

“RANKS IN THE RESURRECTION” was first published in 1973. Since that time, we have reprinted this booklet several times. There is a lively interest in the truths contained in this article. It is one thing to know that there is a resurrection guaranteed us by Christ’s resurrection, but it is also important to know that we can have a “better resurrection,” even as some Old Testament overcomers have already experienced. We are looking forward to being taken out of this world before the Tribulation Period, and more importantly, to reign with Christ. “It is a faithful saying: For if we be dead with Him, we shall also live with Him: if we suffer, we shall also reign with Him: if we deny Him, He also will deny us.” (II Timothy 2:11 - 12) “And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together.” (Romans 8:17) -- Paul N. Smith

RANKS IN THE RESURRECTION

Paul N. Smith

“For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ’s at His coming” - I Corinthians 15:22, 23. “That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death; if by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead” - Philippians 3:10, 11.

We would like to present a truth that is both inspiring and needful. It is a neglected study; and, even more, it is rejected by most Bible students. We cannot understand why it should be refused, because the Scriptures are quite plain in presenting the fact that there are ranks or orders in the resurrection. Some critics piously explain that God is no respecter of persons and, therefore, would never raise some of His people from the dead before others. Others dismiss this truth without searching to see if these things are so. These lessons are not being printed for the sake of argument; but we shall try to present the truth from the Scriptures without any of man’s theory or logic. The above Scriptures are the basis for our belief in a better resurrection. The Apostle Paul uttered these words, not as a sinner nor as a newly-born Christian, but as a mature Christian and Apostle. He had already passed the crossroads of indecision and uncertainty. He was not worrying whether he would make it to Heaven. He had written words to the Romans long before this that express his persuasion concerning his relationship with God and Heaven. In Romans 8:38, 39 we read his emphatic statements: “For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” This is not the language of a man who was unsure of his future. His treatise on the resurrection of believers is found in I Corinthians fifteen. Why, then, would he make such a statement to the Philippians? It is because the Lord revealed a deeper Truth to him. His whole Christian purpose was centered upon the Goal and the Prize. We shall study into this in detail. Let us look at the wording, “resurrection of the dead,” in Philippians 3:11. The Greek word for “resurrection” is “anastasis,” which literally means “a standing up again.” This word is used in every instance in the New Testament concerning the resurrection, with two exceptions. In Matthew 27:53, the word used for Christ’s resurrection is “egeresis,” which means “to wake, or rouse from sleep.” The other exception is found in Philippians 3:11. This is the only time that the form of this word is found. It is “exanastasis” - ek “from or out of,” and anastasis “a raising up.” Literally translated it is, “the out-resurrection from among the dead.” In most literal translations, this difference is noted. We would like to

give a few examples. Rotherham's Emphasized New Testament reads, "If by any means I may advance to the earlier resurrection, which is from among the dead." The Diaglott has, "If possibly I may attain to the resurrection out of the dead ones." The New Testament by Kenneth S. Wuest part 1 reads, "If by any means I might arrive at the goal, namely, the out- resurrection from among those who are dead." The Amplified New Testament, minus the words of interpretation between brackets, is translated as, "That if possible I may attain to the resurrection out from among the dead." In the Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words by W.E. Vine, we find that this word is literally translated, "The out-resurrection from among the dead." The Critical Lexicon and Concordance to the English and Greek New Testament by E.W. Bullinger gives the same translation. The following Greek texts also translate it thus - Lachmann, Tischendorf, Tregelles, Alford, and Wordsworth. We are not trying to prove something by presenting the majority of man's opinion, but have given you the literal translation of this phrase. The key word that marks this resurrection as unique is "attain." The Apostle Paul, after at least thirty years of ministry, was pressing with all his inward and spiritual strength toward the goal of the out-resurrection. He sounds no uncertain note when he says, "IF BY ANY MEANS I MIGHT ATTAIN." If he made such a statement concerning his salvation, then his language would not be compatible with that in the rest of his writings. The word "attain" - "katantao" - means "to reach, to arrive at." If we compare this with the rest of this chapter in Philippians, we will see that he was not talking of a general resurrection of all believers. First of all, he speaks of his life before his conversion, of the things that could be counted as gain to him. We read that he gave all that up, and even counted it as "dung," in order to "win Christ." This cannot refer to initial salvation, for nowhere in the Scriptures are we told that salvation comes by our relinquishing all our past attainments or abilities. Salvation is by grace through faith. Paul was saved while lying on the dusty road between Jerusalem and Damascus. His words, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" - attest to that. No, he is speaking of something far beyond the initial faith for salvation from sins. He knew nothing about winning Christ, when he was first converted. This truth was revealed to him later. He also expressed the desire to "be found in Him, not having mine own righteousness"; and, "that I may KNOW Him." These are not desires of a sinner, nor of one newly saved. These are the heart-devoted desires of a mature Christian who wants all that Christ provided through redemption. The apostle wanted all his activities to be "in Christ." He wanted his desires to be "in Christ." Then he wanted an intimate knowledge, progressive through experience, of the power of Christ's resurrection life. He desired the communion of Christ's sufferings, and the culminating experience of being made conformable unto His death. This is all foreign to a babe in Christ, and to the carnal believer. These desires go far beyond what the average Christian even thinks about. Most of God's children are concerned with either their salvation or their service. This desire of Paul is far advanced to either. He had grown in experience from the kindergarten grade to the college level. Philippians 3:12-21 further substantiates this. He speaks of attaining, following after, apprehending, forgetting, reaching forth, pressing toward, and walking.

These are words which express energy, power, strength, and perseverance. There is a "high calling of God in Christ Jesus." Paul wanted to reach this goal, the out-resurrection, more than anything else. He put aside all things that would make him popular or exalted in any way, and that which would hinder his progress. He put all the energy of the

resurrection life of Christ to use, in pressing forward through all obstacles of unbelief and satanic forces. He writes of this power to the Ephesians, and the purpose of possessing such force. "That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him: the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of His calling, and what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and **WHAT IS THE EXCEEDING GREATNESS OF HIS POWER TO US-WARD WHO BELIEVE**, according to the working of His mighty power, which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead ... – Ephesians 1:17-23. These two portions of Scripture correspond in a wonderful way. They both speak of this high calling. The one is the purpose, and the other is the power. There is strenuous overcoming connected with this calling. Perhaps this is the reason for the unpopularity of such a teaching. It cuts down all the flesh of man, it humiliates the Christian, it glorifies Christ only. To run in this race means separation, strenuous training, suffering, and a complete dependence on the power of the Holy Spirit. This leaves no time for religious play-making. The racer must travel a lonely road, apart from the general rush of religious activity. He is put through some peculiar experiences and puzzling situations, and brought to many blind corners. Faith leads the way, and there can be no nice detours either.

We shall study in detail the Two General Resurrections, the Manner of the Resurrection, the Time of the Resurrection, and the Different Ranks in the Resurrection. Read the Scriptures that are given, and meditate upon them. Give the Holy Spirit a chance to reveal this truth to you. Jesus said, "Search the Scriptures." Paul said, "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good." John said, "Try the spirits." "We say, "Amen."

THE TWO GENERAL RESURRECTIONS

"Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear His Voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation" - John 5:28, 29. There will be a resurrection of the righteous and a resurrection of the wicked. As we study the Scriptures, we find that there are one thousand years between these two resurrections. Turn to Revelation twenty, and read the entire chapter. We read plainly that the first resurrection includes all the righteous. "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years" – Revelation 20:6. In the previous verse, we find that "the rest of the dead (all the wicked) lived not again until the thousand years were finished." From verses seven to fifteen, we are taught how the wicked will be revealed and then how all the unbelievers will be raised and judged before the great white throne of the righteous God.

In this article, we shall concern ourselves only with the first resurrection part 2 that of the believer - and see that there are ranks in this resurrection. The most comprehensive study of the resurrection of the believer is found in I Corinthians fifteen. The Apostle Paul writes nothing of the second resurrection in this chapter. Verses twelve to twenty-three prove conclusively that there will be a resurrection. Paul makes it very plain that Christ is the Firstfruit of the resurrection; and, since He has been raised from the dead, so will all

who believe in Him. “For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.”

