRIEST of God? He does not come to sit with you at your table, but He invites you to come to HIS table: He invites you to listen to HIS voice and follow and obey it until you find the table of continual communion and close fellowship where are spread the delectable bounties which will make you strong and whole and tall in the priesthood of God. He sets before you hidden manna; He has spread a table of heavenly bread which will give you vibrant health and supernatural strength to overcome all things and be conformed into the image of the Son. He opens fountains of living water; He brings the soul to rest beside cool, still streams; your cup will overflow with bounteous rivers of His lovingkindness and grace.

There is one point we must not overlook if we would find this table of hidden manna, if we would feed upon the bread of life and drink deeply of the water of life, if we would be strengthened by doing the will of God. In order to enter into this close relation to the Lord and all it brings, we must sit at the KING'S table, as the Shulamite says in the Song of Solomon. Only when HE IS KING of our lives can we enter into these privileges and experiences. Only when He is enthroned within in His kingly and priestly nature, can we qualify for the heavenly calling. We cannot be king of our own lives, or make some preacher, or so-called shepherd, or harlot church system king over us, and expect He will reveal to us His secrets, or take us into His confidence, or share with us His throne. If Christ were sitting upon the throne of our lives continually, we would be sitting at His table continually! There is no scurvy among those who sit with Him at HIS table. Those who eat from His table get the right balanced diet and are able to serve at His altar. All who eat from MAN'S TABLE get scurvy and are disqualified for the priesthood.

Did you ever meditate upon it, and ask God that you might apprehend and enter into the real meaning and experience of desiring and feeding upon the eternal, living bread of God? To feed upon the bread of God is to so partake of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, to so die to self and sin and the world as He died, to so live in triumphant life as He lives, and to so yield to the will of God in all things, that His Word will become flesh in you, you are the embodiment and expression of Himself. That is what the King means when He says, "I have gathered my myrrh with my spice; I have eaten my honeycomb with my honey; I have drunk my wine with my milk; eat, O friends; drink, yea drink abundantly, O beloved" (S. of S. 5:1). It is as though He said, "I have eaten it all for you, I have gathered my myrrh and my spice, I have eaten honeycomb with my honey; I have drunk my wine with my milk. I have come and offered myself as a sweet savor

before the Father in your behalf. I have become a man like unto you, I have died to sin in the flesh, I have lived by the life of the Father on the earth plane, I have fulfilled all His will and all His word, I have received the incorruptible glory of the Father, I have eaten to the full of all this, that you also might eat and drink to the full of that which I have prepared for you. Now, O friends, eat! Eat! Drink abundantly. Eat and drink of me. Do not eat only a little of the bread of life; do not feed upon Me only now and then; do not pass over any little morsel on My table, do not shirk from the cross and yield to it only occasionally and reluctantly. Do not be satisfied with only a taste of that which I have done for you. Drink to the full, until rivers of living water flow out from your innermost being to all around."

Through our union with Him, He would have us partake of His death and resurrection, until all the movements of our own desires and our own selves shall forever be silenced. He would have us drink of that cup which He has mixed with mercy, until the perfect will and working of God is fully accomplished in our lives unto transformation into His image. He would have our lives filled with all the life and light and glory which He Himself is, and which He now offers to us as we sit at His table with Him. Then He would pour it all out through us as His priests!

SCABS AND OPEN SORES

This is one of the most important items, though it sounds horrible. The New International Version calls it "running or festering sores." There is an obstinate and unsightly affection of the skin which older writers called "lepra" but which is today called "psoriasis." Chronic in nature, it is characterized by inflamed patches, reddish, slightly thickened and elevated, and somewhat wrinkled, and covered with silvery scales. The most frequent location is on the scalp at the margin of the hair, on the arms near the elbows, and on the legs near the knees. On the back, chest, or abdomen, patches the size of a saucer or dinner plate may be located. Eruptions may cover much of the body, accompanied by fierce itching. While medical science claims there is no "cure" for psoriasis, it has been demonstrated that it disappears quickly when correct living practices are observed. One doctor who has treated hundreds of cases states, "We have found psoriasis to respond to dietetic treatment in all cases." In some, complete recovery can be effected in four to six weeks. The disease can be conquered when the sufferer learns how to live so as not to cause the disease's condition. Unburden the body of the vast cesspool of toxins created by improper living and it will, through its own healing power, restore itself to health and vitality. If the body no longer has to oppose, counteract and neutralize the effects of alcohol, tea, coffee, tobacco, and other drugs, of overeating, wrong eating, bad food, impure water, foul air, greasy condiments, rich spices, fear, worry, anxiety, jealousy, self-pity and other destructive emotions, overwork, lack of sleep, and other impairing influences - if it is released from this daily task, what wonders of healing it can accomplish!

The message is clear - the "scabs and open sores" which disqualified a member of the Aaronic order for serving in the priesthood represents an INWARD UNCLEANNES which erupts in OUTWARD PURULENCE. It bespeaks the inward uncleanness of impure thoughts, motives, and desires which erupt into the outward purulence of a life disgraced by unholy actions. Many well-known ministers have gone down the tubes during the last thirty years because the righteousness of the Kingdom of God was never fulfilled in their deepest hearts. 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 would come to hear them whenever they showed up. But their word

wasn't trustworthy; you couldn't depend on them. They would not live within their means, nor pay their honest debts. They glibly asked their followers for thousands of dollars in donations and willingly resorted to every sordid trick and sob story to persuade people to give more and more money. They bilked widows of their life-savings, and then left behind a disgraceful trail of unpaid bills and questionable dealings. Some were caught in bed with another man's wife, or ran off with the organist, deserting their own wife and children. Some divorced and remarried again and again. Others were caught in homosexual acts. Others sank into the filth of free love, wife-swapping, and group sex - in the name of the Lord! One died in a hotel room of acute alcoholism. Another became obsessed with weird and strange doctrines and illusions of grandeur. He founded a cult and built a tabernacle with a golden throne surrounded by the twenty-four elders. And, of course, the whole world knows about Jimmy Jones and the Jonestown tragedy! Others had violent tempers, lying tongues, deceptive methods, kingdom-building spirit, and egos inflated with pride. Ah - "running and festering sores" - what an apt description of men whose hearts are filled with all filthiness and unrighteousness, "having eyes full of adultery, and that cannot cease from sin; beguiling unstable souls: an heart they have exercised with covetous practices; cursed children: which have forsaken the right ways, and are gone astray, following the way of Balaam the son of Bosor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness" (II Pet. 2:14-15). What shame and reproach these bring on the Kingdom of God by their unholy actions!

There are men who profess to be sons of God who have this problem. They have a good knowledge of truth, eloquent delivery, and power to move audiences and influence people, but their lives are oozing with festering pus that stinks to all who come near. Such a one should not feed the bread of God! You would not want a waiter in a restaurant to serve you a meal with his body covered with running sores. How much more important for those king-priests who are to feed the eternal, living bread of God to creation! I can assure you, beloved, that the Royal Priesthood will be made up of men and women who have not scabs or running sores!

Ah, the problem has been that throughout long ages men have sought the POWER of the Kingdom of God apart from the RIGHTEOUSNESS of the Kingdom. Jesus revealed something of the wonderful power of the Kingdom of God when He commissioned His disciples with this authoritative word: "As ye go, preach, saying, The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand. Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils: freely ye have received, freely give" (Mat. 10:7-8). Men have asked for and have graciously received an anointing of that Kingdom power, and have gone forth to do exploits in His name, but in the great majority of cases they neither asked 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 authority 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. THE WAY TO GET RID OF THE EXTERNAL PURULENCE IS TO CLEAN UP THE INTERNAL CORRUPTION. "A new heart also will I put within you."

Let us now take heed to the exhortation of Jesus in Mat. 6:33. "But seek ye first the Kingdom of God, and HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS; and all these things shall be added unto you." The righteousness of the Kingdom is neither a moral standard nor a code of ethics. God's righteousness is JESUS CHRIST. Apart from the inworking of His holy nature and

His beautiful character all our righteousnesses are filthy rags and putrefying sores. Christ is made unto us righteousness (I Cor. 1:30) and we are made the righteousness of God in Him (II Cor. 5:21). When we talk about the righteousness of the Kingdom of God, we have to explain what kind of righteousness we are talking about. There are two kinds of righteousness set forth in the Scriptures that pertain to believers. The first kind is IMPUTED righteousness. The second kind is IMPARTED righteousness.

Let us look first of all at imputed righteousness. Paul talks about this in Rom. 4:3, "What saith the Scripture? Abraham believed God and it was counted (or imputed) unto him for righteousness." In bookkeeping, we have what are called debits and credits. If you have cash revenue come in, you may debit the bank and credit sales. You debit the bank. What does that mean? You deposit money in the bank. It is "imputed" to your checking account. Almost everyone understands that when you deposit money in the bank, you are debiting your bank account, you are imputing money to your bank account. When you get your bank statement, it might show that you have \$743.25 in the bank. That is counted to you, it is imputed to you, though no actual money may have been involved, it may have been a check you deposited. It is debited to you because a deposit to your account took place.

The Bible says of Abraham that when he BELIEVED GOD, it was counted (or debited, imputed) to him for righteousness. He got a great big deposit to his account - righteousness! What kind of righteousness was it? It was imputed righteousness. It was righteousness imputed to his account so that he came to right standing before God by doing one thing. And that one thing was what? BELIEVING! Abraham believed God, and it was counted (imputed) to him, for righteousness.

Salvation begins with imputed righteousness. Most Christians, however, stop right there and never PRESS ON in God to know the blessedness of IMPARTED RIGHTEOUSNESS. Imputed righteousness is like money charged to your account in the bank. But imparted righteousness is like money paid out of the account INTO YOUR HANDS. You can know the joy of sins forgiven and the wonder of being a child of God with imputed righteousness, but only by the INWARD POWER OF IMPARTED RIGHTEOUSNESS can one be brought into the image of Jesus Christ, which is the image of God. What is imparted righteousness? The apostle Peter writes, "Beside this...ADD TO YOUR FAITH virtue (or goodness), and to virtue knowledge, and to knowledge self-control, and to self-control patience, and to patience godliness, and to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love" (II Pet. 1:5-7).

Why does he say, "ADD TO YOUR FAITH?" Peter is telling us that once we have believed, we are at the point of beginning in righteousness. We must have imputed righteousness, but we must add to that what the Bible describes in Romans 8 as FULFILLED righteousness or EXPRESSED righteousness. The righteousness that is imputed to us as a free gift must now find EXPRESSION or FULFILLMENT in our lives. "The law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned (or judged) sin in the flesh: that the righteousness of the law might be FULFILLED (or EXPRESSED) in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit" (Rom. 8:2-4).

As Charles Wesley so beautifully wrote, "He breaks the power of cancelled sin, He sets the prisoner free. His blood can make the foulest clean, His blood avails for me." When

He breaks the power of cancelled sin, then we have IMPARTED righteousness, expressed righteousness, experiential righteousness, fulfilled righteousness. All that God is in His righteousness begins to come forth in our life.

I thank God today that there is a righteousness, a divine righteousness which God can impart to men, and which can exalt a man to the image and likeness of God. In no other way can men ever be exalted or lifted up out of the depths of sin, self, sorrow, and death. So I gladly and thankfully this day record this truth that the righteousness of which I speak is the righteousness of God, which by faith we may possess; not only a righteousness imputed, in which we trust, but a righteousness IMPARTED, INWORKED INTO THE NATURE. All very good is this talk about imputed righteousness, but I cannot - will not - settle for a righteousness that is only imputed. If it is not imparted, it is not a POWER WITHIN US at all. I thank God for the Word of the Master Himself who told us that this Kingdom of God would be within us, and defined it. He said that we were to SEEK THE KINGDOM OF GOD AND HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS. Paul himself excellently words it when he says, "The Kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but RIGHTEOUSNESS and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost" (Rom. 14:17).

Those precious elect ones whom God has chosen in Christ He has sanctified by His Spirit. Sanctification is too great a truth to more than mention here, but sanctification is the work of setting aside holy things for holy uses. It is the Holy Spirit who changes our lives. It is the Spirit who separates us from the world and who separates the world from us. It is the Spirit who reveals our carnal nature. It is the Spirit who deals with that carnal nature and establishes within us the power of the divine nature.

There is something deep within me that tells me that the Kingdom of God for the next age and the ages beyond is not going to be launched from the same old launching pad we have used for the past two thousand years. It is going to be as different from the systems and methods and experiences of the existing Church as the ministry of Jesus Christ of Nazareth was different from the forms and ritualistic ceremonies of the Pharisees. The Church age has been an age of limitation, mixture, and imperfection. But when the long awaited sons of God arise in the fullness of the glory and power of the enthroned Christ, they shall not arise as weak, carnal men thanking God for an imputed righteousness, but they shall go forth to meet all the needs of a groaning creation by the fullness of HIS INCORRUPTIBLE LIFE dwelling within them. And there will be no failure!

We see a terrible lack of things being right, or in divine order, in the world and in the Church. There is a divine order for creation, for life on this earth. There is a proper order for animal life, vegetable life, and human life. But all things are out of order, in terrible chaos. The curse must be lifted, every enemy put under our feet. Divine order for the universe must be restored. All creation is groaning and crying for release from the curse of sin and decay and death. And everything hinges on that body of Sons that are to be manifested in a perfect state of divine order. They will have the mind of Christ. They will have overcome all things and conquered every enemy. They will possess the total inworking of the righteousness of Jesus Christ. They will have all power in heaven and in earth. They will have the power of creation, the power to reproduce themselves in others, even as our precious Lord now has and is creating in us. And this shall be done until all the world and every creature has been rebirthed into the image of God.

Today we see an imperfect Church, living an imperfect life, receiving an imperfect seed from an imperfect ministry, and bringing forth imperfect children who are all their life time

subject to carnality, sin, limitation, sorrow and death, as well as rebukes, chastisements and scourgings to bring them into sonship. Of course we know that the true Word of God is perfect, but if the preachers were preaching that perfect Word, their children would be perfect. And this shall be done, for the Christ shall yet present unto Himself a people without spot or wrinkle, having no blemish. Then when a perfect company of sons puts a perfect and pure seed (or Word) into a perfect Church, the world will be evangelized completely with converts that are birthed out of darkness right into the likeness and life of God. That which God is bringing forth for the next age will be perfect, it will be sinless, deathless, and gloriously victorious! There will be no running or festering sores or ugly scabs on the sons of God! They 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! You can have imperfect apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, teachers, and Christians, but you can't have IMPERFECT MANIFESTED SONS OF GOD! If God were to give unlimited power into the hands of men with imperfect lives and corrupt hearts they would become the most despicable race of devils and tyrants the world has ever known. They would wreck the Kingdom of God in a few short months and creation would never be set free. Praise God! God's Royal Priesthood will be free from scabs and running sores. These priests shall reign in righteousness for "a SCEPTRE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS is the scepter of Thy Kingdom" (Heb. 1:8).

BROKEN STONES

The twelfth and final blemish which the Holy Spirit has signified as disqualifying one for the priesthood is "broken stones." The Hebrew word here for "stones" is ESHEK, meaning testicles. It is the reproductive glands in a man's body. Bill Britton has written such a pungent and pointed word on this that I would be remiss if I failed to share it with my readers. He says, "A man with broken stones cannot produce life. He can be a husband, but he cannot be a father. What has this got to do with the ministry of the Levitical priesthood? God used it as a type of ministry today who preaches sermons, but does not give life. God help us, there are so many in the ministry like that today. They are educated, they are eloquent, they are convincing, but they do not have the ability to produce the life of God in those who hear them. Their ministry is polished, but dead. Their sermons are interesting and well preached, but lifeless. People listen to them, and continue in their old carnal ways, for there is no life-changing power in their words. Their stones are broken, and they are disqualified to feed the bread of God to His people.

"We have had preachers come by and preach for us, only to discover that they had stirred our imagination, fed our intellect, painted pretty gospel pictures with their eloquent words, but produced no new life in us. Sons of God are being birthed in the image of Jesus Christ. It is because a word of life is being planted in the hearts of dedicated and hungry saints. Thank God, there IS a ministry of life in the land, and God is sending them forth with the Holy Ghost anointing. They may shout their message in a loud voice, or they may quietly teach the word in a modulated tone. But they have life to give. And lives are changed, and the image of Christ is appearing in His people.

"Circumstances have nothing to do with this. Jesus could sit on a well in the middle of the day talking to a much married woman, but there was so much life in His words that the

entire city was shaken with revival. They could put Paul in prison, his feet fast in the stocks, but before the night was over the jailer and his family had been birthed into the Kingdom of God. They could exile John to the isle of Patmos, but the words God gave him are still turning men to God many centuries later. On the other side of the coin, a man can preach to thousands in a million dollar cathedral, with millions watching on television, and produce nothing more than a plastic people following a plastic ministry with broken stones and no life to give. There is nothing plastic or man-made about the real Church of Jesus Christ. We have a real Saviour, and He is going to have a real people. He is going to put that people on exhibit in the ages to come, to show all creation what His life has produced in the earth. I have met men who wrote books and claimed that their writing had the same inspiration and authority as the writings of the apostles and prophets in the Bible. That is tommyrot! If you read their writings you will find that you receive information, but no real life. I certainly do not claim that my writings are equal in any way to the Scripture. But I do believe that I have a right in God to expect to put words in print that have enough of the life of God to change lives, and bring forth more of His life in His people. Someone said to me once, 'I enjoyed your message, but you were preaching over my head.' I answered that I was not shooting for his head, but at his heart (which contrary to physical science, is higher than the head). I was not trying to bring information and feed the intellect. I wanted to touch the heart and bring forth life. The man called into the ministry of the High Calling, the Melchizedek order, does not have broken stones. What can we say to these things? With such a high standard for the priesthood in these last days, who can possibly qualify? Have no fear, for the Holy Ghost is doing His work. We desperately need that priesthood of life, and we SHALL HAVE IT!" - end quote.

There is a dimension of the revelation of Jesus Christ that transcends the speaking of words, the writing of books, and the preaching of sermons. The revelation of Jesus Christ is the need of the hour. Only a present intervention of the divine Mind, only a present revelation of the spirit of wisdom will be able to meet the need. If God does not give a special ministrations and the spirit of wisdom and power to meet the need of the world and all creation, it will not be met. There are no buttons to press that can solve the complex and frightening problems that exist in the world today. The further we move in God the more helpless and totally empty we become, for our nothingness is magnified in the light of HIS GLORY.

The hour for the unveiling of God's Royal Priesthood is at hand. May God grant to each of His apprehended ones the understanding that from this time on God is not interested in what He has done for you. From now on it must be "When Christ who is our life shall appear..." If there is a mind in us, it must be the mind of Christ, not our religious mind that has been cultivated through the years until it is religious and devoted and full of the Bible and stayed on God. From now on it must not be your mind stayed on God, it must be HIS MIND IN YOU. What we have witnessed to for years was a work of God, His salvation in us, His peace in us, His victory in us, how we had become a product of the work of God; but God's purpose is not that we shall be a testimony of the work of God, but that there shall come a revelation of a Person, that the revelation will be Christ. It will not be a revelation of the work of God, but the revelation of the Person of God in us.

God is talking to His sons about PERSONIFICATION, EMBODIMENT, MANIFESTATION AND REVELATION. All who are pressing forward into sonship are going to embody Christ as you have been embodying the works of Christ. Christians represent the work of God: Saved from this, having received that, experiencing the other, and changed into

something else; but it is still "ME." What you see is a marvelous expression of the handiwork of God. But God intends that the hour should come when there shall be a revelation of GOD HIMSELF: "He is our life." Not: We have life because He has wrought life in us, but "Christ who IS OUR LIFE shall appear, then shall we appear with Him in glory." "He is our peace;" our peace then becomes not a witness to a work, but the witness of a Person. He is our righteousness, our wisdom, our redemption, our sanctification; all that He is to us then becomes not a witness to a work or an experience, but the witness of a Person.

Are you willing, precious friend of mine, to have nothing but the Person? Are you willing to lay aside the work and forget the experience to have the Person? The hoary headed old prophet, Simeon, took up the baby Jesus in his arms and declared: "Mine eyes have seen Thy salvation." The salvation he saw was not in an experience, it was in the baby. There are thousands of people living in Florida and around the world today who are living witnesses to the work of God, of His handiwork, the power of the blood, the saving grace of God, and the gifts and anointings of God. But what is God still looking for, what is creation yet groaning for, what is to be ushered in by the Royal Priesthood that is any different from what we have had for two thousand years? A PEOPLE WHO ARE NO LONGER WITNESSES TO THE WORK OF GOD, NO LONGER OPERATORS OF THE GIFTS OF GOD, BUT WHO BEAR THE VERY PERSON OF GOD, IN WHOM THE VERY BEING OF GOD IS FORMED, SO THAT WHEN THEY BEAR WITNESS TO SALVATION, IT WILL BE BEARING WITNESS TO THE PERSON OF THE LORD.

The Lord is our salvation, and that means that we do not gamble, steal, get drunk and so on, we are forgiven and changed. That is what salvation has been to us up till now. But Simeon said: "Mine eyes have seen Thy salvation." And all he saw was a baby! He saw a Person. Ah, if it were not for a Person there would not have been the cross and the suffering and the death and the resurrection and the glory. But what many of us have done is, we began with a Person when first we met the Lord, and ended up with His acts. God's order is: You begin with a Person, then His deeds are accomplished, and ultimately the Person can be formed in you. When all is finished, you are not left with the works of God, you are left with the Lord Himself. Christ shall become in us our life, and when Christ appears AS OUR LIFE then we also appear with Him in glory.

