

The Kingdom of God

- Book 1

In *The Kingdom of God* series, J. Preston Eby explores the spiritual reality of the Kingdom not as a future physical location, but as an internal, transformative domain where God exercises His rule.

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Chapter 1

“KINGDOM” — what a magical ring that word plays upon the ear, yet when it comes to the subject of the Kingdom of God there seems to be no end to the carnal-minded reasonings of man as to what it is, where it is, and how it will come to pass.

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“KINGDOM” — what a magical ring that word plays upon the ear, yet when it comes to the subject of the Kingdom of God there seems to be no end to the carnal-minded reasonings of man as to what it is, where it is, and how it will come to pass. If you were to ask several average professed Christians what the Kingdom of God is, you would receive a variety of answers. There are a great many ideas, opinions, interpretations, conceptions and mis-conceptions among believers as to what constitutes the Kingdom of God. Vast multitudes of people believe that any minute Jesus will appear in the sky and whisk away (rapture) those who are saved and take them to heaven to enjoy the Kingdom of God. They teach that the Kingdom of God is heaven and that it has no relationship with the earth. For these the “end time” means the cataclysmic end of the universe, the destruction of the earth by fire, the sending of all unbelievers and wicked people to eternal damnation in hell, and the establishing of an eternal order of bliss for the saved in some far-off heaven somewhere.

Others teach that the Kingdom of God is purely earthly, and that it will be a political and social structure enforced on earth for a thousand years at the return of Jesus Christ with His saints to rule and reign. This theory has been popularized by the Schofield Bible. To these the Kingdom of God is the restored kingdom of Israel fulfilling the Davidic covenant. Jesus offered this kingdom to the Jews, but they refused; therefore Christ withdrew His offer and postponed it until a future time when they would accept Him as their King. When that day comes, they say, Jesus will come back and set His feet upon the Mount of Olives. His saints with Him, He will come to the eastern gate of Jerusalem. Having been sealed up for centuries, this gate will be opened for Him to pass through into the city. He will then set up His headquarters in a building, sit on a throne, and be crowned King. His Kingdom will then be established. People from all nations will journey to Jerusalem to see Jesus — in person — and to worship Him in a millennial temple there. From Jerusalem the Kingdom will expand to rule over all nations. The nations will quit fighting — will beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks and there will follow a thousand years of unparalleled peace, blessing, prosperity, and righteousness.

A variation of the above plan involves the Anglo-Saxon-Celtic nations of earth as descendants of the “lost” ten tribes of Israel — the northern kingdom of Israel carried away into captivity. There is some evidence that these tribes have become the modern nations of Britain, the United States, Australia, New Zealand, north-western Europe, etc. According to this concept Christ comes back to reign over these great Israel nations rather than the Jews — and the capital city of the restored Israel Kingdom will be London, England, where the throne of David is now located. This Kingdom will be earthly, political, judiciary and military.

Still another teaching is that the Church (organized Christianity) is the Kingdom of God. The covenantal promises God made with Abraham and David have been transferred to and fulfilled spiritually in the Church. The Church is thus the New Israel in the earth. This theory prevailed

during the Middle Ages (also called the Dark Ages) when the supreme head of the Church (the Pope), complete with a crown, a throne, a government and an army, ruled the nations of Europe for a thousand years as the Kingdom of God on earth. Unfortunately, this period, instead of being the most enlightening, progressive, prosperous, righteous and glorious epoch in history was in fact the darkest, most illiterate and ignorant, superstitious and backward, of earth's generations! Some among us even today believe that the Kingdom will come as a result of Christians becoming politically active, taking over the existing political institutions, getting elected to office, and ruling the earth through the power of politics. This is exactly what happened when the Roman Emperor Constantine began mixing Christianity with carnal government which gave rise to the Papacy and the temporal powers of government were seized by the so-called Church. The result was not earth's "golden age," "Utopia," or "Jubilee," but the now infamous "Dark Ages" ruled over by the kingdom of MYSTERY BABYLON THE GREAT.

What Is the Kingdom of God?

The Bible speaks of a number of kingdoms. The first world empire — the Chaldean Empire often called “Babylon” — was a kingdom. God inspired the prophet Daniel to say to its king, Nebuchadnezzar, “...the God of heaven hath given thee a kingdom, power, and strength, and glory” (Dan. 2:37). Then there was the kingdom of Israel — the family descended from Israel, which became one of earth’s nations or governments. Nearly all kingdoms involve an ethnic entity (racial group) and their government. The kingdom of Israel under Solomon was a type of the Kingdom of God. Therefore the Kingdom of God is dual: (1) A GOVERNMENT. A government — or kingdom — is composed of four things: (a) a KING, ruling over (b) people, subjects, or citizens within (c) a definite jurisdiction of territory, with (d) laws and a system of administering them. (2) A FAMILY. As with all kingdoms, the kingdom of Israel was a family of the children of Israel. In respect to the Kingdom of God, it comprises the Family of God — a family into which man may be born, which shall be formed into a RULING or GOVERNING family that shall have jurisdiction over all nations, that is, the whole earth, and, later, the entire universe!

As Bill Britton once wrote: “What a marvelous mystery! What a glorious destiny! This new nation of holy people is God’s Kingdom. This Kingdom has a King of kings. And there are kings and priests. There are overcomers who rule and reign with Him. There is a bride and Bridegroom. There is a first-fruits, a harvest, and a great gleanings. There are 30 fold, 60 fold, and 100 fold in that great harvest. There are 144,000 who follow the Lamb wheresoever He goes, and there is an un-numbered multitude standing triumphantly before the throne. There is a Holy City and a Temple. There is a marriage supper attended by Bridegroom, bride, guests, servants, and even intruders. What else could there be in this Kingdom? More by far than our minds could comprehend. Get ready. Be there!”

The dictionary defines “kingdom” as “a government or country headed by a king or queen; a monarchical state; a realm or domain.” The word “kingdom” is made up of the noun “king”, and the suffix “dom”. “Dom” is a noun-forming suffix to express rank, position, or domain. For example, a dukedom is the domain over which a duke has authority or exercises rule, and in the abstract the rank of a duke. In like manner a kingdom is the domain and the people within that domain over which a king exercises authority and rule. It is the “king’s domain”. “Kingdom” is thus a contraction of “king’s domain”. The term, Kingdom of God, can mean no other than the domain over which God exercises rule as King. It is God’s declared purpose therefore that His people, His holy nation, His peculiar treasure, should be the domain over which He would rule as King, and ultimately all the earth and all things and every creature. The Lord’s greatest dominion at this time is in the lives of His elect and chosen ones. We are now becoming ruled and governed by the Lord totally and absolutely. He has extended the dominion of His Kingdom to our hearts and lives, and now the Lord will rule us with complete and undisputed dominion. And He will continue to rule and reign in our lives until every enemy within us is made subject to Him. This is the present truth of the Kingdom of God!

God has a plan, a wonderful Kingdom program for this earth and every person on this earth. You might be surprised to discover how many people go through life — some of them even go to church and speak in tongues — but never truly realize that God has a plan and purpose for them and for the ages. Friends, things are not just “happening” with God. He didn’t fling this earth out in space and then sit back and say, “Whatever will be, will be.” God has a plan and He works all things after the counsel of His own will. God is sovereign and nothing shall thwart His plan. Once you begin to see yourself as a vital part of that plan and purpose, that what He has planned and purposed for your life will not be defeated or stopped, you will then begin to walk forth in victory and in life. But, precious friend of mine, let me assure you that this won’t come just because you give mental assent to it and make a positive confession — this comes only as we bring our lives into conformity with God’s priorities. We need to understand what God’s priorities are and then flow with those priorities. The Lord’s people are dabbling around with so many non-essentials, playing little church games, majoring in minors! The real purpose for which God sent Jesus into the world was to ESTABLISH ON THE EARTH HIS KINGDOM! And His ultimate purpose is that the kingdoms of this world shall experientially become the kingdoms of our God and His Christ. That is the plan of the ages. The prayer that Jesus taught us to pray, and which vast multitudes unheedingly repeat by rote, says, “Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done...” Where? “On earth as it is in heaven.”

The all-wise and omnipotent Creator planted within man’s very nature a tendency to form into tribes, clans, colonies and nations with some kind of government, having a patriarch, chief, or king. Every kingdom requires a king. You cannot have a kingdom without a king. Neither can you have a king without a kingdom. The king must have a sphere over which he rules with absolute authority. If you don’t believe that ask Constantine II, exiled king of Greece, who for a time lived in Italy and now lives in London. He is no king — he doesn’t have a kingdom. He is out of a job. A true king must have a kingdom.

For people living today, living under democratic governments in the western world and in the twentieth century, the word “kingdom” is not at all a natural term to use. We know a lot about governments and politics, but very little about a kingdom. In Bible days, however, this was not the case. Most nations were then ruled by a king. The king was not elected by the people and he ruled with absolute authority — the king’s word was law. Today, when our elected officials are held more accountable for their actions, I’m not sure we can begin to appreciate the absolute power of an ancient monarch. A thousand years ago, when a king spoke, people trembled. Subjects didn’t say, “I’ll, ah...take that into consideration, your majesty.” What they replied was, “Yes, your majesty!” The closest modern equivalent I can think of would be a decision handed down by the United States Supreme Court. You wouldn’t argue with it, you would just accept it. And yet, that doesn’t even come close. In the New Testament just a word from King Herod was enough to slaughter all the male children in Bethlehem two years old and younger. A king like Herod might be hated, but because of his position and power he was still treated with great respect.

Today there are few kings left in the world, and those that still bear the name actually wield very little power. They are kings by title only. The kingdoms of today are a rather hybrid form, that is, a figurehead as a king, yet the kingdom is ruled by some kind of assembly or parliament. They are constitutional monarchs and present to us a picture far different from the king in ancient times. The idea of doing obeisance before someone and being obedient to his every wish and command is foreign to us if not even repulsive. The very thought of not being in control of their own lives has

not even entered very many men's minds. We in this country are used to "freedom" and any "kings" that come along may have some difficulty asserting their influence over us. Alas! That is the very reason so many Christians today have found no entrance into the Kingdom of God! They want God's grace and His blessings, but are submitted to His authority very little.

We have now come to the most sublime of all truths. Our hearts should bow in holy reverence and rejoice that the heavens are opened and that the mind of Christ is coming to dwell in men. We should be glad with joy unspeakable and full of glory that the mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven are being unveiled within our very hearts. The light of the Holy Spirit's wisdom and revelation is shed with its quickening and illuminating rays upon our understanding, dispelling the mists, dividing the light from the darkness, that all the elect sons of God may find an abundant entrance into the Kingdom of God in this great Day.

May the blessed spirit of truth make very real to all who read these lines that the phrase "the Kingdom of God" is only a manner of speaking. That is why Jesus never said, "The Kingdom of God is such and such," but always, "the Kingdom of God is like such and such." He explained the Kingdom in terms of parables and metaphors. There is actually no such entity as the Kingdom. It is not a kind of visible structure or outward establishment that God sets up. "The kingdom of God cometh not with observation: neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there!" It is rather God Himself exerting His rightful power to actually rule by His Spirit over all people, to bring them consciously under His control, to subdue them to His purposes, and direct them by His will. When Jesus speaks of the Kingdom as "coming," He does not mean some "thing" or some "age" or something else which is to appear or begin. He speaks of God Himself making His rule effective in the hearts and affairs of men. May God help us to see the great and eternal truth that when we speak of the Kingdom of God we are talking about something that has no existence at all apart from GOD HIMSELF. Just as we speak of the grace of God, the mercy of God, the love of God, the wisdom of God, the righteousness of God, or the power of God, we deceive ourselves if we think of them as having some tangible existence apart from God Himself. They are merely verbal ways of describing God Himself as He acts and manifests out of His state of being. So the Kingdom of God is a way of speaking of God Himself as He moves in power and glory and goodness and wisdom and righteousness to influence and rule in the hearts and activities of men!

The Rule of God

It is significant to note that the phrases “Kingdom of God” and “Kingdom of Heaven” are not to be found in the Old Testament. They are strictly New Testament terms beginning with John the Baptist and Jesus. When Jesus came He did not preach a message called grace, or salvation, or justification, or sanctification, or regeneration, or even the Church. Could there be any more glorious message than the one that fell from His lips as He began His sonship ministry declaring, “The KINGDOM OF GOD IS AT HAND!” From that time forward the great teaching of the Lord centered in the truth of THE KINGDOM. His gospel was the gospel (good news) of the Kingdom of God. He only lightly touched on the other subjects which today are considered the great doctrines of the Church and then only as they related to the Kingdom. All of these things are included within the Kingdom, but the Kingdom is none of them. The Kingdom is THE RULE OF GOD. It is the DOMINION OF GOD. That is exactly what it is. And Jesus came with just that message — the revelation of the RULE OF GOD within the hearts of men, and through men, over the earth, yea, over the whole vast universe! First He must reign completely in our lives. The Kingdom of God is God in Christ in the saints governing the creation of God. The rule of God begins in the hearts of His elect.

Jesus, after His resurrection, asked Peter three times if he loved Him. He then said to him: “When you were young, you girded yourself and walked where you would; but when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and Another will gird you and carry you where you do not wish to go.” Commenting on these words, the Holy Spirit adds: “This Jesus said to show by what death Peter was to glorify God” (Jn. 21:18-19). The expressions when you were young and when you are old speak of two distinct periods in Peter’s life. They indicate His walk before and after entering the Kingdom. The reference to his past (when Peter was young) and to his future (when he would be old) is not a reference to age but to spiritual immaturity and maturity. Emphasis in the first statement is on the pronoun you (“you girded yourself, you walked where you would”). During this period, Peter’s walk with the Lord was a walk which centered on self — on where he wanted to go and what he wanted to do for the Lord. How impetuous was he in his desires! But the day would come when Peter, subject to Jesus as his King, would allow the Lord to do with him as He willed.

The words, another will gird you and carry you where you do not wish to go, succinctly describe the walk of the Kingdom. The “another” here refers to the Lord. The walk of the Kingdom is far from easy and unlike anything we have experienced in the past. Whereas the Lord tolerated and even overlooked the many inconsistencies in our walk when we were young (immature), He now subjects us to a discipline of fire until His image is formed in us (Mal. 3:2-3). Every part of our being — spirit, soul, and body — must come under His dominion. All our strongholds will be exposed and reduced to ashes, and every thought made captive to the obedience of Christ (II Cor. 10:3-5). In the Kingdom we come to know God as an all-consuming fire — not to destroy but to purge and sanctify us (Heb. 12:29). “Who among us,” asks the prophet Isaiah, “can dwell with the devouring fire?” The answer: “He who walks righteously and speaks uprightly, who despises the gains of oppressions,

who shakes his hands, lest they hold a bribe, who stops his ears from hearing of bloodshed, and shuts his eyes from looking upon evil, he will dwell on the heights...his bread will be given him, his water will be sure. Your eyes will see the King in His beauty; they will behold a land (the Kingdom) that stretches afar” (Isa. 33:14-17).

The epistle to the Hebrews was written to those who were following on to know the Lord. In the twelfth chapter the writer informs his readers that God wanted to wean them from their babyhood walk in God and that which appealed to their physical senses in order to introduce them to that which was real and lasting — the Kingdom. To experience the Kingdom, they would have to forsake the elementary principles which the whole church world glories in today, and go on to perfection. Jesus as King would become the living reality of their lives. But for this to happen, their earth and heavens first had to be shaken. That the earth in us (our humanity) must be shaken before we can enter into the Kingdom is a truth very few would deny. But that our heavens (religious experiences, concepts, understandings, ministries, activities) must also be shaken before we can receive the Kingdom is another matter. To realize all that God has for us as His sons in the walk of the Kingdom, our earth and heavens must give way to a new order — to a new earth and heaven. Not a new earth of mountains and valleys and streams and trees; not a new heavens of galaxies, solar systems, suns, planets and moons; but a **NEW HUMANITY AND NEW SPIRITUAL DIMENSION**. Only then can we know what the Kingdom really is and how to walk in it and minister it to creation. All religious activity apart from the realm of the Kingdom is naught but hay, wood, and stubble. It makes very impressive edifices, but it is not the Kingdom of God, and will disappear forever in the all-consuming fire of God.