Let us pay special attention to I Corinthians 15:23 - “BUT EVERY MAN IN HIS OWN ORDER:

Christ the Firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ’s at His coming.” There will be a general resurrection of all believers, but every man in his own order. Going to the Greek again, we find that the word “order” is “tagma.” Its meaning is, “That which has been arranged in order”; and it was especially a military term denoting “a company, a band, a rank.” This is the only place where this particular Greek word is used. There are different ranks in an army, and each rank or band marches in different orders and at different times. Paul likens the resurrection to this. It is important to know why there should be different ranks in the resurrection, before we can understand that there are indeed different orders.

THE MANNER OF THE RESURRECTION

In I Corinthians 15:35-42 we find that there are different grades of the resurrection; that is, there are different glories. The apostle uses as an allegory, the grain which is planted in the ground, to illustrate the manner of the resurrection. As one looks at a grain of corn, and sees its shriveled shape and feels its dryness, he would not suspect that there was life inside. This grain, when placed into the ground and left there, will die. The outer covering will decay; but, from the inside, there springs forth life. From atop the ground, this is not noticeable immediately; it takes days. But suddenly there is a green shoot which pierces the sod, and every day there is a noticeable growth. Out of the one grain of corn will come a fully developed stock of corn, with perhaps several ears and hundreds of grains of corn. This is a resurrection.

Paul states, “But God giveth it a body as it hath pleased Him.” Oh, what a positive and emphatic proof against the theory of evolution! In the following verses, we read these words, “All flesh is not the same flesh: but there is one kind of flesh of men, another flesh of beasts, another of fishes, and another of birds. There are also celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial: but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another. There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for one star differeth from another star in glory. SO ALSO IS THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD.”

God uses everything in nature to picture some spiritual truth. The glories of the planets are here used to illustrate the differences in the resurrection. Are we going way off base by making such a statement? We do not think so. The word “glory” means “appearance.” We also know that Christ is likened to the sun and is called “the Sun of righteousness” - Malachi 4:2. In Revelation 10:1 we have a picture of Christ in all His eternal glory - “And I saw another mighty Angel come down from heaven, clothed with a cloud: and a rainbow was upon His head, and His face was as it were the sun, and His feet as pillars of fire.” Thus it is easy to understand that the sun glory, referred to by the Apostle Paul in I Corinthians fifteen, refers to the highest degree of glory - even that of the Lord Jesus Christ. Let us look at another symbolic picture in Revelation 12:1 - “And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet,

and upon her head a crown of twelve stars.” This is a heavenly scene, and represents all the family of God in Heaven. We know that the Church is likened to a woman, a chaste virgin. In this scene, we view the three glories spoken of earlier - the sun, the moon, and the stars. As Paul states, “One star differeth from another star in glory.”

As we meditate upon the natural sun, moon, and stars, we find the key of understanding the spiritual application. The sun is, without question, the ruling force of the earth. In Genesis one, the sun is called “the greater light” which would rule the day. “The lesser light” would rule the night. Then, “He made the stars also. And God set them in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth, and to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness.” The moon is a cold rocky planet, and has no light of its own. What light we see at night from the moon is only a reflection of the sun’s rays. Thus, the moon occupies a lesser place in the universe than does the sun. The stars also have some effect upon the earth but in a different way from either the sun or the moon. In eternity, we will have no need of these natural lights. We read, “And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof. And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honor into it” - Revelation 21:23, 24. The glory of Christ and His people will not only lighten all heaven but also the earth. When Christ was transfigured before three of His apostles, He wore His eternal garments of light for a few minutes, and the glory blinded the apostles - Matthew 17. Saul of Tarsus was blinded by Christ’s glory, which shone brighter than the noonday sun. When Christ and all the heavenly ones are gathered together in their glorified bodies, the light will radiate throughout the whole universe. There will be different degrees of glory and appearance in the glorified bodies of the saints. As we read, “So also is the resurrection of the dead.” What determines the degree of glory in a believer? Since we know that Christ Himself will radiate as the sun, then it would be wise to say that the more like Christ we are in our nature and development, the more like Him we shall be in glory. John wrote, “Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is” - I John 3:2. This is the hope of the Christian! We attain to this place by allowing Christ to infuse our lives now and change us into His spiritual image. The Word of God will affect us in such a way as to change us completely from the realm of darkness to the realm of glory and light. Note II Corinthians 3:18 - “But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.” Here again, we see that there are different glories of the Christian life. We are changed from one glory into another, as we allow the Word of God to change our entire beings. We take away the veil of unbelief and self-works, and allow the full glory of the Scriptures to shine upon us. There is progress seen and felt. We go on from one sphere to another, higher and higher. This takes us back to Philippians 3:10, 11, and 14. The Apostle Paul pressed toward the mark for the Prize of the HIGH CALLING of God in Christ Jesus. As we read through the remainder of this chapter, we find that we are to follow Paul in his determination and desire. We are also told of other believers, who will not follow him. They become the enemies of the Cross of Christ, because they do not appropriate the victory that the death of Christ availed for them. But Paul’s great desire is summed up in the last two verses: “For our conversation is in Heaven; from whence also we look for the

Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall change our vile body (our body of humiliation), that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body (or, His body of glory), according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself” - Philippians 3:20, 21. Paul’s outlook was for a body of glory fashioned like unto Christ’s own body of glory. Was this too much to hope for? Of course not or else the apostle would not have uttered such a statement. We also know from the Scriptures and from experience that not all believers walk alike. Some are carnal in their walk, and never grow in grace and in the knowledge of the Truth. Others remain babes in experience, and never are able to walk as they should. Other believers “grow up,” and they become mature saints of God. They learn God’s Word and His ways. They come to know Him intimately, as Paul expressed. They allow the Word of God to cut them down to the right size, and to cut out all that is not pleasing to Him. They use the Sword of the Spirit upon themselves, instead of upon others. These saints shall reflect all the glory of the Son of God. They will be identified with Him in the “Sun Glory.” Others, who are halfhearted or rebellious to the will of God, will have no glory of their own but will reflect the glory of others. These saints will be counted in the “Moon Glory.” Then there are the stars. They have light and glorious light, but they are much farther away than these other planets. The sun rules the day; and we are told that we are “the children of light, and the children of the day.” listen to Paul’s words again, “But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness. Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober” - I Thessalonians 5:4-6. We say, “Amen.” There is the supposition here that some believers will be asleep and not watching when Jesus returns. They would be counted as children of the night, and then would be identified with the “Moon Glory.”

THE TIME OF THE RESURRECTION

For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ’s at His coming” - I Corinthians 15:22, 23. We have established that there are two general resurrections. The first resurrection includes all born again believers from the beginning to the end. In the Scriptures quoted above, we see that Christ is the Firstfruit of the resurrection. The Children of Israel were instructed to bring to the priests their firstfruits - Leviticus twenty-three. These belonged to the Lord. They signified that the land belonged to God; and, in this way, the people were acknowledging this fact.

Christ being the Firstfruit of the resurrection signified that He was the “Tithe” of the resurrection, and the earnest of the resurrection of all believers. Christ has guaranteed that all Christians who die will be raised from the dead. The firstfruits of the land were only samples of the rest of the harvest; there was more to come. So with the resurrection. Christ’s resurrection only opened the door into Heaven for all believers. The Apostle Paul states this truth and then adds, “BUT EVERY MAN IN HIS OWN ORDER.” We have examined the Greek word for “order,” and found that it was a military term signifying “rank.” We are to conclude from this Scripture and others, that the resurrection of believers will be similar to the ranks in an army. There are some who bitterly disagree with this, and say that by believing there are ranks in the resurrection we are “splitting” up the Body of Christ. First of all, we must realize that the Body of Christ is a spiritual

Body, and not one of flesh and bones. He has His own body in which He lived while on earth; but there is a Body of mystery which is His people. This Body of believers, which is alive and on earth at this present time, is not all in one place. The saints are scattered throughout the whole world. Others have fallen asleep, and their spirits are with the Lord in Heaven. So there can be no question about “splitting” the Body. This would be impossible.

There is ample evidence that some of the family of God are already in heaven in their glorified bodies. Christ, the Head, has been there for almost two thousand years. Let us read Matthew 27:52, 53 - “And the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, and came out of the graves after His resurrection, and went into the holy city (Jerusalem), and appeared unto many.” Here is a resurrection of believers who had died before Christ’s death and had been raised at the time of His resurrection, though not at the exact moment. They, like He, appeared to many of the saints. They were seen as He was for forty days - Acts 1:3.