What the Spirit is saying is that God must have a people in whom the Lord is BECOMING rather than DOING. That is what the manifestation of the sons of God is, that is what the revelation of Jesus Christ is, and there will never be a revelation of Jesus Christ if all I can talk about and demonstrate is of what He has done. His works are not Him - HE IS A PERSON. Paul said, "It pleased God to reveal His Son in me," not, "It pleased God to reveal some of the works of His Son in me and give me some great experiences." And when he prayed, "My little children, of whom I travail in birth till Christ be formed in you," Paul did not mean that they should receive a little more cleansing with the blood, a little greater anointing in the gifts, die a little more death and so on. There came an hour when Paul knew that the works of the Lord would not be sufficient, but that the Lord Himself had to be put on in all fullness, so that instead of having a work of patience, the Lord Himself would be the patience.

The Bible says, "The Lord is my strength." It does not refer to some strength the Lord has dished out to you, but, the Lord Himself has become your strength; not a work, but a Person. THAT IS SONSHIP AS A COMPLETED FACT. The revelation now is the revelation of a Person, our witness is unto Him because the Person has become in us. It

looks as if you are turning your back on these wonderful works of God, but you needed them to bring you where you are in God. Now you are "forgetting those things which are behind." From now on, what Christ is, becomes the expression. If at this hour we still need God to DO for us rather than for the Christ to BECOME in us, then we are not ready for the manifestation of the sons of God. When God sends forth His sons, He sends them forth as those in whom Christ is so fully formed that it is not a matter of needing God to do anything anymore, but that Christ has BECOME in them, praise HIS name!

It is vastly more important to reveal the life of the Son of God in meeting creation's need, than to be witnessing to people about salvation. We have become so conditioned to the notion that we aren't doing anything for God unless we are able to get out and witness and skillfully use the Scriptures. That is all good, and there is a place for it, but that is not the manifestation of the sons of God. When you are truly helping people you are becoming a LIVING WORD to them which says, "God cares for you!" That is simply Christ living His life through you. We become a Word that is alive to them, not a dead, printed word, or a testimony, but the living manifestation of the Christ. There is something we can do, and it is more important and powerful than witnessing, quoting scriptures, or teaching. Instead of witnessing about God, we BECOME the witness - the embodiment of what Jesus Christ really is.

May Christ be so fully revealed to all of us is my earnest prayer and my deepest desire, that in these coming days there will not be any longer a cry in our spirit, "O God, do something more for me for that leaves me with myself on my hands. The secret of Jesus was that for three and a half years He did not have to be more consecrated, He did not have to be more dedicated, He did not have to be more victorious, He did not need another experience, or another blessing, all He had to do was let the Father live out through Him. And may it be so in the days ahead that it will be Christ fully formed in us, Christ living out in all the glory of God, in all the fullness of all His life and love and power and victory - HIMSELF.

"Blessed Father! let it be so in us. Let Christ be fully formed in me and in all who read these lines, and in all the body of Christ. Lord, let the work of doing for us come to an end, until it shall be Christ formed in us. Lord, cause Jesus Christ to become in us our peace, our joy, our life, our victory, our power, that from this moment on there shall only be the expression of Himself; not a witness of His work, but the revelation of His own Person and Being and Nature. O God, let that divine Nature, that divine Person of the Son of God be fully manifested in us, that the creation that is groaning for the unveiling of Jesus Christ will see Him unveiled in His body, unveiled in His Church, unveiled in His ministry, unveiled in His King-Priests, that every eye shall see Him and all the kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him. Do this, we pray, through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen." There are no broken stones among those in whom HIS LIFE is manifested!

Chapter 13

Qualifications For Priesthood

(continued)

There were three primary qualifications for priesthood in the Old Testament order of Aaron: (1) birth (2) freedom from blemish (3) maturity. The very first requirement was that one must be a son of the High Priest; a man might be the brightest and most capable Levite, but if he was not the offspring of Aaron he was prohibited from serving in the office of the priesthood. The first qualification for priesthood is birth. You must be the son of the High Priest, the offspring of HIS priestly nature. Membership in the Royal Priesthood begins with the new birth. But being born again no more makes one a priest than being born into Aaron's house made one a priest. Right birth was the first requirement but merely the first step down a long path of preparation and qualification. One could be the son of the High Priest and still not be qualified for the priesthood if there were some blemish in him, any kind of disease, deformity, or physical impairment.

"Whosoever...hath any blemish, let him not approach to offer the bread of his God" (Lev. 21:17). Spiritually, a blemish is a flaw in character. Webster defines blemish as: Any deformity, physical or moral; flaw; disfigurement; to mar or disfigure. It speaks to us of a weakness of character. Ah you can be a Christian (Levite) and have some flaws of character. You can speak in tongues and have such flaws. You can heal the sick and do great signs and wonders and have such flaws. You can be an elder, an evangelist, or even an apostle and have such flaws. But I do not hesitate to tell you that you will never be a priest after the order of Melchizedek with such flaws!

The third qualification for priesthood was maturity. One might be the son of the High Priest without any disease or blemish in him at all, still he could not serve as a priest until he became a mature man, reaching the significant age of thirty. While the Scripture nowhere states the exact age when a priest entered his ministry, it is revealed that the priest's brethren, the Levites, began their service at thirty years of age (Num. 4:3). John the Baptist was of the priestly tribe. His father was a priest (Lk. 1:5). The first born son was to be a priest. John was the first born. John the Baptist was a priest and was six months older than Jesus. He began his public ministry six months before Jesus after reaching the age of thirty. Thirty is everywhere the Biblical age of MATURITY and BEGINNING OF MINISTRY. Christ was thirty years old at the commencement of His ministry. Joseph, His type, was the same age. David, also when he began to reign over Israel. Ah, one may be born again by the Spirit of God, and sanctified holy, sinless and blameless before the Lord but he still cannot qualify for God's Royal Priesthood until he has SPIRITUALLY MATURED, arriving at the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ!

"As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby" (1 Pet. 2:2). Are not newborn babies delightful? They are so cute. You just like to put your finger

under their chins and go "coochie, coochie, coo." You like to see how strongly they can hold on to your finger. A baby just brings smiles to everybody's face. People gather around a crib and they all smile. But if a year later the baby is still lying there on his back, making bubbles, people do not smile, but think, "He's rather small, isn't he?" If five years later he is still lying in his crib gurgling, you will notice that there is not a smile in the house. If we could see the growth of our spirits the way we can see the growth of bodies, I am sure that in the gathering together of the saints, there might not be much joy because we would see many people who have never grown at all, pitiful little retarded, deformed, shriveled up spirits unable to take care of themselves. It is always sad to see someone like that. It is just as sad to see someone who grows up physically to be a full-grown adult and yet has never become mature. We say of such a person, "Oh, he is still immature," and this results in all sorts of problems. He has problems everywhere with everyone because of his immaturity! In the spiritual realm, the same thing is true. There is a spiritual immaturity which causes many problems in the spiritual world. And this is what disqualifies most Christians for the Royal Priesthood.

You have the birth; you have the life, but you must have a certain amount of growth and experience; you must be thirty years of age. A priest must be someone with a matured life. Babies cannot serve at God's altar. Babies cannot offer the bread of God. Babies cannot impart God's life. Babies cannot be handed a sword and marched out to war to deliver creation from the tyranny of sin, Satan, and death. The world is filled with millions of Christians, but it seems they are just like children playing with spiritual things; playing church, playing with the gifts of God, going out to convert the world and sweep nations into the Kingdom of God, but it is all just pretend, make believe, a great game, while the world becomes more and more wicked and evil men and seducers wax worse and worse, and mankind rushes madly onward toward destruction. They are so young, so immature, these would be deliverers of mankind! They can give you their spiritual pedigree but they have not grown. They have not much wisdom. They do not know the mind of the Lord. They have no power. They are immature. To make matters worse, though they are infants, yet in their estimation they are the greatest! They have great programs and grandiose schemes, and raise millions of dollars to turn the whole world to God, and know not that all their mighty works are but sand castles on the beach of creation's need.

Let some carnal, tradition ridden denominational preacher receive the gift of the Holy Spirit and speak in tongues, and immediately he will be paraded around the country to give his testimony and many thousands of well-meaning Christians will sit in rapt attention, clinging fervently to every word that proceeds out of his mouth, esteeming the man as a veritable fountain head of spiritual wisdom and knowledge. The understanding needs but little enlightening to see that such a man, though having received the free gift of God's Holy Spirit, abides still in the harlot's house and his tradition is as thick as smoke to blind and darken the eyes, ever hiding from our understanding the glorious fullness of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Such an one, skillfully trained in the wisdom of THIS WORLD, though born again and Spirit filled, is STILL BUT A BABE IN CHRIST, a mere beginner, a toddler in the Kingdom of God with little to offer those elect saints who seek to walk with God and learn of Him and, being thus led, to grow into full sonship to Him. You will never become a son of God, precious friend of mine, by listening to testimonies and imbibing of the doctrines and traditions of the religious systems. You will become stunted in your spiritual growth, and weak and powerless in your spiritual life.

"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: that we

henceforth be NO MORE CHILDREN, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; but speaking the truth in love, MAY GROW UP INTO HIM in all things, which is the head, even Christ" (Eph. 4:13-15). Allow me to say that this is not merely a teaching. You must pray and search diligently about this matter. Pray and remember that you must grow to a certain standard. The standard is the full measure of the maturity of the Christ. The standard can never be lowered. We must grow up to it. I say GROW UP, not GROW OLD. If you become old, you will be discharged as were the sons of Levi; you will be retired from spiritual service. You must only advance; you must never deteriorate.

You must stand in the priesthood from the age of thirty to the age of fifty (Num. 4:3). You must be full of experience and wisdom and grace and power, but void of deterioration. Some, indeed, have not yet grown up, but they are already old. They have worn themselves out playing religious games. They have burned out in the zeal of the flesh. They are the old young ones. We must grow to a certain stage of spiritual life to be formed into the priesthood of God. There are no short cuts. THIS IS THE THIRD QUALIFICATION.

If the message of the new birth is all we preach, we will NEVER be the priesthood of God. If the baptism in the Holy Spirit and the gifts are all we preach, we will NEVER deliver the groaning creation. If purity and holiness are all we preach, we will NOT move this generation. I do not hesitate to tell you that it will require a deep inworking of "present truth" (II Pet. 1:12) to shake off the shackles of the powers of darkness in this hour! Acts 2:38 is not enough. We must move beyond the foundational principles and begin to mature (Heb. 6:13). In Martin Luther's day, justification by faith was dynamite. But this is not 1525. At the turn of the century, Acts 2:4 was a bombshell. But this is not 1900. In 1948 prophecy, praise, the laying on of hands and impartation shook the Church world. But this is not 1948. Thank God for every wave of God's tide of restoration that has brought a people to the edge of His fullness. BUT WE WILL LEARN TO BE KINGS AND PRIESTS UNTO GOD in this day or we shall be swallowed up and overcome by the birth pangs of a new age. And we will overcome as did the Pattern Son (Rev. 3:21), by fully submitting to the will of the One who is within, until we become like Him. Glory!

The wonderful purpose of God is that of an ongoing, progressive development from birth until spiritual maturity, the end product of which is a generation of holy, priestly sons. Every minute, hour, and day should see new dimensions of His life with a new power. Regeneration and maturity are two different things. There is between them the difference between a baby, a child, and a full-grown man with a large experience, capacity and intelligence which makes him a strong power to do God's service.

MARKS OF MATURITY

A lot can be said for little children especially if it's said by grandparents who have the advantage of being able to take them when they're lovable and leave them when they're not. Little children are self centered, but they don't know any better. They are active, wide eyed explorers of ever expanding horizons. They are entertainers: imitators, actors, and comedians. They are vulnerable, impressionable, playful, and candid. They express simple, uncluttered feelings, thoughts, and opinions. Little children are not afraid to ask questions, to ask for help or to offer it. They know how to laugh. They know how to cry when a good cry helps to make things better. It is just as true, however, that some dimensions of childishness lose their appeal if they don't pass with time. The

preoccupation with imaginary friends, the toys, the testing of authority, the attention getting tactics, and the self centeredness get a little old if they characterize someone who is not acting his age.

In the book of I Corinthians the burden of Paul's message was to show how tremendously important it is for us to grow up in Christ. "But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away. When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things" (I Cor. 13:10-11). Therefore, after briefly stating the "in part" nature of the "gift realm" he speaks of the coming of that which is "perfect." The word "perfect" means "complete." The idea of incompleteness is related to childishness. Just before he emphasized that he had put childish ways behind him, Paul wrote, "For we know in part and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect has come, then that which is in part will be done away." He meant "perfection" in the sense of "completeness" or "maturity." He meant that his childish capacities for speech, understanding, and reasoning had given way to more complete capacities. Can we not see by this that the whole "gift realm" which is "in part" and so frivolously revealed in this hour is naught but SPIRITUAL CHILDISHNESS? Ah it is time for the sons of God to GROW UP!

In that light, then, let us look at the first way of understanding childishness. CHILDREN DON'T REALLY UNDERSTAND WHAT'S GOING ON. They live in the "in part" realm of gifts and play and excitement, but have very limited understanding or responsibility. A brother has shared the following experience which clearly illustrates the point. He says, "We were at the airport getting ready to take a plane to go back East. We had quite a bit of time to spend there because we always get there early. So I spent some time walking around. There was a plane getting ready to leave for the Hawaiian Islands, and I am always interested in going to the Hawaiian Islands, so I just looked at the folk who were going. Most of them were going out there for a holiday. But I saw a couple sitting there, a soldier boy in uniform, a fine looking young fellow, and beside him the prettiest little wife you've ever seen, holding a fine looking little boy. And they were both sad. Everybody else going to the Hawaiian Islands was anticipating the fun they were going to have, but he was on his way to Hawaii to join his outfit going to Vietnam. There sat that fellow and there sat the girl. They weren't saying anything. They were just staring out into space. The little boy didn't know what it was all about; so he was having a big time. When the call came to board the plane, they stood up. I saw him put those great big arms around both of them, his wife and that little boy. And he kissed both of them. Tears were coming down his cheeks and tears were rolling down her cheeks. The little boy, he was still having a big time. And then the fellow picked up his little old bag he had there, started out to the plane, and disappeared. The girl stood there, then she went over to the window and waited till the plane pulled out to get on the run way. I watched her as she went soberly away carrying the little boy and carrying her bag and the toys. She was weighted down. And I never felt as sorry for anyone as I did for that girl. I wondered what the future held. Was there a father or a mother she would go to or would she have to live alone and take care of that child by herself? I don't know, but it was sad to see as she disappeared into the crowd. The little boy knew nothing of these weighty considerations. He was still just having a great time!" end quote.

It is a sad fact that the vast majority of busy, Church going Christians today have positively NO UNDERSTANDING OF WHAT THE FATHER IS DOING. While they sing and clap their hands, dance and play with their gifts, and earnestly talk about the rapture and the far away heaven with golden streets and mansions, where they will strum harps

and shout throughout endless ages, they know nothing of God's will, nor of His word, nor of His ways, nor of His wonderful plan of the ages. While they delight in propagating the grievous deception that the Lord wants nothing but prosperity for His saints, that they should seek and have the best of everything THIS WORLD has to offer the best homes, the best cars, the best furniture, the best food, the best jobs, the biggest bank accounts, together with perfect health and complete absence of sickness, problems, trouble, or tribulation of any kind, bringing God's people into bondage to the world and its transient and empty glory, thus hindering the development of many a saint they know nothing of humility, of brokenness, of suffering, of stripping, of chastisement, of purging, of cleansing, of refining, of processing, and the resultant transformation and conformation into the image of the Son of God. They know nothing of sonship! They know nothing of the groaning creation. They know nothing of the Father's great and wonderful plan in bringing sons to glory and look askance at those mystics who see God's merciful purpose for the government of the world by saints who KNOW HIS WAYS and are acquainted with those purposes which were ordained in Christ our Lord before the world began and before the Spirit of life was breathed into the clay we call Adam. Like the little boy at the airport, they are having a hallelujah big time with their spiritual toys, completely oblivious to the great and important issues that really matter in this dark and momentous hour at the end of the age. One of the sure marks of maturity is the ability to UNDERSTAND WHAT'S GOING ON!

There are certain evidences of whether or not we are growing up into the maturity of the Christ. Maturity speaks of one who is fully developed, robust, strong, experienced, mentally adept, emotionally stable, self sufficient and independent. Children are immature, weak, underdeveloped, and dependent. As one has written: "...and ye shall be the children of the Highest.' First we note this word 'children' from the Greek 'huios' meaning SONS, a mature one, strong to bear the responsibility and position to which he is appointed. There are different words used in the Greek text which speak of the whole range of growth and development from a babe yet unborn, or new born, on through the stages of a young lad being brought through his teens into young manhood, until one arrives at maturity all covered simply by the word 'children' in our King James version of the Scriptures. But there is a GROWING UP into Christ, who is the Head, so that 'when I became a man, I put away childish things' (I Cor. 13:11). God is indeed bringing forth sons, mature ones, developed and disciplined, conformed to His image, which shall also give a true expression of HIS NATURE" end quote.

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." But "blessing" seekers are still babes. Certainly there is nothing wrong with being a babe if you have been a babe but for a short time. Babies should grow up fast! You can always spot a babe in Christ, because his whole world is on the outside. Babies are so weak and helpless. The baby is often in a mess, has the colic, needs a diaper change, has a pain somewhere, or is hungry or thirsty, is too hot or too cold, and in all of these situations the one universally recognized fact about babies is that THEY CANNOT DO ANYTHING ABOUT THEIR PROBLEMS THEMSELVES! The baby's whole world is on the outside of himself. He is totally dependent upon what others can and must do for him. Someone else must always be ministering to his needs. If he gets changed, someone must change him. If he gets fed, someone must prepare the food and put it in his mouth. If he gets bathed, someone must do it for him. He cannot take charge of the situation, he cannot solve any of his problems for himself; they must each be ministered

to from without. Thus we see that there are three basis characteristics that accompany babyhood: (1) The baby has more problems than most older folk (2) He is totally dependent upon others, unable to do anything for himself (3) When he has a need he lets it be known until someone comes and meets it. And this dependency continues in varying degrees through all the years until maturity is reached. Children are dependent upon their parents for almost everything. The adolescent is dependent for home, guidance, money, clothes etc. Often the high school graduate is dependent for money to go to college, plus many of the other amenities of life. WHAT A PICTURE THIS IS OF THE BABES IN CHRIST!

Baby Christians are Christians who are continually laden with problems. They are always sick, or discouraged, or depressed, or offended, or confused, or upset, or worried, or fearful, or hungry, or thirsty, or in need of something. These are the ones who take up 90% of the elder's time, strength, and patience in most groups. You must constantly be praying for them, encouraging them, delivering them, and lifting them up. These you will see answering every altar call, standing in every prayer line, always sitting in the chair in the center of the prayer circle, and following after every meeting or ministry where they may receive yet another "blessing" or "experience." These have the victory when everything is going smooth, or when they are struck with some ecstatic experience such as "falling out under the power" or receiving a personal word of prophecy. But as soon as the "blessing" wanes they are so strengthless that they can't make it without another spiritual "fix."

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, 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. 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 open or infants sucking on mother's breast. There was a day in which Jesus and His disciples had made it to Jacob's well in Sychar and decided to stop for lunch. Jesus sat in the shade of the well's shelter while His disciples went into the nearby town for food. Through the shimmering heat haze, a woman with a water pot on her shoulder approached the well. She came to where Jesus was sitting, and He asked her for a drink. Her response was brittle with the hatred between the two peoples: "How is it that you, being a Jew, ask me for a drink since I am a Samaritan woman?" (Jn. 4:9). Jesus was unruffled, offering her the gift He had come to give to all men: "If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that says to you, Give Me a drink, you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water" (Jn. 4:10).

You see, Jesus is saying, "You're the one that needs the water, don't you know that?" She responded by saying in so many words, "You don't have a water pot. How are you going to get water? Why, this well is deep, and how are you going to draw from this well? Have you got some water that doesn't come from this well? Are you greater than our father Jacob?" She's a little provoked with this Jew that is speaking to her.

Then Jesus tells her a principle that she understands all too well in the natural. He said, "You've been drinking this water all your life, and YOU HAVE TO KEEP COMING BACK EVERY DAY. You know what a wearisome thing it is to walk back and forth through the heat and the dust with that water pot on your head. I do have some water, and if you drink of the water that I give you, you'll never thirst again. Take a drink of this water and it will BECOME IN YOU AS A WELL!

Jesus spoke to this woman of a truth more wonderful and glorious than the vast majority of Christians have ever grasped. How many of the Lord's people STILL COME TO THE WELL! How many of us still have our well, our water, our supply, our source of life, ON THE OUTSIDE! We are still trying to pray something down from heaven, or work something up in a meeting, or always looking for some ministry, or some prophet, or some healer, or some experience from which we can DRAW LIFE! And after all our running to and fro, from well to well, from water pot to water pot, we're still thirsty! We're still singing, "Fill my cup, Lord!" We're still conscious of our need! So we keep looking for a well from which to draw to quench our thirst and meet our need. Some even think it is NORMAL to always be thirsty, to ever be coming to the well, drinking again and again.

Oh, how "need" orientated are God's children! Some years ago I was in a meeting where a brother expressed the mentality of the great majority of Christians today. He asked the congregation, "How many have a need tonight?" Every hand in the building shot up. The brother continued, "If you don't have a need, then you ought to!" How many of us have our center in our "needs"? The truth is that if you removed the saint's "needs" from the average church meeting or prayer group, they wouldn't know how to conduct the meeting! Most of our meetings are conducted with a basic consciousness that we need God. Hardly any of our meetings are conducted with the consciousness that WE ARE FILLED WITH GOD! I don't want anyone to misunderstand me...I am NOT opposed to meetings. It is precious when the saints come together under the leadership of the Holy Spirit in singing, praise, worship, exhortation, teaching, and ministry. But most saints need a change in the direction, in the center of the meetings. Instead of coming as empty buckets we must come together as FLOWING RIVERS! We must know that we are SONS OF THE MOST HIGH GOD. If we come together as little children we will say: "We're here tonight because we need God, we need a refilling, we need a blessing." But if we come as mature ones in Christ, in the blessed spirit of sonship, we will say: "We're here to express God!" Oh! What a difference!