Kingdom of God — Kingdom of Heaven

There are many strange ideas around about the difference between the terms “Kingdom of God” and “Kingdom of Heaven”. It has been taught that the Kingdom of God is spiritual and heavenly, whereas the Kingdom of Heaven is temporal and earthly, and that the two cannot be mixed. Actually, if there were any truth in that, it still sounds backwards! Some say that the Kingdom of God is an eternal kingdom of God over all and that the Kingdom of Heaven is an earthly and temporal program, some future divine dynasty to be established on earth, and that it is of special significance only to the Jews, who, still awaiting their Messiah, will see His righteous government in control of the world, and in their hands, during the Millennium. Others assume that the Kingdom of Heaven means a kingdom in heaven, so they are waiting to die so they can go to their kingdom in heaven where they intend to spend eternity strumming harps and dancing up and down the streets of gold.

Ignorant men have long tried to make a distinction between the Kingdom of God and the Kingdom of Heaven, as though they were two separate kingdoms. They often explain that the Kingdom of Heaven embraces the “Church age” and the Kingdom of God will be set up during the “Millennium”. The simple truth is that the two terms are used interchangeably in numerous places in scripture. To cite only a few of several examples, when Matthew recorded the Sermon on the Mount he quoted Jesus as saying, “Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” But when Luke recorded the same saying of Jesus he said, “Blessed be ye poor: for yours is the kingdom of God.” Again, Matthew quoted the Lord, “And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force. For all the law and the prophets prophesied until John” (Mat. 11:12-13). Luke says, “The law and the prophets were until John: from that time the gospel of the kingdom of God is preached, and every man entereth violently into it” (Lk. 16:16). In these two passages the messenger spoken of in both cases is John. His message was said to begin where the law and the prophets left off. His message was announcing a kingdom. In one passage that kingdom is called the Kingdom of God, while in the other it is called the Kingdom of Heaven. The time was the same, the man was the same, the message was the same, and the kingdom was the same in both cases.

Our Lord’s instructions upon sending out the twelve were, according to Matthew, “And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand” (Mat. 10:7). According to Luke, “He sent them forth to preach the kingdom of God, and to heal the sick” (Lk. 9:2). Certainly Jesus did not preach two conflicting messages at the same time! Certainly He was not announcing two separate and distinct kingdoms and declaring them both to be at hand! These, and many other passages, show the Kingdom of God and the Kingdom of Heaven are one and the same. Yet — there is a difference!

God does not have TWO KINGDOMS — He has only ONE. There is not one Kingdom of God and another Kingdom of Heaven. There is only one Kingdom. However each of these two terms is not without its special significance. For, you see, heaven is a REALM and God is a PERSON. The Kingdom has its origin in the REALM OF HEAVEN, and in the PERSON OF GOD. The term “Kingdom of Heaven” denotes, on the one hand, from whence (from what place, location, realm or dimension) the Kingdom proceeds, while the term “Kingdom of God” reveals, on the other hand, from whom (from what person or being) the Kingdom originates. When we consider these two items, place and person, it immediately follows that as to REALM the Kingdom is out of the heavenlies, but as to PERSON the Kingdom comes from God. It is called the Kingdom OF God because it is from and by God. He is the Instigator and Head of the Kingdom. It is called the Kingdom OF Heaven because it has its inception in heaven — the invisible realm of Spirit.

The prophet Daniel brings the two together when by inspiration he says, “And in the days of these kings shall the GOD (person) of HEAVEN (place, realm) set up A KINGDOM, which shall never be destroyed” (Dan. 2:44). Jesus then brings the two together when He says to Pilate, “MY (person) kingdom is not of THIS WORLD (place, realm): for if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now MY (person) kingdom is not from HENCE (place, realm)” (Jn. 18:36). Through their relationship we understand there cannot be a Kingdom of Heaven without the presence of God. On the other hand, where the presence of God is, there is a manifestation of Heaven’s Life.

Ah, then, this Kingdom of God may also be called the Kingdom of Heaven! To call, then, the Kingdom of God the Kingdom of Heaven is to ascribe to the Kingdom of God every heavenly and spiritual perfection. The Kingdom of God is, for example, heavenly in its origin — that origin is the bosom of the eternal Father. The Kingdom of God is heavenly in its purpose — that purpose is to restore creation to its original glory. The Kingdom of God is heavenly in its king — that king is the Son of the Highest, Head and body. The Kingdom of God is heavenly in its subjects — those subjects are the children of God. The Kingdom of God is heavenly in its nature — that nature is righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. The Kingdom of God is heavenly in its entrance — that gateway is not by birth of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but by birth of God. The Kingdom of God is heavenly in its laws — those laws are not ordinances, rules, or regulations — they are spiritual principles. The Kingdom of God is heavenly in its method — that method is not by might, nor by power, nor by the enticing words of man’s wisdom, but by the Spirit of the living God. The Kingdom of God is heavenly in its prerogatives — those prerogatives are for the sons of God to be the salt of the earth, the light of the world, a kingdom of priests after the order of Melchizedek, Saviours on mount Zion. The Kingdom of God is heavenly in its privileges — those privileges are to be heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ to the inheritance which is incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away. In brief, the Kingdom of God is the Kingdom of Heaven — it is the Kingdom of Heaven because it is the kingdom or dominion of the GOD OF HEAVEN!

The Sovereignty of God and the Kingdom

What holy assurance stirs within as the Spirit of God floods our souls with the divine understanding of truth so sublime as this: "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" (Col. 1:16-17). Your whole outlook on life will change from one of fear and dread to one of blessed assurance and confidence with the entrance of the understanding that ALL THINGS are vassals of His power, His dominion, and His control, and ALL THINGS are in His hands. Nothing exists without His consent. None acts without His orders or prospers without His blessing. In His omnipotent hands the nations of the earth in all their vaunted might and power are but dust upon the scales. You will not spend sleepless nights worrying about the Chinese, or the Russians, or the terrorists when your heart rests assured that God has ordained all these things for His purpose and He is in control of them all as well as your life and mine.

Oh, the unfathomableness of the wisdom and power of our God! How can mortal minds even begin to comprehend it? He is the omnipotent and omniscient Source of everything. He speaks and atoms come into existence. He utters His voice and light shines into the darkness. He commands and billions of galaxies appear. He breathes and life begins to flow. By the manipulation of His fingers He sets the stars in their courses and with the span of His hand He measures the heavens. He sets bars and boundaries for the oceans. He says to them, "Thus far and no farther, and here shall thy proud waves be stopped." They may beat upon the shore and run up the beaches, but they have to fall back into the boundaries God set for them. "Praise ye Him, all ye His angels: praise ye Him, all His hosts. Praise ye Him, sun and moon: praise ye 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 hath made a decree that shall not pass. Praise the Lord from the earth, ye dragons, and all deeps: fire, and hail; snow, and vapors; 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 earth and heaven" (Ps. 148:2-13).

Oh, my soul, what words are these! All things on earth and throughout the unbounded heavens are under His command. The whole creation, like a great machine, every part working in precise coordination with each other, all fulfilling the purpose they were designed to do. Even fire and hail, the snow and vapors, and the stormy wind fulfilling His word. Everything obeying the will of the

Almighty. All accomplishing their designed purpose in the great scheme of creation. Listen in reverence to these divine words, “A man’s heart deviseth his way, but the LORD directeth his steps” (Prov. 16:9). “The king’s heart is in the hand of the LORD, as the rivers of waters He turneth it whithersoever He wills” (Prov. 21:1). “The steps of a man are ordered of the LORD, and He delighteth in his way” (Ps. 37:23).

The Lord whom we worship controls the hearts of all kings, presidents, prime ministers and rulers whether they realize it or not; God it is who is ordaining their paths and directing their ways. He turns their heart in the direction He wants them to go. He raised up Pharaoh for a purpose, and it was the Lord Himself who kept hardening his heart (Ex. 7:3,13). Now I, like many who read these lines, was raised up 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! The word of the prophet is wonderfully true, “The earth is the Lord’s, and the fullness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein” (Ps. 24:1). 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’s look at three people in the scripture whom God raised up to rule the earth. Isaiah talks about Cyrus, the Persian king whom God put in charge of the earth (Isa. 44:24 to 45:7). God called Cyrus “My shepherd.” That’s astounding, to think that God would raise up a heathen king to accomplish His purposes in the earth. But the Lord says, “I will raise up Cyrus, My shepherd, and he is to rule over the whole thing by My divine appointment.” In Daniel 4:28-37, we discover that Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, 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 you’re going to fulfill all my will, and I’ll 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 causing him to lose his mind for a season. He went insane and 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.

Almighty God raises up kings, and casts them down at will. He drowns the mighty Pharaoh in the depths of the sea, and puts His hand on a little shepherd boy tending the sheep and makes him the greatest king the world has ever known. He tells us what is going to happen on the morrow, and casts the shadow of events that will happen in the years and ages to come. He can do all this because He planned it all, created it all, and controls it all; and it will all work out the way He has planned. In spite of men, angels, or demons His purpose is always fulfilled. He is the eternal King and the only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords! What a mighty God we serve! If the God we worship were less than this, we would be in trouble. We serve a God who is guiding us, our loved ones, our president, the governors of our states, the kings and princes and rulers and even

our enemies unto the ends of the earth. His mighty hands are in all things and the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and His Christ. In due time all will see the fullness of all this.

I cannot emphasize too strongly that the will of God is sovereign. It is done in the long run everywhere and always. His thoughts are carried out; His laws are enforced; His purposes are accomplished. Man may delay them, defy them, deny them, set himself up with utmost strength against them; but he can no more resist and defeat them than he can push back the ocean tide. The world moves on in the course that He has marked for it. Not in a straight line — the wickedness and perversity of men may push it back a little with His permission; they drag it to the right and left of the true direction; but it returns again and pursues its resistless course until the goal of the Almighty is reached. As Nebuchadnezzar said long ago, “He doeth His will among the inhabitants of the earth, and none can stay His hand or say unto Him, What doest Thou?”

Nations and kings and the great ones of the earth are like clay in the hands of the potter. “He girds them though they have not known Him.” He uses their very folly as an instrument of His wisdom. He makes their wrath to praise Him, and the remainder of that wrath doth He restrain. The greatest crimes that have ever been committed have been wonderfully used by Him to further His truth and justice in the world. The crucifixion of Christ made Christ the world’s Saviour. The slaying of the saints prepared the way for the triumph of the early Church. The burning of the English martyrs made England Protestant. The atrocities of the Spaniards led to the establishment of the Anglo-Saxon race on the American Continent. Out of the hugest evil God’s foreseeing mind works good, and the march towards the perfect day goes on in spite of the craft and strength of devils and men.

If it were not for this we should lose all faith in God, and all hope for the future of His world, if we did not believe that in the end God is always victorious, and that man’s haughty ambitions, evil designs, and fickle passions are over-ridden and thrown aside by His unerring power. The world is not a battlefield in which the results depend upon human combatants alone, or a huge game of chess in which statesmen, rulers, soldiers, thinkers, the press, chance and accident, and the forces of goodness and the forces of hell have the winning and the losing moves. God is over all and in the midst of all. He has the last, decisive word in every dispute, the final and winning move in every game. Through all the ill-doings and stupidities of men His unceasing purpose runs. And there is only one will that always gets done. It is the mighty will of Him who is the sole Master of the world, God in Christ Jesus.

In all our lives that same will is done. It is done in every saint’s life, in every life of faith and obedience, in the joy and strength and peace of those who trust in God. It is done in every foul, unclean, intemperate, and godless life, in the misery and unrest and hell which follow the heels of sin. You cannot escape God’s will or overturn it. It holds you in love or grips you in suffering. He is the Lord of our lives, and if we will not take the way of His dear children, then we have to take the hard way of transgressors, and that also is of His appointment. The will of God, whether infinitely gracious or terribly severe, is done on every one at last. And what we are to pray for is not God’s sovereignty — that is beyond our praying— but something much more beautiful, that HIS KINGDOM MAY COME. “Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done, in earth as it is in heaven.” That is the Kingdom of Heaven on earth! What I want to point out to you is the difference between the sovereignty of God and the kingdom of God. The Kingdom is something beyond God’s sovereignty, higher than

God's sovereignty, more glorious than God's sovereignty. We must never confuse the two.

The scriptures speak of the Kingdom of God as "everlasting" on one hand, and as having a definite historical beginning, progress, and termination on the other hand. When we allow the Holy Spirit of Truth to teach us, we see that the Kingdom over which God rules has two distinct aspects: the everlasting and the limited, the universal and the local, the general and the specific. There are passages of scripture that clearly declare that God has always possessed absolute sovereignty over all creation and that He rules as King over all. God is ruler over heaven and earth. He is the supreme Governor of the universe. If Creator, then surely He is the Owner and Possessor of all realms. By inherent, incontestable right, He is sovereign Lord. There is but one will in the universe and that will is the will of God. "The Lord reigneth" is declared again and again. He is King over all principalities and powers. "For the Lord is a great God, and a great King above all gods" (Ps. 95:3). "The Lord is King for ever and ever..." (Ps. 10:16). "The Lord sitteth King for ever" (Ps. 29:10). "Thine, O Lord, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty: for all that is in the heaven and in the earth is Thine; Thine is the Kingdom, O Lord, and Thou art exalted as head above all. Both riches and honour come of Thee, and Thou reignest over all; and in Thine hand is power and might; and in Thine hand it is to make great, and to give strength unto all" (I Chron. 29:11-12). "This matter is by the decree of the watchers, and the demand by the word of the holy ones: to the intent that the living may know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever He will, and sitteth up over it the basest of men" (Dan. 4:17).

God's sovereignty is exercised over both heaven and earth. There have been many occasions when His sovereignty has been manifested through His direct intervention in the affairs of kings, rulers, and nations. He has often demonstrated His sovereignty through mighty miracles and judgments, proving that He is Lord. One such instance is seen in His dealing with Pharaoh, as we have mentioned. The seat of God's government is His throne. The throne of the Most High is the highest thing in all of God's universe. There is nothing higher. It is a throne of consummate power and majesty and glory. From that throne God rules over all creatures and things. And yet, strange as it may seem, shocking as it may sound, THIS IS NOT THE KINGDOM OF GOD!

The Kingdom of God is not the sovereignty of God as such; God is always and everywhere the sovereign God. If His sovereignty were His Kingdom there would be no need to pray, "Thy Kingdom come." Jesus would never have said that it is necessary to be "born again" in order to "enter" into the Kingdom of God. The Kingdom is beyond sovereignty and only the Kingdom ultimately satisfies the heart of the Father. The Kingdom is what He is after through His sovereignty. The Kingdom is the sovereignty of God in action to overcome all resistance and bring willing submission of every creature. Sovereignty is God ruling over men. The Kingdom is man submitting to God. In sovereignty God enforces His will upon men even when they are not aware of it. In the Kingdom God is calling and wooing man until God and man become one. Sovereignty is God above man ruling and overruling. The Kingdom is God and man in union. In sovereignty there is only one will — God's. In the Kingdom God's will and man's will are united.

The Kingdom is not the reign of God as such, for God is ultimately reigning as the King eternal and the King of the universe at all times. The Kingdom is, rather, the gracious action of the sovereign God of heaven by which His reign is recognized and revered and entered into by those men whom God had previously permitted to walk in their own sense of "self-hood." The Kingdom is the

gathering together of all things into one in Christ. The Kingdom is reconciliation. The Kingdom is the restitution of all things. The Kingdom is salvation. The Kingdom is regeneration and transformation. The Kingdom is every man presented perfect in Christ Jesus. The Kingdom is God All-in-all.