The question arises, “Who were these saints who were raised at this time?” They were believers; so they had to be raised in the first resurrection. Here is one rank of believers. We find out who they were by reading Hebrews 11:35 - “Women received their dead raised to life again: and others were tortured, NOT ACCEPTING DELIVERANCE; THAT THEY MIGHT OBTAIN A BETTER RESURRECTION.” This entire chapter records the heroes of faith and their victories. These Old Testament saints were overcomers in their time. Read the list, and you will see that they stood out above all others in believing God. Some were miraculously delivered, but others suffered terribly. They all believed God for “a better resurrection.”

Now isn’t it strange that they should want a “better” resurrection? Wouldn’t a resurrection be all right? The word “better” is a word of comparison and means, “stronger, more powerful, excellent.” There was a price to pay for this “better resurrection.” That price was an all-out surrender to the will of God. These people suffered untold agony, and exercised mountain moving faith. They knew that they were running a race to gain the best. These people were such wonderful overcomers that we read - “of whom the world was not worthy.” Thus they gained the great distinction of being raised two thousand years before any other believers. Can anyone deny that this was a great honor? These saints became a “cloud of witnesses” (Hebrews 12:1); and they proved that we too can run the race with patience, and obtain a better resurrection out of the general Church.

When Jesus ascended into Heaven we read, “And when He had spoken these things, while they beheld, He was taken up; and a CLOUD received Him out of their sight” - Acts 1:9. This cloud of witnesses is with Him even today, awaiting the time when Jesus will return for His watching waiting ones. We read of this cloud in I Thessalonians 4:13-18, but let us note one verse - “Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them (the sleeping ones) in the CLOUDS, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.” When Jesus is revealed to the earth, and especially to His earthly people Israel, we read, “Behold, He cometh with CLOUDS; and every eye shall see Him, and they also which pierced Him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him. Even so, Amen” - Revelation 1:7.

We have noted one rank in the first resurrection, and there are others. The believers who were raised when Christ was, were overcomers. The ones who experience the “outresurrection” of which Paul spoke will also be overcomers. That is, they overcome all the difficulties and trials in their lives. They never succumb to discouragement and difficulties. They overcome the world, the flesh, and the devil. They overcome all. Our Apostle Paul ran with all his ransomed might, in order that he might attain or arrive at this better resurrection of the Church. He states in I Corinthians 9:24 - “Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain.” Now Paul was not a coach of a track team here in Corinth, because he continues this simile - “And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible. I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air: but I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway (or, disapproved)” - I Corinthians 9:25-27.

There is a price to pay in order to be counted in this number. The Lord must have first place in our lives, and His will must be paramount in all that we do. We have a description of such people in the book of Revelation. Jesus instructed John to write to the seven churches of Asia, and these letters are found in chapters two and three. These were local churches, but they also represent different experiences and grades in the Church. They portray the overcomings and the failings of the Church. They also represent, dispensationally, the history of the Church Age from the day of Pentecost to the judgment of apostatized Christendom. We cannot go into a detailed study of these churches in this booklet. If you care to study them in detail, and do not now have notes of Revelation by A. S. Copley, please write for this book.

The Judge of the Church, Jesus Christ, is seen in the first chapter walking in the midst of these churches judging according to the Word of God. His eyes scrutinize all hearts who hear the Word. He knows whether we let the Word judge our hearts and change our lives. In two of these letters, there is not one word of fault found. This is not so in the other five. He had somewhat against Ephesus, the first church; but they had the opportunity to repent and get back to their previous position. Evidently, the church as a whole did not overcome; as there is a declension seen in the churches. Pergamos is more worldly than Ephesus. Thyatira becomes very wicked in doctrine and practice. Sardis, though a great body and a loud profession, is found to be dead. Laodicea is the end-time picture of Christendom. They are neither hot nor cold. They are impassive toward God’s Word, and indifferent to whether they overcome or not.

That leaves two churches who had no blame attached to them. The first is Smyrna. This church is noted for its suffering. They are weak, poor, and have tribulation. The Lord commends them, however, and gives them a wonderful promise, “... be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life” - Revelation 2:10. This statement intimates that these saints went into the grave, but they died in victory.

The other church is the Philadelphia assembly. This is a “brotherly love” group, and their characteristic is also “a little strength.” We see, however, that they have been faithful in all their ways. We read, “Thou hast kept My Word, and hast not denied My Name ... thou hast kept the Word of My patience.” Their reward is great and manifold, but we would like to point out one portion - “Because thou hast kept the Word of My patience, I also

will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth” - 3:10. This tribulation is not the testing that comes to all children of God who live godly in this world. It is stated as - “the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world.” This hour of tribulation is the subject of the book of Revelation from chapters six to nineteen. Now the promise to these saints was that they would be kept out of this time of trouble, or be taken out of the world before the tribulation days. This taking out is a reward for faithfulness to God and His Word, as we have read. Not all believers fit into this category.

Thus we have two churches, Smyrna and Philadelphia, which represent full overcomers of the Church Age. The first group figures those who go into the grave; while the second group figures those who are alive and remain at Jesus’ coming. We have these two groups seen in I Thessalonians four, to which we alluded earlier - “For the Lord Himself shall descend from Heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the Trump of God: and the DEAD IN CHRIST SHALL RISE FIRST: then we which are ALIVE AND REMAIN shall be caught up together ...”

These verses represent Christ’s coming for the saints who are looking for Him. They are “the children of the day,” as seen in I Thessalonians five. They are armored for the battle and ready for the flight. They are ready to go with the Lord when He returns. They are listening for that shout of command and the trumpet blast which will announce His coming. The world will be spiritually dead, and Christendom will be asleep or drunken when this event takes place.

When the Children of Israel moved, or were called to an assembly, there was a sounding of the trumpets. There will be a trumpet used when Jesus comes again. In I Corinthians 15:51, 52 we read, “Behold, I show you a mystery; we shall not all sleep (or, go into the grave), but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.” Here we read, “THE LAST TRUMP.” If there is a last trump, there must be a first trump, and perhaps other trumpet sounds in between. Each rank of the resurrection will be called forth, even as were the Children of Israel, in companies.

The next question arises, “Where are these overcomers, the Smyrna and Philadelphia churches, seen in Heaven?”

THE DIFFERENT RANKS IN THE RESURRECTION

“After this I looked, and, behold, a door was opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said, come up hither, and I will show thee things which must be hereafter” - Revelation 4:1. The saints in the Philadelphia and Smyrna churches symbolize full overcomers during the Church Age. The meaning of each name is significant. “Smyrna” is a derivative of myrrh, and means “suffering, bitterness.” “Philadelphia” means “brotherly love.” We have noted before, that there was no blame attached to these saints. They were poor, persecuted, and of little strength; yet they were faithful in all their ways. They overcame all the obstacles in their day. They learned the lesson of bitter trials and experiences; but they also learned that Jesus loved them dearly, and in turn they loved one another. The Philadelphia church represents the saints who will be “alive and remain” unto the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. They overcome the conditions of apostatized Christendom, and the wickedness of

the world in which they live. They will have remained faithful to the Lord's Headship and to the Truth, to the end. One of the promises as noted before is, "I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation ..." Some members of the Church will be taken out of the world before this terrible day of judgment begins, and others of the Church will experience some of the horrible judgments meant for unbelievers only.

In the book of Revelation we will see different groups in Heaven; and, as we look closely at them, their special characteristics will be seen and also their differences. All Christians are not the same in experience, in devotedness, in consecration, nor in overcoming. To deny this, one must be blind to conditions existing today. Let us look at the first group seen in Heaven, in chapters four and five.

