

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!

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