In the nineteenth century, Karl Marx went off to university, where he renounced his faith in God in favor of atheism. He defied God and seduced arrogant minds and ignorant masses. Marx gathered his armies and weapons like a dark cloud over man's highest hopes. Marx and his hearers shook their fists at history, revelation, and divine will. But we have seen, are seeing, and shall yet see that Jesus Christ is Lord of the opposition — "Bye-Bye Marx!" Jesus Christ is Lord of all! But some are persuaded that the collapse of communism in Russia and Eastern Europe heralds the dawn of the new age of the Kingdom of God. After decades of Godless tyranny both the Iron Curtain and the Berlin Wall fell and the captive nations were set free. The world looks with wonder on these astonishing events as a historic turning point in the world political structure — Someone in supreme authority raised His hand and actually rolled back the vast and icy seas of communism. Great news! A real cause to celebrate! New-found freedom is always a cause to celebrate, and any undermining of godless systems is surely a reason to be glad.

Now the light of the gospel of Christ can more easily penetrate the darkness of those great lands. The Lord revealed to me in a dream in 1983 that He would soon liberate Russia from the yoke of communism and that this liberty would be followed by a massive "religious revival" which in turn would ultimately be followed by a mighty move of the Spirit of God. I have witnessed these events take place with the exception of the final one. How we praise God for what He is doing! What a day to behold the wonders of our Lord! But — is this a manifestation of the KINGDOM OF GOD? I think not! It is rather an action of God's sovereignty. Just as "law" is a facet of the government of the United States, yet the government is something vastly more than "law," so is the Kingdom of God an aspect of God's sovereignty, yet God's sovereign acts are not the Kingdom of God. God sovereignly moved to bring down atheistic communism, but this did not bring the Kingdom of God to Russia nor to the world. Everything that happens is controlled by His sovereignty. But the Kingdom of God is something infinitely greater, grander, and more glorious than the sovereign act of God to destroy a corrupt system of government. Many such governments and tyrannies have fallen throughout history. God Himself brought them down. But casting a devil out of a man does not make him a saint. After the devil is cast out he must then be quickened by the Spirit of God and made alive unto God. In like manner, eradicating communism out of Russia brings no one into the Kingdom of God. Except the Russian people be born again, born of God, born of the Spirit, they can neither "see" nor "enter" into the Kingdom of God. That is the realm beyond sovereignty.

The Kingdom of God is more narrow in scope than the region over which God rules as Sovereign. At all times and in all circumstances God has dominion. He is Lord of ALL. Even evil men and vile deeds in their worst expressions are under His sway and scepter. Satan is the servant of God as an adversary to challenge us so that we may grow stronger in the Lord. Yet wicked men have not entered into the Kingdom of God. Neither has Satan, though he does God's bidding, been translated into the Kingdom of God's dear Son. All men are subject to God's sovereignty, but when we come to the Kingdom the scriptures speak of a "calling" to the Kingdom of God, of "entering" into it, of its being "shut" or of people being "cast out" from it, of its being "sought," "given," "possessed," "received," and "inherited."

The Kingdom of God is limited to that domain where God's saving power has defeated all opposition, broken down every wall, transformed all that is contrary of God's nature, mind, and will, and has brought men into willing submission to His authority. Where the nature of God and the mind of Christ have mightily conquered, the state of things is called the Kingdom of God. Where hearts are changed, where sin and error and darkness have been defeated, where truth and righteousness advance, where the will and ways of God are raised up as reality and life in a people, where the mind of Christ rules out of union with God — there the Kingdom of God has come and is advancing. In the Kingdom it is no longer God ruling over you by sovereignty, but the life, mind, heart, nature, power, wisdom, knowledge, and will of God entering into you, becoming your very own reality.

The Kingdom of God is the power to transform. Its citizens are a holy people. Its kings and priests are all righteous, wise, mighty through God. Its territory is one of light and beauty and glory. In the days of Christ's earthly sojourn, as He was choosing the first men for His Kingdom, He selected men of passions and faults like yours and mine; but He manifested the power to change them! He found Matthew the tax collector — mercenary, commercial, selling his birthright for cash and commission, metallic, his god more a Roman coin than the God of Israel. Yet Christ changed him, and forsaking all, Matthew marched to the drum beat of the Kingdom of God. Then James, selfish, introverted, hedonistic, wanting the right hand at the throne of Christ, finally finds that the glory of life lies in works of faith, mercy, goodness, righteousness and the power of God. Christ finds John, a man irascible and of bad disposition, "Boanerges — a son of thunder," but when Jesus is done with him he becomes the great apostle of love and reconciliation. He finds Thomas, ever stumbling over his mind, intellectually slow to believe; but he finally cries, "My Lord and my God" and marches to a great kingliness of spirit. He calls Simon Peter, impulsive, bragging, making great boasts but bogging down in the face of the taunting of the crowd; but finally Peter is willing to be crucified head downward for his Lord. Before their change they were subject to God's sovereignty, but after their change they were one with God in nature, power and purpose. That is the reality of the Kingdom of God! It is the experiencing of God Himself BEYOND SOVEREIGNTY! This is the kingly life. When you and I step into Christ we become a part of a great imperial, majestic program to make Christ King of kings and Lord of lords. Alexander the great, Caesar, Hannibal, Napoleon and Hitler never dreamed of the breath-taking consummation of power that Christ prophesied for Himself and those who are one in Him when He uttered the sublime words: "MY KINGDOM".

According to the good pleasure of His will, and to the praise of His glory, the purpose of God from eternity focused on the Kingdom. A Kingdom not of this world, a Kingdom not of men blindly ruled and over-ruled by the unobserved sovereignty of an unknown God, but a reign in the hearts of willing and loyal subjects. The story is told of a king who was famous for his abhorrence of waste — so it was quite surprising when he came into the room where his aides were assembled carrying a breathtakingly beautiful pearl in his hands. Showing it to the first of his aides, he asked, "What do you think this pearl is worth?" "Oh, many trunks full of gold, your majesty," he replied. The king said, "Smash it." "It would be an insult to the king to destroy such a beautiful pearl," replied the aide. The king turned to a second man and showed him the pearl. "How much do you think this pearl is worth?" he asked. "One cannot put a price tag on such a beautiful pearl as this," replied the second man. "Smash it," said the king. "Such senseless destruction is unthinkable," replied the second aide. The king turned to a third man. He was a humble laborer who, in return for a kindness he had shown the king, had been invited to live in the palace. "What do you think this pearl is

worth?" he asked the man. "More than all the gold I have ever seen in my entire life," he replied. "Smash it," said the king. Without a moment's hesitation, this man took the pearl to where there were two large rocks and in an instant, reduced the pearl to a thimbleful of useless dust. "The man is mad," cried the others in the room. Holding up his hand to quiet the murmurs, the laborer said: "Which is of greater value; a beautiful pearl or obedience to the king's command?"

The Kingdom of God that I am proclaiming today is composed of that company of elect sons of God who have aligned themselves with God; who listen to His voice, who put on His mind, who obey His commands, who walk in His nature, who do His will and carry out His divine purpose in the heavens and on the earth. They are the loyal subjects of His Kingdom and ever do His bidding. Their King is the Lord God Almighty and He is their Father. They obey without question; for it is their nature to do only and always those things that please the Father. They are the true citizens of the Kingdom of God. They are first under His rule and authority, but they are ambassadors of that divine Kingdom. They are heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ. They are destined to share His glory and sit with Him upon His throne. They are the members of the government of God and the Kingdom of Heaven is expressed through them and the power and the glory of the Kingdom is being committed into their hands for the age and the ages to come.

This is the Kingdom Jesus came and announced, taught, personified, demonstrated and brought into reality among men. Are all Christians in the Kingdom of God? Perhaps you have heard someone say, "All Christians have Jesus as Saviour, but not all have Him as Lord." A young boy might put it this way: "I am the son of my father, but I don't want him to tell me what to do." The Kingdom of God in its simplest definition means that JESUS CHRIST IS LORD! He must be Lord in us, and He must be Lord through us. This is the mark of sonship. This is the power of the Kingdom.

Such is what God planned in a new creation species of men redeemed and transformed into the image and likeness of God. Such is what God has purposed to bring all men into in His due time. Such a glorious climax to the Father's plans, which has now been made known unto God's elect by the Spirit, has not always been revealed to the sons of men. Righteous men and prophets received glimmering hints, but it was not given to them to know. Mighty angels were curious, but they too had to wait until the fullness of time (I Pet. 1:10-12). Little by little, however, God had dropped hints of a wondrous Kingdom to come. Dim at first, then becoming brighter and clearer, was the lamp of prophecy. As a candle in a dark place is helpful, so was the prophet's testimony about Jesus and the Kingdom, which inspired hope until the Day dawned and the Day Star arose within our hearts.

One glorious day the firstborn Son of the living God walked among men and announced, "The time is fulfilled, and the Kingdom of God is at hand" (Mk. 1:15). The new reign of God had come to the birth. The call went forth throughout all the earth in the power of the Spirit for men to become willing subjects to the Kingdom of God. First twelve, then seventy, then vast multitudes responded to the call. On the day of Pentecost alone about three thousand precious souls, quickened by the Holy Spirit with eyes to see and ears to hear answered the call and were gathered into the reign of God. No longer did devout men wait for the Kingdom, but they were in it, and they ate and drank in the Kingdom of Heaven. Let God be praised! for His rule in ransomed hearts had begun. Everywhere men and women were translated out of the kingdom of darkness into the Kingdom of Heaven. Even in lonely exile on the isle of Patmos, John the disciple could exult that he was a

brother and companion to the saints “in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ.”

Chapter 2

There are many strange ideas around about the difference between the terms “Kingdom of God” and “Kingdom of Heaven”.

The Realm of the Kingdom of Heaven

There are many strange ideas around about the difference between the terms “Kingdom of God” and “Kingdom of Heaven”. Carnal-minded men have long tried to make a distinction between the Kingdom of God and the Kingdom of Heaven, as though they were two separate kingdoms. Our Lord’s instructions upon sending out the twelve were, according to Matthew, “And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand” (Mat. 10:7). According to Luke, “He sent them forth to preach the kingdom of God, and to heal the sick” (Lk. 9:2). Certainly Jesus did not preach two conflicting messages at the same time! Surely He was not announcing two separate and distinct kingdoms and declaring them both to be at hand! These, and many other passages, show the Kingdom of God and the Kingdom of Heaven are one and the same. Yet — there is a difference! For, you see, heaven is a REALM and God is a PERSON. The Kingdom has its origin in the REALM OF HEAVEN, and in the PERSON OF GOD. The term “Kingdom of Heaven” denotes from whence (from what place, location, realm or dimension) the Kingdom proceeds, whereas the term “Kingdom of God” reveals from whom (from what person or being) the Kingdom originates. When we consider these two items, place and person, it immediately follows that as to REALM the Kingdom is out of the heavenlies, but as to PERSON the Kingdom comes from God. It is called the Kingdom OF God because it is from and by God. He is the Instigator and Head of the Kingdom. It is called the Kingdom OF Heaven because it has its inception in heaven — the invisible realm of Spirit.

In this message we shall consider the meaning, magnitude and magnificence of the realm of the Kingdom of Heaven. The gospel of the Kingdom is not the good news that we shall go to some far-off heaven somewhere and live forever in an external paradise. As extraordinarily marvelous as that would be, God has something for us far, far better than this! Going to a place called heaven is not what Jesus had in mind when He proclaimed the Kingdom of Heaven. The religious tradition concerning “going to heaven” is so strong that it distorts people’s ability to perceive and understand what is written in the Word of God. When we emphasize the concept of going to heaven to live forever, the gospel of the Kingdom becomes incoherent. Preachers are always making the foolish statement, “Except a man be born again he cannot get to heaven.” THAT’S NOT WHAT JESUS SAID! It is an absurd perversion of the word of our Lord. Jesus wasn’t talking about going anywhere — He plainly said that unless a man is born again by the Spirit of God he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God.

Oh! Why do men play with the Word of God? Why do they twist, change, mis-quote, mis-represent, and distort the good news of the Kingdom? Is it not the incredible darkness of the carnal mind and the ignorant foolishness of religion? I tell you today that the gospel of the Kingdom of God has absolutely nothing to do with dying and going to heaven — it has everything to do with the rule of

God coming into this earth. Redemption is not a change of location — it is a transformation of the state of being. The Father's desire is not that we leave the world behind someday to "fly away" to our mansion in the sky. His desire is for us to leave the world behind right now and press forward each day deeper and deeper into the depths of the Kingdom of Heaven on earth.

I once read the story about Thomas Huxley. He was a devoted disciple of Darwin, the famous biologist, teacher, and author. Huxley staunchly defended the theory of evolution. An avowed humanist, he was bold and convincing as he traveled widely giving his lectures, which were a series of blistering attacks on Christianity, and especially what he called, "The alleged resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth." One day, having finished a series of public assaults against Biblical truth, Huxley was in a hurry to catch his train to the next city. He took one of Dublin's famous horse drawn taxis and settled back with his eyes closed to rest himself for a few minutes. He assumed the driver had been told the destination by the hotel doorman, so all he said as he got in the cab was, "Hurry, I'm almost late. Drive as fast as you can." The horses lurched forward and galloped across Dublin at break-neck speed. After they had gone some distance Huxley glanced out of the window only to realize that they were going west, away from the morning sun, not toward it. They were not headed toward the train station but were actually getting farther and farther away from it. The scholar leaned forward and shouted to the driver, "Do you know where you're going?" Without looking back or slacking the pace the driver yelled a classic line. It was not meant to be humorous, nor is it when you think about the truth it contains. "No, your Honor," the driver shouted back, "but I'm going as fast as I can!"

That story is more than a story. It is the graphic illustration of the whole church world today. All think they are on their way to heaven and they are going just as fast as they can to get there. Great speed, much commotion, a rapid pace — but a journey to nowhere! They have eternal life, alright, and they are headed somewhere, but not where they think. The planet with the golden streets, the mansions, the harps, the white night gowns, the fluttering wings — all the visible, external things their hopes are fastened upon DO NOT EXIST. And they are traveling at break-neck speed in the wrong direction — away from all the glorious and eternal reality those things represent!

One of the beautiful symbolisms given us in the book of Revelation is the Holy City "coming down from God out of heaven" (Rev. 21:2). When John said that this city comes down from God out of heaven, he wasn't talking about coming down past Mercury, Jupiter and Mars. He meant not that it would settle down over the mount of Olives or any other geographical location. In the Bible a city represents a government, and the "holy" city is a righteous government. It is not a man-made government. It doesn't have a "Democratic," "Republican," "Reform," "Labor," or "Conservative" party. It emanates from God, out of the celestial or spiritual realm, and is established on earth through a heavenly people. May the blessed spirit of revelation grant us the clarity to see that this city shall never rule until it has in all truth become the "holy" city, prepared, adorned, and "made ready." She comes down from heaven. Her origin is divine, her nature, her character, is heavenly — "out of heaven from God." One is reminded of the scripture, "As IS the heavenly, such are they also THAT ARE heavenly...we shall also bear the image of the heavenly" (I Cor. 15:48-49).

"And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the

tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. And He that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new" (Rev. 21:2-5). My beloved, John saw the city descending down from God to earth. He did not see us going out into space somewhere. God is going to perfect His elect right here upon earth with a divine life that comes out of God from heaven, and they are going to reign upon the earth. "Suddenly there came from heaven the sound of a rushing mighty wind...and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost." Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men! And He shall dwell with them! God is coming to dwell with mankind. That is the power and the glory of the Kingdom of Heaven on earth.