"After this I looked, and, behold, a door was opened (having been opened) in Heaven: and the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said, Come up hither, and I will show thee things which must be hereafter." It is not possible to make a complete study of this book, but let us examine some of the important features. We see first of all, a door opened and a trumpet sounding. To the Philadelphia believers, we read, "I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it ..." In I Thessalonians four, we read about the trumpet sounding the return of the Lord Jesus for His own. In this respect John, the writer, represents the full overcomers who know about that "open door" and who enter it in time to see the enthronement of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Read the entire fourth and fifth chapters of Revelation, before you continue reading this article. You will note that there is a throne in Heaven for Jesus to occupy. John saw this happen. Also, around His throne, were twenty-four seats or thrones; and upon them were twenty-four elders who had crowns of gold. There were also four beasts ("living creatures," Greek) seen there. These twenty-four elders and four living ones are seen falling down before the Lamb on the throne and saying, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come." Who are these twenty-four elders and four living ones? As you read through the book of Revelation, you will find these people mentioned again and again. There are many interpretations as to who they are, and the majority of Bible students say they are angels. This is ridiculous when you consider their occupation and their attributes. In Revelation 5:9, 10 we read of these creatures, "And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for Thou wast slain, and HAST REDEEMED US TO GOD BY THY BLOOD OUT OF EVERY KINDRED, AND TONGUE, AND PEOPLE, AND NATION; and hast made us unto our God **KINGS AND PRIESTS**: and we shall reign on (or, over) the earth." It is evident that these are not angels, for they could never sing this song of redemption. Neither are angels said to be kings and priests. As John writes the vision which he saw, we read often that one of the living ones or one of the elders is always on hand to show him what these things mean. In noting just one instance, we find these words, in Revelation 22:8, 9 - "And I John saw these things, and heard them. And when I had heard and seen, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel (or, messenger) which showed me these things. Then saith he unto me, See thou do it not: for I am thy fellow servant, and of thy brethren the prophets and of them which keep the sayings of this book: worship God."

The saints of God are associated with Him in all His purposes, and we see this displayed very graphically here in Revelation. The twenty-four elders are seen, in chapter four, sitting upon thrones. They also have crowns. They are reigning with Jesus Christ. They are kings unto God. They represent that part of the dual ministry of all children of God who lay hold of that privilege. In Revelation 1:5, 6 we read, "And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first-begotten of the dead, and the Prince of the kings of the earth. Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and hath made us **KINGS AND PRIESTS** unto God and His Father ..." We are told by the Apostle Paul, in II Timothy 2:12 - "if we suffer, we shall also reign with Him: if we deny Him, He also will deny us" (that privilege of reigning). Also, in the letters to the Smyrna and Philadelphia churches, we find that these two groups of saints alone have crowns. The Smyrna saints are said to have **CROWNS** of life. The Philadelphia group are told, "Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take **THY CROWN**." Is it possible to share the throne with Jesus Christ? Is it too much to believe? Let us read the Scriptures and believe what they say, and disregard all our traditions and teachings of man. Romans 8:16-18 gives us the basis for this hope - "The Spirit Himself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, **AND JOINT-HEIRS WITH CHRIST**, if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be **ALSO GLORIFIED TOGETHER**. For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us." Thus, we have read that we can reign with Him, if we suffer with Him now. We can be joint-heirs; that is, share His inheritance. He will reign for one thousand years as the Sovereign of all He surveys, and we have the blessed privilege of reigning with Him. There is a price to pay, as there always is for a monarch. We must be separated unto that calling and trained to fill that place. There is much suffering that precedes that glory. We must share His rejection and humility now. We must cast our lot with Him while He is without a throne.

Now, let us look at the four living creatures. For a detailed study of this subject, we suggest that you write for our booklet called "Cherubim and Seraphim." But, for now, let us read Revelation 4:7, 8 from the Revised Version - "And the first creature was like a lion, and the second creature like a calf, and the third creature had a face as of a man, and the fourth creature was like a flying eagle. And the four living creatures, having each one of them six wings, are full of eyes round about and within: and they have no rest day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God, the Almighty, Who was and Who is and Who is to come." These creatures though pictured in a different way from the twenty four elders, nevertheless, have the same place and the same occupation. The creatures have a fourfold description - that of a lion, a calf, a man, and an eagle. This description describes their character. The lion is the king of beasts, and would show the kingly nature of these creatures - even like the Son of God in this respect. The calf would represent sacrifice; and, shows the yielded life of an overcoming Christian, ready for whatever his Lord requests. The man would figure their identity with humanity, and stamp them as being redeemed human beings. The eagle represents their heavenly nature. The Lord Jesus Christ also manifested these traits; and we see a wonderful correspondence with this fourfold description of these creatures with the description of Jesus in the four Gospels. Matthew's Gospel pictures Jesus as the King of the Jews, the lion. Mark pictures Him as the Servant of mankind, the calf. Luke pictures Him as the Son of Man, or His humanity.

John shows Jesus as the Heavenly One, the Son of God, and the eagle. In this comparison, we see the life and character of Jesus reproduced in the lives of the children of God. For further study of this fourfold description in the four Gospels, you may write for our booklet called "The Gospel Records."

These two groups then, the twenty-four elders and the four living ones, make up one wonderful group. They are the **KINGS AND PRIESTS** which we read about earlier. The four living creatures are always seen as falling down and worshipping Christ. The elders follow suit. We give our entire devotion to Christ, who is our life and victory. We reign now in life by one Christ Jesus; and we reign over the world, the flesh, and the devil. We are learning to reign now so that, when Jesus takes His throne, we will be able to sit with Him in judgment upon all these things. The fourth chapter tells us of the judgment fires burning; and, as we read on, we will see how that judgment is executed upon the world. The four living creatures represent our priestly nature which worships God and offers up prayers to Him. Note Revelation 5:8 - "And when He had taken the book, the four beasts and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials (or, bowls) full of odors, which are the prayers of saints."

The four living creatures and the twenty-four elders are always seen close to the Lamb and active in the incidents of this book. In Revelation six, when the seals of the book are opened, it is one of the creatures which call forth each judgment. The Authorized Version reads, "Come and see." The Revised Version and other Greek translations read thus, "And I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seven seals, and I heard one of the four living creatures saying as with a voice of thunder, "COME." This voice which was heard was a shout of command. The living creatures know when it is time for these judgments to come to pass, and they command them to begin. These living creatures are pictured elsewhere in the Bible, and it is an interesting study. We see cherubim at the entrance to the garden of Eden, guarding the way to the tree of life. They are seen hovering over the mercy seat, looking down upon the blood which was placed there. They are seen in Ezekiel's vision, associated with the Spirit and the will of God.

Let us not take these things lightly, and dismiss them as merely created heavenly beings. They are glorified humans, who have yielded their lives to the Lord while on earth; and now, as seen in Heaven, they are actively associated with the Lamb in putting down all rule and authority against God and His throne. This is real, and these creatures and elders represent full overcomers of this Church Age. They have hazarded their lives for Jesus and the Gospel's sake. They have yielded themselves to the will of God absolutely. They have been separated unto Him, and have had perfect fellowship with Him. Read thoroughly the prayers of Paul for the saints. Why does he pray for the saints? We will lose much if we view Paul's Epistles on the surface only. Search them out and ask the Holy Spirit, our great Teacher, to reveal to you what they mean. Let the Spirit speak to your heart concerning this high calling. Bow your knees in real humility, asking for all that the Lord has for you. Do not be satisfied with less than His best.

We shall note the characteristics of the innumerable company, as contrasted with the twenty-four elders and four living creatures. They are alike, in that they have come from all corners of the earth and have all been born again. "After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and

palms in their hands; and cried with a loud voice, saying, salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb” - Revelation 7:9, 10. In Revelation 7:11 we see a group of angels and the twenty-four elders and the four living ones around the throne worshipping the Lord, when this innumerable company appears. In Revelation 7:13 one of the twenty-four elders questions John as to the identity of this vast multitude which had just then appeared in Heaven. Of course, John did not know, and asked the elder to tell him. Here is his answer: “These are they who have come out of the great tribulation, and have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb” - Amplified New Testament. There follows a description of this group and their activities in Heaven. Let us note seven prominent points of difference between this great company and the smaller group with which we have already become acquainted. The First Fact to face is that the former group is already seen in Heaven before this group is seen there. In Revelation four, five, and six, we find no trace of the innumerable company at all. The first group is present when Christ is set upon His own throne to rule for one thousand years. This group is seen now, as having just arrived.

The Second Fact is a very important one, and that is: The first group, figured by the Philadelphia Church, is KEPT OUT of the Great Tribulation. This was a special promise to them. This was a reward for their faithfulness to Christ throughout their lives. Read again, Revelation 3:10. God is faithful to honor His Word. We can depend on Him to fulfill every promise that He gives to us. As we read again the words of the elder concerning the innumerable company, he says, “These are they which CAME OUT of great tribulation ...” The Tribulation Period begins when Christ takes His throne. Judgment begins to fall upon the inhabitants of the world, as is witnessed in Revelation six. When Christ is on His throne, all other world rulers will be usurpers. The inhabitants of the world will, for the most part, be in rebellion to God and the Gospel. Thus it is from this terrible condition, though in its beginning, that the great multitude comes. They will be taken from the earth during the first half of the seven years of tribulation.