Jesus shared with the Samaritan woman one of the most profound and blessed truths of the ages. He said that He has water to give you, and if you once drink this water, you can throw away your water pots, because this water becomes a mighty artesian well WITHIN YOU. As long as the well is on the outside, as long as our source of life is without, then we have to go to the well and get water to satisfy our thirst. And any time you have to go to the well to drink you are going to be thirsty again! And if you stay away from the well very long you will become famished! Is this not a spiritual thermometer by which one can determine just how mature he is? So Jesus asked the woman, "How would you like to have the well on the inside? No more water pots, no more drawing, no more walking back and forth, no more thirst, no more effort and sweat." Let me ask you, dear reader, What would you think if you had the well on the INSIDE? This is what this thing of sonship is all about! It is the well on the inside: "Christ IN YOU the hope of glory." Sonship, maturity, overcoming, perfection, the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. All this is found in that blessed realm where we know that we do indeed HAVE LIFE IN OURSELVES even as the Father has life in Himself. This is the well on the inside! And it

is high time that those who are apprehended of God to be His sons STOP GOING TO THE WELL. It is time we drink until we get the well on the inside!

Let us meditate deeply upon these challenging words penned by another: "Of Jesus Christ we read, 'though He were a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered; and being made perfect, HE BECAME THE AUTHOR (source, wellspring) of eternal salvation unto all them that obey Him; called of God an high priest after the order of Melchizedek' (Heb. 5:8 10). Sonship by virtue of birth was not enough, a boy as a babe is son of his father, but that does not make him a 'huios,' a mature son. This requires all the discipline, training, development, until BEING MADE PERFECT. The process of 'becoming' climaxed in the state of perfection and maturity. 'The last Adam was made (became) a quickening (life-giving) spirit' (I Cor. 15:45). Being made perfect leads into 'BECAME THE AUTHOR,' or, into becoming LIFE-GIVING. When 'rivers shall from within him flow, of living water' (Jn. 7:38, Rotherham). Quickening streams of divine life flowing out of those who have BECOME. This is the lifting of the realm of sonship into fatherhood, to BECOME AN AUTHOR, source of supply, to bring forth after one's kind. Maturity of sonship is preparation for fatherhood. Sons of the Highest are not limited to simply coming to maturity, and then maintaining status quo, no increase. 'Of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end' (Isa. 9:7). Glories expanding, new vistas unlimited" end quote.

It should be clear to every thinking heart that once you have the well on the inside, not only do you not need to draw from a well without, but you BECOME A SOURCE of life for all about. "How can I attain to such a high and holy calling?" I hear someone asking. Ah little by little and day by day these precious realities are inworked into our lives as we follow on to know the Lord, saying "Yes" to His work and faithfully obeying His will as He reveals it. All the "following after" and "pressing toward" precede the "apprehending" making it our own. Keep walking forward, my brother, and you will GROW into His likeness just as naturally as an eating boy in due time becomes a strong man.

THE PROCESS FOR MATURITY

This is a day of instant things. In this fast-paced, fast-food society, we are used to having things as we want them, when we want them. Everything is instant. We can walk into a room and get instant light, heat, or air conditioning by flipping a switch. We get up in the morning and drink instant coffee, and eat instant hot cereal, instant soup, instant mashed potatoes, and instant other things too numerous to name. If it isn't instant, then we turn on the microwave. All too often we also expect instant results in our spiritual life instant perfection, instant power, instant maturity, instant sonship! But, dear one in Christ, God doesn't believe in short cuts! Haste in the high and holy things of the Kingdom of God is freighted with grave danger. When the almighty Creator plants a redwood tree in the womb of mother earth, He is looking forward in infinite wisdom and patience perhaps five thousand years to a day when it is a towering monarch of the forest. Think it not strange, then, that He would spend the entire span of a man's brief lifetime in bringing to perfection a saint who is to rule the world as a son of God, bringing life and order out of the dreadful death and chaos that everywhere reigns upon earth. The wonder is that it does not take much longer. Let us, therefore, not be weary in well doing, for in due season we shall reap if we faint not.

I am deeply impressed with the words of George Hawtin in his paper THE PAGE wherein he writes: "God increases our faith through patience. At first what faith you had

was void of patience. It wanted to see creation leap in response to its impatient demands. The sick must be healed RIGHT NOW. The world must be converted RIGHT NOW. You must get rid of carnality and become perfect NOW, of course; but as years went by and things continued much as they were before you tried to set the world on fire, you began very slowly to see that God is not enthused about impatient faith; you came to see that faith and patience are inseparable and methinks someday you will see that patience IS faith. We have heard a great deal about faith, much of it springing from the desire of the carnal mind. Little indeed have we heard of patience without which there can be no real and lasting faith.

"Harvests do not come without patience and waiting. Vainly we have tried to squeeze God into our mold of haste and hurry. We have cried, wept, and teased like spoiled children in an endeavor to get our way and hurry God in His program. We have demanded of God and tried to command Him. We have quoted Scriptures to try to bolster our position but all in vain. To learn faith in patience is much more important than for us to have our own way about things. In Heb. 10:35-37 the apostle wrote, 'Cast not away therefore your confidence which hath great recompense of reward. For YE HAVE NEED OF PATIENCE that after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise'" end quote.

Ah, beloved, does it seem that you shall never overcome the flesh, the world, and the devil, never live the abundant life, never arrive at perfection or attain unto maturity of sonship? Be encouraged, dear ones, for our gracious heavenly Father dropped a word into my heart in such a time of foreboding when progress seemed so slow in my spiritual life that it appeared I was going backward instead of forward. His voice fell in quickening illumination upon my attentive ear with this beautiful word of wisdom: 'My son, look back upon your walk, five years, ten years...how were you then? Have you changed any? Have you grown? Have you gained victories? Are you not wiser, stronger, more enlightened, experienced, and triumphant, and do you not know me in a deeper way than you did then? Have you made some progress? Can you SEE how much different is your life today than it was then? Ah, My son, if all this has been wrought by My hand in your life through the past few years, can you not now TRUST ME to finish and perfect that good work which I have begun in you? Do you not know that I am silently but faithfully working in you even this day to conform you to the image of My Son?' Sons of God! Do not worry as to whether or not you seem to be making progress. There is nothing in the world that grows so fast that you can SEE it grow. My fourteen year old daughter is growing every day of her life, but I cannot SEE her grow. Let God be the judge of how much or how little you have grown. Your duty and mine is to press relentlessly onward heedless of circumstances or conditions, but pressing patiently toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

A dear friend of ours in the city of Detroit shared this meaningful experience with us some years ago following a message I brought along this line. "I will never forget my first day in school in a rural community in the South. I arrived alone, but refused to go inside. I didn't think that I would enjoy school, and was quite certain that I didn't need an education. In my childish mind I made a firm decision not to go to school at all. Quickly I passed by and went straight to my grandmother's home. Grandmother, surprised at seeing me, asked, 'Why, Veta, what are you doing here? Didn't school start today?' I actually felt I was in command and could carry out my plans, so I replied with finality, 'I have decided not to go to school!' Grandmother was a wise old woman, and appeared to respect my decision. She didn't scold, but sadly said, 'I'm so sorry to hear that, Veta. I'm really disappointed

that you aren't going to school. You see, grandmother needs someone to write letters for her, and I had hoped that you would go to school and learn to write. I thought you would be the one to write the letters for me.' I loved my grandmother very much, and her words impacted my childish mind. I changed my mind, deciding to go to school just long enough to learn how to write. I left grandmother's, made my way back down the road to school, arriving late, of course, and walked in with my hat and coat on for I was certain that I would be there for only a short time. The teacher was very understanding and quite gentle with me. Later, I found myself at the blackboard, chalk in hand, the teacher's hand upon mine, showing me how to make the number 2 along with the letters of the alphabet. After some minutes I asked the teacher when would we get on with the writing. Suddenly the whole prospect loomed menacingly before my mind and irritatedly I inwardly shouted, 'If we don't go faster than this, I'm going to be here ALL DAY! And I was, of course! I went back to school the next day, and the next, and the next for many years to come! I became a star student, and a joy to my grandmother.'

So God, omniscient and omnipotent, has established here upon earth a School for the training of those destined to be the future rulers of the universe. This School is known as "the body of Christ." None shall ever rule in the Royal Priesthood who have not graduated from this School! And what a great Teacher we have! One begins in God's School of Kingship and Priesthood in the first grade. You start with the ABC's. God opens the class and says, "Now children, we are going to learn how to rule. To rule means to govern, to control, to be master over that which is ruled. You can never rule anything until first you overcome it WITHIN YOURSELF. To 'overcome' means TO COME UP OVER THAT WHICH IS OVER YOU. When, within yourself, you rise above the circumstance, the problem, so that it no longer controls you, you are then ready to control it, to no longer be the victim of circumstances, but the master of them." And so, in the nitty gritty of everyday life God teaches us how to overcome, how to reign, how to bless, how to love, how to have compassion, how to be a King and a Priest in His Kingdom.

The promises of God are vast and varied. Some of them are free and can be attained very easily. That is why so many people receive them. But if you would be a member of the Royal Priesthood and receive the power to bless and deliver creation, if you would learn the life and authority and government of God in preparation to take the Kingdom and reign with Christ, then that is a different thing altogether. You must become a follower of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises. It takes patience to attain any worthy goal. It takes endurance too. No man having put his hand to the plow and looking back is fit for the Kingdom of Heaven. We do not attain sonship by a single bound. Neither do we qualify for the Royal Priesthood in a moment of time. It is not something you receive one night at the altar. We have need of patience. We must through faith and patience grow up to the spiritual age of thirty. We must become mature ones through experience. Only such can serve as the priests of the Most High!

A MATURE PRIESTHOOD

The farmer cannot make the seed grow, he cannot generate light, this is done only by God. So, when the seed of the Kingdom is planted in the human heart, if other conditions are right, God will make the seed grow until that son reaches spiritual maturity. The greatest need in the world today is spiritually mature sons of God who are qualified to minister as Kings and Priests in the Kingdom of God.

I would like you to think a moment about maturity. Jesus Christ, of course, was the first Son who ever lived who achieved absolute maturity. He walked as a man should walk. He talked as a man should talk. His attitude and His approach to life were mature in every sense of the word. He looked with holy eyes upon the sins of a sinful world, but was not discouraged nor depressed by it. He wrote over the face of a despairing world, "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly" (Jn. 10:10). To a world enshrouded in darkness He brought a heart full of heavenly sunbeams, and by the light that was within Himself rolled back the heavy clouds of despair that hung low over a world that had lost its way.

Our Lord Jesus Christ is seen coming in the book of Revelation, riding upon a white horse and the armies which are in heaven following Him on white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, which is the righteousness of saints, and having on His vesture and on His thigh a name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS. Many centuries ago the prophet Malachi asked the burning question, "Who may abide the day of His coming? and who shall stand when He appeareth?" (Mal. 3:2). The aged apostle John admonished, "And now, little children, abide in Him; that, when He shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before Him at His coming" (I Jn. 2:28). May the Spirit of the living God lay His finger of inspiration upon us that we may understand that God is preparing a people today FOR HIMSELF. "This people have I formed FOR MYSELF; they SHALL show forth My praise" (Isa. 43:21). In Exodus God says, "Ye have seen...how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you UNTO MYSELF. Now, therefore, ye shall be a peculiar treasure UNTO ME above all people...and ye shall be UNTO ME a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation" (Ex. 19:46). God's purposes are fulfilled IN HIMSELF. "Ye shall be witnesses UNTO ME," Jesus said (Acts 1:8). The saints of God are a peculiar people, a holy nation, a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, that we should show forth the praises, the excellencies, and the virtues of HIM.

To show you how God's purposes are wrapped up IN HIMSELF and they not only have their beginning in Himself, but they have their ultimate fulfillment in Himself the Scripture says, "Wherefore He has highly exalted Jesus." He has exalted Him to His right hand and caused Him to sit at His right hand, saying, "Sit at My right hand till I make Thy foes Thy footstool." God has highly exalted Him and given Him THE name, that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things on earth, and things under the earth, and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, TO THE GLORY OF GOD THE FATHER. The Father said, "Sit at My right hand till I make Thy foes Thy footstool," and the Scripture said, "For He must reign, till He hath put all enemies under His feet. 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).

The purpose of God will only find fulfillment IN HIMSELF. "And, having made peace through the blood of His cross, by Him to reconcile all things UNTO HIMSELF...whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven" (Col. 1:20). Jesus said, "I came from the Father and I am come into the world: again I leave the world, and I am going back" not to heaven as we would think; He did go to heaven, but heaven is only incidental He said, "I leave the world, and GO TO THE FATHER" (Jn. 16:28). Ah, my brother, my sister, where are we going? For generations we have set heaven as our goal "When we all get to heaven, what a day of rejoicing that will be!" But the Psalmist David declared, "If I make my bed in hell, THOU ART THERE" (Ps. 139:8). The place is not the matter, it is the

position, IN RELATIONSHIP TO HIMSELF. Jesus called twelve men whom He ordained as apostles "to be with Him." And then, incidentally, to send them. And to prove that the sending was only incidental, He sent the twelve and He sent the seventy, who were not apostles at all, and they did just as much as the twelve. But He chose the twelve to be WITH HIM. The cry in the heart of God is for a people FOR HIMSELF. Why does God want a people for Himself? So that He may form Himself, that Christ may be fully formed in their lives, in order that His nature and His image and His person should be so wrought in them, that He would be able to APPEAR IN THE MIDST OF THEM, at any time He wants, and in any form He desires to appear.

What was the secret of the ministry, and the wisdom, and the power, and the glory of Jesus Christ? The secret was that God could manifest HIMSELF and say anything, and do anything, and be anything through Jesus Christ that He desired to say, do, or be. He could not do that through the prophets. No matter how glorious the prophets were, even John the Baptist John the Baptist had the Spirit before he was born into the world, while Jesus had to wait until He was thirty to be anointed with the Spirit; John the Baptist was filled with the Holy Ghost from his mother's womb but the Father could not reveal Himself in and through John the Baptist in the fullest measure and in the most complete way that He would desire to do. John was the greatest of all the prophets born of women, but Jesus said, "The least in this Kingdom is greater than John." Why? I will tell you. Because John was not a SON! John was not even a potential son.

John was only a prophet. I could name you one of the sons in the Old Testament: Moses. However, the Bible says, "Moses was a SERVANT in the house" (Heb. 3:5). Think of that! Moses was not a son, only a servant in Father's house. Well, I could name you another man: Abraham. But Abraham was only a FRIEND of God (James 2:23). A friend! Not a son. Do you realize what has happened in the New Creation? Has your heart grasped the glorious and eternal significance of the words spoken by our Lord on that dark night before His death, when He raised the cup and said, "This is my blood of the New Covenant"? At that wonderful moment something new came in and the old forever passed way. The old was wonderful in its day, but in this New Covenant: "Their sins and their iniquities I will remember no more, and I will write the law of Mine own Being, the law of My own nature, the law of My own disposition IN THEIR MINDS AND IN THEIR HEARTS, and they will not teach one another saying: Know the Lord, for they will all know Me, from the very least unto the greatest of them" (Heb. 8:10-11). Why? Because we have been born, not of blood, not of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but there has been a birth of God. His seed has come into us, we have been born of the Spirit of God, God is having a people in whom is the Spirit of His Son, so that there is a relationship with the Father and a forming and a revelation of the Father's character and mind and will. For what reason? So that GOD CAN APPEAR IN THE MIDST OF HIS SONS, AND GOD CAN APPEAR THROUGH HIS SONS AT ANY TIME AND IN ANY MANNER HE DESIRES. "When He shall come to be glorified IN HIS SAINTS, and to be admired IN ALL THEM THAT BELIEVE in that day" (I Thes. 1:10).

The revelation of Jesus Christ is the appearing of Jesus Christ, and the appearing of Jesus Christ is the coming of Jesus Christ. "Who shall abide the day of His coming? and who shall stand when He appeareth?" Ah, Jesus Christ has come as Saviour and has appeared in saving power in the midst of all the saved ones. He has come as Baptizer with the Holy Spirit and has appeared in the glory of the anointing in the midst of all the Spirit filled ones. He has come as Healer and has appeared in miracle working wonder in

the midst of all the healed ones. But now He must come as LORD, as KING, as PRIEST, as the SON OF GOD.

The world will never know Him as King of kings until there are kings among whom He can stand and reveal Himself as King of the kings. The world will never know Him as Lord, until there are lords among whom He can stand and reveal Himself as Lord of lords. The world will never know Him as High Priest until there are priests among whom He can stand and reveal Himself as the great High Priest of their profession. Why is God bringing many sons to glory? That in the midst of all Jesus Christ might appear as the preeminent One, THE SON among the sons. As long as we remain children, He cannot appear as the Son in the midst of children. How are you going to have a Son that is preeminent among a group of babies? That is no preeminence at all, that gives Him no eminence whatsoever, it gives Him no honor. You cannot say, "He is the first begotten, the firstborn among many babies!" But as God brings us into maturity, and brings many sons to glory, He appears as the preeminent One, as the first born among MANY BRETHREN. Why does God want us to grow up into the fullness of sonship? So that the Son of God can be revealed in all His glory, wisdom, virtue, and power in and through the sons. Why does God want us to be priests, maturing in the priestly nature and ministry? So that He can appear in the midst as the Great High Priest of the heavens to bless and redeem and restore all of creation into God.

As long as we remain down on some spiritual plane below this high calling, even though He is greater than we, He has to condescend and limit His manifestation in and through us to the level we are on. He appears in the midst of WHAT WE ARE IN HIM. He comes as El Shaddai, the breasted one, bearing the milk of the Word in the midst of all the babes in Christ. But as the Church of the First born rises into the heavenlies to occupy the place God has ordained for it, in the place of glory, then Christ can be revealed in greater glory, in greater majesty, and in greater might.

Do we love HIS APPEARING? Do we want God to make us a people FOR HIMSELF, so that in whatever form He desires to appear, He can appear in the midst? Whenever He appears, we must be like Him on the level in which He appears. The Scripture says, "We know that when He shall appear, we shall be like Him" (I Jn. 3:2). It says, "We shall be," but it also means: "We must be." If we are not like Him, He cannot appear in that form. He can only appear in the form in which He has been formed in us, because we are HIS BODY and whenever He manifests Himself, He is to manifest Himself in the form of the body, in whatever form the body is.

Oh! Beloved saints of God, let us yield ourselves under the mighty hand of God that He may grow us up into mature priests. We can never be priests of the Most High until we reach maturity. The world will never behold the priesthood, nor be touched by the healing hand of our Great High Priest, until there stands a royal race of mature priests in the midst of the earth. All creation stands on tiptoe to see the glorious sight of God's Royal Priesthood arising with mercy and power. Let us not sell creation short!

Chapter 14

The Progression of the Priesthood

Deep down in the heart of men there is a strong and instinctive demand for a priest, to be a mediator, to lay one hand on man, and the other on God, and going between both to bring the two together into unification. A priest or priesthood infers that there is a reason why such has been called into play. It denotes that there is an estrangement between God and His creatures and the priest ministers to bridge that gulf and bring about peace and contentment. The ministry of the priest is an intermediate or go between ministry. He reaches out with one hand and takes hold of God; he reaches out with the other hand and takes hold of humanity; and brings the two together by virtue of his priestly ministrations.

It seems that many people envision God as like the politicians, they just go from day to day reacting to each crisis and improvise as they go along. When a difficult or dangerous situation rears its ugly head they come up with some stopgap measure and hope it works, and then when it doesn't, they try something else. Believe me, precious friend of mine, God doesn't operate in that manner! Long before there was a world or any man, God almighty and all wise, planned every detail of the whole creation from start to finish. The omniscient and omnipotent God has known the end from the beginning, He established His plan and His program from the beginning, He ordained precise measures for its development, He set it on a time schedule, and He is seeing to it that His program is carried out. Can we not see by this that the priesthood of God was not an afterthought, not some hastily concocted plan to remedy an unforeseen and unfortunate situation, but it was part of His great and wonderful purpose from the beginning?

Priesthood and the shedding of the blood of a sacrifice for sin are inseparable. Dear friend, it is well that we should go back to Calvary and the atonement, to the cross and the precious blood, to look at the everlasting foundation of the priestly ministry. The blood of God's Lamb is our foundation. What unfathomed depths are contained in these words that come down to us from the beginning of time! "And the Lord called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou? And he said, I heard Thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself. Unto Adam also and to his wife did the Lord God make COATS OF SKINS, and clothed them" (Gen. 3:9-10,21). We would be totally void of understanding as to what kind of victim it was that provided this blessed covering for the sinning man and his wife, were it not that the Holy Spirit has shed precious light upon this wonder, revealing that the Christ is "the LAMB slain from the foundation of the world" (Rev. 13:8) who verily was "a LAMB without blemish or spot...foreordained before the foundation of the world" (I Pet. 1:19-20).