Yet millions of Christians vainly imagine that they are going to a city up in the sky to live there with Jesus forever and ever. Multitudes believe that somehow they will escape "The Great Tribulation" by being "raptured," snatched up to heaven. The testimony of scripture is just the opposite of man's childish superstitions. God has always come to man. In the sacred mists of long ago Eden the Lord God came down and walked and talked with Adam. In another place we find that the Lord appeared on the plains of Mamre and walked and talked with our father Abraham. God came down on Mount Sinai in flaming fire and smoke before the face of the whole assembled nation of Israel, and gave them His law. God instructed Moses to build the tabernacle in the wilderness so that He could have a dwelling place in the midst of our Israelite forefathers. Long centuries later "the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us" (Jn. 1:14). John saw the city descending from God, and it is descending from God. With every message of God that is preached, the Holy City is coming down to earth. With every person that is born from above, thus becoming a citizen of that city, it is coming down to earth. With every person who receives the anointing of the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, the Holy City is coming down to earth. With every member of God's elect who grows up another step into perfection, into the image and likeness of the Holy One, the Holy City is coming down to earth. With every revelation that comes to us from the Spirit of God and that takes us onward into the perfect fulfillment of God's great plan and purpose in our lives, the Holy City is descending to earth. As the principles of the Kingdom of God — righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost — are established in our lives, the Holy City is coming down from God out of heaven. When the nature and character of our heavenly Father are formed in us, and His precious mind rules our hearts, the Holy City is descending to earth. With every victory over sin and sickness, over limitation, darkness and death, the Holy City is descending to earth. Beloved, it will continue descending with the development of the body of Christ into its full stature. It will descend and descend until the prayer that Jesus taught for sons is fulfilled: "Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven."

In an article some time ago Terry and Tykie Crisp wrote, "Why is it that this Great City is coming DOWN OUT of heaven? It's because of the burdened appeal of creation! Beloved, there is coming a GLORIOUS CHURCH in these last days, a church which has been caught up to the highest heaven, to the very throne of God...but who, because of the spirit of sonship in their hearts, will not be able to ignore the groaning of the prisoners! They will come down from the heavenlies in High Priestly attire, bearing their gem-studded breastplate, which is the burden of mankind upon their hearts...with deliverance, with power, and with authority, to set the captives free! Imagine, if you will, a church so virtuous and bright that the nations of the world will walk in the light thereof, and

the kings of the earth will bring their glory and honor to it, submitting themselves to her authority, and seeking wisdom from her mouth!” — end quote.

This great city, the heavenly Jerusalem that started coming down on the day of Pentecost, shall continue to come down from God out of heaven. That is, it shall continue to descend from out of the divine consciousness and life of the Lord into the receptivity and consciousness and experience of His people on earth. It shall persist until all that dwell upon the earth shall walk in its light and enter in through its gates. Then shall the whole earth be filled with the glory and the knowledge of the Lord. Even now the new heavens — THE NEW MIND AND SPIRIT — are descending into our hearts, our nature, creating within us a new earth for the tabernacling of God. Every thing that God sends down out of heaven is infinitely good and glorious. Two thousand years ago He sent Jesus as His best gift, and all the world has been blessed by that gift. When He brings heaven down to us we know that He is bringing His best. Every good and every perfect gift cometh down from above. A king once gave a diamond to one of his friends, and the friend said, “Sire, this is too great a gift for me to receive.” But the king answered, “It is not too great a gift for a king to give.” In like manner, if the full manifestation of the life and glory of God in you, His elect, seems beyond what you deserve or are capable of, remember! it is NOT TOO MUCH FOR GOD TO GIVE AND DO!

According to the beloved John everything on earth IS going to be transformed. He speaks of a new heaven and a new earth. He speaks of all things made new. At present heaven and earth are quite separate states of existence, but in the new City of God which John beheld in spirit they are no longer two, but one. It is my conviction that the veil between seen and unseen is a very flimsy one, and that this seemingly solid matter that forms our prison-house is not so very solid after all. Probably it is nothing more than our own thought exercised upon a very limited plane, a darkened perception. It is quite conceivable that we might wake up, as it were, from a sleep, and realize that there never has been a material and a spiritual, but that we have all the time been living at the very center of reality, only we did not know it. If men were only endowed sufficiently with the spirit of wisdom and revelation, and ready for the change, the veil between heaven and earth would be taken away, the heavens would be opened, and the two would be seen as one, as it was with the servant of Elisha that day in Dothan when he saw the armies of heaven upon the mountains of Israel. This is what John means by the city coming down; it is heaven taking possession of earth and absorbing it into itself. That is the Kingdom of Heaven on earth!

The world is to be won for God; there is to be a transformed society of men on earth; in the end earth will become heaven. Death will be abolished, and sin and sorrow will flee away. When John used the language of Isaiah about the city needing no light of the sun he meant it in even a grander way. Henceforth God in Christ is to be the light of every man’s life, all the nations are to walk in that light, and love and brotherhood be all in all. But he makes a bold stroke at this point by departing from the Old Testament dream of the Jerusalem Temple. He says that God Himself will be the Temple, and men shall worship Him in spirit and in truth. Looking back, as it were, upon the desecration and destruction which had fallen upon the temple that was formerly the pride and the glory of Israel, he says in effect: Well, let it go! At the best it was only a beautiful symbol for a still more beautiful reality. Nothing is lost by the ruin of that which was built by hands. God Himself is our Temple — God in Christ! We need no other. The whole earth is full of His glory, and in Him we live and move and have our being. By destroying the outward it throws us back upon the inward; it removes the local and temporary to fix our gaze upon the universal and eternal.

Some of us surely have noticed the beautifully significant picture of God's purposes given us in those glorious and divine events that transpired at Sinai, the mountain of God, when Moses and the children of Israel came face to face with God there. Until this moment encounters between Yahweh and men had always taken place on an individual basis. But now there was a dramatic change — the private and individual revelation is transformed into a public and corporate one. An entire nation, from sage to servant, witnesses Mount Sinai engulfed in smoke, God descending in fire, the mountain quaking to the rising crescendo of the shofar (ram's horn), and the Voice giving the law — the Constitution of God's chosen nation on earth.

A magnificent event, yet in the midst of this cosmic marriage, something else of strange and great significance is taking place. The whole story is found in Exodus, chapter nineteen. First, "God descended on Mount Sinai, and God called Moses to the mountain peak" (Ex. 19:20). Once Moses begins to ascend, God tells him to "go back down" (Ex. 19:21) and warn the people not to cross the boundary. Moses replies that they "cannot climb mount Sinai. You already warned them to set a barrier around the foot of the mountain and not to cross it, for whoever touches the mountain will die." Again, God says to Moses, "Go down. You can then come back up along with Aaron. But the priests and the rest of the people must not violate the boundary" (Ex. 19:24). As soon as Moses descends, God begins the Ten Commandments: "I am the Lord thy God..."

Why was this momentous occasion marked by so many directions, instructions, warnings? Had God forgotten that He had already commanded Moses to tell the people not to approach the mountain? Why must Moses point out to God what God certainly knows? This scene is not merely a logistical account of where everyone — God, Moses, Aaron, the priests and the nation — were positioned on that historic occasion. It depicts a divine tension between the idea of "ascending" and "descending." Moses seemed to think that the highest spiritual experience is achieved by turning one's back on the world, forsaking wife, children, friends, job, responsibilities, recreation, and all the mundane things of life, and ascending into a high plane in the Spirit alone. But God is saying that His way of merging and becoming one with creation, has an altogether different focus. The task of sonship is not to escape the world and ascend into the heights of God in some mystical experience, but to bring God down, to redeem the world, change humanity, and transform creation, to suffuse spirituality into every aspect of its existence. Before Moses ever "ascended" into the glory of God, God first "descended" on Mount Sinai before the faces of all the people. Then further, He sent down His law — His nature — into their midst. Had Moses merely gone up the mountain — had God not also descended — the laws he brought down would have been more suited for the mountain peaks and the seekers who climb them in search for God. But at Sinai the entire nation saw the almighty Yahweh descend into the world of His creation. And that very day the Lord said, "Ye shall be unto me an holy nation, and a KINGDOM OF PRIESTS." Ah, when God and man meet and are brought into union, there is the Kingdom of Heaven on earth!

Do you want to know where the glory of God can be found? God came down in Christ Jesus and tabernacled among mankind and men beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. And now God has descended again in the Holy Spirit sent down from heaven. The Kingdom OF Heaven is not the Kingdom IN Heaven. The prayer Jesus taught us to pray is not, "Come, take us away up to heaven to live with You," but "Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven." It is the Kingdom of Heaven on earth and in earth. No man can ascend into the world of God until first God descends into his world. The descending and ascending

bring glorious UNION between God and man. It is there that we know oneness with Him and receive His law, His government in our hearts!

The Kingdom of "Heaven"

The Kingdom of Heaven is the Kingdom of, or out of heaven. There is perhaps no subject in the Bible about which there is such shallow thinking, such dullness of understanding, and so many distorted notions, as the subject of heaven. Where is heaven? What is heaven? Is it a place? Is it a planet? Is it a galaxy? Is it beyond the stars? Is it a condition of life? Is it a different dimension of living? If our very Father is in heaven, then we ought to know something about heaven, for it is the source of our life, the realm of our origin. We know this because the Father who begat us dwells in heaven; therefore we are out of heaven and from heaven. If He is our Father and heaven is His natural environment, His habitat, we should understand what that realm is really like.

By saying God is in heaven, Jesus does not mean to localize or locate God. He is not telling us of a place where God is and where God lives apart from any other place in the universe. If that were the case then there would be no God anywhere outside of that place called heaven. Those who think of heaven as a place, usually think of Him as being very distant. Somehow we have gotten the idea that heaven is a long way off. This error has crept into many songs sung by the church world. In the Pentecostal Church where I was raised as a boy two of the favorite songs were "When We All Get To Heaven" and "Won't It Be Wonderful There." Another with which many who read these lines will be familiar says, "There is a happy land, far, far, away." And even in that popular hymn, "The Old Rugged Cross," we sing, "He will call me some day to that home far away..." How did we get that conception? Certainly not from Jesus or the apostles! When Jesus was talking to Nicodemus, He said, "No man hath ascended up into heaven, but He that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven" (Jn. 3:13). That is, Jesus claimed that while He was sitting and talking with this rabbi, He Himself was actually in heaven. This means, of course, that heaven is here and now.

The easiest way to understand heaven is to realize that it is where God lives. The question follows: Where is God? Is He on a planet thirteen trillion light years beyond the farthest star? Or, is He everywhere, omnipresent? The Psalmist David posed this intriguing question: "Whither shall I go from Thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from Thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, Thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, Thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; even there shall Thine hand lead me, and Thy right hand shall hold me" (Ps. 139:7-10). Is there some point out in the universe where you can draw a line and say, "God comes to this point. Beyond here God does not exist. If you cross this line you will leave the presence of God." Ah, the scriptures testify that God is before all things, all things were made by Him, He upholds all things, He fills all things, and He is greater than all things.

It is abundantly clear that wherever there are things, there you will find God. Is there any place where there are no things? If there is, man has never found it. There is no scientific evidence that such a place exists. As far as man can see with his telescopes, including the new and most powerful Hubble telescope, there is no end to the universe. Man is unable to find the outer

perimeter of the cosmos. The galaxies and the swirling nebulae stretch out into infinity. Since God both created all things in Himself, and fills all things with Himself, it is an absolute certainty that to find the end of creation would be to discover the limit of God. God is infinite, unlimited, boundless, unending and inexhaustible. The creation is co-extensive with the Creator, therefore, there is no end to the cosmos for there is no end to God. Certainly that answers the question of the Psalmist, "Whither shall I flee from Thy presence?"

Will you agree with me that everything everywhere is made up of things that are visible and things that are invisible? And is it not true that visible things never remain the same but are always changing, and that invisible things always remain the same and never change? "The things which are seen are TEMPORAL," says the Lord, "and the things which are not seen are ETERNAL." This is the wisdom of God in a mystery. But it should be clear that the realm of the unseen is the realm of the INVISIBLE GOD! That which you cannot see is called Creator, Origin, Source, Cause. That which you can see is called creation, effect, form, matter, things.

The wonderful attribute of omnipresence is one of the foremost parts of God's glory. God's omnipresence — that is to say, God's presence everywhere and wholly everywhere — is rooted in the fact that He upholds all things and fills all things and is higher than all heavens. That is the testimony of scripture. God's presence is with all His creatures of all kinds, and in all places of His dominion. Give strength, then, to your understanding, and give wings to your imagination, and give holy fear to your heart, as we try to enter upon those great matters — "which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man...but God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit." When you try to do it, you cannot limit the presence of God to any one place on earth, or in heaven: no, nor to all places on earth and in heaven, taken together. Place, precinct, locality, situation — when you attempt it, you soon find how absolutely impossible it is to limit and restrict God in that way. Heaven and earth, time and eternity, all worship their Maker in these adoring words, and say: "Behold the heaven, and the heaven of heavens, cannot contain Thee: how much less this house which we have builded." And then, if anything could add to the awe and the wonder of all that, it would be this other all-transcending truth — that He who is everywhere is also wholly everywhere. Now that the almighty Father is wholly, and is continually, with every one of us in all the completeness, and in all the totality, of His Godhead — what an absolutely staggering thought is that!

In the early 1600's the Christian mystic, Jacob Boehme, wrote: "If you want to know about Heaven and what Heaven is and where it is, you do not need to cast your thoughts many thousands of miles off, for that place, that heaven thousands of miles away, is not your Heaven. The true Heaven is not a created place but an uncreated place, and it is not found in a particular place but everywhere, even in the very place where you are standing and going. For when your spirit within you is able to penetrate inward through and beyond your own flesh and life, and is able to catch hold of the innermost moving of God, then you are clearly in Heaven. Moreover, if your eyes were but opened, you should see God everywhere in His Heaven, for Heaven is found everywhere. For instance, when Stephen saw Heaven open, and the Lord Jesus at the right hand of God, his spirit did not suddenly transport itself into outer space, but rather Stephen's spirit had moved inward, within, into the innermost place where Heaven is found everywhere, for God fills all things. So you must realize that this world with all of its physical properties is in union with the vast vistas of the heavenly spaces above the earth. There is only one Heart, one Being, one Will, one God, All in all."

I know that these words seem to be incredible but they are truth. I point you today, dear child of God, to another world, spiritual in content, which lies beyond the immediate grasp of the physical senses. It is a world that exists within and beyond our physical existence, with its own structure, modes of behavior, patterns of communications, knowledge, wisdom and power. It sees without being seen. This spiritual realm bears the same relation to the sensible world as the Creator does to the creation, as the spirit does to the body. This realm is heaven. Heaven is not a place, not a geographical or astral location — it is a sphere or realm of reality. It is a dimension of life. It is a level of God-consciousness. It is the invisible realm of Spirit that transcends this gross material realm. It is as omnipresent as God is omnipresent. It is co-existent and co-extensive with the physical universe, but on a different level of reality and being. It is the dimension of spirit reality, of being where God is all that He is. Heaven is also the realm in which God is revealed by the Spirit. Heaven is the realm in which God is known by the Spirit. Heaven is the realm in which God can be touched in the Spirit. Heaven is the realm in which God can be experienced in the Spirit. Heaven is everywhere. Heaven is closer to you than the air that you breathe, closer even than the blood that courses through your veins.

Let all who read these lines clearly understand that God's heaven is not the inexhaustible universe of stars and suns and planets and swirling nebulae. Heaven has nothing whatever to do with the time-space continuum or matter in any form. The true heaven is beyond it all, above it all, before it all, yet in it all. Heaven is that high and holy and invisible realm of SPIRIT, the pure and divine and eternal and incorruptible realm of GOD HIMSELF, which existed before ever a star or a planet appeared. Heaven, therefore, can only be entered BY THAT WHICH IS SPIRIT. Is that not why Jesus spoke of heavenly things to Nicodemus and said, "Except a man be born again, except a man be born from above, except a man be born of the Spirit, he can neither see nor enter into the Kingdom of God."

Let every man know for a certainty that carnal eyes cannot pierce the invisible realm of Spirit. The Russian astronauts returned from space and said, "We have been up there, we have looked around, we didn't find or see God." Of course not! Natural minds know nothing of that realm, for we perceive only those physical things recognizable by the physical senses. Natural ears are unable to hear that which is spoken in the realm of the spirit, for spirit vibrates on a frequency higher than and superior to the low vibrations of matter. Heaven is all around us, in us, through us, but we must be raised out of our natural consciousness in order to touch it. But the dimension of heaven is ten thousand times ten thousand MORE REAL than this gross material realm to which our mortal form has been subjected.