The Third Fact is the different positions of the two groups. The former group is seen in and around the throne in Revelation four and five, and the elders are seen sitting upon thrones of their own. We also read in Revelation 5:6, “And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain ...” They are in very close proximity with the Lamb. This latter group is seen in Revelation 7:9, and 15 as standing around the throne. It is not said that they sit upon thrones, nor that the Lamb is in their midst. The Fourth Fact is the type of worship each brings. The former group is always seen as falling down before the Lamb. They are on their faces, prostrated in adoration before the Lamb. They SING His praises, and tell of redemption. This latter group is pictured as standing before the throne and crying with a loud voice, SAYING, “Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb.” They do not even sing their praises. They have a good message but shallow as compared with the other group. They only know that the Lord has saved them. The Fifth Fact is what they possess. The first group have crowns upon their heads, which they later cast at Christ’s feet. They have won the right to wear victors’ crowns; but they also acknowledge that their victory has come because of Christ. This second group have palms in their hands. Some of the Jews took palm branches and laid them in Christ’s path while He rode into Jerusalem. This was a salute to a monarch or a prominent personage. Thus, this group owns Him as a King, and they look upon themselves as His subjects.

This is wonderful, but hardly a close place. The Sixth Fact is their occupation. The former group declares that the Lord had made them “kings and priests: and we shall reign ...” This we can see throughout this book of Revelation. They do reign with Christ, and are very active in everything that takes place. Not only do they fulfill His wishes, but they know what He is going to do. They have spheres of rulership which have been given to them by the Lord. In Revelation 7:15 we read of this second group:

“Therefore are they before the throne of God, and SERVE Him day and night in His temple ...” They are servants of God and are content in that place. Now, it is wonderful to be a servant of the Lord, and we are all supposed to take that place while we are upon the earth. But, can’t you see, that the former group occupies a place more prominent than that of a servant? There are many types of servants in a kingdom. There are those who do menial tasks, and then there are those who sit in the council chambers with the king. This latter group is never seen worshiping the Lord, other than what we have already noted - Revelation 7:9-17.

The Seventh Fact is their prominence. The former group is seen throughout the book of Revelation. They are active, right to the end of this record. They are prominently pictured with the Lamb and His purposes. The latter group is seen in this seventh chapter, and not again until chapter nineteen and then only in an obscure way. “And a voice came out of the throne, saying, Praise our God, all ye His servants, and ye that fear Him, both small and great.” They are faithful in service, but are never leaders either in worship or in rulership. In Revelation 7:16, 17 we have a hint of the kind of life the members of this innumerable company had while upon the earth. These are wonderful promises, but they are the kind that we are to lay hold upon before we reach Heaven. Notice - “They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.” There is the thought here that, while on earth, they were hungry and thirsty. There is no excuse for any child of God to go hungry or thirsty now. This does not refer to natural food, I am sure, but to spiritual refreshment and nourishment. We are to feed upon Christ now, feast on the good things contained in the Scriptures. We are to eat and grow up into Christ in all things now. We are to learn about God and His purposes now. We are to grow spiritually now. We are to eat the “strong meat” of the Word now; and, if we have grown out of spiritual babyhood, we can. We are to find our refreshment from the Holy Spirit now. Jesus said, “Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.” Many children of God go throughout their earthly existence without the infilling of the Holy Spirit. He is said to be the “Refreshing” - Isaiah 28:12. We are to drink of this one Spirit now - I Corinthians 12:13. Some people wonder why their lives seem so dry and useless. It is because they do not allow the Holy Spirit to come into their bodies and fill them. There is a hint of their experiences through some of the tribulation days. “Neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat.” This is one of the judgments of that period of time. The sun will shine brighter and hotter than ever before, and scorch men with its heat. This also speaks of judgment in general. The fires of righteous judgment will fall upon the rebellious earth, and these saints will be caught in its burning. It was not God’s original purpose that they were left on earth; but, when they failed to lay hold of the promises of God, they missed the first trumpet sound. They were not faithful when it counted. They did not fully overcome when they could have. They did not stand

for all the Truth, but denied that it could be so. We also read that the Lamb “shall feed them.” Only babies have to be fed. These saints are not able to get their own nourishment from the Word. They must always be taught by others. They never sit down and meditate upon the Word for themselves. They never receive any nugget of Truth by their own digging. They are content to let others read for them.

“God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.” They seem to have had sorrow all their lives. They did not know how to get the victory over the cares and the woes of their earthly sojourn. We are taught in the Scriptures that Christ is our Source of strength and joy now. When we are in trouble, we go to the Lord and He takes away the pain and suffering and gives us victory. Even though we may remain in the trial, He gives us a song of joy and victory and we do not mind the trial. We do not have to wait until we reach Heaven, to know the sweetness of having Him wipe away our tears. We learn now, how compassionate He is throughout our lives. There are some today who are always crying on someone else’s shoulders. They can never seem to appropriate God’s grace for themselves. When they suffer, everyone else knows about it. The real overcomer can be in great trial and yet, in the presence of others, happy and carefree. This is victory. Oh, that we would read and meditate upon the Scriptures! There is so much more than what appears on the surface. We know only in part now, but what we have learned fills us with unspeakable joy. What will it be when we know Him in His fullness and reality! Let us read the Word and ask the Holy Spirit to reveal the Truth to our hearts. It is not too much to ask. We are not afraid to go to the minister and ask him what something means. Why not ask the Holy Spirit, as you would your preacher or teacher? Talk to Him personally, out loud if you can; and then let Him speak through the Word. He will always and only speak through the Scriptures. “And I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God: and he cried with a loud voice to the four angels, to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea, saying, hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads. And I heard the number of them which were sealed: and there were sealed a hundred and forty and four thousand of all the tribes of the Children of Israel” - Revelation 7:2-4. We come now to the third group of saints in resurrection. As we wrote before, this group is quite distinct from the other two. In verses two to eight, we note that they are sealed as a group. First of all, let us determine what is the Scriptural meaning of the word “sealed.” “The seal of the living God” (verse two) means an emblem of ownership and security, and also carries the thought of destination. By reading Ephesians 1:13, 14 we learn that the seal of God is the Holy Spirit - “In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the Word of Truth, the Gospel of your salvation: in whom also, after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of His glory.” Let us also note in this connection, the wording of Ephesians 1:13, as to when we are sealed. It is “AFTER THAT YE BELIEVED.” In Ephesians 4:30 we read, “And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.” Here is the thought of not only security and ownership, but also of destination. When we are filled with the Holy Spirit we receive the seal of God, and it is definite and sure that we belong to God. This ownership is eternal, and will never be revoked. We are “sealed unto the day of redemption,” or until the time when we are glorified in Heaven. A person may profess to be a Christian, but not possess the Life of Christ; but, when a believer receives the Holy

Spirit into his body, it is proof that he belongs to the Lord. The Holy Spirit is a Gift to believers only, and cannot be received by the world or sinners.

We have learned then that the 144,000 are sealed, or have received the Holy Spirit. You may ask, "When were they sealed?" We will answer this in detail later. We do learn from these verses that they were all sealed before the great day of wrath which is coming on the earth. The winds of judgment are held back from the earth until all the sealing is done. Another fact which we learn is that these people are distinctly of the house of Israel. They include twelve thousand from each tribe of Israel; and we can take it for granted that this is a literal number. When God writes of Israel as to number and date, it is always exact. In their history, God would tell them to do something or to observe a certain feast upon a certain date. When we read of the Church which is made up of both Jew and Gentile, the language is often symbolic. We believe that this is because the Truth given to the Church was a mystery until revealed to the Apostle Paul. God had to speak in symbols and parables, because that Truth was hidden until the right time.