I now invite you to meditate deeply upon my words. Redemption is not an afterthought Of God by which He hopes to salvage a few of the broken and shattered pieces of His creation. Redemption is PART OF THE PLAN OF CREATION. If the fall of man is part of the plan of God, then the redemption of the fallen creation must also be a part of the same plan that issued forth from the fathomless depths of His omniscient mind. If Peter

was speaking the truth when he wrote of God's Lamb, "Who verily was FOREORDAINED BEFORE THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD, but was manifest in these last times for you" (I Pet. 1:20), then the fall of man must certainly be a part of the plan of the Creator. For what possible purpose was the blessed redemptive Lamb foreordained BEFORE the world began if redemption itself was not already in the mind and plan of God? It is clear that the plan of redemption was prepared in its fullness before the voice of God ever commanded, "Let there be!" It was not completed just in case man should fall, but because the fall of man and his redemption from sin was part of the process by which he would come into God's image and live in the eternal realm as a creature of experience and knowledge, completely redeemed, completely purified, completely perfected, and completely incapable of sin forevermore. Creation and redemption walk hand in hand through all the pilgrim journey from Eden to the New Heaven and the New Earth.

THE PROGRESSION OF THE PRIESTHOOD

From the day that that first sorrowing pair was driven from Eden's blessed garden there has existed in the earth the priesthood. The sinner was given a sacrifice that could die and pour out its life on his behalf. Through substitute animals man could know fellowship with God until the Saviour, by the offering up of Himself, established reconciliation forever. Without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sin, the Scripture says, and may I hastily add that it is just as true that without the shedding of blood there is no ministry of priesthood, and without the priesthood there is no power in the blood. I have long believed, and with abundant Scriptural backing, that apart from our great High Priest in the heavens Calvary's blood would be worthless, and without the blood the High Priest would be powerless and meaningless.

This great truth is set forth beautifully by the inspired writer of the book of Hebrews wherein he says, "For 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...for every High Priest is ordained to OFFER GIFTS AND SACRIFICES: wherefore it is of necessity that this man HAVE SOMEWHAT ALSO TO OFFER...but Christ being come an High Priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building (creation); 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. 5:1; 8:3; 9:11,12). If there were no sins against the living God, there would be no need of a priest. The perfect man Adam in the Garden of Eden needed no priest, for he was created sinless. Jesus Christ, "the last Adam," was born into a race of sinners, but He needed no priest, for He had a virgin birth through Mary and His life was direct from God. He was born sinless and grew up sinless and remained sinless down to His sacrificial death. Because of His sinlessness He could offer the perfect sacrifice and become the forerunner and High Priest of the heavenly order.

There will come an unbelievable transformation to your understanding of God's redemptive plan of the ages when the revelation of this truth dawns upon your heart teaching you that THE PRIESTHOOD IS PROGRESSIVE. Its development can be noticed throughout the Scriptures. There is a beautiful progression from that day when in the beginning every individual man was his own priest and offered his own sacrifices, as did Adam, Cain, Abel, Noah, Abram, and others, to a larger priesthood whereby a man became a priest for his family, as did the patriarch Job, onward to a priesthood for an entire nation of people, as was the Levitical Priesthood, to that which is personified in

Christ, who is the priesthood for the Church gathered out of all nations, and ultimately shared by those who become ONE IN HIM as members of the Royal Priesthood destined to reign over the earth and all nations, reconciling the world and restoring all of creation back into God again. So perhaps we had best begin at the beginning!

A PRIESTHOOD FOR A MAN

"And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And the Lord had respect unto Abel and to his offering" (Gen. 4:4). The worship of God under the dispensation of conscience and under the patriarchal dispensation was of the simplest kind. An altar was erected where Abel, Abraham, Isaac, or Jacob, or any of the patriarchs offered the sacrificial lamb. Man could not initiate his salvation. The substitutionary sacrifices were God's gift to man, foreshadowing the day when the power of man's sin and death would be fully broken and dealt with by the greater power of God's own life. From the first promise of the Deliverer, man was given the sacrifice a place, a time to come and claim in type and by faith God as his salvation. The first recorded coming and receiving of salvation was that of the son of Adam called Abel. The first order of the priesthood was that of an INDIVIDUAL PRIESTHOOD in which there was a single sacrifice offered, one lamb given for one man. Each man was his own priest, making his own sacrifice to God, approaching and officiating before God on his own behalf one sacrifice FOR one man, and BY one man. That was the first worship acceptable to God, when Abel offered the firstfruits of his flock, a lamb, and when shortly afterwards his own blood was mingled with the sacrifice, because his brother murdered him there.

A PRIESTHOOD FOR A FAMILY

In the book of Exodus we find the head of the family officiating as priest on behalf of all who were in his house. "Speak ye unto all the congregation of Israel, saying, In the tenth day of this month they shall take to them every man a lamb, according to the HOUSE of their fathers, a lamb FOR AN HOUSE" (Ex. 12:3). Israel was about to be delivered from Egypt, and as the commands were given for the Passover observance, it was to be a lamb for a household. A man would offer one lamb, for the covering of his whole family, and all those within his gates. The head of the house was responsible for all the house, and was to make sure the lamb was there. It was a family rite, where the housefather acted as priest. The father of the home was the priest of the home, and he could spread his coverage to all of his family, claiming the protection and blessing and salvation of God for them all.

Job was one of the greatest priests of this order. Scarcely any doubt exists that the book of Job, a divine drama, existed long before Moses was born, and that probably Moses himself, or some great Hebrew poetic genius, put it into its present sublime form. This wonderful book records: "There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job; and that man was perfect and upright, and one that feared God, and eschewed evil. And his sons went and feasted in their houses, every one his (birth) day; and sent and called for their three sisters to eat and to drink with them. And it was so, when the days of their feasting were gone about, that Job sent and sanctified them, and rose up early in the morning, and offered burnt offerings according to the number of them all: for Job said, It may be that my sons have sinned, and cursed God in their hearts. **THUS DID JOB CONTINUALLY**" (Job 1:1,4,5).

I would point out that in this second order of priesthood the principle remains the same, but there has been an EXPANDING OF THE COVERAGE. In the first order it was one sacrifice for one man by one priest, whereas in the second it is one sacrifice by one priest FOR A WHOLE FAMILY. Now the priestly ministry has intensified, there is an enlargement of its scope and an increase in its coverage, so that one priest is so much more effective, ministering on behalf of, and bringing blessing to, not himself alone, but to ALL THAT ARE IN HIS HOUSE!

A PRIESTHOOD FOR A NATION

The third step in the progressive unfolding and development of the priesthood designated one tribe as separated from the twelve tribes for holy service, and from this one man and his posterity was to be chosen to be the priesthood on behalf of THE NATION. His name was Aaron. He was assisted by his sons because of the magnitude of his ministry. Until the law was given at Sinai, each man was a priest over his own household. But now there is an entirely new arrangement, the priesthood itself being numerically altered, and the scope of its ministry extended to embrace the entire nation of Israel instead of just a family or a clan. On Mount Sinai, Moses was shown the splendor and glory of the heavenlies, and God gave him a pattern from which to build a tent on earth that would be a symbolic visual aid of heaven itself and the heavenly realm. God provided for the sin of the nation of Israel by giving them a priesthood, headed up in the High Priest, who was given by God to be the representative man for the whole nation. He carried the nation in himself, and in him they communed with God. The priesthood officiated at the God given offerings. For every spiritual need and mood of the people there was provided offering wherein God took it upon Himself to bring the people to Himself. The very center of the whole sacrificial system was on that one day in which God proclaimed all that He was doing. It was called the Day of Atonement. On this day the offering included all other offerings of the year and in a final sense summed them up so much that through this offering the High Priest, as the representative of the covenant nation, could go into the immediate presence and commune with God behind the veil. In his being there, every covenant Israelite saw himself there, carried in his representative.

Caiaphas, being High Priest the year in which Jesus was crucified, said to the chief priests and Pharisees, "Ye know nothing at all, nor consider that it is expedient for us, that ONE MAN should die for the people, and that the WHOLE NATION perish not. And this spake he not of himself: but being High Priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus should die for THAT NATION; and not for that nation only, but that also He should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad" (Jn. 11:49-52). As one has written: "Interesting to observe that there is a Spirit that accompanies the office, not dependent upon the man filling the office. So Caiaphas, being the High Priest that year, was anointed by the Spirit to prophesy concerning the death of Jesus, that it should be ONE MAN for a WHOLE NATION, which was the nation of Israel, and not limiting it to those gathered in the geographical boundaries of the nation, but for all those children of God, the Israelites which were scattered abroad throughout all the nations" end quote.

For sixteen centuries the priestly system of Aaron prevailed, like ivy, entwining itself around the oak of the national life. And it was a more intense and effective priesthood than the orders which preceded it. Its scope was increased. Its coverage was expanded. Its ministry was enlarged. Instead of one sacrifice for one man by one priest, or one sacrifice by one priest for a family, it was now one sacrifice by one priesthood for an ENTIRE NATION! Every reader should notice especially that with each CHANGE in the

order of the priesthood there is an enlargement, an increase, an expansion of its scope of ministry, blessing greater and greater numbers of people being included under its coverage. From the days of Abel to the time of Aaron the coverage of the priesthood saw an increase from ONE MAN to more than TWO MILLION PEOPLE!

A PRIESTHOOD FOR THE CHURCH

This brings us to the fourth stage in the progressive unfolding of the priesthood. "If therefore perfection were by the Levitical priesthood, what further need was there that another priest should arise 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. For he of whom these things are spoken pertaineth to another tribe, of which no man gave attendance at the altar. For it is evident that our Lord sprang out of Judah; of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood. And it is yet far more evident: for that after the similitude of Melchizedek there ariseth another priest. Who is made, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life. For He testifieth, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek" (Heb 7:11,17).

If the priesthood is changed, the writer to the Hebrews states, there is also the need to change the law under which the former priesthood operated. Or we could reverse the statement, if the law is changed, then there needs to be the changing of the priesthood also, to bring forth those who are able to minister the life of the new order. Each priesthood has its own order of laws, the Levitical priesthood was under the ministration of condemnation and death. The Melchizedek priesthood is of the law of the spirit of life. We are now in a time of transition, the Melchizedek order of priesthood is executed only by the HIGH PRIEST AND FORERUNNER of that order, Jesus Christ, for He has entered within the veil. We have no earthly priest performing our services, but we have a HEAVENLY the glorious firstborn Son of God and Captain of our salvation. He is the High Priest of OUR PROFESSION, ministering on OUR BEHALF, as we press forward to apprehend the fullness of that Melchizedekian Order. There is no filling of this Melchizedek priesthood position without the total and complete maturity of HIS LIFE bringing FULL REDEMPTION AND CONFORMATION TO THE LIKENESS OF JESUS CHRIST. Presently we are in the process of preparation, following in the steps of Christ, "Who in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and duplications with strong crying and tears unto Him that was able to save Him from (out of) death, and was heard in that He feared; 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 a High Priest after the order of Melchizedek" (Heb. 5:7-10).

While our High Priest ministers this eternal salvation unto us we are possessed of a hope "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. 6:19,20). While manifested on this earth plane, Jesus Christ left us His personal example that we might follow in His footsteps. It is a way that leads BEYOND THE VEIL into the glories of the Father. It was necessary that He tread all the course that we might be able to follow all the way into His divine fullness. HE IS THE WAY unto the Father, and by our union with Him we find it is first a way of humiliation before it becomes a way of exaltation. Thus we humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God, assured that in due time HE will lift us up, and we shall live in His sight.

As we have pointed out earlier in this series, a FORERUNNER is one who goes ahead of others. He goes ahead as a sample of those who are to follow. Jesus is our FORERUNNER, which clearly indicates that others are expected to follow on into the same realms of glory. Christ, a priest forever after the Order of Melchizedek, is our FORERUNNER, He went first, and where He went, we are to go. The Forerunner blazed the trail all the way, and we rejoice in this fact, but then He also came back, by HIS SPIRIT, to escort us all the way into the glory beyond the veil, the glory of a PRIESTHOOD AFTER THE ORDER OF MELCHIZEDEK. Full well He knows the route, for He has travelled it all the way through to victory, and now is able to guide us down the same path into the glorious victory which He obtained. It is HIS daily enabling that gives us strength to carry on until the consummation is reached.

The Aaronic priesthood continued until the death, resurrection and ascension of the Christ in the days of Caiaphas, the High Priest. Then it ended, for the Christ passed within the veil of the heavenlies and sat down at the right hand of the Majesty of high as the Great High Priest and took upon Himself the ministry of intercession for the whole Church of God. And Oh! What an increase! What an enlargement! What an expansion of coverage! What an extension of blessings! For now, instead of one sacrifice for one man by one priest, or one sacrifice by one priest for a family, or one sacrifice by one priesthood for a nation, we have one sacrifice forever by one priest for THE CHURCH a great body of redeemed men gathered out of EVERY KINDRED AND TONGUE AND PEOPLE AND NATION!

"For Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation" (Rev. 5:9). "For by one Spirit are we ALL baptized into ONE BODY, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been able to drink into one Spirit" (I Cor. 12:13). "For ye are ALL the children of God by faith in Jesus Christ. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is NEITHER JEW NOR GREEK, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are ALL ONE in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ's, THEN are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise" (Gal. 3:26,29). "For the Scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on Him shall not be ashamed. For there is NO DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE JEW AND THE GREEK: for the same Lord over ALL is rich unto ALL that call upon Him" (Rom. 10:11,12). "For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God...where there is NEITHER GREEK NOR JEW, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is ALL, and IN ALL" (Col. 3:3,11).

It is a great fact that Jesus came into the world to save sinners ALL sinners. "I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men...for...God will have ALL MEN to be saved...for there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; who gave Himself a ransom for ALL, to be testified in due time" (I Tim. 2:1,3,6). Christ Jesus died for the sins of all sinners; 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). It is also a great fact that He died to redeem all that Adam lost, "He planned for the maturity of the times and the climax of the ages to unify ALL THINGS and head them up and consummate them IN CHRIST, both things in heaven and things on earth" (Eph. 1:10, Amplified).

There are those who teach and preach that Christ is NOW the High Priest for all peoples, but that is not true. Throughout this Church age He is the High Priest of His redeemed,

blood washed, Spirit begotten elect ONLY. "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. For both He that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all OF ONE: for which cause He is not ashamed to call THEM BRETHREN... 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" (Heb. 2:10,11,17).

Where we clearly see that Christ is the great High Priest for "the brethren" those who are sons of God, sanctified, made one in Him, and partakers of the heavenly calling. He is great High Priest to all who are covered by the blood and who are living stones in the House of God. "Having therefore, BRETHREN, 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" (Heb. 10:19,22)

The High Priestly intercession of the Christ is a dual ministry, as is all priestly ministry, both Godward and usward: In its Godward aspect we hear His own words: "I pray NOT for the world" (Jn. 17:9). There is no need of making any mistake about it. With all the grace we may attribute to Him it is an outstanding fact. Christ does not now pray for the world, for those who are not His. This is what He says: "I pray not for the world, but FOR THEM WHICH THOU HAST GIVEN ME" (Jn. 17:9). What a mark of separation from the world and separation unto Himself there is in that statement and the fact of it! True, there is a ministry which touches the world through the body of Christ, but the High Priestly ministry of Jesus is uniquely on behalf of the Church which is His body. The world shall yet be blessed through a people who are PERFECTED IN HIM, as Jesus said, "That they all may be one; as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in us: THAT THEY MAY BELIEVE THAT THOU HAST SENT ME" (Jn. 17:21). When the Lord turns His hand to save the world it will be a glorious day indeed! But the work of God today is with US the firstfruits of His redemption, His kings and priests for the ages yet to come.

What an amazing fact it is, that He who is the Master of heaven and earth prays for US and prays in heaven on the throne of the Highest. It is not that He is praying for just the things we wish, nor even such as we dream we need, but the fact that He is praying for us is beyond definition of all it demonstrates of interest in, of grace, and care and divine purpose for us. There is a priesthood yet to arise to rule over the earth and reign over the nations, but the Christ is now High Priest on behalf of those who have received of HIS LIFE. It should not be necessary to enlarge on this thought. Nothing could be more reasonable and just than the fact that Christ is a Son and High Priest over His own house, "whose house YE ARE" (Heb. 3:6).

Notice the pronouns in the following verses: "Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of OUR profession" (Heb.3:1). "Which hope WE have as an anchor of the soul, and which entereth into that within the veil; whither the forerunner is for US entered, even Jesus..." (Heb. 6:19-20). "Now of the things which we have spoken this is the sum: WE have such a High Priest, who is set on the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens" (Heb. 8:1). "For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands...but into heaven itself, NOW to appear in the presence of God for US" (Heb. 9:24). Ah, all is now for US, not for the world! "Seeing then that WE have a great High Priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let US

hold fast OUR profession. For WE have not an High Priest which cannot be touched with the feelings of OUR infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as WE are, yet without sin. Let US therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that WE may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need" (Heb. 4:14,16).

"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). Just what does it mean to "save to the uttermost"? This phrase is given by Phillips as "He can save fully and completely." Young's Literal, "He is able to save to the very end." Amplified, "He is able to save to the uttermost completely, perfectly, finally, and for all time and eternity." As one has pointed out, "The Greek words used here are most interesting, 'eis to panteles,' or INTO THE ALWAYS. It is only used twice in the New Testament, here, and one other time, which, while being in the negative sense, we shall examine anyway, for it helps to bear out the strength and meaning of the word.

"And, behold, there was a woman which had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, and was bowed together, and could IN NO WISE lift up.' IN NO WISE could she lift up, it was a complete bondage, not a single avenue of escape, nor a moment of respite. Always it was 'bowed down,' to the uttermost, always. UNTIL Jesus came and brought liberation, and then the negative had to give way to the positive, and it was His salvation which was then to the uttermost. Praise God, what is to man an unchangeable situation, and as far as the natural is concerned will remain that way always, such a state is not impossible to God. The only permanent, and unchangeable state which is truly eternal, is HIS SALVATION. All sin and evil shall end, but His life and righteousness shall continue always." end quote.

The Greek points out that He is able to save COMPLETELY. He is able to save ALL THE WAY, even unto the valley of the shadow of death. He is able to save altogether, NOTHING LACKING complete salvation with no flaw, complete as only a holy and omniscient and omnipotent God knows completeness and perfection. This "salvation to the uttermost" is a complete salvation of spirit, soul, and body reserved for those who "come unto God (the Father) by Him" those who follow all the way into the Holiest, within the veil, to know HIM in all His glorious and eternal reality. "The uttermost" is the strongest and the extremist word in all the world. There cannot be anything beyond the uttermost. The uttermost is situated on the very extremes" rim, on the very outmost edge, and on the very highest pinnacle of all existing things. It is the limit, the boundary, the completeness, the perfection, the fullness, the summit, the apex and the ultimate of all realities. All change absolutely ends, all growth stops, and all development comes to its everlasting limit, when it comes to its uttermost. Beyond the uttermost, sheer nothingness or absolute infiniteness exist. We may labor the thought, and we may repeat and multiply the word, till we are wearied; but after we have done all, we must always end with this, that the uttermost is just the uttermost; and beyond the uttermost, neither the experience of man can pass, nor the imagination of man can picture.

Now, as there is something that is the very uttermost in the world of time, and as there is something that is the very uttermost in the world of space, so there is something that the very uttermost in the world of sin and in the world of salvation. It is not given to any mortal man to know when the uttermost moment of time is to come. "Of that day, and that hour, knoweth no man: no, not the angels which are in heaven: neither the Son, but the Father." And as for the uttermost point of space, some men of science are so perplexed with it as to think that space must be absolutely infinite, like its Creator. And, on the

negative side, no more does any man know what is the uttermost limit of sin and death and misery. Who is the uttermost of all sinners? Who can tell? But that there is such a sinner somewhere, still sinning on earth, or saved in heaven, or suffering in hell; and that God knows that sinner, and knows all about him, all that is quite certain. There is something in that sinner's case, there has been something in that sinner's career, that conclusively stamps him as the very uttermost of all sinners everywhere to be found. In God's sight, and in God's judgment, there is some sinner somewhere, who bears the title: TO THE UTTERMOST. In Paul's day he was convinced that he was himself that man! "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I AM CHIEF" (I Tim. 1:15). The Amplified says, "of whom I am foremost," and Phillips renders, "I was the WORST OF THEM ALL."

With the release of the mystery of iniquity into the Adamic race, the wickedness of man became great in the earth, "every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually" (Gen. 6:5), and God used a restraining work to hold the upsurge of evil in check, restraining it according to HIS purpose. The race of Cain was a filthy, sensual polygamistic race; they were hateful and violent and they were murderers. They were ignorant and rebellious and would not learn of God. They were boastful and vile in the extreme, and would have nothing to do with the God who made them. They were the offspring of a murderer who slew his brother. God knew exactly where their "uttermost" of wickedness lay, He allowed it to go a certain course for a certain length of time, knowing full well just how far HE could allow man to express these evil inclinations, and just where to draw the line. They were so bad that God could not wait for them to die, and another generation to arise, but in order to reestablish some order on earth He had to sweep all of them off the earth into hell. At the appropriate moment the spirits of these wicked men were put in prison as society today puts a criminal in prison; the flood swept them away into hell and hell restrained the antedeluvians from committing more wrath upon earth. Their limit, the extremity and fullness of their transgression had been reached. They had sinned to their "uttermost."

On the positive side, however, there is a "to the uttermost" SALVATION which leads to perfection, unto complete and full redemption into the image of God. Not just a salvation "from" sin and death, but an apprehension unto the "uttermost" the very fullness of HIS LIFE, the very plenitude of HIS WISDOM, the very maturity of HIS NATURE, the very perfection of HIS CHARACTER, the very summit of HIS POWER, the very apex of HIS MAJESTY AND GLORY! In this "salvation to the uttermost" there is no aspect of man that is left unchanged, no part of man that is left untransformed, no remaining vestiges of the carnal mind or of sin or death that are left undealt with, no measure of HIS LIFE that is unappropriated it is victory all the way, and forever, TO THE UTTERMOST! All the lack, and all that now troubles you, dear one, shall be taken care of in the glorious and abundant provision of this SALVATION TO THE UTTERMOST. Praise His name!