Heaven is our Father's native realm, and the realm in which the sons of God shouted for joy in that blessed day when they were chosen in Christ Jesus before the foundation of the world. Heaven is our Father's natural environment. It is His home and habitat. Heaven is heaven by virtue of the fact that His presence, nature, power, wisdom and glory make it such. If God dwells in me, then heaven is within me, for He is my Father "in heaven." When teaching His disciples that magnificent prayer called The Lord's Prayer, Jesus was not thinking of a distant Being in some remote area of the universe. He was referring to One whose existence was the very essence of His life. What was true of Jesus Christ as He lived in Palestine twenty centuries ago, is equally true of all sons and daughters of God today. Our Father is in heaven and also in our hearts. The word "also," however, is superfluous — GOD IS OUR FATHER IN HEAVEN IN OUR HEARTS! That is the truth of the matter.

To know this is to know a new and deeper dimension to life. To know the presence and person of God our Father within is to experience heaven in the here and now, to be in heaven. But even more than that, we will cede our lives now as the residence and habitation of the Most High. We will know ourselves to be the home of our heavenly Father, the base of His operation, just as Jesus did. "The words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, He doeth the works" (Jn. 14:10). The Father who dwelled in Jesus is the Father in heaven. Thus, we and heaven are one. To say that God is in heaven and also in my heart, and to then separate between the two, is to entirely miss the mark. Once God's DOMINION has been established by the Spirit in any human heart, the establishment of the Kingdom of Heaven is accomplished in that life. Heaven rules there! That is the Kingdom of Heaven on earth. And the Kingdom of Heaven, my beloved, is at hand!

From Realm to Realm

The only life you know is the life that you have lived, and it's the world to which you are accustomed. But there are worlds within worlds. Oh, sure, we have only one Earth. But in that one Earth are many countries and many different terrains, climates, cultures, languages, religions, and kinds of people. If you go into just one apartment building, how many different worlds are there within that building? There are drug worlds. There are child and spousal abuse worlds. There are suicidal worlds. But there are also believing worlds, righteous worlds, and loving worlds.

On a late night some years ago I turned on the television. Johnny Carson was chitchatting with a "show-biz" guest. Suddenly the thought flashed through my mind, Who else, pray tell, but a "show-biz" person could Johnny interview? Who else was of any importance or interest to the viewing public? Johnny, I realized, must have only IMPORTANT people — CELEBRITIES — on the show. Show business is his world, and he could not be expected to "descend to a lower level." An actor or entertainer is in THE ONLY world that counts! All others are beneath him. Show business people have their own journals and publications, just like other worlds. They speak their own language, have their own terminology, totally incomprehensible to an outsider. They are all knowledgeable about their own world and its personalities, though they may or may not know much or anything outside their all-important world. The same is true, of course, of all other fields — the sciences, medicine, the arts, car racers, body-builders, investors and thousands of other "worlds." I began to think about how many different worlds exist within this world on the planet Earth. And even smaller sub worlds within those worlds. We speak of the Free World in contrast to the Communist World, the World of Islam, the Third World and many others.

I want to tell you about another world very close to you which some who read these lines may never have even visited, let alone lived in it. It is my world. It's a beautiful world! It's a wonderful world! It's a vibrant world! It's a victorious world! It's a glorious world! IT'S THE WORLD OF THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN ON EARTH. Natural minds discern the natural. Spiritual minds discern the things of the Spirit. Natural minds cannot discern the things of the Spirit because they each belong to distinctly different realms. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned" (1 Cor. 2:14). For natural minds to comprehend the spiritual is equally as impossible as for a creature of the animal kingdom to comprehend things human.

By instinct, beavers build dams. But all these dams follow the same pattern. The beaver cannot think out some new, different pattern and make some new and different thing. Ants may form anthills; gophers, snakes and rodents dig holes; birds build nests. But they always follow the same pattern. There is no originality, no thinking and designing of a new idea, no new construction. The beavers' dams, the ants' hills, the gophers', snakes' and rodents' holes, the birds' nests are all made purely by instinct. A test was made with weaver birds. For five successive generations, weaver birds were kept in a place with no nest-building material available to them. The fifth

generation had never seen a nest. But when nest-building materials were made accessible, that fifth generation immediately made nests just like weaver birds have always made nests.

Humans are of a higher order than beavers. Beavers may see men, and may observe their movements, yet there is no common ground of knowledge. Just because a beaver can build a wonderful dam of logs, branches, stones and mud in the creek, you would never give him a contract to build a hydro-electric dam of concrete and steel on a mighty river. You may take the beaver to the river and let him observe how men build dams of concrete and steel, yet the beaver 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. Likewise, heavenly beings are of a higher order than are mere humans. They belong to a higher realm, another world. There is no common ground of knowledge. Therefore natural men are totally incapable of comprehending that which pertains to that higher order. And so — until men are quickened by God's Spirit, until they are born again, born from above, born of the Spirit, and made alive to the realm of the Kingdom of Heaven, and are translated into it, it is impossible for them to have any understanding, either of God, or His ways, or of His realm.

Jesus is the example par excellence of a man living and walking in the realm of the Kingdom of Heaven. He came to earth and walked among men in their realm, but at the same time He walked in the Kingdom of Heaven realm. He was a spiritual and heavenly man who walked among men. He had dominion over them. They planted their smartest lawyers and most learned theologians in the crowd and tried to trip Jesus up — He made fools of them. They tried to throw Him over a cliff and destroy Him — He just walked through their midst and went His way. Never man spake as this heavenly man spake. Never man lived as this man lived. Never man did the mighty works that He did. He lived on earth, but He came from a higher world and lived by the laws of that higher world. And He made that heavenly world available to you and me. That is what Jesus was talking about when He went about preaching the Kingdom of God and declaring, "The time is fulfilled; and the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand: repent and believe the good news!" (Mk. 1:15).

The Kingdom life we have received is given from heaven, and is heavenly. It is a life that reaches heaven. Once we obtain this life, we have fellowship with heaven and are joined to heaven. Our citizenship is in heaven. Our life-style is heavenly. Our thoughts and desires are heavenly, and we dwell in heaven. Although according to outward conditions we still live on earth, yet according to the inner life we are in heaven. We are a heavenly people, the heavenly man. The situation is just like the Lord's during His time on earth. He said that though He "descended out of heaven," He was still "in heaven" (Jn. 3:13). He walked in the conscious awareness of both realms, but His reality was in heaven. He was the embodiment and personification of the Kingdom of Heaven on earth. Mature sonship is the power and the glory of the Kingdom of Heaven in manifestation.

The following words by T. Austin-Sparks are so very pertinent to our present thought. "There were these things about Jesus, so that when you met Him on the surface, face to face, as a man, it was just impossible to feel that you had met everything, that that was all. There are some people whom you meet — and that is all. You meet them, pass the time of day or have a few words with them, and then you part, and that is all. They came and they went, and there was no more to it than that. It was never so with the Lord Jesus. If you had met Him, you would have immediately met something more than the ordinary, but you would also be left with the consciousness — That is not

all; there is something very much more there than I have seen or touched. He implies a vast amount more than I have been able to recognize or grasp. That Man has a lot more behind Him than is on the face of things. He did not put all His goods in the shop window, so to speak: you were conscious of something there of a vast and profound fullness and depth, and that left a mighty impress.

“There was behind Christ another world of resources that He could draw upon, an extra world of knowledge that was available to Him, an extra world of relationships, heavenly relationships: with the Father, yes, and with other intelligences, celestial intelligences. What a big world He had behind Him to draw upon in this life down here, in its vicissitudes, its difficulties, its trials, its adversities, when He was alone and no one could help Him. Even those who would want to seek to help Him could not, for they could not minister out of that other world. He was alone here. Without the resources of this world, He had another world to draw upon, a wonderful other world of resource.

“Oh, how much more real that must be to all sons of God in our consciousness! Here I have come to the end of my resources, here I am right up in a corner, here I am, not knowing, so far as this world is concerned, which way to turn; but I have another world to draw upon, a very real world, and that other world can come right into my situation. And it is just as we are living out from heaven, out from our extra, our plus, world, that things will partake of the character of the eternal, and that into this life will come the imperishable, the incorruptible. God is always seeking to have it like that. That is why He allows the problems and the impasses, to teach the sons of God that this is not all. There is another world of resource, all so infinitely in advance of what is seen.

“Looking at the Lord Jesus, speaking as men speak, we could say that that Man was governed by different standards, by different conceptions, by different ideas, from anything in this world. He did not act just as people usually act here. His conduct was different from the usual conduct of people, from the established and accepted order of things, of how it is done, and how people think it ought to be done. No — He did not belong to that realm at all. He could not be involved in this world’s system of ideas and procedure and conduct at all. He would just not allow Himself to be roped into that order. He had another world with an altogether different set of conceptions, and He acted according to them and was governed by them, and that made Him so strange amongst us. The Lord Jesus was a foreigner to this set-up, this whole order of things. He belonged to another world, and He had that other world’s conceptions. There was a great difference about Him. They just could not keep Him in, they just could not make Him conform, they just could not understand Him at all!

“It was those very heavenly standards and conceptions and ideas that were the incorruptible things. This world’s ways of going on — what do they lead to? They lead to corruption. At their fullest, highest, greatest, they lead to corruption. Never, never was that more apparent than in our own day. The whole world is sinking into an infernal morass of corruption. But His ideas did not work out that way. You and I — we have come to know something of the Lord, something of the Lord’s standards, the Lord’s ways, the Lord’s conception of heavenly things, and we know quite well that this is not corruption, this is LIFE AND INCORRUPTION. We are rejoicing because we have come to know the Lord; but what have we come to know? Something from outside of this world altogether, something different.

“The Holy Spirit coming down from heaven has not come just to make us successful in this world, not just to prosper our carnal ventures here, not to be used by us to realize the thing in which we are interested and to further those plans of ours. He has not come down from heaven for anything like that. He has come down to reconstitute us as heavenly people and bring heaven into man’s world. That is His whole work, the reconstituting of our whole being according to heaven’s ideas. That is what He is getting at in His work in our lives, His dealings with us, His ways with us. He is after getting us to turn everything to heavenly account, to make us according to heaven’s pattern. He is after the incorruptible” — end quote.

The Laws of the Kingdom of Heaven

The unseen world of the Kingdom of Heaven is available to men on earth today by faith. Let me give yet another illustration. Radio is a method of sending out sounds for long distances by the use of electricity. The radio waves are sent out from a tower. The waves travel out in all directions and they are everywhere. That is why you can travel down the highway at 80 miles an hour and clearly pick up the signal at all times. But — you must have a receiver! A radio receiver is usually called a radio set or just a radio. One of its parts is the antenna. The radio waves in the air strike the antenna and are carried into the set. Of course, the air is full of radio waves broadcast by different stations. The place where you sit as you read these lines is literally filled with radio waves. Music, voices, and noises of various kinds are all around you, passing through the walls, and even your body. Do you feel them? Can you hear them? Do you see them? No — but they are there, they are all there, co-extensive with every visible thing, occupying the very same space! Yet each wave exists in a different “world” entirely. They are on different frequencies. Therefore they don’t interfere with each other, they don’t mix and become all scrambled up. They are not in the same world.

That is what I mean by a “realm” or “dimension.” It is like a frequency. It can occupy the same space and yet be another world altogether. That’s how God can be in heaven and in the room where you are sitting and in your heart at the same time. He is simply on a different frequency, in a different dimension or realm, but occupying the same space. Heaven has nothing to do with a “place,” either here or beyond the stars. Heaven is a REALM OF REALITY, a DIMENSION OF LIFE. It is as omnipresent as God is omnipresent, as omnipresent as the universe is omnipresent — it is where He dwells.

In order to hear the radio sounds that are in the air you must turn on your receiver. But you want to select only one of these wave lengths. For that purpose the receiver has a tuner. As you turn the dial, at each position a different frequency will flow into the condenser and then be translated into sound heard by your ear. The radio waves exist as it were in a different “dimension” than the things you naturally see, feel and hear; but they are right there, nevertheless, and can be heard if you are able to “tune in” to them. In like manner, the Kingdom of Heaven is all around you and right within you IF ONLY YOU CAN TUNE IN TO IT! That is what Jesus meant when He said repeatedly, “He that hath an ear, let him hear!” The spiritual ear is the “tuner” of the New Creation Man!

The definition “three dimensional” is used to express a law of physics which mathematically proves the length, height and depth of the universe. All physical things have these three dimensions of height, length and depth — a bead, a book, a house, a mountain, a planet, a star, or a universe.

And yet — the three are ONE! If you have an ice-cube, the height of the cube occupies the same space as its depth or its length. They are not three separate “places” within the cube, but three “dimensions” or realities occupying the same space.

A book called Flatland, by Dr. Abbott, attempts to show how there is above us and about us other powers which we little realize. In that very clever, small volume, Dr. Abbott uses a keen analogy. He tells of “Flatland” where there was neither up nor down. Everything moved in two dimensions only. Various geometrical forms of matter, as triangles, squares, octagons, points, and lines represented the soldiers, wives, politicians, and various groups of personalities in that flat land. The author appeals that if someone from another dimension world were to reach into the kitchen of Flatland and lift out a cook stove it would be an unexplainable catastrophe to the people of two dimensions — length and breadth. They could not look up or down, and so the removal of the stove would be a mystery too deep for their limited lives. Now, suppose the same power would put the cook stove back in answer to their prayers. That would be a profound “miracle” to them. But to the person of the higher dimension it would be very simple and not miraculous at all!

Since God exists in a world of other dimensions, then heaven is closer than religionists would like to think! It is all around us, yet we have no way of knowing it unless we are able to “tune in” to its frequency. And it operates upon laws that pertain to that other world, laws which the carnal mind can never comprehend, but laws just as true and precise as the laws of the physical world. When God operates in our world by those higher laws we call it a “miracle,” but in that world it is natural. What to God is normal and elementary is to man mysterious, miraculous and inexplicable. The ability to move into another dimension and back again in spirit, soul, and body, was demonstrated by Jesus when He moved in and out of closed rooms without having to use a door, and when He moved through crowds without being seen. All of His signs, wonders and miracles were but acts performed according to the spiritual laws of the spiritual world. To one living in that world there is nothing “miraculous” about it — it is normal! The Kingdom of Heaven is a miracle realm: for it is the dwelling place and operation sphere of the Lord God Almighty. It is how and where He works. It is a super-natural realm, that is, above and beyond what to us is natural. The supernatural element pertains to all He does. Therefore, when He wants something done without the supernatural in it, He employs someone of the carnal, natural plane to do it!

We should not have to try and convince anyone that there is a spirit dimension and there is a matter dimension. The inspired apostle states it this way: “The things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.” The Kingdom of Heaven refers to a vast realm of spiritual reality. All spiritual reality emanates from this one realm of the Kingdom of the Spirit, even before Jesus opened this realm to all men. As one has written: “What do we find in the Bible? A continuous record of happenings that we call supernatural, which cannot be fitted into our interpretations of normal cause and effect. Abraham and Sarah have a child when respectively an hundred, and ninety years old; Joseph accurately foretells through dreams; Moses brings plagues on Egypt, crosses the Red Sea on dry land, gets water from a rock and daily manna; Joshua crosses the Jordan, and brings down the walls of Jericho, and stops the sun for a day; Elijah stops and then brings the rain; Elisha makes an axe head swim; Daniel spends a night among hungry lions; the three young men walk in the fiery furnace and come out without even the smell of smoke on them. Jesus was continually doing things beyond natural explanation, bringing calm in a storm, walking on water and thus counteracting gravity, feeding five thousand with five loaves, healing all kinds of

diseases, and raising the dead. Paul and the apostles saw prison doors open, chains fall off, the dead raised up. Do we not recognize that here are happenings which are products of another dimension, the spirit dimension, and altogether beyond the scope of human thinking and action?"