Some will say, "There cannot be twelve thousand out of each tribe, because ten tribes are lost." Do not believe it. The ten tribes were scattered among the nations, but were never lost as far as God is concerned. When the Apostle James wrote his epistle, he addressed all of them - "James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad, greeting" - James 1:1. There is a teaching that the ten tribes lost their identity as belonging to Israel, and are now Great Britain and the United States. This is completely without Scriptural foundation. As far as we know, the identity of the ten tribes is unknown, but God knows. They are scattered; and, when God is ready to gather them, He will do it without asking men for their help. The two tribes known as Judah have always retained their identity, and we know them as Jews. They have definite characteristics which can never be erased, because they are eternal people. God's promises to them are eternal, and these promises include the twelve tribes. We do not believe that the ten tribes comprise any certain nation or nations, but are individuals scattered throughout many nations. They are related to the Jews but, because they have mingled with other nations, they cannot be readily identified as the Jews.

In Revelation fourteen, we see that the 144,000 are in Heaven singing a new song. In chapter seven, we saw only that they were sealed, not where they were. Thus, between chapters seven and fourteen, this group was caught away into Heaven. Let us first notice the wording in chapter fourteen. In verse one, we read, "Having His Father's Name written in their foreheads." This refers to "the seal of the living God," in Revelation 7:2. In Revelation 14:3, we read that they sung a new song which only they could sing. We also read, "The hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth." This establishes them definitely as of Israel. "Earth," in the book of Revelation, symbolized Israel; whereas, the "Sea" or "seas," refer to either the Gentiles or the nations. This may help in further study of this book.

"These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb. And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God" - 14:4, 5. Here is their description. You could not find any greater commendation than is found here. This stamps them as overcomers, even as the four living ones and the twenty-four elders. But why are they in

a different group? The answer is simple: They are strictly of the nation of Israel, although they are a part of the Church.

Let us note their overcoming qualities. They “were not defiled with women.” This means that they were not connected with any religious organization. Religious bodies are symbolized by women. This is not to be taken as a natural defilement, because that would mean that these were all men. When we understand that these people are of the Church because of the time in which they lived, we can see why it is important that they were not defiled with women. The majority of Christians today are “defiled with women,” in symbolic language. They belong to some church organization, and go by that name. They may be born again but still retain the name of the organization, whether it be Baptist, Methodist, Presbyterian, Lutheran, etc., etc. When we belong to a religious organization we are defiled, because we go by the Name of Christ and also by another name. It is as though a woman might be truly married to a man named Smith, and yet would also go by the name of Jones. Thus, a believer who calls himself a Christian (or, after Christ’s Name) and also bears another name, is committing spiritual adultery. These 144,000 were not defiled in this manner. They stood apart from all man-made organization.

“For they are virgins.” This explains further the thought we have given in the above description. They have never given themselves to another head. They have kept themselves spotless for Christ. The Apostle Paul espoused the Church to Christ - “a chaste virgin” - II Corinthians 11:2. He knew that all believers would not stay true, as he warns in the next verse. And they have not kept true. There are some who have kept out of organization, or have come out after they learned the truth. They are virgins, spiritually speaking. “These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth.” This speaks of full surrender to the will of God. They followed Him through suffering and death. They preached Christ without fear, and could not be detoured from their one great purpose to follow Christ.

“These were redeemed from among men.” This denotes their humanity. It also means that they were called and saved individually, and not as the whole nation. These people were saved during the Church Age period when the commission is, “Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature” - Mark 16:15. They were saved, not because they were of Israel; but because, as individuals, they realized their need of a Savior and accepted the Lord Jesus. The nation of Israel will be saved at the beginning of the Millennium - Isaiah sixty- five and sixty-six.

Being the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb.” This statement sheds a lot of light upon them. We know from Paul’s writings and also from the accounts given in the book of Acts, that the Gospel went first to the Jews and then to the Gentiles. “To the Jew first” was the pattern in the beginning of the Church Age, which officially began at Pentecost but actually began with the Cross. For the most part, this company includes all the early Christians from the day of Pentecost to the calling out of the Gentiles.

In studying the book of Acts, we note that there are two purposes of God running parallel. The Lord was still dealing with the nation of Israel, as we see by the testimony which was constantly presented to the elders and rulers of Israel. The door of the Gospel to the nation was closed officially, when the rulers rejected Stephen’s message and stoned him.

Immediately we read that the Christians were scattered throughout Judea, Samaria, and the uttermost parts of the earth. We read that they went everywhere preaching the Gospel - Acts eight. This was in fulfillment of Acts 1:8. Right away the great persecutor Saul of Tarsus was converted, and became the Apostle to the Gentiles - Acts nine. Then, in Acts ten, the door of faith was officially opened to the Gentiles.

The one hundred and twenty, who were gathered in the upper room on the day of Pentecost, became the nucleus of the Church; for it was on that day that the believers were baptized into one Body - I Corinthians 12:13. These included the twelve apostles, Mary the mother of Jesus, and other disciples of that time. On the day that the Holy Spirit descended, Peter filled with the Spirit preached to the multitude and three thousand were saved. The next day five thousand were saved. These people never knew what organization was. They were free to be led by the Holy Spirit; and we read over and over how the Spirit led them. These were “the firstfruits” that we read of in Revelation fourteen. They were all filled with the Holy Spirit on that day. The erroneous teaching, that one need not be filled with the Spirit, had not been introduced. They all preached this truth, beginning with Peter and continuing with Paul. Read Acts 2:38 and Acts 19:2-6. At the end of the Church Age, which is about here, we have another period of time in which two purposes of God are running parallel. The Lord is about through with this Age of Grace, and the Rapture is due any day. But, He has another purpose to continue, after the Church is gone to Heaven; that is, His dealings with Israel as a nation. When the apostles asked Jesus before His ascension - “Wilt Thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?” - Jesus ignored the question and said, “It is not for you to know the times or the seasons...but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high” - Acts 1:7; Luke 24:49. After the Church is gone, it will be time for the Lord to restore the kingdom to Israel. That is why the great tribulation must come, because the Gentile nations will be reigning after Christ is reigning on His throne in Heaven. There will be seven years of bringing everything into order, before Israel can be restored as God’s nation on the earth. All other rulers will have to be judged and dethroned. All rejecters will be destroyed. God’s archenemy Satan, along with his henchmen the false prophet and the anti-Christ, will have to be put away. We say this to show that, at the beginning and ending of each dispensation, there is a transition period when God must work out two purposes. It may be that some of the 144,000 will be garnered out of this latter transition period. They would still be of the Church, but also of Israel. As we do not know just who Israel are, we cannot say who of the present time would be in this group. Perhaps some of these people who are receiving the Holy Spirit today, and yet who have no interest in deeper teaching, may be in this group; but this is entirely speculation on our part. We know for sure, however, that the bulk of this number will have come from the beginning of this Christian era.

The great question now is, “When do they arrive in Heaven?” There is only one answer for us, and we read about it in Revelation twelve. This chapter concerns the nation of Israel during the tribulation period. Read the whole chapter through once or twice before you continue. First we see a great wonder, or sign, in Heaven. It is that of “a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars” - Revelation 12:1. This woman represents all the family of God that are in Heaven. The sun, moon, and stars represent different glories, as we studied in I Corinthians fifteen. In symbol, we see that there is yet more of the family of God to be brought to

Heaven. She is said to be in travail and pain. This condition illustrates under what stress and persecution these 144,000 were saved. The early Christians were in peril at all times, and those of the end-time will be also. We find that this “man child” will be “born” at the time that Satan will be cast out into the earth with his angels. This will happen just before the anti-Christ will be revealed to the inhabitants of the earth.

This puts us about in the middle of the week, or the seven years of the tribulation period. We read that as soon as the man child was delivered, he was caught up to God and His throne. Satan was there to destroy this manly son. Most Bible teachers say this man child is Christ. This cannot be so because, at the time this happens, Christ will have been in Heaven almost two thousand years. And, too, He was not caught up to Heaven immediately after His birth. He lived on earth for over thirty-three years, and was a grown Man when He died on the Cross. We have seen Christ in Heaven already, in this book of Revelation, sitting upon the throne. How then could He be this child who was brought forth during the tribulation period?

At this time, the ones of this group will be raised from the graves, and others who are alive at this time will be caught up to God. No wonder Satan is after them! They will rule over the earth, which is his domain. Christ will rule from Heaven, but He will have others to rule in various capacities. We read that Jesus told His twelve apostles that they would sit upon twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel. It could be that each apostle will be head over a tribe. These 144,000 all of Israel will, of course, have jurisdiction over the Israel on earth.