Captain James Cook was a famous English explorer who lived about two hundred years ago. His adventurous life began when he joined the British navy at the age of 27. He surveyed the St. Lawrence Channel and the coasts of Newfoundland and Labrador before he was given his own ship, the ENDEAVOR, to command. He sailed this ship all the way around the world, exploring the coasts of eastern Australia and New Zealand on the way. After returning to England he set out again for the South Pacific with two ships, the RESOLUTION and the ADVENTURE, and explored the icy Antarctic Ocean. He explored the New Hebrides Islands and discovered the island of New Caledonia in the Pacific Ocean off Australia. Early in his career Captain Cook made this amazing

statement: "It is not my desire to merely go where other men have not gone; I WANT TO GO AS FAR AS IT IS POSSIBLE FOR MAN TO GO!" And his wish was granted, for when he was killed in 1779 by natives of the Hawaiian Islands, there were no more frontiers to explore on this planet, and no more coasts to be charted.

Ah in the spiritual realm just such a desire is arising within a company, those destined to become God's Kingdom of Priests in the earth, the desire not merely to press on in God into heights and depths not discovered by those great ones who have blessed this earth with God's grace and glory and wisdom and power, but indeed to GO AS FAR AS IT IS POSSIBLE FOR A MAN TO GO IN GOD! What a vision! We are well acquainted with the "in part" realm, as God anoints men with the Holy Ghost and with power, and their gifts increase and their ministries expand and many are blessed. But then they die, and while others might try to carry on their vision, it is never the same again, the movement crystallizes around the memory of the "part" the ministry possessed, and while they try to perpetuate it, it finally stagnates and dies. For one thing, every generation needs a NEW VISION and not a carryover of the old, but in this end of the age God is birthing a SON COMPANY, a Royal Priesthood, who desire not merely to rebuild and restore the work of God of yesteryear, be it New Testament Church Order, fivefold ministry, gifts of the Spirit, or whatever; but we are possessed of a heart to become identified with Jesus Christ behind the veil, in His Melchizedekian Priesthood, after the power of an endless life, to know God not just in a measure, but in His fullness, and receiving that ministry which can proceed through the ages until a full victory is consummated and God is ALL IN ALL.

This "uttermost" salvation can never be understood apart from our great High Priest who has secured it and who now ministers it unto us. Paul's letter to the Hebrew believers sets forth the divine truth concerning our great High Priest. In this epistle the Lord's priesthood is the main subject, and it is very significant that at the immediate outset of the epistle the Holy Spirit draws our attention to the dignity of the Person who is now our great High Priest. "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son. Whom (His Son) He hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also He made the worlds; Who being the brightness of His glory, and the express image of His Person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high; being made so much better than the angels, as He hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they" (Heb. 1:14).

The Son by whom God has spoken is the brightness of God's glory, the express image of God's Person. He is the One who at all times is upholding all things by the word of His power. He Himself purged our sins, and is now seated in the higher heavenlies at the right hand of God. He was made so much better than the angels, He has obtained a more excellent name than they, and at His name every knee in heaven, in earth, and under the earth, shall finally bow to the glory of God. THIS is our great High Priest! This Person, our great High Priest, is GOD yet He is man! Very God, very man. Therefore, when angels, Moses, Joshua, Aaron, Isaiah, David, or Solomon are compared with Him they fade into insignificance and disappear like the fog in early morning when the sun breaks through. They are lost in His high, surpassing, eternal glory. Most of us think of the WORK of the Lord Jesus Christ as our High Priest and truly, it is profitable to study and learn all we can about His office, which He does for us as our great High Priest; but the first thing the Holy Spirit would have us recognize is HIS PERSON, the Person of Him who, as our High Priest, is now standing before God on our behalf. His qualifications, His

ability and power to EXECUTE the office of our great High Priest depend entirely upon the character of His Person. Who WAS He? Who IS He NOW?

There is nothing ordinary about our Christ. Everything about Him is superlative. His perfection is far beyond all question. Our Christ is the most powerful among the powerful, the mightiest among the holy and the holiest among the mighty. With His nail pierced hands He has lifted empires off their hinges. With the same nail pierced hands He has lifted prodigals out of the hog pen. Our superlative Christ has turned the stream of time into new channels. HE MAKETH ALL THINGS NEW! Whatsoever He touches, whatsoever touches HIM, becomes new. Our Christ governs the ages of the ages, and when we LOOK UNTO HIM we are changed from glory to glory into the very same image. The LOVE of Christ is unknowable (Eph. 3:19). The RICHES of Christ are unsearchable (Eph. 3:8). The JOY of our Christ is unspeakable (I Pet. 1:8). The WAYS of our Christ are untrackable (Rom. 11:33). The GRACE of Christ is inexhaustible (II Cor. 9:8). The PEACE given by our Christ is unfathomable (Phil. 4:7). The POWER of the Christ is unlimited (Mat. 28:18). CHRIST HIMSELF is unsurpassable: "Who is like unto Thee, O Lord, among the gods? Who is like Thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders?" (Ex. 15:11).

Ah, He is unsurpassable, but He says, "The glory which Thou gavest Me I HAVE GIVEN THEM; I in them, and Thou in Me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that Thou hast sent Me, and HAST LOVED THEM, AS Thou hast loved Me" (Jn. 17:22-23). Rev. 3:14 tells us that Jesus is the "beginning of the creation of God." Which creation? Adam's creation? OF COURSE NOT! "If any man be in Christ, he is a NEW CREATION" (II Cor. 5:17). Moffatt's translation says, "There is a NEW CREATION whenever a man comes to be in Christ." And the New English Bible is very enlightening: "When anyone is united to Christ, there is a NEW HEAVENS and a NEW EARTH." A new creation! How? By coming INTO CHRIST. For He is the beginning of this new creation. Before He came, there was the realm of Deity, the angelic sphere, the demonic world, and the world of Adam's fallen race. Adam was a living soul, of the earth, earthy. But Christ came to establish something new, and to those that received Him, to them gave He the privilege to enter into this NEW CREATION WORLD.

None of Adam's race will ever enter this new world. "Flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God" (I Cor. 15:50). Adam must die, as was spoken to him in the beginning. Adam's nature and life cannot inherit this Kingdom. Not that God is vindictive or unforgiving. It's just that the Adamic nature can not stand in that glorious light unto which none can approach. So God is creating a new man. "This shall be written for the generation to come, and the people which SHALL BE CREATED shall praise the Lord" (Ps. 102:18). This creation or world of which I speak was never in existence until Jesus came. He was the beginning of this new creation Man. He is the beginning and the end, the first and the last, the Alpha and the Omega. So through Jesus Christ, something new came into existence. And He is the Door, so none can enter this realm except through Him. He is the Head, so once in this realm you cannot move or operate in His divine principles except as He directs you. He is the first and the last, the beginning and the end, so no one ever had this without Him, and you will never get past Him or surpass Him; no matter how far you go in God, you will find that Jesus is there, too! He is truly the GODMAN. And in union with Him we become GODMEN. As it is written, "Who is like unto Thee, O Lord, among the GODS!" Oh, the wonder of it! Salvation to the UTTERMOST! What a limit! What a boundary! What a summit!

The glory and extent of such a salvation rests in the ability of our great High Priest. A changing priesthood is sure to have its limitations, but an UNCHANGEABLE priesthood can proceed to minister until fullness is reached in every part. "The Lord swears and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek: by so much better was Jesus made a surety of a better testament. And they truly were many priests, because they were not suffered to continue by reason of death: but this man, because He continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood. 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. 7:21,25).

As someone has written, "Herein is another seal of our total redemption! Because HE EVER LIVETH. Being our Forerunner, it was essential that HE COMPLETE ALL THE JOURNEY INTO VICTORY, else He could not bring us through to the same goal. The contrast in Hebrews 7, is that the Levitical priesthood could never finish the job because they did not live long enough. Always the priest would die, and another would have to take his place. But Christ having conquered death, ever liveth, and whatever work He begins in us, He is able to bring to a successful conclusion, regardless of how much time is involved, because He lives on and on, bless His name. He is Lord, both of the dead and the living, and He can make intercession. The Greek for 'intercession' means TO CONVERSE WITH, HAVE DEALINGS WITH, TO MEET WITH for us, until He has saved us to the uttermost, to the full" end quote.

Ah, beloved, does it seem that you shall never overcome the flesh, the world, and the devil, never live the abundant life, never arrive at perfection or come into the image of God's Son? Be encouraged, dear ones, for we have a great High Priest who can SAVE TO THE UTTERMOST because HE EVER LIVETH to make intercession for us, there is never a single moment in which His priestly action, His watchful care of us, His loving sympathy and succour, His working in us in the power of our endless life, is not in full operation. Therefore HE CAN SAVE TO THE UTTERMOST, COMPLETELY, there is no bondage that He cannot break, no fear that He cannot calm, no sickness that He cannot heal, no pain that He can not alleviate, no sorrow that He cannot assuage, no trait of Adam's nature that He cannot slay, no death that He cannot conquer, no victory that He cannot gain. Glory to God! My earnest prayer is that God shall make this a living hope in the hearts of all who read these lines.

Salvation to the UTTERMOST! Someone said that the highest purpose of God in the salvation of the believer is to bring forth in him the fullest manifestation of Christ in every aspect of his character. To which Ray Prinzing adds these pertinent words: "Is that your desire? That God might bring forth in you the very fullest manifestation of Himself? There are times when our mind staggers under the impact of such a realm in God, but we say this, 'while presently I cannot grasp it all, whatever God means by it, that's what I desire.' Surely we would not limit our salvation to the scope of what the natural, finite mind can comprehend. Rather, we desire that which is above and beyond all that we can ask or think even that which is purposed in the heart of God. Christ didn't and couldn't procure a partial, an ineffective and unproductive salvation for men at Calvary. The horror of the fall, with its utter ruin and chaos, as man was 'turned to destruction' by the sovereign plan of God, demands the provision for ALL the need to be met, even unto the uttermost. But He is able 'to carry out His purpose and do superabundantly, far over and above all that we dare ask or think infinitely beyond our highest prayers, desires, thoughts, hopes or dreams' (Eph. 3:20), insomuch that 'you may be filled through all your being unto all the

fullness of God that is, may have the richest measure of the divine Presence, and become a body wholly filled and flooded with God Himself' (vs. 19)" end quote.

The great Italian sculptor, Benvenuto Cellini, told of receiving a vast block of marble with one flaw. Because of this flaw, no artist would submit a design except one. In the public square of Florence a fence was built around that piece of marble, and a little shack was erected for the artist. For two years the sculptor labored; then the fence was torn down, and the shack was taken away. All of Florence beheld the result and marveled. Since then, Italy and all the world has marveled at Michelangelo's "David." In that block of marble was a statue; others did not see it, but Michelangelo did. In the lump of clay which is you, God sees an image too, the image of Jesus Christ! And God wants to form the image of His Son in you in its totality and completeness, salvation unto the uttermost!

How precious is this thought, we are not BECOMING because we are so capable, wise, strong, or deserving. Ah, we have nothing but the barrenness, the weakness, the unprofitableness, the unworthiness and nothingness of a vessel all flawed and scarred and marred by sin and selfhood, that's all we have to offer Him, but it becomes the arena for the operation of God's quickening, vivifying power. HE is able to bring forth a new life, glorious salvation unto the uttermost, praise His name. A full salvation and exaltation unto the celestials. Indeed to the UTTERMOST. The progress summarized is, therefore:

A priesthood for a man
A priesthood for a family
A priesthood for a nation
A priesthood for the Church.

But that is not all, for there shall yet be revealed in the progressive unfolding of redemption's plan:

A PRIESTHOOD FOR THE NATIONS and
A PRIESTHOOD FOR CREATION

This priesthood is NOW IN PREPARATION. When our great High Priest has completed His work within us, He will PLACE US as His King Priests into His Kingdom Authority, and the world shall know that a NEW ORDER has begun. While we shall yet reign with Him as priests over creation, we rejoice that He now reigns over us by His Spirit to bring forth His FULL SALVATION. "And unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation" (Heb. 9:28). Only when His priestly work is fulfilled IN US will we be qualified as priests of the Melchizedekian Order to bring deliverance and life to ALL CREATION.

Chapter 15

The Expanding Priesthood

There will come an unbelievable transformation to your understanding of God's redemptive plan of the ages when the revelation dawns upon your seeking hearts, teaching you that THE PRIESTHOOD IS PROGRESSIVE. Its development can be noticed throughout the Scriptures. There is a beautiful progression from that day when in the beginning every individual man was his own priest and offered his own sacrifices, as did Adam, Cain, Abel, Noah, Abram, and others, to a larger priesthood whereby a man became a priest for his family, as did the patriarch Job, onward to a priesthood for an entire nation of people, as was the Levitical Priesthood, to that which is embodied in Christ, who is the priesthood for the Church gathered out of all nations, and ultimately shared by those who become ONE IN HIM as members of the Royal Priesthood destined to reign over the earth and all nations, reconciling the world and restoring all creation back into God again. So perhaps we had best begin at the beginning!

The first order of the priesthood was that of an INDIVIDUAL PRIESTHOOD in which there was a single sacrifice offered, one lamb given for one man. Each man was his own priest, making his own sacrifice to God, approaching and officiating before God on his own behalf, one sacrifice FOR one man, and BY one man. That was the first worship acceptable to God, when Abel offered the firstfruits of his flock, a lamb, and when shortly thereafter his own blood was mingled with the sacrifice, because his brother murdered him there.

In the book of Exodus we find the head of the family officiating as a priest on behalf of all who were in his house. "Speak ye unto all the congregation of Israel, saying, In the tenth day of this month they shall take to them every man a lamb, according to the HOUSE of their fathers, a lamb FOR AN HOUSE" (Ex. 12:3). A man would offer one lamb, for the covering of his whole family, and all those within his gates. It was a family rite, where the housefather acted as priest. The father of the home was the priest of the home, and he could spread his coverage to all of his family, claiming the protection and blessing and salvation of God for them all.

I would point out that in this second order of priesthood the principle remains the same, but there has been an EXPANDING OF THE COVERAGE. In the first order it was one sacrifice for one man by one priest, whereas in the second it is one sacrifice by one priest FOR A WHOLE FAMILY. Now the priestly ministry has intensified, there is an enlargement of its scope and an increase in its coverage, so that one priest is so much more effective, ministering on behalf of, and bringing blessing to, not himself alone, but to ALL THAT ARE IN HIS HOUSE!

The third step in the progressive unfolding and development of the priesthood designated one tribe as separated from the twelve tribes for holy service, and from this one man and his posterity was to be chosen to be the priesthood on behalf of THE NATION. His name was Aaron. He was assisted by his sons because of the magnitude of his ministry. Until

the law was given at Sinai, each man was a priest over his own household. But now there is an entirely new arrangement, the priesthood itself being numerically altered, and the scope of its ministry extended to embrace the entire nation of Israel instead of just a family or a clan. Its ministry was enlarged. Instead of one sacrifice for one man, by one priest, or one sacrifice by one priest for a family, it was now one sacrifice by one priesthood for an ENTIRE NATION! Every reader should notice especially that with each CHANGE in the priesthood there is an enlargement, an increase, an expansion of its scope of ministry, blessing greater and greater numbers of people being included under its coverage. From the days of Abel to the time of Aaron the coverage of the priesthood saw an increase from ONE MAN to more than TWO MILLION PEOPLE!

This brings us to the fourth stage in the progressive unfolding of the priesthood. The Aaronic priesthood continued until the death, resurrection and ascension of the Christ in the days of Caiaphas, the High Priest. Then it ended, for the Christ passed within the veil of the heavenlies and sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high as the Great High Priest and took upon Himself the ministry of intercession for the whole Church of God. And Oh! What an increase, What an enlargement! What an expansion of coverage! What an extension of blessings! For now, instead of one sacrifice for one man by one priest, or one sacrifice by one priest for a family, or one sacrifice by one priesthood for a nation, we have one sacrifice forever by one priest for THE CHURCH a great body of redeemed men gathered out of EVERY KINDRED AND TONGUE AND PEOPLE AND NATION! He is great High Priest to all who are covered by the blood and who are living stones in the House of God. "Having therefore, BRETHREN, 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" (Heb. 10:19-22). True, there is a ministry which touches the world through the body of Christ, but the High Priestly ministry of Jesus is uniquely on behalf of the Church which is His body. Ah, all is now for US, not for the world! "Seeing then that WE have a great High Priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let US hold fast OUR profession. For WE have not an High Priest which cannot be touched with the feelings of OUR infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as WE are, yet without sin. Let US therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that WE may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need" (Heb. 4:14-16). When the Lord turns His hand to save the world, it will be a glorious day indeed! But the work of God today is with US the firstfruits of His redemption, His kings and priests destined for the ages yet to come.

A PRIESTHOOD FOR THE NATIONS

In the program of God's redeeming purposes, given in Acts 15:14-18, James tells us that the work of God among the nations in this dispensation is "to take OUT OF THEM a people for His name." This, dear reader, is the direct work of the Gospel in this age, and with this program the history of the past nineteen hundred years is in the fullest and most striking harmony. This is precisely what has happened. In every generation God has been "taking out" a people. This is the very meaning of the word "church" the "called out". God is not calling all people now, nor is He now converting the nations. He is taking out a people FOR HIS NAME that is, a people to bear the name of Christ, the inChristed that in ages yet to come these elect saints shall rule the world and gather all things in earth and heaven into our wonderful Lord and Saviour (Eph. 1:10).

As one has written: "During the centuries of the Church age many wonderful revivals have taken place. Multitudes of mankind have wept in repentance and contrition at the

feet of the Saviour and, being begotten of Him, they rose to walk in newness of life, justified by faith in His blood, but up to the present hour all we have seen has been the gathering of the elect, the sonship company, who at the end of the age stand complete in Christ as His body of King Priests for the blessing of all nations and peoples. While these multitudes were being gathered into the fold, unnumbered millions, yea, even billions, have walked in outer darkness living and dying without even once hearing the message of salvation or ever knowing that the true God existed or that He so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. But was that not to be expected? Most certainly it was, for had God intended to enlighten the heathen in this age, His omnipotent power could have done so ten thousand times over, opening their blind eyes and transforming their hearts in a moment of time."

After more than nineteen centuries of the preaching of the Gospel, the body of Christ is yet "a little flock" in comparison with the great world that still "lieth in the evil one" (I Jn. 5:19). "The god of this world" (age) still holds sway over the vast proportion of human hearts and lives. For more than nineteen centuries we have had the Gospel of the grace of God in Europe, and still the vast mass of the men of Europe are completely outside of Christ. For nigh four hundred years we have had that same Gospel in this country, and yet the vast majority of the people of so called "Christian America" are utterly outside of any living relationship with Christ. Take any nation, country, city, town, village, or hamlet in any part of the world today, and only a SMALL proportion of the population will be found to be true Christians. And the governments of most of the nations and cities of the world today are downright hostile toward Christ and His Gospel and His people.

Truly the problems which are confronting the nations today seem almost overwhelming in their immensity and complexity. We have economic stagnation, runaway inflation, racial tension, immorality, pollution, drugs, rebellion, crime, revolution, atheism, war armed, bristling and aggressive, with enough atomic and hydrogen bombs stockpiled to blow this planet and twenty more like it into oblivion. Since 1945 Communism has gobbled up five hundred square miles of this earth's territory every single day and continues to grow at an alarming rate. We have problems that are baffling and overwhelming. Certainly every thinking person must ask himself the question: What in the world can we do?

The Apostle Paul faced similar problems at the beginning of the Church age. The Roman world was pregnant with difficulties; the Pax Romana was weakening; the barbarians were clamoring at the gates of Rome; Herod, Pilate, and Caesar had conspired to destroy the Christ and His newly budding religion; the religions of paganism had lost their force and were only nominally held to by most of the pagan world. Even the religion of the chosen people had degenerated until it was in a deplorable state. The world was half slave and half free. Infanticide was prevalent everywhere. Perversion was approved by the philosophers as well as the masses. What hope was there for a world in such a state? Things, indeed, looked dark.

They were dark also in the heart of Saul of Tarsus, a Pharisee and the son of a Pharisee. He came in religious zeal breathing threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord. He was a man who was filled with indignity, and hostility and bitterness. If he found any Christians, men or women, he sought to bind them and bring them to Jerusalem where they might be tortured and killed, if they refused to recant of this Christian heresy. He went to the High Priest to secure papers to go to Damascus. As he drew near, there suddenly shone a light from heaven so bright as to pale the sun by

comparison, and it caused him to be thrown from his horse to the ground! In this blinding light Saul heard a voice which called his name saying, 'Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?' Trembling with astonishment, Saul asked, "Who art Thou, Lord?" The reply thundered back, "I am Jesus, whom thou persecutes."

In that moment Saul saw a vision that was to change his entire life. Everything was changed in the brilliance of that light. His world was turned upside down, rather, right side up! His right, he discovered, was wrong; his faith was unbelief; his earnestness was treason; his truth was error; his zeal was rebellion. Everything suddenly turned topsy turvy and he realized that this Jesus, whose name just a moment before had been an epithet, an object of derision, of laughter, of scorn, of hatred, now suddenly was the Lord of Glory, the All Holy One, the Altogether Lovely One, the Creator and Redeemer of the world! In that moment Saul was changed from the persecutor to a disciple. He fell to the ground a sinner, and rose a saint; he fell to the ground a sighted man who was blind, and rose a blind man who could see. He saw the greatest sight in all the world. He saw his God for who He really is. In that moment Saul bowed low before the God of grace and power; he was brought to submission to Jesus Christ. And through Paul's life and ministry the Church was established throughout the far-flung Empire and the course of history was forever altered. Skeptics down through the centuries have tried to explain that conversion and the dramatic events it precipitated. But, precious friend of mine, there is no explanation other than the SUPERNATURAL SOVEREIGN WORK OF GOD. That is our God. And I do not hesitate to tell you, beloved, that God is getting ready to move again! All over the world in this particular moment in history, the Spirit of God is speaking to His apprehended ones concerning the imminent manifestation of the sons of God The trumpet has sounded, the appointed time has come. Elect saints in every nation have heard the voice of the prophets, foretelling of this most awesome intervention of God's power that is about to sweep the earth and shake all nations.