No law of nature can be broken, but any law may be superseded by a higher law. Lower laws may always be overruled by higher laws. Such overruling occurs when we walk in the spiritual order of the Kingdom of Heaven. So-called miracles are not really miracles at all, any more than the airplane that defies the law of gravity and flies through the sky is a miracle. It is simply that the law of aero-dynamics supersedes and transcends the law of gravity. Miracles are simply VERY NATURAL ACTIVITIES ACCORDING TO A HIGHER LAW. When one is sick and the illness has not responded to medical treatment, if we then minister out of the power of the Kingdom of Heaven and the person is healed, no natural law has been violated. A new and higher law has been demonstrated — the law of the Kingdom. Jesus came and demonstrated this realm in an unprecedented measure and proclaimed its accessibility to all men. The manifested sons of God shall manifest out of this Kingdom Realm to bring deliverance to all creation. We have experienced its power and its glory by measure, but the day of fullness is wonderfully nigh at hand and the whole earth shall be filled with the glory of God. That is the Word of the Lord to this generation. The Day is dawning!

Scattered among earth's billions is a special species of people. They are in the world but not of it. These have known from the beginning that they were different. They have gone through the motions, tried to be a good Christian, held every office in the church and tried to live the way they were told. But in the midst of all the effort to belong, there has always been something that kept this people from blending in with the majority. There has been an emptiness and a knowing deep inside that this was not the reason they were here. There has always been something that separated them from all the external forms of religion they have passed through. This, precious friend of mine, is the day of RECOGNITION! This is your day of knowing and understanding where you came from and where you have been in order to arrive where you are right now, and where you are going. Something deep within has cried out, "I didn't come into this world just to get saved from hell." Deep has called unto deep and you knew you were born for a purpose. You knew that you were here by divine appointment. You knew there was something greater, more glorious, and transcendental in God. You knew you were born to unveil God's great plan, will, purpose, wisdom, nature, power and glory in the earth!

While writing this message a sermon tape arrived in the mail from Bob Torango in Dickson, Tennessee. It was precious to hear that he was speaking of these same realities. At one point he said, "Moses had to wake up to who he was. Moses thought he was Pharaoh's son. He thought he was an Egyptian. He had no idea that his mother had put him in an ark and floated him down the river. He had no idea who he was until he met up with his kindred. In that experience he found his true citizenship. He discovered that he was nothing more than a resident of Egypt. God revealed to him that he was a free-born Hebrew. He was not a Hebrew by pledge — he had been birthed into that reality. And today the Spirit of God makes clear to God's elect that we are not of that Jerusalem that is below, but we are citizens of that Jerusalem that is above, which is the mother of us all. God is re-introducing us to who we really are. Instead of so many titles He is awakening us to what kind of blood-life flows through our veins. It is not the life of man, but the very life of God that is invested in us. And armed with this knowledge we are becoming less and less identified with the outer man and more and more identified with the inner man.

“I have a friend in Oklahoma who has a Green Card. I never knew that Chris wasn’t an American. He acts like an American, he talks like an American, he looks like an American. He doesn’t speak Slavic or any other language. He speaks perfect English. And yet — I just found out that my friend isn’t an American. He’s still a citizen of England. He has a Green Card. Amazing! To think that someone I have been around so long isn’t even a citizen of our country. You know, there are a lot of people in the world like that. There are a lot of people praising, singing, clapping, worshipping, paying tithes, working; they have ministries, they are blessing people, but they haven’t yet become citizens of the HEAVENLY KINGDOM. The churches are filled with people who don’t know what country they belong to. They are expecting a deposed, exiled King to come back from outer space and rescue them. They are waiting to be evacuated from planet Earth. But for those of us who are citizens of the Kingdom of God, OUR KING IS IN ZION — and we are the Zion of the Holy one of Israel (Isa. 60:14)” — end quote.

From the time when the morning stars sang together and the sons of God first shouted for joy, rhythm and rapture have rolled upward and onward through all the boundless and endless spiritual universe as the sweet expression of the mind and will of almighty God. This spiritual universe, this Kingdom of Heaven, is the home and heritage of every son of God. He belongs to it, and it belongs to him. He is in it, and it is in him. He holds himself in harmony with it, and it fills his spirit with its songs. He apprehends its truth, enjoys its beauties, expresses its love, utilizes its power and partakes of its holiness. There is no place in it where he may not feel at home — no place where he has not a right to be; for it has been the Father’s good pleasure to give him the Kingdom. His life is not measured by years, but by its possibilities and expansiveness. Divinity and eternity are born within him. This is the power and the glory of the Kingdom of Heaven!

Chapter 3

When you look at a map of the world you find parcels of land with names such as Canada, United States, Russia, China, England, Africa, etc.

The Realm of the Kingdom of Heaven

When you look at a map of the world you find parcels of land with names such as Canada, United States, Russia, China, England, Africa, etc. These are the names of geographical territories. Here in El Paso we live only a few miles from the Mexican border and sometimes I drive down there to take friends who want to experience Mexico, or to shop or get dental work done. When I cross the border I am driving on soil that is called Mexico. When I return and cross the border again, I am back in a country called the United States of America. These are the names of these land masses. But when you listen to the news and hear that the United States has sold a million bushels of wheat to Russia, that Japan has sold a million automobiles to America, that Russia and the United States are working on an arms limitation deal, that Europe is sending peace-keeping forces to Bosnia — what are we hearing? The news-caster isn't talking about land, the soil that bears those names. He is talking about the people who live in these various lands. It is the citizens of Russia, Japan, the United States and Europe that he is speaking of. Not the places, but the people. The people that live in the places. The people are identified by the realm or territory where they live. In just the same way, when the scripture refers to "heaven" and "earth," it is not referring to places as such, but the beings who inhabit them. When the scriptures say, "Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad," what is going to rejoice? Is it stars, suns, planets, and moons; is it hills, rocks, trees, valleys, and rivers? Of course not. It is the inhabitants of those realms who are to rejoice and be glad.

In the opening chapters of the Bible the Garden of Eden reveals the glory of the Kingdom of Heaven on earth. It is not the Kingdom IN Heaven — it is the Kingdom OF Heaven, the Kingdom that originates in and out of a heavenly realm. Our prayer is that the Kingdom will come, so that God's will is done on earth as it is in heaven. God is now creating a new reality on earth, a people that is heavenly but that walks on earth. They bring heaven down within themselves to earth. They have no desire to leave earth to "go" to heaven. They are not looking for either a rapture or death. They are the city that comes down from God out of heaven. "Behold! the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God."

This new reality is formed in the elect of God in this hour and shall spread over all creation. God is creating something new. A new history is beginning. A new world is coming to earth. The earth shall be filled with the glory of God. God is raising up the life of Christ in a people and through the sons of God He is putting a seed into the earth. We are now the light of men and the light of the world. We are now the salt of the earth. We are the new seed for the new age. God's purpose in raising up Christ in us is that through us the generations of mankind may be lifted out of the curse

of sin and death, toward the revelation of eternal life and glory. Why else did Jesus heal the sick and raise the dead? Why did He exalt the poor, the hungry, and the oppressed? Why did He touch, with miracle power, the hopeless and possessed? Surely not in order to tell them that they would be blessed after death in some far-off heaven somewhere! He brought the blessings and benefits of the Kingdom of God to men great and small right here on the earth because the Kingdom of God was at hand! He brought heaven to earth. That is the homeland we seek. There is no other to be sought, for the tabernacle of God is with men. Strange, is it not, how all the churches on earth teach just the opposite! They teach that the tabernacle of man is with God — in heaven. But the goal of all God's redemptive effort is that finally He will be a God whom men will see on earth, a God who will make earth to be one with heaven, where Jesus is Lord over all men and they, in Him, will live in the Kingdom of Heaven.

Some years ago Gene Edwards ministered a word of revelation of powerful import. I have shared this once before, but feel to share it again because of its special relevance to this subject of the Kingdom of Heaven on earth. In the following paragraphs I will unfold as faithfully as I can the concepts he set forth. In that wonderful day when the Lord God planted a Garden in Eden for the man in His image, God stood in the boundary between heaven and earth and did an incredible thing. He stretched forth His hands of omnipotence and took this terrestrial ball in one hand as with the other He grasped the heavenly realm. He moved the two toward one another. He brought the spiritual realm, the timeless realm, the dimensionless realm toward planet earth and moved earth toward the heavenly realm. The two moved closer and closer until they kissed each other. The two realms touched — entering into union with one another. The realm where heaven and earth met together and overlapped He called Eden. The place where these two realms met, overlapped, and interfaced became unlike earth and unlike heaven, that which had never existed before — not heavenly and not earthly — the Kingdom of Heaven on earth! The only thing it can be likened to is the resurrection body of our Lord Jesus Christ. He was visible, but utterly spiritual. He brought His physical body out of the tomb and appeared in a body possessing an earthly form and appearance, but it was a glorious metamorphosed body limited neither by time, space, or natural law. Here in this realm where heaven and earth meet and mingle all that is visible becomes spiritual, and all that is spiritual becomes visible. Everything on this earth which is seized upon by the spiritual is transformed by the spiritual, and there is created here the Kingdom of Heaven on earth. When you take the heavenly and the pristine earthly and join them together, what is formed by that blessed union is far more beautiful and glorious than either.

Man, formed of the dust of the ground, lay just outside this realm of the interface. God came to man there — just beyond the shining Eden, just outside the glorious spiritual-physical realm. God came to man in the lowlands of the earth realm. He breathed into the man, so magnificently formed of the earth, He breathed into him the spiritual realm, the life-giving winds of heaven, the breath of divinity. Out from the mouth of the almighty Creator came a brilliant, dazzling, sparkling effervescence like living stars that surged with divine power into the nostrils of Adam and flowed through his body and soul, permeating every cell of his being. That wind, that spirit, that breath, that celestial air, that divine and heavenly life animated the clay model, creating within a dimensionless quality, condition, and state of being.

All the animal kingdom and each of the myriad life forms on earth has a "breath of life" — the air of earth's dense atmosphere. Man is the only being into whose nostrils GOD BREATHED THE BREATH

OF LIFE. Man's "breath of life" is not air — it is the Spirit of the Almighty which giveth understanding — intelligence and wisdom! Only the light that God IS was more glorious than this exquisite creature — man in God's image! And the magnificent wonder is that this man could see right into the heavenly, spiritual world. The animals can't peer into that realm, the birds are unable to communicate with that realm, the fish have no knowledge of that realm — no creature on earth can see beyond this gross material realm except the man in God's image. There is no "god" in any other creature that can awaken them to spiritual, heavenly realities. Please mark this! Here is a physical, visible creature who can see the unseen. He is not frightened by it, nor is he intimidated by any thing or any creature he beholds in that glorious realm. He is at home with who he is and who they are. He looks around and all things are open to him. He sees all, perceives all, understands all. The face of God bent down and looked into the face of man, and man looked up into the face of God, and they looked like each other! They looked like Father and son. They bore an incredible, remarkable resemblance. God stretched forth His hand, Adam stretched forth his hand, and stood up from the dust and faced his Creator. He belonged to this planet, but the winds of heaven were within him. He belonged to the heavens as well as the earth. He is the only creature that has ever been, is now, or ever shall be, that BELONGS TO BOTH REALMS!

Consider with me, my beloved, What is the natural habitat of man? He is spirit — his natural habitat is the heavens! He is dust — his natural habitat is the earth! Both? No! Neither? Yes! Neither. And yet, in some strange, mystical way — both. This glorious creature God created — where is his "home"? Ah — God prepared the place for man as soon as He created man. He created a place that corresponds to man's true state for man to inhabit. The earth, contrary to all that you may have been taught, is not the natural habitat of man. And neither are the heavens the natural habitat of man! The Garden — and only the Garden — and no place but the Garden is your natural habitat. That's where you belong — that is your true world, your homeland, your motherland — that unique realm where heaven and earth meet and mingle, the Kingdom of Heaven on earth! The Garden was not heaven, neither was it earth. It was a realm where God could walk, and where man could walk and talk with God. It was the dimension of the spiritual body — spirit and body, heaven and earth, visible and invisible, celestial and terrestrial, blended into one. The greatest of the glories of heaven was in that Garden — the tree of life was there. And that was man's habitat. It was not merely where man was — it was what he was.

This great truth of man's STATE OF BEING constituting the Garden of God is one of the tremendous themes which courses its way like a mighty river through the scriptures, from Genesis to Revelation. In the book of Revelation the Garden of Eden finally becomes the wonderful City of God — which City we are (Rev. 21:9-11; Isa. 60:2,14). "And I saw the New Jerusalem...having the glory of God: and her light was like a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal. And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. And in the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded their fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and His servants shall serve Him: and they shall see His face; and His name shall be in their foreheads. And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever" (Rev. 21:10-11; 22:1-5).

How do you suppose the tree of life was transferred from the Garden of God to the City of God? The simple truth is — it wasn't! The Garden still exists. The Garden is in the City. The Garden IS the City. In this City two realms interface once more — the new heavens and the new earth — not two separate entities, but that place where heaven and earth are joined, the Land of the Interface! This is where righteousness dwells — the new mind and the new body. That is your world, my beloved. You and I belong to an interface. We are an interface. We are part heavenly and part earthly; part spiritual and part physical; part visible and part invisible. What is the New Jerusalem? It is the place of union with God in the interface where heaven and earth overlap. We are a colony from the heavenlies inhabiting the earthlies. We belong to neither and we belong to both. We are of the Lord Jesus Christ, we are in the Lord Jesus Christ, the HEAVENLY MAN. He, more than any other man, is an interface of these two realms. He is the second man, the last Adam. He embodies and reveals within Himself the true purpose of God in man.

Only in Christ can one understand the true nature of all things. He is of both these realms and He is in both of these realms. He is in both and He is in neither. It is a great and deep and glorious mystery. Oh, the wonder of it! He is a MAN seated in the higher than all heavens! We who have been born of water and of the spirit are of His species. We are bone of His bone, flesh of His flesh, mind of His mind, spirit of His spirit, life of His life. We belong to His realm. We walk with Him today in the Garden of God, in the City of God, in the LAND OF THE INTERFACE, for it is the only place where we can comfortably move in both realms. And yet it is not both realms — nor is it either realm — it is a combination, the union of the two, an entirely NEW CREATION IN CHRIST JESUS! That's what you are! You are spirit and you are body. You are God and you are man. You are divine and you are human. That is our destiny — to be both in union in one! That is our habitat. And redemption progressively brings us into our inheritance in this blessed Land of the Interface. The salvation of the soul, the redemption of the body, will complete the work. Let us press on, saints of God! The full splendor and bountifulness of this precious Land lies just before us! As the crab lives in two elements — water and land — so the New Creation Man lives in two elements: the earth and also the heavens!

The Connecting Link

God has a great purpose in creation. He made the heavens and the earth. He made the world for Himself as a field wherein to unveil Himself and make visible what He is, in all the perfection, wisdom and truth of His Being. Creation has an origin and a purpose, and this origin and purpose were determined by the wisdom and pleasure of the omnipotent Creator. The world around us has a meaning. It is not a world such as materialistic science supposes, which came from nowhere in particular, has no particular aim and nobody knows where it is going, nor what the end shall be. Against that we set this divine declaration, "Hallelujah, for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth." Creation came from God, it goes back to God. He reigns over it, and it will fulfill His purpose which is altogether and absolutely a glorious purpose. It will bring to God a revenue of praise and glory and adoration as no other device could do. Therefore it has a meaning. It is the field of the development and display of God's wisdom, power and glory, a means by which He makes Himself known and understood, a means by which too, not only is God known, but a supreme joy and eternal blessedness will be achieved. This is the secret without which creation cannot be understood.