In Revelation 12:6 we read that “the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days” - three and one-half years, or “a time, and times, and half a time” - 12:14. This group refers to those who endure the remainder of the tribulation period. The devil will send forth his armies through the anti-Christ and try to annihilate these saints, because they will refuse the mark of the beast. God will protect them, and in miraculous ways too. These are the ones to whom Jesus refers when He said, “But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved” - Matthew 24:13.

This may seem farfetched to some of you who have been taught differently. But let us not take man’s teaching without question. Do not take this teaching without question either. Search the Scriptures, and ask the Holy Spirit to guide you into the Truth. Some quote from noted men of the Scriptures and say they did not teach that, so it must not be so. There were many well-known teachers of years ago, who did believe in ranks in the resurrection. Among the most notable ones were R. Govett, G.H. Lang, D.M. Panton, G.H Pember, J.A. Seiss, and Austin Sparks. We do not teach this truth because these noted students of the Bible have taught it, but we believe it because the Word of God declares it to be so. The wise man can admit that he is wrong, whereas the fool will never try to discover whether he is or not.

TYPICAL TEACHING

“Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam’s transgression, who is the figure of Him that was to come” - Romans 5:14. In this section, we want to point out some types or figures of the truth

which we have been presenting. Some teachers would exclude all typical teaching of the Scriptures; but we see by the text verse that the Apostle Paul believed in them. We know that Adam was a figure of Christ in several ways. Adam was the head of the first creation, whereas Christ is the Head of the new creation. Adam was held responsible for bringing sin into the world. Christ was responsible for atoning for that sin and bringing in righteousness. Adam was given dominion over the earth at his creation; likewise, Christ will have dominion over all things concerning the earth. Adam was only a type, but one which God used. In this respect, we shall see that Eve was also a type. "And the Lord God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a help meet for him. And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept; and He took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof. And the rib, which the Lord God had taken from man, made He a woman, and brought her unto the man. And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of man. Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh" - Genesis 2:18, 21-24.

These verses are used to show that God instituted marriage; but they also show a deeply spiritual truth, that of Christ and His Bride. This fact is not denied by fundamental Bible students; but they vehemently refuse to believe that the whole Church is not the Bride of Christ. We hope to be able to show clearly that the Scriptures teach that not all of Christ's Body will be His spiritual Bride. As you will have noted - "God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam" and, while he was in this condition, God performed an operation. The "body" of Adam was unaware of what God was doing. Also, God used only one rib in building a wife for Adam. Removing this rib from Adam's side, did not destroy his body. He was as much a man as before. Adam still had his body but, he also had a wife, which came from his body.

This is the basis for our belief that the Bride of Christ will be a "Rib" portion of the whole Body of Christ. Adam was not able to complain to God about what He did then, nor could he argue with Him about His method of operation. We have no right, either, to argue with Him because of what He is doing today in the spiritual Body of Christ. One may say, "Where are your Scriptures that support your belief?" As is always the case, when we want to find the truth concerning the mysteries of the Bride or other truths concerning the Church, we must go to Paul's writings. God chose him to be the Apostle to the Church, and He gave him the message for this dispensation. Read Galatians 1:6-12. In turning to Ephesians 5:17-33, we find that Paul explains the statement made by Adam when God brought Eve to him. In verse thirty-two we read, "This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the Church" As you read all of these verses carefully, you will note the truth that is taught. First of all, the Lord desires that we understand the will of God. He wants us to be filled with the Spirit, always victorious in our spirits; and able to give thanks for all things in our lives, even adversities. We see that the Church is to be subject to Christ in everything. This is a high calling, and it is the will of God that the whole Church come into this experience. Any honest Christian will have to admit that not all believers fit into this pattern. All believers do not know the will of God for themselves, even so how can they know what God's purposes are for the Church? All believers are not filled with the Spirit. This "filling" has the thought of being full at all times. It would signify then, that we are to be controlled by this Spirit at all times, letting Him lead us into the will of God and give us victory over everything. All believers are

not Spirit-filled nor Spirit-led. Many are carnal, and live worldly lives. Many go in their own ways, ignoring the Word and the Will of God.

We also know that the Church as a whole is not subject to Christ. If this were true, then there would be no earthly heads over God's people. When God raised His Son from the dead, He "gave Him to be the Head over all things to the Church, which is His Body, the fullness of Him that filleth all in all" - Ephesians 1:22, 23. Christ should be the Director of the Church, and His program is revealed and regulated by the Holy Spirit. Every earthly pastor should take his direction from the Lord Jesus Christ. There is no basis whatever in the Bible, to substantiate man-made organization over God's people. If you have an earthly headquarters with governing bodies and departmental heads, you have an organization. These men are usurping Christ's place as Head over His heritage. Religious organization is spiritual fornication, which is abominable in God's sight.

"Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the Church, and gave Himself for it; that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the Word, that He might present it to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish" - Ephesians 5:25-27. Here is the purpose of God for the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ. We would like to inject a thought here. Notice that there is only ONE CHURCH. God recognizes only one Church, made up of believers during this Church Age. He does not recognize different denominations, who would exclude all other believers unless they call themselves by their own particular title. Just as God presented to Adam a perfect bride, so He wants to be able to present to Christ a perfect Bride - one who is spotless and who has been cleansed by the Word of God. We are cleansed from our sins when we accept Christ as our Savior; but there is a daily cleansing which comes through a daily adherence and obedience to that Word. Adam had a particular pride in his bride Eve, and exclaimed, "This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh." He exulted in her, because she was a part of him. Christ will also rejoice in His Bride, who is a part of His Body and who has been a partaker of His holy Life. Does all the Church know this? Has all the Church lived up to her privileges in Christ? Has all the Church remained a virgin, spiritually? Does the Church, as a whole, hold Christ as her only Head? Let us read what Paul says about this, in II Corinthians 11:1-3. "Would to God ye could bear with me a little in my folly (as this is what the Corinthians termed this teaching): and indeed bear with me. For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused (engaged) you to one Husband, that I may present (you as) a chaste virgin to Christ. But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ." The apostle knew that there was a possibility that all the Church would not be true to her espousal. He has given us the Truth concerning this high calling that is for all who will heed and follow the Spirit's leading. There are some who will not heed this engagement. Satan has whispered doubts to them, even as he did to Eve in the beginning. Eve's great fault was that she did not consult her husband before she ate of the forbidden fruit. She did not yield to his headship.

The picture is very plain that this is exactly what the Church has done concerning her Head, Christ. In the beginning of the history of the Church, there were no denominations; there were no heads over bodies of people. There were the twelve apostles at the very first; but they surely did not organize the people into sects. The Apostle Paul assumed his

place as the Apostle to the Gentiles, and champion of the Gospel of Grace which was revealed only to him; but neither he, nor those who worked with him, organized the believers. They ordained elders in each assembly; but we do not read of any denomination as we have today. The believers were one, and acted like it. They were all taught the same Truth in the beginning. They were all saved through faith in Jesus Christ, baptized in water, and filled with the Holy Spirit.

Only when men began to teach differently from what these early apostles taught, do we find any divisions among the believers. Just as Paul feared, Satan has spoken lies to men and they have mistaken his voice for that of the Spirit. In turn, they have led thousands of believers in the wrong path. The Holy Spirit is not able to direct them in the right way. They are taught that a certain denomination has the Truth, and that all others are wrong. That is why there is so much confusion in Christendom today. That is why some denominations have departed entirely from teaching salvation. The decline has been gradual, but it has been steady. Many believers are coming out of denominations today, because they are not satisfied. They seek more light on the Word of God, and a deeper experience, than that which they have had. Thank God for this thirst! The Bride of Christ will be entirely yielded to the Lord and His will. She will be like Him in her spiritual life. She will know His Voice above all others. She will submit to the Word of God. She will seek His good above her own. This also is pictured in type, in Proverbs 31:10-31. Read these verses, and think of them as pertaining to Christ and His Bride.

Genesis twenty-four, also, gives us a wonderful type of the Bride and her obedience to the will of God. We will not give an exposition on the whole chapter, but will give the high points. First of all, Abraham represents God the Father. Isaac is a type of Christ. Eliezer, the servant, pictures the work of the Holy Spirit. Abraham commanded the servant to - "Go unto my country, and to my kindred, and take a wife unto my son Isaac." The wife was to be related to Abraham's family. This refers to the family of God; and, of course, the Bride of Christ will come from among His great family.