We are now living in the most momentous hours anyone could possibly imagine. In fact it is beyond the power of human imagination to see and understand the greatness of the things that are happening all about us and to fully comprehend what God is beginning to do in His people. There is an AWAKENING among the elect of the Lord that transcends human knowledge. As at a certain time of the year God puts it into the minds of salmon to leave the vastnesses of the sea and start their long journey back to the river in which they were hatched, so He is putting into the hearts of a chosen people the desire to ready themselves for the sonship. He has prepared for them from the foundation of the world. He is putting in their minds and hearts the very nature and spirit of priesthood, in preparation for their role as the deliverers and shepherds of the nations.

Many years ago I was assailed by a strong temptation to pessimism. The fact that for more than nineteen hundred years only a few in each generation had turned to Christ became a terrible burden to me. The thought that this same progress might continue for centuries or milleniums to come became heartbreaking and intolerable, and I cried out mightily to God. This Study, and my ministry on its theme for many years, forms the answer to my prayer. Now the future is radiant for me because I see a brighter day coming for the Church and for this sinned world. The history of the past is not to be indefinitely prolonged. We are not to have interminable ages in the future in which a "few" only will be saved and the masses lost. I say on the authority of the Word of God and the revelation unfolded within the hearts of many thousands of God's elect in this hour that the next great event on the calendar of God's program of the ages is the

MANIFESTATION OF THE SONS OF GOD the unveiling of God's Kingdom of Priests before all nations!

Great were the glories seen by men like Noah, Moses, Joshua, Gideon, David and Soloman. Glorious were the manifestations of God's power that swept the Judean hills when our Lord spoke as never man spoke and healed, and cast out devils, and even raised the dead to life again. Sublime beyond explanation were the holy visitations at Pentecost and in the years that followed as multitudes, both of men and women, were brought to the feet of Jesus Christ, and by the hands of the apostles God wrought mighty miracles and special signs and wonders until the world was literally turned upside down with the glory of the heavenly visitation. It would have been wonderful to have dwelt there then and to have rejoiced with them for all the wonderful works of God. Marvelous beyond description were the works of God as He birthed His infant Church! Blessed as were all those things and marvelous as were the results, yet more glorious still is the hope pulsating within the breast of all creation as "the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now, for the earnest expectation of the creation waiteth for the MANIFESTATION OF THE SONS OF GOD Because the creation itself ALSO shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God" (Rom. 8:19, 21,22). As J. B. Phillips so beautifully renders, "The whole creation is on tip toe to see the wonderful sight of the sons of God coming into their own."

The supernal glories that lie like the towering Mount Everest before us are beyond compare. The grandest event of all time is now at the doors. For almost two thousand long years the Lord has been gathering out of all nations an elect people and refining them in the furnace of affliction, transforming them in mind and heart by the deep dealings of His Spirit, and preparing them in wisdom and knowledge to possess the reins of the government of the world. And while we rejoice and praise God for all the mighty visitations of the past, and those glorious visitations we have experienced in our own life time, yet I know by the Word of the Lord that the next great move of God will be greater than all the manifestation of the sons of God. Nothing is more certain than that. The Spirit witnesses all across the land and around the world that the long awaited revelation is at hand. The unveiling of the inChristed is now at hand. The cry of the groaning creation and the prayer of the travailing saints are joined with the unutterable longings of the Holy Spirit, all crying in unison and harmony for the arising of God's Royal Priesthood. The desire of all nations is at hand.

It is through saved INDIVIDUALS that God now reaches and saves INDIVIDUALS out of all nations, but it will be a glorious enlargement of the work of Christ when He reaches and saves THE NATIONS through A NATION that He has saved and formed into a royal kingdom of priests. "But YE are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, AN HOLY NATION, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of Him who hath called you out of darkness into His marvelous light" (I Pet. 2:9). My prayer to God is that the eyes of God's elect may be opened wide to see that as there has been a priesthood for the Church, even our Lord Jesus Christ, so there is a priesthood, gathered out of all nations, and ordained for the nations, to bring the living nations of earth with their teeming billions of inhabitants into the life and light and liberty of the Kingdom of God.

The glorious vision beheld by the beloved John while caught up in spirit into the realm of God's throne fills my mind and heart, and makes me an optimist in the midst of apostasy and darkness. His vision caught a glimpse of things far beyond the law with its bondage and far beyond the Church age in which we live. John saw these wonders and lifted his

pen and wrote in ecstasy these immortal words: "And he that overcometh, and keepeth My works unto the end, to him will I give POWER OVER THE NATIONS: and he shall RULE THEM with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of My Father" (Rev. 2:26-27). Again, "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 then with transfixed eyes John beheld in wonder as the four living creatures (kings) and the twenty four elders (priests) fell down before the Lamb and 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 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 OVER THE EARTH**" (Rev. 5:9-10). Yes, and, glory be to God, many thousands of souls now living and waiting are taking up the glad refrain, for they know by revelation from the throne, that God's Royal Priesthood shall indeed reign over the earth and over all nations and that the inhabitants of the earth shall not much longer endure the misrule and treachery of ages past. The six milleniums of human injustice will be ended, and that forever. The Lord with His inChristed saints will reign over the nations of earth. Of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David to order and establish it with justice and judgment from this time forth, even unto the age. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this.

The concern of the Lord Jesus has been toward the nations ever since He came the first time. Probably the most powerful and far-reaching word ever spoken is recorded in the second Psalm. It is God's Word to His Anointed Son when He promised Him His inheritance: **THIS EARTH**. The sweet singer of Israel penned these significant words: "I will decree the decree of the Lord (Jehovah): He said to Me, You are My Son; this day (I declare) I have begotten You. Ask of Me, and I **WILL GIVE YOU THE NATIONS** as YOUR INHERITANCE, and the **UTTERMOST PARTS OF THE EARTH FOR YOUR POSSESSION**. You shall break them with a rod of iron; You shall dash them in pieces like potter's ware" (Amplified Bible). Little is known in the Church of this promise, this powerful **COVENANT PROMISE** of the Father to the Lord Jesus. Most Christians haven't realized that Christ has any inheritance in the earth, thinking rather that He is to possess some distant heaven, "way beyond the blue", and there prepare a place for His "evacuated saints" to spend eternity in rest. Oh, that our eyes might be opened to see that the Lord Jesus the Christ is to inherit **THIS EARTH!** He is to establish His Rule here, and amazing to the imagination, we have been promised a share in all which will one day belong to Him! "The meek shall inherit **THE EARTH**" (Mat. 5:5). These are to be a **GOVERNMENTAL PEOPLE** through whom He may express His authority in a new order here on this earth. The immeasurable importance of Psalm 2 has been impressed on me for years. The understanding of it is basic and essential in the preparation of those who will stand with the Lord Jesus Christ as this age ends in its fury, and the next is born in its glory.

Consider what Jesus told His disciples to do among the nations: "Jesus approached and breaking the silence said to them, All authority, all power to rule, in heaven and on earth has been given to Me. Go then and **MAKE DISCIPLES OF ALL THE NATIONS**, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Mat. 28:18-19, Amplified Bible). But that is not quite what the Greek text says. In the Greek He did not say, "make disciples OF;" there is no substantive in the command except nations. The Greek English Interlinear reads: "Going forth disciple you **ALL THE NATIONS**." The command includes a far larger enterprise than that of bringing individual souls to Himself,

or establishing the Church in every place. It is a command to influence all the nations toward His will and His ways, yea, to subdue and subject them UNTO HIM.

The Greek word for nation is ETHNOS and occurs in the Greek New Testament a total of 164 times. We derive our word "ethnic" from this word. It doesn't mean "country" (a political boundary) like we do when we think of a nation, but means a race, a tribe, or a group of people who share the same culture, language, and geography. There are over 220 nations with governments in the world today, but there are many more nations as God reckons nations (ethnos). The sons of God are to rule not just over the 220 countries, but over the SIXTEEN THOUSAND NATIONS (ethnic groups) of the world!

My prayer is that the Holy Spirit will open the eyes of our understanding that we might see the truth as the Psalmist saw it when he said, "Say unto God, How terrible art Thou in Thy works! THROUGH THE GREATNESS OF THY POWER SHALL THINE ENEMIES SUBMIT THEMSELVES UNTO THEE. ALL THE EARTH SHALL WORSHIP THEE, and shall sing unto Thee; they shall sing unto Thy name. Selah. HE RULETH BY HIS POWER FOREVER; His eyes behold THE NATIONS: let not the rebellious exalt themselves" (Ps. 66:17). David expressed this truth in a prayer for Solomon, which is prophetic of the reign of Christ, in that magnificent Psalm 72: "Yea, ALL KINGS shall fall down before Him: ALL NATIONS shall serve Him ...ALL NATIONS shall call Him blessed." It is further written, "ALL NATIONS whom Thou hast made shall come and worship before Thee, O Lord; and shall glorify Thy name" (Ps. 86:9). Please notice, precious friend of mine, that it is not the Church, not merely men OUT OF all nations that shall serve the Lord; but ALL THE NATIONS THEMSELVES shall submit unto Him. What a promise! What a day! It has never been since the foundation of the world. Today, all nations do not serve Him and sing unto Him and praise and glorify His name. Russia does not. China does not. Tibet does not. Iran does not. Israel (Israeli State) does not. And most of the nations do not, and many NEVER HAVE.

Psalm 67 is a prophecy foretelling the future joy of mankind when they behold the blessings of the Kingdom of Christ. It also expresses the sentiments of all the faithful saints of God, past and present, who having been birthed into the power and glory of that Kingdom long for its triumph in the earth realm. The Rotherham Version of this Psalm reads: "God be favorable to us and bless us, cause His face to shine upon us, that Thy way may be known throughout the earth, throughout ALL NATIONS Thy saving help! Peoples will praise Thee, O God, peoples will ALL OF THEM praise Thee. Races of men will be glad and shout for joy, because Thou wilt judge peoples with equity, and races of men throughout the earth Thou wilt lead. Peoples will praise Thee, O God, peoples will ALL OF THEM praise Thee. Earth will have given her increase, God, our own God, will bless us. God will bless us, that all the ends of the earth may revere Him."

"In thee and in thy seed shall ALL THE FAMILIES (the 16,000 "ethnos") OF THE EARTH BE BLESSED," is the covenant made with Abraham in that long ago. Since God has promised to bless all mankind, we can rest assured that they will be blessed! This design of our omnipotent Father to bless mankind with peace, happiness, and LIFE is the great theme song of the entire Bible. Its first faint notes are heard in promises recorded in the early chapters of Genesis, and it reaches its grand crescendo in the closing chapters of Revelation, where we are given the assurance that "there shall be no more death," and where we are told of God's wonderful provision for the "healing of THE NATIONS" (Rev. 21:4; 22:12).

Can you not see what a vital, transforming difference is made to your understanding when you see God's purpose behind the Church, His purpose extending to all nations and peoples. God would much rather see the faces of all peoples lifted up to Him, praising Him, and the hands of all races and tribes lifted up to Him in worship, than to go about eternally destroying all the people. Jesus said that He did not come to condemn THE WORLD, but that THE WORLD through Him might be saved. As surely as you live, and as surely as God lives, the words of the prophets shall be fulfilled: "Arise, O God, judge the earth: for Thou shalt INHERIT ALL NATIONS" (Ps. 82:8). "ALL NATIONS whom Thou hast made shall come and worship before Thee, O Lord; and shall glorify Thy name" (Ps. 86:9). "And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain (kingdom) of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and ALL NATIONS shall flow into it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and He will teach us of His ways, and we will walk in His paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. And He shall judge among the NATIONS, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: NATION SHALL NOT LIFT UP SWORD AGAINST NATION, NEITHER SHALL THEY LEARN WAR (and THAT certainly hasn't been fulfilled yet!)" (Isa. 2:24). "And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen (Greek: ethnos, nations) through faith, preached before the Gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall ALL NATIONS be blessed" (Gal. 3:8). Then again 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 "the Lord, Most High, is terrible: He is a great King over all the earth. He SHALL SUBDUE THE PEOPLE UNDER US, and THE NATIONS under our feet; for God is the King over all the earth; and the princes of the peoples 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. 47:19).

I do not think it necessary here to multiply Scripture to prove that God intends to subdue and save all the nations and fill the whole earth with His glory until all men see the salvation of the Lord which He has prepared before the face of all people. While it has not been God's intention to save the nations during this Church age, He has, nevertheless, given abundant proof of His ability to do so. Church history is replete with examples of how the Spirit of God has moved in sundry places with such mighty power that whole nations and entire societies have been transformed by His grace. It should be abundantly evident that God has given us these unique examples as SPECIMENS of what He can do when He sets His hand to conquer a people for His Kingdom. As I have read of the marvelous dealings of God with peoples and nations in the past I am deeply moved, and how my spirit rejoices in all these things! They teach me, first of all, that God CAN SAVE NATIONS and they further reveal that when His instrument is prepared, He WILL DELIVER ALL THE NATIONS. How our hearts should be encouraged by these things! If God has ever, anywhere, saved A NATION, then He is abundantly able to save ALL NATIONS. Let us bear these thoughts in mind as I share with you some of the beautiful examples of God's glory revealed on the national plane.

IRELAND

I think the life of St. Patrick will come as a great surprise and astonishment to many, when we consider St. Patrick, the Roman Catholic patron saint of Ireland. What was he really like? Here are some facts. One: He wasn't Irish. Two: He wasn't born on March 17th. Three: He didn't drive the snakes out of Ireland. Four: He wasn't a Roman Catholic

and he may never have had anything to say about the shamrock and the trinity. However, behind the myth, there was a real person and I think that you might find that the life of the real Patrick is as amazing as the story about the legendary one. Let us look through the mists of legend and see what we may ascertain for sure.

One who has studied the life of St. Patrick wrote: "St. Patrick was born a long time ago in the year 389 AD And most scholars agree that he was born on the west coast of what was then Roman Britain, just south of Lumberton in Scotland, today at the confluence of the Clyde and the Leaven rivers. In the dark land of Hibernia, which had never been subjugated by Rome, dwelt the awesome Druids, with their live sacrifices and their contempt for human life. The very name could send a chill down the spines of those who dwelt on the west coast of Britain, because their ferocious raiding parties would often sweep down and take captives back to this land of Hibernia, which today we call the Emerald Isle.

"One day Patricius, or Patrick, tells us about playing with two other boys on the beach and spending the afternoon in the breakers as they swept up onto the long crescent beach and climbing over the rocks there at Bannavem, where he lived. Afterwards, sitting in the mouth of a cave, planning an escapade for the morrow, all of a sudden, they saw a band of freebooters and pirates coming around the headland. They sprang to their feet to flee in the opposite direction, and as Patrick says, they rushed incontinently into the arms of the other half of the pirate group. They were bound and dragged on board their ship with several hundred other young men and women, and taken away to Ireland. They were driven in chains two hundred miles inland into the forest of Ireland, and there Patrick was sold into slavery. 'To the unspeakable horrors,' he says, 'of slavery.' He was sold to a Druid chieftain, who put him to work feeding the swine in the deep forests of Ireland. And there, for six years he languished. He says, 'It was while I ate the bitter bread of that hateful servitude in a foreign land, that the light divine broke upon my benighted soul and I called to remembrance the holy things which I had been taught in my dear old home at Bannavem.' He remembered the words of his father, saying that there was a true God, a God that could deliver, a God who cared.

"In the midst of his dreadful solitude, he lifted up his eyes to that God and wondered how he might find Him. And he remembered the stories he had so often heard about the Son whom God had sent into this world, Jesus, who had come in a far away corner of the Roman Empire and there upon a cross, at the hands of Roman soldiers, He had been put to death. But that He had died, not for His own sins, but for ours; that He was bruised for our iniquities and that for our transgressions He had suffered. Patrick tardily remembered the waywardness of his life and the sins for which he felt he was now being punished. He says that by means of those tender memories the Lord opened his hard and unbelieving heart to a tardy remembrance of his transgressions and led him to turn with his whole soul to his Redeemer.

"Patrick, in truth, became a saint. Not canonized by any Church, but made a saint by God, sanctified and set aside by the Holy Spirit. His heart was transformed and he became a new creature in Christ Jesus. By faith in the Redeemer, this young man in the depths and darkness of the forests of Ireland found the Saviour of the world.

"After six years he had a dream one night. In that dream he had a vision and a voice said, 'Lo, thy ship is ready!' The next morning he fled his captors and staggered two hundred miles through the dense forest of Ireland, finally arriving at the sea. And when he

came out of the woods, there was a ship, waiting to sail, loaded with Irish wolfhounds. He asked passage on the ship but was angrily cast out. As he walked dejectedly away, someone ran after him and told him to come back, that they had changed their minds. And so, Patrick left the land of Ireland. He sailed to Gaul and after some years returned to his home. But he could never get out of his mind those Irish Druids that had held him captive. For years, he planned the revenge that he was going to have upon his captors. But it was a different kind of revenge; it was a noble revenge in which he would bring to them the light of the Gospel. He could hear the thousands of souls in those darkened forests, crying for the Bread of Life, and there was none to break it, he said. Finally, after twenty years had passed, during which he watched the weltering sun go down over that benighted island, and his heart would return to those people, one night he had another vision and someone came with a handful of letters and at the top it said: 'The Voice of the Irish.' And suddenly, he said, I heard a whole chorus of voices and I saw a group of people standing at the forest's edge, the forests of F. Clough, and they said, 'We pray thee, holy youth, come and henceforth walk among us.' He believed that he had been called by God to return to the land of his slavery. So, he set sail for Ireland, There he landed on those inhospitable shores and plunged into the depths of the forests and confronted the fanatical Druids and proclaimed the Gospel. And what was the message that Patrick proclaimed? One thing is very clear from his writings. It was very simply the Evangel of Jesus Christ; it was the simple Gospel of Christ. It was the story of the Christ who died and rose again to bring us to God. It was the message of God's undying love. There is nothing here of the Roman Catholic dogma. There is no mention of any foreign Church or Pope or any of the various doctrines of Rome. It is simply the Gospel of Christ which on his lips took on the power of God. He declared himself to be an ambassador of Jesus Christ. Actually, he was an apostle!

"So he confronted the Druid kings and priests and he overwhelmed them with the power of the Gospel. And so mighty was his missionary endeavor that he crossed Ireland from one side to the other, time after time. There was hardly any place in the Emerald Isle where the breath of the revival brought by Patrick did not reach. The results were astonishing!

"The Encyclopedia Britannica declares that Patrick himself baptized one hundred and twenty thousand persons. That is incredible, when we realize that the population of all of Ireland at that time consisted of only three hundred thousand people. And many more people were baptized by his helpers. He found the island a completely pagan and savage land, and left it almost totally Christianized. He declares himself, 'I am greatly a debtor to God. What have I done to deserve the Grace that has been so bountifully bestowed upon me? When I think of the multitudes who have been born again through my instrumentality and when I think of the vast number of these converts whom the Lord has called to be missionaries and evangelists, I am bowed down with penitence and adoring gratitude. His Grace has been wonderful most wonderful.'

"He established over three hundred Churches and yet, the Church that he established was very different from the Roman Church of the Middle Ages. In fact, it was not until the year 1167 that Henry II sent five thousand iron clad Papal soldiers to Ireland to subdue the Irish Church to the Papal authority. Their conquest was completed in the year 1172. The Church founded by Patrick finally was subdued to the authority of Rome, centuries after Patrick died. He was a preacher of the Gospel of Grace one of the greatest missionaries of all time" D. Kennedy.

Ah, yes, when God has prepared His vessel He is perfectly capable of converting an ENTIRE NATION to Himself. In the light of this truth how awesome is the prospect of a great many-membered body of matured, perfected, overcoming, incorruptible SONS OF GOD being given authority and power over ALL NATIONS AND TRIBES AND PEOPLES in the coming age! The Scriptures contain marvelous promises for the nations and when He is ready to reveal Himself to them, and has His instrument prepared, we shall witness a move and manifestation of God that shall shake the whole earth under the explosion of the power of God. Glory to God!

SCOTLAND

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.

Mary Queen of Scots said that she feared the face of John Knox more than ten thousand ships. It was because he was not afraid. He would come into her castle at a time when she was trying and condemning as heretics people all over Scotland and burning them at the stake. He would come right in and reprove her to her face. She was a woman of keen wit and often endeavored to argue with him. But to argue with John Knox was a task not to be lightly undertaken even by the Queen of Scotland with all of her courtiers surrounding her. They often whispered, "He is not afraid." And he was not afraid!

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. Carlyle tells us that no one man ever succeeded in more TOTALLY TRANSFORMING THE ENTIRE LIFE OF A NATION than John Knox. He is, indeed, the Scot of Scotsmen! When all others pale into insignificance at the name of Scotland, the name of John Knox looms with ever greater luminescence as the centuries go by. 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.