God's purpose in man transcends by far the beauty and glory of creation. The unfolding pattern of God in creating man has never changed. "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: so God created man in His own image..." In this text the fall is shown not to be man's normal state. Man today, like Adam, may be far from God, yet in his heart, as in the scriptures, a witness will be heard, saying that this distance is through self-will. He may live in sin and sorrow; but deep in his conscience he knows that such a life is in opposition to the will and purpose of his Creator. Therefore the man in God's image is shown before the fall — to confirm the voice that speaks to every human heart, and declare that though all men walk as Adam, sin and death are not a part of God's eternal order, but a mere temporary arrangement in the working out of God's great plan. Man's proper place is seen IN CHRIST, the last Adam, prefigured by the first Adam before he fell. Adam, in the image and glory of God, ruling all the works of God's hands, is the type of man in Christ, as God ordains him.

A king in Europe, a kindly monarch, went to visit a school. Children were being taught concerning the various kingdoms into which nature and man were divided. The king wished to ask the children some questions. A sweet little girl stood forth, and the king said, "Now, my dear, tell me what these are," holding objects in his hand. She said, "A flower, a bird, a beast." "Tell me to what kingdom the flower belongs." "To the vegetable kingdom, sire," said the child. "Tell me," said the monarch, "to what kingdom do these animals belong?" holding up various animals. "To the animal kingdom, sire." "Tell me, my dear," said the king, "to what kingdom do I belong?" Now, I think if she had said he belonged, for the most part, to the animal kingdom, she would not have been far wrong; but the little one had great reverence for her king, although he had so often failed to recognize the Kingdom to which he belonged. The little, blushing maid did not like to say that he belonged to the vegetable or the animal kingdom, but "out of the mouth of babes and sucklings God has perfected

praise." The little one, with her eyes full of tears, for she had heard the tittering of the laughter which was running through the school at her embarrassment, looked up into the face of the king. "Now, tell me, dear," he said, "to what kingdom do I belong?" "You belong to the Kingdom of God, sire." And the king bowed his head, for the arrow had gone to his heart. He said, "My dear, pray that I shall be worthy of that Kingdom, the Kingdom of God."

The answer of the child is the answer which I give you. Do you desire to teach the child that which will enable it to triumph over the lusts and passions of a mere animal nature? Train the child from the beginning to know that he or she belongs to the Kingdom of God. Teach them that they are the Offspring of the Father of spirits, and that first and greatest of all is the spiritual nature which they have, and not the physical or psychical nature. "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness." Teach them that sex, station, and race are nothing in that Kingdom of God. Teach them that "there can be neither Jew nor Greek, there can be neither bond nor free, there can be no male or female; for ye are all ONE MAN IN CHRIST JESUS." Teach them to seek for that New Creation which God's Spirit alone can impart, that they may be worthy of that Kingdom, and that they may have the Love which rules in that Kingdom from its divine center to its utmost circumference, and which crushes lust and sin and death beneath its feet.

By such stature, nobility and rulership committed to Adam we get some idea of what sort of beings we are. One might be so impressed with the majesty of the silent, speechless mountain that lifts its white peak high above the clouds as to worship in silence at its altar — so suggestive is it of the Infinite. But what is a mountain, or a star for that matter, or billions of galaxies of stars and suns and planets and moons as compared with a man? They think not, they speak not, neither do they feel or hope or love or plan or build or have a duty or a destiny. Man is God's image and likeness! It is interesting to note that the almighty Creator fashioned and formed everything of nature throughout all the unbounded heavens and unto the depths of the earth and then, after completing and ordaining all, He gave us the true estimate of man's greatness and purpose when He said, "Let us make man in our image, and after our likeness: and let them have dominion." Man is therefore not only the most important creature on the earth, but the most important creature anywhere in the universe. Can we not see by this that Adam stood in the midst of the vast creation as the REVELATION OF GOD to it all.

In the image of God and with dominion over all the works of God's hands man was the connecting link between the invisible God and the visible creation. Both heavenly and earthly, spiritual and natural, visible and invisible, dwelling in the Land of the Interface between the two worlds, Adam was the expression, representation and revelation of the invisible God to the visible creation. He was God's priest and God's king. As a kingly priest, with one hand he reached forth, taking hold of God with his spiritual nature, while with the other hand he reached out, taking hold of creation in his earthly form; and under his glorious dominion he brought the two together in himself into union. What a priesthood! What a kingship!

Adam was God's special gift to the entire creation, from the highest heaven to the lowest hell. He came not from the brute ancestry, nor from the muck of some primordial sea, nor from the mire of the jungle, but from the hand and spirit and breath of the divine Creator. Time will not allow us to dwell on the glories of man in God's image, but Adam was perfect, pure, and powerful. He was without spot or stain, taint or tarnish, pure in character, perfect in holiness, powerful in personality.

He was the embodiment of all wisdom and knowledge. He was able to do on the morn of creation what no sage, scientist, or naturalist could do today. He found himself surrounded from the beginning with vast kingdoms of living things — fish, birds, animals. These were brought to him and at the command of God he gave them names. In the typology of scripture a name denotes a nature. Make no mistake about it, my friend, Adam did something greater far than merely classifying all the creatures which God had created in the world. When he “named” these creatures the wonderful truth is that he “natured” them — that is, he spoke creatively into them the nature that his mind of wisdom and knowledge conceived. Sovereignty and authority rested like a crown of glory upon the head of Adam the magnificent. He was made the Lord over all the creation of God to rule and reign as the visible expression of the invisible Creator. In him God was to be seen and known and touched by every thing everywhere.

We are never told how long Adam lived in that wonderful Garden where the glory of God was revealed through him in dominion and blessing to creation, but that glorious reign of wonder and peace under the direction of a son in the image and likeness of God was but a dim figure of the day when a whole company of sons in God’s image would reign in splendor over all things in all realms throughout all worlds and all things in heaven and in earth would be gathered together into union with God in His life and purpose. Our Lord Jesus Christ is the first and Head of this glorious company, and as typified and shadowed by the first man Adam, He is the connecting link between God and creation — in spirit from God, in body from creation — the revelation of the invisible Father to the visible worlds. From the Land of the Interface He is the Word made flesh, dwelling amongst us, full of grace and truth.

The Kingdom of Heaven opens to us all the power, resources, and abilities of the heavens and puts at our disposal everything God has and is. BUT THERE MUST BE A MEANS OF EXPRESSION. There must be a means by which God can translate heavenly things into a language that the world can understand. The Spirit of God may be everywhere and moving everywhere but human, natural eyes cannot see the things of the Spirit. There is no way they can “tune in” to that world. But the world can see the moving of the Spirit IN US! The world sees a moving of the Spirit in men living upon this earth and the body of Christ is used to express, manifest, reveal and interpret God to the world.

God is now perfecting His sons in wisdom, holiness, knowledge, grace and power and God will set this Man before His creation and say, “Here is my image and my likeness. In this one is my dominion and my authority.” It will be as though God is saying to His creation that it is not necessary for them to see the Creator, for they will see this Man He has made. Was it not this very truth that Jesus spoke to His disciples one day and said, “Have I been so long time with you and you do not know me? He that has seen me has seen the Father.” So it will be with all the holy sons of God.

The word “Christ” simply means ANOINTED. When the Spirit of God came into the world and descended upon Jesus, He then became JESUS, THE CHRIST. He was a human, God man. He was a God, human man. He was the forerunner of the ultimate man that God is bringing into the universe as the revelation of Himself. This highest and ultimate of God’s creation will reign throughout the ages first from pole to pole, then from world to world, and finally from galaxy to galaxy, throughout all the unbounded heavens. There is one thing the Holy Spirit would impress deeply upon our

hearts today — if we are not walking in the place that God has for us, then GOD IS BEING SEPARATED FROM HIS CREATION. He is not then glorified as He should be before all worlds and all heavens, for God is to be GLORIFIED IN US. Not apart from us, but IN US. Oh, the mystery of it! It will be God's glorious New Creation filling all the earth and sky with the manifestation of Himself — the great Man that God brings forth. God and man, ONE CREATURE, to be praised and honored and glorified through all ages and unto the ages of the ages.

The Kingdom Family of God

The Bible is a book of faith and hope. It looks, not backward or downward, but forward and upward. Its face is ever set toward the Dawn. It always points us toward the best that is yet to come — the completion, maturity, fullness, consummation. In its first pages we read of the heaven blest Eden; of a time when mankind was free from pain, sorrow and evil, because man was free from sin. While man walked in his primitive state of innocence his home was a Garden — the Kingdom of Heaven on earth. He reigned splendidly over all realms from the lowest to the highest, symbolized in the dominion given him over the lowest realm of the fish of the sea, the higher realm of the beasts of the earth, and the highest realm of all, the birds of the heavens. These are but word-pictures of a dominion more powerful and extensive than mortal minds can comprehend. God was his familiar Friend and intimate Father. But we read on a page or two and a change comes over the order of things. Eden, the Kingdom of Heaven on earth, disappears, becoming but a history recorded, a faint memory beyond the pall that hangs dreadfully over the mind of man. Joy, peace, glory, power, holiness and life vanish, and leave in their wake sorrow, discord, weakness, shame and death. When man sinned pain, limitation, frustration and death entered the world, man's heavens grew black with clouds; God no longer communed with him in the spirit of the Day, and he was driven out of the Garden, at the gates of which the cherubim were posted with swords of flame that pointed every way, as if to say, "No return, no return."

Then Jesus came! The message He gave was the Kingdom of God. It was the center and circumference of all He taught and did. After four tragic millenniums the gates of Eden suddenly swung open and the Kingdom of Heaven was seen again on earth. A man in God's image and likeness stepped forth out of that long-closed Land of the Interface and the glory and power and nature of God was seen upon Him. He came with a gospel — the GOOD NEWS OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD. 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 before men. He began His public ministry with preaching the gospel of God, saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the Kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe the good news." On His first circuit through Galilee, He taught in their synagogues, and preached the good news of the Kingdom, Himself saying, "I must preach the good tidings of the Kingdom of God to the other cities also: for therefore was I sent." On His second circuit through Galilee, He went about through cities and villages, preaching, healing, and bringing the good tidings of the Kingdom of God. On His third circuit through Galilee, He went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, healing the sick, casting out devils, raising the dead, and proclaiming the good news of the Kingdom. When He was near Bethsaida, and saw the great multitudes who were as sheep having no shepherd, He had compassion on them, and ministered to their needs, and spake to them of the Kingdom of God. Even when He presented Himself alive following His crucifixion, by many proofs, He appeared to His apostles during forty days, speaking of the things concerning the Kingdom of God. Creation once more beheld God in the form of man.

Eden is God's picture of His plan for man. Eden is the proto-type of the Kingdom of Heaven on earth. This Kingdom plan was fully represented in the Garden of Eden. All four necessary elements of the Kingdom of God were there in Eden. Eden was the land, Adam and Eve were the people, the Lord was the King, and the Lord's command about the eating of the trees of the Garden was the law. God's own ideal for man was not a kingdom as we conceive of it, but a family. All the world was to be a Garden of Eden. God and man were to live together in sweetest, most intimate fellowship. The family is God's ideal for us. Israel was a family — the children of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. They were the tribal families of Israel. The family became a kingdom, but it was a family-kingdom. Joseph was given the birthright, Judah was given the scepter, unto Levi was committed the priesthood, and each tribe had its part.

Adam was the son of God, and Eve was his daughter-wife, with their home in a Garden, and God Himself a Father-Mother in the midst. Its atmosphere was love; its music the rhythm of their wills with His. Sweeter music never filled human ear. When the work of redemption is fully accomplished, and every bit of darkness and discord destroyed, we know again the glories of Eden — the Kingdom of Heaven on earth. Then the ideal of the Father's heart is realized. The Garden becomes a City, but it is a Garden-City, all the sweet simplicity of the nature-life of the Garden, and all the authority and glory of the City, are joined in that wondrous Garden-City and City-Garden. God's elect are now citizens in that glorious City. We are a family of sons gathered into Christ Jesus. We see His face in the spirit, His likeness is upon our countenances, for His name is written in our foreheads. Our light is the glory of His presence, His life-giving Spirit the water that flows through our street and waters our tree. Our atmosphere is love; and the music of wills made one in Him pervades our land.

The Kingdom of Heaven on earth is the eternal union of heaven and earth. The Kingdom of Heaven is not a place in heaven or upon the earth. It is the blending, merging, intersecting of heaven and earth. The spiritual realm provides the government, the righteousness, the wisdom and knowledge, the peace and joy, the love, the wonder, the eternal significance, and the glory of the Kingdom. The people and things of earth are the outward forms and visible expression of the inward reality of the Kingdom.

The Environment of the Kingdom of Heaven

It will help us in our understanding of what it means to live in the Kingdom of Heaven, to look at the order of life in the realm of nature. I am indebted to Henry Drummond's wonderful out-of-print book *NATURAL LAW IN THE SPIRITUAL WORLD* for a number of the thoughts shared in the following paragraphs.

Every day in the year more than 300,00 babies are born in the world. All have tiny faces and usually the same number of ears, fingers, arms, legs and toes. All are little humans, quite alike in size, and with the same needs for food, love, protection and learning. Each also has his or her own special features. Each is like every other baby and unlike any other baby born on that day, or on any other day in history. Now, if these same 300,000 people were to meet on their twenty-fifth birthday, their specialness would be even more obvious than at birth. Some would be very tall, some very short, and the rest would be somewhere in between. They would vary from very fat to very thin. Skin colors would be yellow, brown, white, reddish, black, and all kinds in between. Equally different would be the many types of personalities, mental abilities, talents, and ways of living in these 300,000 people. All were born on the same day and at the time were similar in many ways. All breathed alike, ate alike, and cried alike. But within twenty-five years, each had grown up into an individual who is like other human beings, but who is also very different from other humans. Some would like Mexican food, others American food, and others Chinese food. Some would speak English, others French, and others Russian. Some would worship God, some would be atheists, and others would revere ancestral spirits. They would dress differently, think and act differently.

There are two strong forces in nature which influence human life and determine what a person will be. These two forces are *HEREDITY* and *ENVIRONMENT*. Neither one alone is sufficient to mold a full and useful human life. Heredity is a word used to mean the way in which certain characteristics are passed from parents to children, generation after generation. Because of heredity, each baby is born with human characteristics that make him distinctly human. Environment is a word used to stand for all the conditions and influences from without which become a part of a person's life and affect his development. Included in a person's Heredity is the color of his or her skin, hair, and eyes, physical stature, facial characteristics, temperament, and many other physiological and biological features. Included in a person's Environment are the food he eats, the liquids he drinks, the air he breathes, the place he lives, the home he is brought up in, the values he is taught, the diseases he may have, and the ideas, people, and education he is exposed to. Thus it can be seen that Environment is altogether as important a factor in what a person will be as is Heredity. Perhaps even more so!

It needs to be very clear in our minds that the nature of man is received through Heredity, but the sustenance, development, and conditioning of that nature depends entirely upon the Environment. For instance, a child may be born with an aptitude for music. Because of his Environment that talent may lie undeveloped, or he may become a rock star or a violinist in a symphony orchestra. Environment makes all the difference! The first and primary purpose of our Environment is to sustain life. The Environment is that in which we live, and move, and have our being. Without it we would neither live, nor move, nor have any being. Within every living organism is contained the principle and the power of life; but in the Environment is the power to sustain and develop that life, the conditions of life. Every living thing normally requires for its development an Environment containing air, light, heat, water and food. When we simply remember how indispensable food is to growth and work, and when we further bear in mind that the food supply is contributed by the Environment, we shall realize at once the importance of the meaning and the truth that without Environment there can be no life!

Almost three-quarters of the human body is water. Other important substances in the body are calcium, phosphorus, and carbon. These substances are called “elements” — they are among the hundred basic substances of which every thing in the visible universe is made! Your physical body is composed of some of the same elements as is the world around you, and only by being in harmony with that world, only by intermingling what it is with what you are do you have life. For example, through the secret pores of your skin two pounds of water are evaporated daily from every healthy adult. The water has to be replaced. And from where does it come? From the Environment! Meanwhile you are breathing, taking in air you can use and sending out air you cannot use. From the air you breathe in, your lungs take oxygen. You must have it to live. Matters not how much life you have in you, or if royal blood is flowing through your veins, you must assimilate your Environment to live! Heredity is not enough. The Environment is really AN UNAPPROPRIATED PART OF OURSELVES. We and it must be one. We and it are one. Life depends upon that UNION — the Organism united with its Environment. An Organism in itself is but a part; its Environment is its complement. Alone, cut off from its Environment, it is not. Alone, cut off from my Environment, I am not. Without food, I am not. Without air, I am not. Without water, I am not. Without love and protection and communication, I am not. I continue as I receive. My Environment may change me, but first it has to sustain me. Its secret transforming power is directly molding body and mind and is sustaining the very life itself.