WALES

Jessie Penn Lewis has recorded the history of the great revival that swept through the country of Wales in 1902-1905. In an hour of great apostasy and degeneracy many hundreds of people began to fervently pray for God to move in that land. 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 came 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. The meetings would be closed two or three times but others would cry for mercy or break out in joyful thanksgiving. 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. There was no forcing, no urging, not even any inviting, spontaneity characterized the proceedings from beginning to end. Soon all the Churches were crowded, the valleys

and the mountains ringing with the high praises of God. The people sang without books, and often would be heard a sweet warbling voice like a nightingale's trill breaking out into a hymn while the people bowed in prayer. Souls were sung to Christ, and exulted over in song when won. The spirit of gladness and praise filled all hearts, as thousands rejoiced in the marvelous works of God.

The revival was characterized by a profound spirit of repentance, which is the first principle of the Kingdom of God. "From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, REPENT! for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand" (Mat. 4:17). The Spirit of God did his own work of convicting, and many were the evidences of His power working in repentance, restitution, and transformation. A young man would return his prize medal and diploma because he had gained it unfairly. A grocer would return money picked up in his shop, and kept although knowing the one who dropped it. Long standing debts were paid. Stolen goods returned. Prizefighters, gamblers, tax gatherers, racecourse enthusiasts, and men of other classes rarely touched by ordinary means came to Christ, and quickly the world knew the results. Magistrates were presented with white gloves in many places because there were "no cases", so many people had been saved that the crime rate had dropped to zero! The taverns had to close their doors, for lack of patrons. Rowdiness was changed to soberness. Cursing and swearing ceased to be heard, so that, it was said, in the coal mines the horses could no longer understand the language of their drivers! The reading of light literature was exchanged for Bible reading, and stores were emptied of their stocks of Bibles. Prayer meetings were held in mines underground, in trains and trams and all kinds of places. Managers of factories bore witness that the amount of work turned out by the men since the revival had been more than they had known for years.

Far and wide the influences spread, affecting all classes. Political meetings had to be postponed, and Members of Parliament were out taking part in "revival meetings". Football teams were disbanded because all the men had been converted, and would rather be out "about the Father's business." From one district a Theatrical Company folded up, as there was no hope of audiences, for all the "world" was praying.

The mighty tidal wave swept hither and thither, men knew not how or why. The Spirit of God found His own channels; and many districts had extraordinary manifestations of the power of God. Lists of converts were sent to the newspapers, the number reaching nearly 100,000 by the end of March, 1905. Many of the young people were thrust out by the Lord to share in the service, 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!

INDIANS

It is amazing to see a brutal people in New Guinea, for whom the highest conceivable virtue was treachery, fall before the spell of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and come to the place where virtually the entire tribe is converted and worshipping the living Saviour. It is amazing to see the vicious Aucas even become missionaries to other tribes downstream. The Aucas had previously never allowed anyone who entered their domain to live, they had killed the five Christian missionaries. To see that whole tribe converted to Christ was and is a marvelous thing to behold. There is no doubt whatsoever that Christianity is a

SUPERNATURAL WORK when one considers the results it has produced in the lives of people.

These great exploits were all wrought by men of like passions as we are, but sublime beyond imagination will be the glory that shall be revealed among ALL NATIONS when the glorified sons of God arise to take the reins of the government of the world. We have had a glimpse of what it is like for an individual to be filled with God's glory and power. A man or woman like that can, as Jesus did, shake a city or even a nation. But what if the entire body of THE HOUSE OF SONS is filled with the glory? What will happen to this earth when the sons of God are filled with the fullness of which we, in this Church age, have received merely the "firstfruits"?

Ah, beloved saint of God, the sons of God shall arise and soar to victory all over this planet. There will be no need for a "pretribulation escape rapture". The reason some people still hope for a rapture to take us out of the world alive, is that they simply do not have a vision of this glorious body of Christ full of HIS life and power and victory! Every hamlet, every village, every city, every province, every nation will feel the impact of the resurrection life of Jesus Christ. The knowledge of His glory will cover the earth as the waters cover the sea. This victory of Christ on earth will be repeated over and over again until every enemy is put under our feet. All creation shall know the Christ of God, to the glory of God the Father! Hallelujah!

In closing this article I would remind my reader that in this wonderful PRIESTHOOD FOR THE NATIONS there is once more an EXPANDING OF THE COVERAGE OF THE PRIESTHOOD. In the first order it was one sacrifice for one man by one priest, whereas in the second it was one sacrifice by one priest for a whole family. In the third order it was one sacrifice by one priesthood for an entire nation, while in the fourth order it is one sacrifice by one priest for the whole Church of God. This brings us to the fifth stage in the progressive unfolding of the priesthood: THE PRIESTHOOD FOR THE NATIONS. Every reader should notice especially that with each CHANGE in the priesthood there is an enlargement, an increase, an expansion of its scope of ministry, blessing greater and greater numbers of people being included under its coverage. From the days of Abel to the time of Aaron the coverage of the priesthood saw an increase from ONE MAN to more than TWO MILLION PEOPLE! And from the days of Aaron until now the coverage of the priesthood has seen an increase from two million people to HUNDREDS OF MILLIONS OF PEOPLE. When the Royal Priesthood arises in the earth to reign over the nations, blessed be God, there shall be an increase in the coverage of the priesthood from hundreds of millions of saints to UNTOLD BILLIONS OF PEOPLE! What an increase! What an enlargement! What an expansion of coverage! What an extension of blessings!

Chapter 16

The Expanding Priesthood

(continued)

It is through saved INDIVIDUALS that God now reaches and saves INDIVIDUALS out of all nations, but it will be a glorious enlargement of the work of Christ when He reaches and saves THE NATIONS through A NATION that He has saved and formed into a royal kingdom of priests. "But YE are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, AN HOLY NATION, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of Him who hath called you out of darkness into His marvelous light" (1 Pet. 2:9). My prayer to God is that the eyes of God's elect may be opened wide to see that as there has been a priesthood for the Church, our Lord Jesus Christ, so is there a priesthood, gathered out of all nations, and ordained for the nations, to bring the living nations on earth with their teeming billions of inhabitants into the life and light and liberty of the Kingdom of God.

The glorious vision beheld by the beloved John while caught up in Spirit into the realm of God's throne fills my mind and heart, and makes me an optimist in the midst of apostasy and darkness. His vision caught a glimpse of things far beyond the law with its bondage and far beyond the Church age in which we live. John saw these wonders and lifted his pen and in ecstasy wrote these immortal words: "And he that overcometh, and keepeth My works unto the end, to him will I give POWER OVER THE NATIONS: and he shall RULE THEM with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of My Father" (Rev. 2:26,27). Again, "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 then with transfixed eyes John beheld in astonishment as the four living creatures (kings) and the twenty-four elders (priests) fell down before the Lamb and 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 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). Yes, and glory be to God! many thousands of souls now living and waiting are taking up the glad refrain, for they know by revelation from the throne, that God's Royal Priesthood shall indeed reign over the earth and over all nations, and that the inhabitants of earth shall not much longer endure the misrule and treachery of ages past. The six milleniums of human injustice will be ended, and that forever. The Lord with His inChristed saints will reign with power over the nations of earth. Of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David to order and establish it with justice and judgment from this time forward, even unto the age. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this.

GOD'S PROGRAM FOR THE AGES

Have you ever wondered why Christ came? Ask the average Christian, and the most common answers are: to save us, to redeem His people, to give us eternal life, or to take us to heaven. But few will remember God's purpose in sending His Son that the government might be upon His shoulders (Isa. 9:6) and that Christ should rule and reign over the affairs of men and nations (Isa.9:7) until all nations serve and worship Him (Ps. 86:9). This national message of the Bible is one of the most neglected themes of the religious systems. It is possible erroneously to limit God and His program of redemption to narrow personal and individualistic interpretation. In the light of such a profound array of scriptures as those we have just considered, I am at a complete loss to understand how anyone who knows God at all could fail to grasp the living hope that a radiant age of splendor, in which Christ and His glorious body shall rule and reign and subdue all enemies and all nations and all things unto God, is coming. A careful study of the Scriptures reveals an outline of the progressive expansion of the priesthood; its headings are:

1. In Genesis we have the Priesthood for the Individual.
2. In Exodus and Job we have the Priesthood for the Household.
3. In Exodus and Leviticus the Priesthood for the Nation.
4. In Hebrews the Priesthood for the Church.
5. In Revelation the Priesthood for the Nation.
6. In Col. 1, Rom. 8, & Heb. 2 the Priesthood for the Universe all of creation.

"Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles (nations), to take out of them a people for His name. And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written, After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up: that the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles (nations), upon whom My name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth all these things" (Acts 15:14,17). We have here the sequence of events as to how God shall carry out His program of reconciliation and redemption. Peter has declared before the Council at Jerusalem, the conversion of the Gentiles at Caesarea, and Paul and Barnabas have borne similar testimony about the divine blessing attending their missionary tour. Then James put before the brethren three great steps in the divine plan: FIRST, to visit the nations and take out of them a people for His name. That is, to draw out unto Himself a remnant, a firstfruits company, election by grace, which is what He has been doing from the time of Calvary until now. He has been visiting each generation among the nations and TAKING OUT OF THEM A PEOPLE FOR HIS NAME, TO BECOME THE EXPRESSION OF HIS NAME in the earth. SECOND, after His firstfruits have been brought forth, completely gathered, formed, and processed, then He will return and BUILD AGAIN THE TABERNACLE OF DAVID releasing the full manifestation of His presence and glory in the earth through a many-membered body, His DAVID'S TABERNACLE COMPANY. THIRD, after that, and through the Tabernacle of David People, He will move upon the residue of men, causing them to seek unto the Lord and "all the nations shall be blessed" as HIS NAME IS CALLED UPON THEM.

This is the blessed ministry of God's Royal Priesthood in its ever increasing and widening circles, reaching out until God shall be ALL IN ALL. How we need to stay in line with God's priorities! The entire Church age has been set aside, not in the vain and deceptive hope of the conversion of the world, but for the distinct purpose of "calling out a people for His name." When this people, HIS NAME COMPANY, is brought forth they will stand in the earth as the manifestation of the restored TABERNACLE OF DAVID.

THE TABERNACLE OF DAVID

"In that day will I raise up the Tabernacle of David that is fallen, and close up the breaches thereof; and I will raise up his ruins, and I will build it as in the days of old: that they may possess...ALL THE HEATHEN (Heb., nations), which are called by My name, saith the Lord that doeth this" Amos 9.11-12). "After this I will return, and will build again the Tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up" (Acts 15:16). "And the Lord will create upon every dwelling place of Mount Zion, and upon her assemblies, a cloud and smoke by day, and the shining of a flaming fire by night: for upon all the glory shall be a defense. And there shall be a Tabernacle for a shadow in the daytime from the heat, and for a place of refuge, and for a covert from storm and from rain" (Isa. 4:5-6). "And David made him houses in the City of David (Zion), and prepared a place for the Ark of God, and pitched for it a Tent (Tabernacle)" (I Chron. 15:1).

David became king of Israel in a time of spiritual declension and apostasy. He found the land in a helpless state, everywhere under the power of the Philistines, and with many of its cities still held by the Canaanite people. Many of the people of Israel were prostituting the worship of Jehovah with the pagan practices of the goddess Ashtaroth and Mylitta. The Ark of the Covenant was lost to God's people. It was taken into battle against the Philistines, and captured by them. High Priest Eli was so shocked to hear that the Philistines had captured the Ark that he lost his balance, fell over backward and broke his neck; also his daughter-in-law in the throes of death lamented, "The glory is departed from Israel, for the Ark of God is taken" (I Sam. 4:18-22). Upon its return to Israelite territory it was kept in hiding in the house of Abinadab under the care of his son Eleazar.

At this time the city of Jerusalem, on Mount Zion, had been kept as a stronghold by a Canaanite tribe called the Jebusites, ever since the days of Joshua. David led his men of war against it, but the Jebusites, from their high walls and steep rocks, laughed at him. To mock King David, they placed on the top of the wall the blind and lame people, and they called aloud and taunted David, saying, "Even blind men and lame men can keep you out of our city!" This angered David, and he said to his men, "Whoever first climbs up the wall and strikes down the blind and the lame upon it, he shall be the chief captain and general of the whole army." Then all the soldiers of David rushed against the wall, each striving to be first. The man who was able first to reach the enemies and strike them down was Joab, the son of David's sister Zeruah; and he became the commander of David's army, a place which he held as long as David lived.

After the fortress on Mount Zion was taken from the Jebusites, David made it larger and stronger, and chose it for his royal house; and around it the city of Jerusalem grew up as the chief city in David's kingdom, Zion, the City of David. The Philistines soon found that there was a new king in Israel and a ruler very different from King Saul. They gathered their army and came against David. He met them in the valley of Rephaim, a little to the south of Jerusalem, and won a great victory over them and carried away from the field the images of their gods; but that the Israelites might not be led to worship them, David burned them all with fire. But David did not rest when he had driven the Philistines back to their own land. He marched with his men into the Philistines' country and took their chief city, Gath, which was called "The mother city of the Philistines." He conquered all their land and ended the war of a hundred years by making all the Philistine plain subject to Israel.

Now that the land was free, David thought that the time had come to bring the holy Ark of the Lord out from its hiding place, where it had remained all through the rule of Samuel and the reign of Saul. Though God had given great and glorious victories on the battlefield, yet Israel had lost the sublime presence, power and glory of the living God. The Ark of the Covenant, which was the focal point of God's presence, glory and power in Israel, was in hiding. The glory of God had departed from the people. There was no Tabernacle, there was no cloud by day, nor pillar of fire by night, no Shekinah within the Most Holy Place, no priesthood to minister according to the order of God.

The presence of God this Ark of the Covenant had to be restored! The glory of God this Ark of the Covenant had to be restored! The power of God this Ark of the Covenant had to be restored! The people of Israel lamented after God's presence. They decided to do all they could to bring the Ark of God, the power of God's presence, to them. In the midst of this preparation David pitched a Tent to receive the Ark of the Covenant: "And David made him houses in the City of David, and prepared a place for the Ark of God, and pitched for it a Tent" (I Chron. 15:1). With chosen men of all the tribes, he went to bring up the Ark to Mount Zion. And before the Ark walked David and the men of Israel making music upon all kinds of musical instruments. "And David spake to the chief of the Levites to appoint their brethren to be the singers with instruments of music, psalteries and harps and cymbals, sounding, by lifting up the voice with joy" (I Chron. 15:16). When the joyful procession arrived at Mount Zion, David set up the Ark in the Tabernacle he had built. "So they brought the Ark of God, and set it in the midst of the Tent that David had pitched for it" (I Chron. 16:1).

David, by bringing back the Ark of the Covenant, restored the POWER OF GOD'S PRESENCE AND GLORY to Israel. He put the Ark in a Tabernacle, from which the light of God's glory, power, victory, blessing, joy and peace shone out to all who came to Mount Zion. The presence of God as seen in the Shekinah Glory above the Ark of the Covenant in Moses' Tabernacle was restored. His presence and glory dwelt upon Mount Zion and transformed all who worshipped at David's Tabernacle. This was, however, altogether different from the Tabernacle which Moses had built. This was a new day. A new thing. And a new order! There was an Outer Court, a Holy Place, and a Holy of Holies in the Tabernacle of Moses in the wilderness. However, there was no Outer Court and no Holy Place in the Tabernacle of David. It should be no marvel in the eyes of any enlightened saint to see that what David did was to TRANSFER ONLY THE HOLY OF HOLIES TO MOUNT ZION when he built his Tabernacle there. The reason for this is that all the pieces of furniture in the Outer Court and in the Holy Place have their fulfillment in the contents of the Ark of the Covenant! Thus we see with added emphasis and urgency, the extreme importance of this one thing the Ark of the Covenant!

The Outer Court of Moses Tabernacle was pitched at Gibeon and retained the brazen altar of sacrifice (I Chron. 21:28-29). Zadok, as High Priest, officiated at Gibeon in the continual offering up of sacrifices. "And Zadok the priest, and his brethren the priests, before the Tabernacle of the Lord in the high place that was at Gibeon, to offer burnt offerings unto the Lord upon the altar of the burnt offering continually morning and evening" (I Chron. 16:39-40). Ah, but the NEW ANOINTING, the NEW THING, the FRESH MOVE OF THE SPIRIT, the more recent, more prophetic service of psalms, and hymns and music, of revelation and glory and power, under Asaph, GATHERED AROUND THE TABERNACLE OF DAVID IN MOUNT ZION.

When the Ark came to Zion it was with great rejoicing, praise and worship. The Psalms we love so well were born at David's Tabernacle. David himself entered into a new ministry. God's glory had been restored in the midst of His people. Oh, yes, there was still a ministry in the Outer Court at Gibeon, and you could continue with that old ritualistic order if you wanted to. But the fullness of the presence and glory and power of God was not there on the hill at Gibeon! GOD did not dwell there! He was not TABERNACLED, or EMBODIED there! He was not SEEN there! God's presence and glory and power were in the Tabernacle of David on another hill Mount Zion!

Mount Zion was the highest peak in Jerusalem, and there King David dwelt and reigned. A priesthood was ordained for the Tabernacle of David on Mount Zion. Kings and Priests were united there in the glory and power of God. To correctly understand the spiritual significance of David's Throne and David's Tabernacle and its Priesthood on Mount Zion, we need to meditate deeply upon this shadow. Israel was the whole nation, all who belonged to God from the poorest pauper to the king on the throne. Jerusalem was the capital city, the seat of government, the ruling class, a people closer to God and more privileged than any who dwelt in the land. And while Jerusalem comprised all the ruling class, yet in Jerusalem there was only one who, with his household, dwelt on Mount Zion. He was the King. His was the highest pinnacle of glory and power attainable. But that Zion of old was only a shadow of the true Mount Zion to which we are come!

David was king over natural Israel. Christ is King over spiritual Israel. David dwelt on the natural Mount Zion. Therefore Christ dwells on the spiritual Mount Zion. And this spiritual Zion is composed of those who have reached the very highest pinnacle attainable in Jerusalem: those who, like David of old, have wholly followed the Lord and done all His will. They are a people after God's own heart. Spiritual Zion is the "little remnant": the ones who have attained the highest pinnacle of majesty in the spiritual realm. These called out and elect saints, who have been in preparation for two thousand years, are the BODY OF CHRIST, the SONS OF GOD, whom God has chosen and ordained to sit with Him in His throne as King

Priests after the order of Melchizedek. They are the fullness and completeness of Him who everywhere fills the universe with Himself. These are the 144,000 who stand with the Lamb upon the heavenly Mount Zion (Rev. 14), who have suffered with Him, and will now reign with Him for the ages. These are they who follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth, going all the way with God. They have their Father's nature written in their minds and in their hearts. They sing a new song of revelation and glory and victory, known only to those who have trodden the path from Mount Calvary to Mount Zion. They are overcomers. They are not defiled with the treacherous harlot religious systems, nor have they subscribed to the doctrines, blasphemies and idolatries of Mystery Babylon. In their mouths is found no guile. They are without fault before the throne. How glorious is the theme! I have no hesitancy whatever in telling you that these holy sons of God are THE RESTORED TABERNACLE OF DAVID. Press on, saints of God, for if your heart is as my heart you cannot dare not settle for anything less than HIS FULLNESS. The Tabernacle of David MUST be restored, the glory of the firstborn Son must be manifested in many-splendored fullness in His many brethren, and I would not miss it for a million worlds such as the one in which we now live. God is preparing and raising up a ZION PEOPLE, the TABERNACLE OF DAVID COMPANY through which to reveal the power and majesty of HIS PRESENCE among men. Zion is the Mount of the fullness of His presence and glory and power expressed through King-Priests.

This is why David said of Mount Zion: "Why leap ye, ye high hills? this is the hill which God desireth to dwell in; yea, the Lord will dwell in it forever" (Ps. 68:16). Again David said: "Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised in the city of our God, in the mountain of His holiness. Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, is Mount Zion, on the sides of the north, the city of the great King. God is known in her palaces for a refuge" (Ps. 48:13). And again: "For the Lord hath chosen Zion; He hath desired it for HIS HABITATION. THIS is My rest forever: here will I dwell; for I have desired it" (Ps. 132:13-14).

In the Tabernacle of David pitched on Mount Zion, the glory of God was visible to all the people. This is why we read in the Bible that the Glory of God's Presence SHONE out from Mount Zion. We see in the Tabernacle of Moses, the Glory of God and the Light of His Presence had been confined to a tiny room, the Holy of Holies, fifteen feet square. But there was no veil to contain or hide the Glory of God or the Majesty of His Presence and Power in the Tabernacle of David. This was why Asaph, who was appointed to record the Psalms given by the Spirit there, was able to testify: "Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God HATH SHINED" (Ps. 50:2).

There is a wonderful prophecy found in Isa. 60:1-22 which shows that it is out of His ZION PEOPLE that God shall shine in the perfection of beauty, and this shining shall result in the salvation and restoration of all the nations of earth. "Arise, shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and His glory shall be seen upon thee. And THE GENTILES (NATIONS) SHALL COME TO THY LIGHT, AND KINGS TO THE BRIGHTNESS OF THY RISING. Lift up thine eyes round about, and see: all they gather themselves together, they come to thee: the abundance of the sea (unconverted masses of the nations) shall be converted unto thee, the forces (powers) of the Gentiles (nations) SHALL COME UNTO THEE...and they shall call THEE, THE CITY OF THE LORD, THE ZION OF THE HOLY ONE OF ISRAEL." THIS is the Tabernacle that God has promised to restore! How wonderful it is!

James, speaking under the inspiration of the Spirit, quotes from the book of the prophet Amos. He speaks of the restoration of the Tabernacle of David, the building up of a glorious habitation for the Spirit of God, to bring a mighty harvest of souls to Christ. Under the unction of the Holy Spirit, James, together with all of the Old Testament prophets, looks down the corridors of time to an age when there will be a complete restoration of the Tabernacle of David as a dwelling place of God's presence "...that the RESIDUE (remainder) of men might seek after the Lord, and ALL THE GENTILES (NATIONS) upon whom My name is called, saith the Lord" (Acts 15:17). This is really what the restoration of the Tabernacle of David is all about. Not the pitching of a tent on a hill in a faraway land. But the manifestation of the fullness of the power and presence and glory of God in His people before the face of all the nations. Not for our own benefit or blessing or glory, but for the blessing of ALL THE NATIONS of the world.