This is a great truth in the physical world. It is but a wonderful picture of the greater realities in the SPIRITUAL WORLD! This is a truth of so great importance in the spiritual world that we shall not mis-spend our time in pursuing it. In the spiritual world he will be among the enlightened and wise who understands this one great truth: Without Environment there can be no life! I speak of course of the Spiritual Environment of the Spiritual Realm of the Kingdom of Heaven. What does this amount to in the Spiritual World of God and His sons? Is it not simply the grand and glorious truth spoken by the first-born of the New Creation when He said: “Without ME ye can do nothing” (Jn. 15:5). Through the mighty work of regeneration we have been birthed into the realm of the Kingdom of Heaven as SPIRITUAL ORGANISMS, spirit beings, begotten of God, the off-spring of our heavenly Father. There has been awakened within us a new principle and power of life — God’s very own divine life, the life of heaven.

But let every man consider this that I now propose: even in this, our New Creation Life, we require a SECOND FACTOR, a something in which to live and move and have our being — an ENVIRONMENT! The Kingdom of Heaven has an Environment. The Spiritual World has an Environment. The whole universe is a type and shadow of this glorious truth. Every star has its gravity. Every planet has its Environment. Every living organism has its Environment. Without the Environment of the Spiritual World we cannot live divinely as sons of God or move or have any spiritual being. Without the Spiritual Environment of the Kingdom of Heaven the life of sonship within us is like the body without air, the fish without water, the eagle without its nest.

The great Pattern Son, Jesus, walked in the full and enlightened consciousness of the inter-relationship between Organism and Environment. He did not live independent of that Spiritual Environment which surrounds and envelops the sons of God. Jesus declared, “Believe me that I AM IN THE FATHER, and the Father IN ME” (Jn. 14:11). It was not only the Father IN THE SON (heredity), it was also the Son IN THE FATHER (environment). The Father was the center and circumference of Jesus’ life. That blessed Christ also prayed for the younger sons who were to afterward follow in His steps, saying, “Holy Father, keep through Thine own name those whom Thou hast given me, that they may be one, even as we are. That they all may be one; even as Thou, Father, art in me (heredity), and I IN THEE (environment), that they also may be one IN US (environment)” (Jn. 17:11,21). Christ knew that as a son He was the Organism and His Father was the Environment. The Father was that IN WHICH THE SON LIVED AND MOVED AND HAD HIS BEING. Although He was the Son of the Father, He could in no way live independent from the Father. And what is the Environment of the sons of God today? It is God in Christ. God in Christ, and we in Him, is our Environment in which we live and move and have our being!

Multiplied thousands of God’s precious saints have been lifted into new and wonderful realms of understanding and experience as the great truth of “Christ in you” has exploded within their quickened hearts. But I declare to you today that altogether as magnificent is the marvelous fact of OUR BEING IN CHRIST. To know “Christ in you” is to know the reality of your inward spiritual life, but to discover yourself as being “in Christ” is to apprehend the fact of Christ as your Environment, your sphere of existence, the realm of your new life and being. This Environment is a world that surrounds you and also separates you from whatever is outside of it. This Environment is so strong that it not only sustains but it also protects whatever is within it from all that is without, even as our atmosphere on earth protects us from the deadly rays in space. And again, it supplies, to whomsoever is within it, whatever it contains, as our atmosphere supplies all that is needed for our physical life. The Father of glory is most truly AN UNAPPROPRIATED PART OF OURSELVES. He is Himself the Environment of the Spiritual World of His sons. We live by the Father! By translation into the Kingdom of the Son we have been raised up into a new and altogether different Environment in the heavenlies, of which Jesus spoke when He said, “As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you. ABIDE IN MY LOVE, EVEN AS I ABIDE IN MY FATHER’S LOVE” (Jn. 15:9-10). In the light of Christ’s union with the Father, our union with Him becomes clear. His life in the Father is the law of our life in Him.

Our present thought is a very simple one. We seek to show the boundless range and omnipotent power of the atmosphere of this wonderful Kingdom of Heaven. God’s Spirit is bringing a truth of highest importance before us, compelling us to give heed that the spirit of revelation may unfold its marvels to our believing hearts. There is a deep design. Paul wrote that if any man be in Christ he

is a NEW CREATION. Not only is he himself new, but he now lives in a new world, on a new “planet,” as it were, in an entirely new order of things. The things, the Environment of the old creation have passed away and ALL THINGS ARE BECOME NEW. Every created thing has its Environment. Every created organism, on earth or in any other world, has to live and move and have its being in its particular Environment. The eagle is not afraid that when he flies in the sky he will have too little wind currents. Imagine a fish crying, “Cast me not into the water, lest I drown!” Imagine a sunflower refusing to turn toward the sun lest it get a sun-burn. The Environment of the New Creation is the Father in the Son. Ah, precious child of God, you can no more live and grow up into the image and likeness of God apart from daily and constant and intimate and vital union with the Father than a fish can live without water. Jesus forcefully expressed it thus: “Abide IN ME...he that ABIDETH IN ME ...the same bringeth forth much fruit. If ye ABIDE IN ME...ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you” (Jn. 15:4-7). The Organisms is composed of the very same elements as its Environment, but it cannot live in separation from its Environment! The two must be one. The one must live by the other. We have been made partakers of the divine nature, but that fact will never bring us to mature sonship. We must live by the Father, in blessed fellowship, participation, and union with Him!

The most common error in the lives of many of the Lord’s people is the attempt to live without assimilating Christ as their Environment, failing to make Him the absolute center of their existence, the sphere of their life. Friends, family, job, amusement, home, hobbies, worldly pursuits — all too often these are the Environment by which we live. No words could be more solemn or arresting than the statement of Jesus, “He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, DWELLETH IN ME...as the Father hath sent me, and I LIVE BY THE FATHER: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me” (Jn. 6:56-57). As the natural man must have sustenance from his Environment, so the spiritual man. The spiritual man must come to know how to live by his Environment.

After he has gotten life you must give him food. Now, what food shall you give him? Shall you feed him with knowledge, or with beauty, or with prosperity, or with blessings, or with religious exercises, or with creeds, or with commandments, or with gifts, or with power, or with programs, or with experiences? No; there is a rarer luxury than all these — so rare, in fact, that few have ever more than tasted it; so rich, that they who have will never live on any other fare again. It is this: “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God” (Mt. 4:4). Nothing can satisfy the son’s appetite but this — he hungers for the bread that cometh down from heaven. Nothing else will fill him. Nothing else will satisfy him. Everyone knows the world is hungry. But the hungry world is starving. It has many meats and many drinks, but there is no nourishment in them. They are but sugar-water. It has pleasures, and amusements, and excitement, and works; but there is no food there for the immortal craving of the spirit. It has worldly society, and worldly books, and worldly events, and worldly knowledge, and worldly lusts. But these things merely intoxicate.

The church world is hungry, too. Starving, in fact. Oh, it has many meats and many drinks, but there is no nourishment for the spirit in them. It has impressive rituals, and stirring programs, and moving ceremonies, and splendid ordinances, and pomp, and show, and candles, and incense, and temples, and cathedrals, and priests, and preachers, and creeds, and organization, and abundance of activity. Its people get all involved “in the work,” and committed “to the work,” and “giving to the work.” They do and do but in all this something other than CHRIST has become the central

factor. The center becomes the movement, or the message, or the organization, or the program, or the ministry, or the experience, or the method, or the personality or some other thing. But I declare to you that all these religious things and activities merely intoxicate and millions of Christians are drunk with them and in their inebriated hilarity think they know the living Christ.

There is no SUBSTANCE in them! The divine ingredients of the celestial atmosphere of the Kingdom of Heaven are missing. Sons of God cannot live in that Environment. So our spirit turns its eye from them all with unutterable loathing. "Blessed are they that do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled." "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." No possibility of starving or suffering malnutrition on this fare. It is eternal food for the sons of God to live upon. And notice — sons live on every word that is proceeding out of the mouth of God. That is how the Greek expresses it. Is it not dreadfully true that the vast majority of Christians are living on words that have proceeded out of the mouth of God? They live on a by-gone revelation, a word spoken to another people at another time, a historical creed, that which God spoke through St. Augustine, or through Luther, or through Calvin, or through Spurgeon, or through Whitfield, or through Finney, or through the Pentecostal pioneers, or through the Latter Rain prophets! It is stale bread, spoiled meat, stagnant water and a dead word. It is a word that God spoke, but not the word that the Spirit is speaking. It is a word that in some ancient day proceeded out of the mouth of God, but not the word that is proceeding out of the mouth of God. "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit is saying unto the churches." It is yesterday's manna, and it has bred worms and stinks. It is truth, but not present truth. But the living bread of the living Christ in His living revelation to His elect sons in this day is meat that the world knows not of, meat that endures unto eternal life. In spring-time it is not sown, and in summer drought it cannot fail. In harvest it is not reaped, yet the storehouse is ever full. Oh, what possibilities of life it opens up!

How graphically Douglas Wilson illustrates our relationship with this Environment of the Kingdom of Heaven in one of his booklets. He wrote, "Can we imagine such a thing as this? A child is born into the world that has no hearing, no sight, no sense of smell, or taste, or feeling, and it cannot speak. Many children are born with one or more of these disabilities and there is a possibility that children could be born without any of these five senses, or the ability to speak. It is of such a one we are now thinking. It cannot see, or hear, or feel, or smell, or taste or speak.

"IS THERE ANY POSSIBLE HUMAN WAY TO REACH SUCH A CHILD LIVING IN SUCH A BODY? It is living in a world filled with normal human beings. It has the same life in it that is in the others. But it cannot communicate with those beings in any way. It cannot see what is around it, neither hear. It has no sense of feeling, and therefore would not know when it was touched. It has no sense of smell, nor of taste, and has no communication with the outside world or appreciation of anything in it. This child would have no means of learning from that world around it. It would only know that by some means unknown to itself it is surviving in its own little world. It has no conception of what mankind is. There is no way by which it can express itself to the surrounding world. What a horrible condition! But please know this. There are literally multitudes of God's people who occupy that very condition spiritually.

"It is these five senses and our ability to speak that give meaning and value to our existence in this world. It is possible to get along without one or two, perhaps three of these senses, but such a

person is terribly handicapped. But to have none of the senses nor the ability to speak, would put such a person into complete isolation. There is no known means by which such a person could be communicated with. It would be a world alone.

“Let us suppose that the child grows, reaching at least a partial maturity. Then one day, by a miracle, it receives sight. We have no way of knowing what the emotions in such a person would be, upon its reception of sight. Suddenly out of a world of darkness, the sight would reveal the beings and all the proportions of the world about it. A WHOLE NEW WORLD WOULD SUDDENLY COME INTO EXISTENCE FOR THAT PERSON. Such a world would never have been dreamed of. There had been no means of even suspecting such a world. It would be confusing, bewildering, frightening. The mind of such a person would have had no way of conceiving anything that the eyes now see. YET THIS WORLD HAD BEEN THERE DURING THE WHOLE LIFE OF THAT INDIVIDUAL. This person had been right in the middle of it all the time. It was not a new world, but new to this person. And yet, the child would still have little conception of this new world. He would have no idea of what would be safe or dangerous in this world. He would have no knowledge of beauty or ugliness. He would have no sense of value of good or bad, or the meaning of the things he sees. Such a person would not understand the difference between a tree or a man. He would not know that an animal is an animal or that a bird is a bird. All of this would have been around the person all the time, but he had not known it.

“Again, this person goes on for weeks or months, and then another miracle is performed and its ears are opened. ANOTHER WORLD IS SUDDENLY OPENED TO THIS ONE BY THE OPENING OF THE EARS. A vast, expansive new world comes to this one in the world of sound. He would hear people talking and wonder what those sounds were. He hears music, and the chirping of birds, and marvels at what he hears. He has no ability yet to evaluate the sounds, so there must be a learning process by which they can all be sorted and arranged and catalogued as to what they are, pleasant or unpleasant. He had no means of even dreaming of such a thing as sound, having been locked up in his own world apart from it all. He has possessed no means of contacting those around him. And the people about him, though filled with compassion and a desire to help this creature, could not in any way ‘get through’ to him” — end quote.

Believe me, precious friend of mine, THERE IS A WORLD AROUND US THAT THE NATURAL MAN HAS NEVER SEEN. It is there now, and has always been. Little by little God is opening our spiritual eyes and we are beholding with wonder things that we have not suspected or even dreamed of as being about us. With our physical senses we have absolutely no comprehension of that world, because there has been no way for it to communicate with us. But the Spirit of God is opening the vision of His elect in this hour to see things that eye hath not seen, ear hath not heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man. There is a realm, a dimension of reality, a sphere of existence, a world, a universe, a Kingdom that God has prepared for His sons, and He is revealing it to us by His Spirit.

Strange and wonderful emotions stir within us as we begin to discern the value of the things we see by the eye of revelation. We are testing them and trying them to grasp their certainty and their purpose and intent. We are daily exploring this wonderful world of the Kingdom of Heaven that is opening before us. We know that it is the land our heavenly Father has prepared for us from before the foundation of the world. There is no way for this higher world that is around us to reach us until

God opens a channel. Mighty angels and glorious creatures in heavenly realms may be possessed of a burning desire to make us understand about this new world, but they cannot do so. Never until God Himself quickens and transforms us by His Spirit is this new world opened to us. Carnal-minded men think of heaven in terms of golden streets, harps, gold slippers, white robes, palm branches, trumpets, and so forth. But heaven is a busy world in which mighty things are accomplished. Heaven is an active, aggressive realm and it is all around us and within us. Some of us know by the moving of the Spirit that this spiritual world is in existence here and now, and it is our Fatherland. Jesus came and demonstrated heaven, but the people could not see it. Before their very eyes Jesus demonstrated the power and the glory and the life of that bright world about us, yet most were blind to it.

One morning the servant of Elisha awoke and stepped outside the house where they were visiting. He looked about and saw that he and his master were surrounded by a great and terrible army and he cried to Elisha to ask what they should do. He was frightened beyond belief because in his limited ability he could see no way out. But can we not hear Elisha saying, "Don't be fearful, we have more with us than they have with them." Consider the astonishment upon the countenance of this servant and hear him say, "I wonder what is the matter with you, Elisha. I went out and scanned the mountains, I saw all the host of the enemy there. I don't see anyone here with us." So Elisha prayed the Lord to open the eyes of the young man, and God did so. What a sight he saw! ALL THE TIME HE HAD BEEN IN THE VERY MIDST OF GOD'S ARMIES OF HORSES AND CHARIOTS OF FIRE AND DIDN'T KNOW IT. He had been surrounded by the very power of God and the world of God, but he possessed not one faculty that could reveal it to him. He was just as certain as the Russian Cosmonauts that there was nothing there. He could not see, taste, feel, smell, or hear what was all around him. There had been no connection between himself and this other world until God opened the eyes of his spirit and revealed it to him.

Men who witnessed the demonstration of the first telephone made by Alexander Graham Bell, refused to believe that there could be any such thing as a telephone or a voice coming through a wire. THERE IS A WORLD ABOUT US and we try to tell people about it but they inform us that they have seen all there is to see and heard all there is to hear, because they have the Word of God. But the Kingdom of Heaven is not a book, the Kingdom of Heaven is not a place, neither is the Kingdom of Heaven an age. The Word was not made a book, the Word was not made a place, the Word was not made an age — the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. And now that same Word is made flesh in us, in all who are the sons of God. This is the power and glory of the Kingdom of Heaven on earth! Hallelujah!