"In that day I will raise up the Tabernacle of David that is fallen...behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that the plowman shall overtake the reaper, and the treader of grapes him that soweth seed; and the mountains shall drop sweet wine, and all the hills shall melt" (Amos 9:11,13). As a physical phenomenon, the plowman overtaking the reaper is an impossibility. No natural seed grows that quickly, but there is a seed, which when watered sufficiently by the rain from heaven, will. That seed is "the Word of the Kingdom", the Word of the living God (Mat. 13:19). Thus the prophet is speaking of the sowing of the

Word of the Kingdom, and an ingathering of souls, and the fruit of righteousness among all nations. And this is exactly how James uses this prophecy in Acts 15:16. Not only is a quick harvest foretold, but **MANY HARVESTS**, one upon another, until the Kingdom of God is filled and running over with multitudes of men who are in turn filled and running over with the fruit of the Spirit of God!

In the same way, no one has seen a mountain dropping sweet wine. In the Bible, mountains often speak of the strong kingdoms of men. In the restoration of David's Tabernacle, God will turn these into "sweet wine" into glorious victory filled and overflowing with the joy and revelation of God. Likewise, the melting hills speak of even the lesser institutions of man being flattened out by the power of the Lord, subdued unto the Christ. The hills that were dry and barren shall be moistened with grace and shall melt with the fatness and mellowness of His Spirit. Ah, these are **SPIRITUAL BLESSINGS**, all the peoples of the earth shall have the bread of life to quicken their hearts, and the wine of divine revelation to make them glad meat indeed and drink indeed all the benefit that comes to the souls of men from the Word and the Spirit of God. The Amplified Bible interprets these promises as spiritual blessings, adding to verse thirteen, "that is, everything heretofore barren and unfruitful shall overflow with spiritual blessing." Bless HIS name!

Today's spiritual signposts point to the fact that God is doing, as He promised, "a **NEW THING**." There is coming, in this generation, a manifestation of God in His sons, an unveiling, a shining forth of His incorruptible life and power, and a harvest of souls and nations turning to God such as has never been experienced before in all history. This is the promise of David's Tabernacle. This is the hope of the manifestation of the sons of God. This vital truth unlocks the key to the house of David (Isa. 22:22; Rev. 3:7).

GOD'S MAN FOR THIS HOUR

We have often been accused of preaching a "futuristic message," and we most humbly bow our head and acknowledge that it is true. As one has said, "We believe in **A LIFE THAT IS LIVED IN THE NOW**, but only with respect to how it relates to that which is yet to be revealed." And we can say that the vision grows steadily brighter, the overcoming of today pointing to the reigning of tomorrow. "And he that **OVERCOMETH...to him will I give POWER OVER THE NATIONS**: and he shall **RULE** (shepherd) **THEM** with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers" (Rev. 2:26-27). So we keep examining our priorities, to make sure that we shall be prepared to receive at His appointed time. We have been blessed **TO BE A BLESSING**, and we have glimpsed a glory which is incomparable to anything else. "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed" (Rom. 8:18).

The "glory that shall be revealed" has nothing in common with the past moves and revivals as we have known them. Evangelistic Crusades, Missionary Societies, Pentecostal Outpourings, Latter Rain Revival, Healing and Deliverance Campaigns, Charismatic Renewals, etc., as they have been labeled, have all been used, in the measure they were of God, to separate a people unto Himself, to lead them into a process of becoming and apprehending **HIS FULLNESS**. But that which lies before us, the manifestation of the sons of God, the priesthood for the nations, the Tabernacle of David restored, the glory that **SHALL BE** revealed, far transcends anything God has ever

done in past generations and ages, and signals the beginning of the RESTORATION OF ALL THINGS, spoken of by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began.

We have come to a period of the world, and to a condition, for which there are no precedents. There are no instructions left for guidance in the details of the restoration of all things, beginning with the deliverance of the nations and their entrance into the Kingdom of God. The Holy Spirit has given no exact direction concerning the manner in which the priesthood for the nations is to minister or its work to be effected. We have, in the Word of God, abundant instructions for the "in part" realm of Church age ministry. But I will defy any theologian to find anything that will give us direct help, even in the words of Jesus Christ, Himself, concerning how to reign as King

Priests over the nations. He left that for the Holy Spirit to teach to that elect company of overcomers who should be the heirs of the Kingdom of God. How important, then, to be TAUGHT OF HIM! "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when He, the Spirit of truth is come, He will guide you into all truth...and He will SHOW YOU THINGS TO COME" (Jn. 16:12-13).

History faithfully records that when an age destroys itself by sin, national degeneracy or social corruption, when moral debauchery and social disease gnaw away the vitals of spiritual life, God creates and raises up from the midst a thundering voice and a mighty deliverer for that age. When Israel, cut to the quick by Egyptian bondage, cried aloud for deliverance, Pharaoh, the personification of iniquity, was mastered by Moses. At the very hour when all that Pharaoh represented was tyranny and slavery, God was creating the matchless deliverer who would captain the forces of the Lord and lead them toward the promised land of Canaan.

Israel cried hopelessly in the wilderness, wandered aimlessly, lost faith in divine intervention, and shouted agonizingly, "We die! There is no promised land!" God then strengthened the heart and faith of Joshua to march across the Jordan which separated the desolate wilderness from the Promised Land of plenty. Centuries later Ahab and Jezebel were outmaneuvered by the prophet Elijah, the thundering voice of God. Crises have always produced the grandest of prophets. Isaiah, towering on the loftiest peaks of prophetic utterance, appeared at the dawn of tragic hours. John the Baptist and Herod were direct opposites. One represented sin; the other the divine Voice of judgment that stifled the thunder of kings. This is the pattern of God's dealings through the ages.

Rome met its master in Paul. He transformed its society to the magnificent glory of the Almighty, to sweep Imperial Rome from the world scene. From the chaos of the Dark Ages came Martin Luther. From the moral lassitude of Reformation hours there arose mighty men as John Calvin, John Knox, and scores of other lights who were God's voices for the night of spiritual blackout. At the moment when spiritual life ebbed lowest, when godly lights had all but flickered and gone out, in the "leanest of the lean English rectories" God brought forth John Wesley to spark into being the great evangelical revival that was to sweeten the life of Britain and the world.

So it has always been in the annals of divine history. So it is today. No age in the history of the world matches in crisis and tragedy, in the debacle of nations, in moral degeneracy, in the stamping out of individual liberty and freedom, in the germs of complete destruction of civilization, if not life itself, as the age in which we live. On any moral chart, on any graph of religious decline, on any diagram of wickedness and

treachery, THIS AGE IS THE HOUR HORRENDOUS. A hundred million of the world's population yearly, over the past forty years, have lost the last threads of individual freedom and bowed to godless communist tyranny. Moral lights are going out. Pulpits, established to herald the Kingdom of Righteousness, are mockingly consecrated to pleasing platitudes and static creeds and empty religious ceremony. Where voices should be, or have been, there is not the faintest cry for a return to God and right. A rising tide of crime engulfs our age, with a cost outweighing that of religion and education. The world is rocked by terrorism. Our newspapers herald: CIVILIZATION DESTROYED IN AN HOUR. These are not the frantic howlings of country prophets or the eccentric mutterings of doomsday philosophers, but the voices of the world's greatest scientists who have created these ominous forces. Life hangs in the balance. The age is catastrophic with dark predictions of nuclear war, atomic blasts, thermonuclear annihilation, and deadly fallout. What of tomorrow? Will God leave this age voiceless? Will heaven fail to intervene? He has never done so! He has matched the hour and the need with men. In spite of humble beginnings, the hand of the Almighty has rummaged among the possibilities for greatness, scanning the horizon of the age AND FOUND A MAN!

When God has selected His man, He has ground that man and polished him through the cauldron of human need and suffering. And when the divine process was completed, the schooling finished, His lapidary stones for hewing character burnished His man to a bright hue. God freed His man from the crippling chains of tradition, from timeworn dogma and creed, from stifling religiosity, and armed him with multifold weapons of spiritual power and might. Then He lifted him forth to captain the forces of right, a thundering voice of prophetic power and delivering force. In the darkest hours of human night there has always been the lighted torch in the hand of GOD'S MAN. So it is today. God is even now preparing a Voice, a Challenger of the forces of evil, a Vessel of honor and power and mercy and blessing, a Man to blow a trumpet which will rally the armies of the Lord, stampede the fortresses of the enemy, invade the gates of hell, break to shivers the oppressors of the nations, and inaugurate a blessed age of glory and peace and righteousness for ALL MANKIND. The hour demands it. The measures of bygone generations will not suffice for this day. The very existence of the planet is at stake. And God has a Man. THIS MAN IS A MANY MEMBERED MAN, THE SONS OF THE LIVING GOD!

We think that we have seen some wonderful moves of God, and we have, but we haven't even scratched the surface, we haven't seen anything yet that faintly resembles the Glorious things God will do in the momentous days that lie before us. With all its multiplied missionary programs, the Church has not yet even started on world evangelization. God is laying a groundwork and processing, preparing, equipping, and empowering His people for the coming invasion of all the world. He must do something unprecedented for us first, so that we will be ready. We don't have all that we need for this great work, but God is quickening us for it. We still put too much dependence in money, methods, and materials, but God is challenging us to move out of that and into HIS REALM.

Methinks HIS REALM will be something like this. The word came to Phillip the evangelist in Samaria to go down into the desert to meet the Ethiopian eunuch. Phillip didn't say, "Lord, I haven't got a helicopter, how can I get down there? Give me time to mail out a newsletter to my partners in faith and raise the money for the trip. How am I going to find one man in all that vast desert, and anyway, Lord, I've got a big revival going here in Samaria." Phillip did not speak like that at all, but he obeyed the Lord and went

immediately. God TRANSPORTED HIM BY THE SPIRIT into the desert and pointed out the chariot and said, "Go and join yourself to that chariot." Phillip had to run and outrun the horses to get into the chariot. When God was through with him, the Spirit took him up and he was "found" at a place called Azotus.

Can we believe that when God wants any of His sons in any place, HE will put them there? God, omnipotent in power, need pay no attention to iron or bamboo curtains. He need not take into consideration national borders or immigration or passport offices. We are talking about the miracle working power of God and a level of resurrection life to be manifested when the sons of the Most High are manifested as King-Priests after the order of Melchizedek. We really know little of the Melchizedek Order, but God is teaching. We are not yet equipped, but God is working! We have yet to see a pure, unadulterated moving of the Spirit with everyone in total subjection to the mind and will of God, but we are going to. It must come in this hour.

We have not yet witnessed the magnitude of ministry that shall be revealed through the Royal Priesthood. At times God has raised up mighty men and, as it were, pulled apart but a little the veil, giving a glimpse of the force of a ministry filled with the fullness of His power, the harbinger of greater things to come. Such a man was Charles Finney, an attorney, who upon being apprehended of the Lord left his vocation, waited upon and then followed the Lord. When he entered into a town often all the taverns, theatres, pool halls and houses of prostitution would close, not because of some law, nor out of respect for religious gatherings, but because there was no longer any need for them, there weren't any customers, the whole town had turned to God! One man wrote of Finney, "No one has ever approached the gigantic stature of the mighty Charles Finney, who alone, without an evangelistic society, without a radio or television program, without a computer, without 10,000 partners TO APPEAL TO or a business manager, WON TWO AND A HALF MILLION SOULS TO CHRIST. A hundred like Finney WOULD WIN THE ENTIRE AMERICAN NATION." And do I have some good news for you! God is going to turn 144,000 incorruptible sons of God, with a thousand times more power than Charles Finney, loose on this sin cursed earth!

The following words by George Warnock have proved an inspiration and blessing to my heart. "We believe we are living in the day of the opening of the seventh seal, and swiftly approaching the hour of the blowing of the seventh trumpet. I do not question that the book of Revelation is for the whole Church age, otherwise why would God have admonished His people to READ it and to be BLESSED by reading it, if it was not for them? But the seven thunders seemed to have special significance for the end time, because John was not permitted to reveal what was said. It would not have had vital meaning to the people of his times as it would in the time of the end, when the mystery of God is to be finished.

"God has been faithful in this past decade or two in bringing forth ENDTIME TRUTH. Is end-time truth different from other truth? Not really. But there must be a particular phase of ministry and truth revealed in the day and the hour when the 'mystery of God is to be finished.' And the time is here when God would say to the end-time people who have embraced end-time truth: GO TAKE THE LITTLE BOOK AND EAT IT. This message will not bring forth that Living Word for the nations of the earth until WE EAT THE BOOK. True, it will be 'bitter' as you digest it, but it is only in the EATING of the Word that God would bring forth in this hour: that clear, sanctified, pure and holy Word that proceedeth directly from the throne of God. The bitterness that we shall know in the digesting of the

truth will take away and remove any vainglorious desire to display our knowledge in the eyes of men. The bitterness of the Word working within us will purge away all thoughts of grandeur and of greatness, and leave us DUMB (like Ezekiel of old), until the hour when God shall open our mouths; and then we shall be enabled to speak that clear, infallible Word direct from God's own heart.

"After the bitterness had taken hold of John, God said, 'Thou must prophesy again before many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings.' Oh, what a pure Word will come forth in that day! A pure word to all nations! Here is a people who have EATEN THE BOOK, and knowing the bitterness of the Cross in their lives they will have become merciful and faithful priests to men of every color, tribe and nation. The bitter herbs of the Passover meal...the bitter hyssop of a broken and contrite spirit...will have completely removed all bitterness from their lives; and they will show forth the mercy and the compassion of Jesus from their lives. They will not be entertainers. They will not be supported in their task with 'ministries' of 'mime' and 'puppets' and 'rock musicians' that go about today in the name of Christ making merchandise of holy things. These people have known and have eaten the bitter herbs, like Joseph in an Egyptian prison, like Moses in the Midian desert, like David in the wilderness of Judaea, like Jeremiah in the mire of the dungeon...and now they stand before the peoples of the earth with a clear, living Word from the mouth of God.

"God is saying to His people: I have been faithful in giving you of the Water of Life and of the Bread of Life. You have tasted of My Word and have found it to be sweeter than honey and the honeycomb. And now I say unto you, Go, take the little book and eat it, otherwise it will not profit you. Fear not to swallow it and digest it. For only then will it become a part of your being. And only then will you be able to bring forth that living Word of Life to the nations of the earth" end quote.

THE PRIESTHOOD FOR THE UNIVERSE

After the living nations on earth have been gathered under the unfurled banner of the Kingdom of God, the ministry of the Royal Priesthood must be further expanded to deal with ALL THE CREATION OF GOD. As I have pointed out before, I now remind you that the Kingdom of God, having filled the earth in the dispensation to come, will from thence extend eternally outward to reconstitute, rehabilitate, reconcile, and replenish the entire universe, enfolding within its mighty branches the vast limitless expanse of nebulae, luminaries, and galaxies until the multiplied myriads of the ransomed and reconciled shall in chorus fill the vastness of the universe with these words: "Praise ye the Lord. Praise ye the Lord from the HEAVENS: praise Him in the HEIGHTS. Praise ye Him, all ye angels: praise ye Him, all His HOSTS. Praise ye Him, SUN AND MOON: praise Him, all YE STARS OF LIGHT Praise Him, ye HEAVENS OF HEAVENS, and ye WATERS that be above the heavens. Let them praise the name of the Lord: for He commanded, and they were created. He hath also established them for ever and ever: He made a decree that shall not pass. Praise the Lord from the earth, ye DRAGONS, and all DEEPS: FIRE, and HAIL; SNOW, and VAPOURS; STORMY WIND fulfilling His word: MOUNTAINS, and all HILLS; FRUITFUL TREES, and all CEDARS: BEASTS and all CATTLE; CREEPING THINGS, and FLYING FOWL: KINGS of the earth, and ALL PEOPLE; PRINCES, and all JUDGES of the earth: both YOUNG MEN, and MAIDENS; OLD MEN, and CHILDREN: let them praise the name of the Lord: for His name alone is excellent; HIS GLORY IS ABOVE THE EARTH AND HEAVEN" (Ps. 148).

"For 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 He is before ALL THINGS, and by Him ALL THINGS consist. 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. And YOU that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet NOW HATH HE RECONCILED" (Col. 1:16-17, 20,21).

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 them 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, intelligences, chief ones, in heaven and in earth, were created by God. And it is not just the fact that all of these were created by God that startles us the most, but it goes on to say that BY THE BLOOD OF HIS CROSS ALL THESE THINGS ARE RECONCILED TO GOD IN HEAVEN AND IN EARTH. This implies that the principalities and powers in the heavenly realms NEEDED RECONCILING and ARE RECONCILED by the blood of God's Son. Is this not why the blessed 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, very God and very man, 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. Glory!

"By Him to reconcile PRINCIPALITIES AND POWERS IN HEAVEN and on earth" (Col. 1:16,20). These are the words that stopped me in my tracks one fair day. "What is there IN HEAVEN that NEEDS TO BE RECONCILED?" I queried. The thought had never crossed my mind. I had always assumed that all was at peace and that never a cloud had darkened any brow in heaven! Discord in heaven? Perish the thought! Sin in heaven? Impossible! Negative forces in heaven? It couldn't be! Wickedness in heaven? No way! "But," I thought, "not only does it plainly state that the Christ will reconcile things in heaven, but it furthermore states that among the things to be reconciled are PRINCIPALITIES AND POWERS. Principalities in heaven! Principalities in heaven that are hostile to God! Principalities in heaven that MUST BE RECONCILED, and that by the blood of God's heavenly Son. Powers in heaven! Powers in heaven that are hostile to God! Powers in heaven that MUST BE RECONCILED!"

It is not just the scope of "things on earth" being reconciled that startles us the most, for it goes on to say, "and things in heaven." One day the words struck me with such incredible force, here I faced anew one of the old, well known verses of the Bible, and when the profound truth of it broke in wonder and glory within my consciousness I had a completely new Bible, and an increasingly wonderful God. For the first time in my life I saw what God had created in the beginning according to Col. 1:16. And the scope of things created is the full scope of the things reconciled! I discovered at least sixteen different items or groups of items CREATED AND RECONCILED in that one short passage:

1. All things in heaven
2. All things in earth
3. Visible things
4. Invisible things
5. Visible things in heaven
6. Visible things in earth
7. Invisible things in heaven
8. Invisible things in earth
9. Thrones in heaven
10. Thrones on earth
11. Dominions in heaven
12. Dominions on earth
13. Principalities in heaven
14. Principalities on earth
15. Powers in heaven
16. Powers on earth

And all this is to be reconciled BY THE BLOOD OF GOD'S SON! The blood and the priesthood are inseparable. The priesthood without the blood would be impotent, having no power, and the blood without the priesthood would be limited and ineffectual, lacking implementation. The blood is the power, while the priesthood is the instrument. What a mighty power! And what a glorious instrument! The Royal Priesthood is God's greatest FOREIGN MISSIONARY. Their parish will be not only the earth, but the heavens also. God is going to make Himself known through us to the myriad hosts of the heavens. Our bliss will be to bestow the boon of God's favor and redemptive power throughout the bounds of stellar space. Out of the magnificence of God's grace and glory we will gladden the hearts of all His creatures in worlds we have never seen.

Can we not see by this how it is that the Royal Priesthood, which shall be the instrument of God to effect this universal reconciliation, is itself BOTH EARTHLY AND HEAVENLY, composed of men of earth who have been born from above, made ONE IN HIM, raised up and made to sit AMONG THE CELESTIALS IN JESUS CHRIST? It is plain to anyone with eyes to see that all creation groans in a sort of universal travail, waiting for the MANIFESTATION OF THE SONS OF GOD. And in the words of J. B. Phillips who so beautifully translates "And the hope is that in the end the whole of created life will be rescued from the tyranny of change and decay, and have its share in the magnificent liberty which can only belong to the children of God!" (Rom. 8:21).

The end of all this great historic process of creation and redemption is the glory and dominion of the Christ. The thrones and dominions of Europe, the governments and presidencies of the New World, the tyrannies of Russia and Asia, the petty chieftaincies of Africa, the principalities and powers of the Heavens He is the Creator, the Lord, the

Master, the Redeemer and the Arbiter of all. In the end, only HIS WILL is done, and HIS PURPOSES wrought out. We cannot desire a wiser, more powerful or more illustrious governor than the One who sits in the heavens and upon the circle of the earth, who inhabits the ages, yet dwells with him who is of a humble and contrite heart. His glorious power is exercised, not to exalt the proud, but to abase them and to exalt the humble and the meek. To these the Kingdom of God is given, the priesthood, and the power and the glory. A more delectable kingdom than that of Christ cannot be imagined or conceived. He uses His vast power and prerogative, not to oppress, but to save and redeem. Though richest of all, He appeared amongst us as the poorest of all and declared, "Learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls." I have known no joy so pure and permanent, no bliss so ecstatic as comes to me when some straying sinner or seeking saint receives God's love through some word or act of mine. What will it be to be perfectly equipped with inexhaustible supplies of power and grace and fare forth into the celestial realms as an ambassador of peace to proclaim the GOOD NEWS of God's limitless love to the celestials of the starry spheres? THIS is the destiny of the Royal Priesthood! When all will know Him, when all things are subjected to Him, when Gods become everything to everyone throughout all the unbounded heavens, and to the lowest hell, then the priesthood will end. We pray for the coming of that day, for THE END OF THE PRIESTHOOD!

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).