The servant had the responsibility of finding a suitable wife for Isaac. The Holy Spirit, today, is searching the Church for the willing ones who hear His Voice and allow Him to lead them to their Heavenly Isaac. The servant asked guidance to find the right one - Genesis 24:12-14. Rebekah, the daughter of Abraham's brother, came; and she immediately did what Eliezer had requested. This shows her willing ness to serve. As the story unfolds, we can see the beautiful purpose of God for the Church.

The Holy Spirit calls us to a deeper walk with the Lord. He tells us of Christ who is waiting for a Bride. He puts jewels upon us. These jewels which Rebekah received, picture the gifts of the Spirit. We also note her willingness to go immediately with this man. Her family tried to persuade them to wait. How true this is in the life of a believer who hears the high calling, and is ready to go all the way immediately. Her family called her and said, "Wilt thou go with this man?" And she said, "I will go." She let no one stand in her way. This is the spirit of the overcomer of this day. He is ready to go on the long journey, and be ready to meet Christ in the air. Rebekah had to ride upon camels for that long journey, but she had the servant to show her the way. She had the comforts of a nurse to go with her. All of this is significant. The camels represent all the providences which take us on to Heaven. They are the trials, the difficulties - anything that will make us overcomers. They are the "all things" of Romans 8:28. The ones who say, "I will go,"

have the purpose in their hearts to go all the way, in spite of the trials. They have the Word of God to comfort them and encourage them. They know that the Holy Spirit is up ahead, directing their paths to their Heavenly Isaac. Did all the daughters marry Isaac? Did the whole family accompany her? These are the questions which I would like to ask you concerning the Church today. Do all believers eagerly follow the Lord? Do all believers surrender their lives to the Lord, and allow the Holy Spirit to lead them? Do all believers have the living hope that Christ will be their Bridegroom? You might try asking your religious friends and associates these questions. "Many are called, but few are chosen." All believers have the same opportunity to heed this call, and yield to the Holy Spirit. But will they? God is no respecter of persons. This truth is in the Scriptures for all to read and believe. However, it seems that only a few ever come into the fullness of this teaching.

All believers do not overcome. When difficulty comes their way, they seek the easiest way out. When some tragedy befalls them, they blame God instead of asking Him to make it work good for them. When they want guidance, they usually go everywhere instead of to the throne of grace. When they hear the message of being filled with the Holy Spirit, they begin to squirm and wiggle and try to find ways to leave. Do not try to tell me that all believers are the same in their love and devotion for the Lord. All believers are in the Body of Christ; but, as to experience, there is a great difference. Some go "all the way," and never turn aside or back. There are differences in the spirituality of believers. Some are babes in Christ, and they never grow. Others become mature saints of God, able to hold the victory for themselves and others. Some grow up into Christ in all things. Others are indifferent, and feel that going to meetings on Sunday is sufficient. The Bride of Christ will have intimate knowledge of her Lord and Savior. She will know Him, even as Paul expresses in Philippians 3:10. She will experience His joys and sorrows. She will understand His vicarious work of Redemption. She will sympathize with Him in His rejection, and rejoice with Him in His victory over His enemies. She will say, "Amen," to all His judgments. In other words, the Bride of Christ will surely be as close to Him as the most intimate of earthly marriages. We can see that many believers are not in this class. "So Esther was taken unto King Ahasuerus into his house royal ... And the king loved Esther above all the women, and she obtained grace and favor in his sight more than all the virgins; so that he set the royal crown upon her head, and made her queen instead of Vashti" - Esther 2:16, 17.

This story is another type of the Bride of Christ. The first queen, Vashti, had fallen out of favor with the king because of her disobedience and lack of submission to her husband. She is a wonderful figure of the professed church of our day. She is the false church who claims to be the wife of Christ, but in reality does not hold Him as her Head. Of course, Christ is as displeased with the false church as Ahasuerus was with Vashti, and more so. There was another queen, however, who did please the king; and we read that he loved her "above all the women." This maiden was not even of the same nationality; but her beauty and manner touched the king's heart, and he claimed her as his own. This is exactly Christ's estimation of His spiritual Bride. She will please Him in every way. Her inner beauty will win His heart; and He will crown her with the honor of reigning with Him. Notice that Ahasuerus loved Esther above all the others, and this can be said of Christ's love for His Bride. Now, I can hear someone say, "Christ loved all humanity; there is no difference." As the Savior of the whole world, I will agree with this. He loves

all sinners, and all who turn to Him for salvation. This is redeeming love. I am speaking of connubial love. There is a great difference between compassion and love. We can have compassion for an animal which is in need. We feel sorrow and pity for the person who is in the gutter and cannot get out. I have a love for my wife that is different from the love I feel for others. We love all of God's people; and yet we can also love some with a deeper love than others. Is this different from God's feelings? I think not, for our capacity for love came from God. Esther pleased the king, because she had had the best of treatment from one who knew the king. This is typical of the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives. Hegai, the keeper of the women, is like Eliezer of Abraham's time. The Holy Spirit knows the mind of the Lord, and He knows what will please the King. He will work in us, if we cooperate, and will give us the kind of beauty that touches the heart of Christ. He will instruct us as to the likes and dislikes of the Lord. But we must put ourselves in His hands. He will teach us how to act in Christ's Presence. He will be no stranger, when we see Him face to face. All the faults that would cause Christ to turn His eyes from us will be corrected, if we let the Holy Spirit have control of us; then we will surely be "holy and without blemish" - Ephesians 5:27.

Ruth, in her attitude, is typical of the spirit of the Bride of Christ. She was willing to live with her mother-in-law, and to take her husband's people as her own. She was willing to glean in the fields of Boaz, never hoping that he would notice her. But her attitude caused Boaz to notice her, and her desire for God brought her into his presence. This is the attitude that the Apostle Paul displayed in going after the spiritual riches of Christ. He forsook all other things, and followed Him. He wanted to apprehend everything that there was for him to lay hold of.

We must have this same spirit, if we ever hope to have the best that Christ offers. We must count all of our own natural attainments and goodness as refuse, and follow Christ. We should have the attitude that if we never are in the forefront it will be all right, as long as we win Christ. Some people have such a conceited opinion of themselves and their abilities that they never get out of God's way. They always put themselves forward, even when God is not pleased. They are not willing to be quiet, to sit in a corner, and wait for the Lord to call for them. They cannot begin to think that perhaps God can use someone else besides them. The Bride will have a humble spirit concerning herself, but an exalted opinion of Christ. The Song of Solomon is a wonderful love story, all of Christ and His Bride. There is really no reason for this Song to be in the Scriptures, unless we see that it is symbolic and spiritual. Solomon represents Christ in wooing the Shulamite. She represents the Bride who loves the Lord with all her heart, and yet has much to learn about Him. It is a thrilling account of their courtship. Their love for each other is clearly seen, and they are not ashamed of their feelings for each other. At first she declares, "My Beloved is mine, and I am His" - Song of Solomon 2:16. Afterward, however, she says, "I am my Beloved's, and my Beloved is mine" - Song of Solomon 6:3. And later, "I am my Beloved's, and His desire is toward me" - Song of Solomon 7:10. His love for her is manifested, too; and He declares more than once, how beautiful she is, and that she is the fairest of all the maidens. We hear Him say, "My dove, My undefiled is but one; she is the only one of her mother, she is the choice one of her that bare her. The daughters saw her, and blessed her; yea, the queens and the concubines, and they praised her" - 6:9. There were other daughters, there were other young virgins; but His delight was in this one, and it seemed to Him that there was no other.

This is deep spiritual love. This is the love that Christ has for His Bride. She will reciprocate His love. She will wish to please Him in every thing. She will not be selfish, nor will she seek other loves. She loves only Him, and He is enough to satisfy every longing of her heart. If a child of God can sincerely say this, then that one will qualify to be in that Bride company who will reign with Christ as His Wife. Some Christians would be embarrassed to even think of such a relationship with Christ. They would rather be just an acquaintance, or a friend of the Bridegroom or perhaps of the Bride. If you really love Christ, you will not be ashamed to speak to Him intimately of your love. You will not draw back when He desires to caress you. This is a communion that is found only with intimate dealings with the Lord. He becomes more than a Savior, or the Good Shepherd. He is more than the Miracle Worker, and the Healer. Mary of Bethany also pictures the Bride of Christ. She loved Jesus above all else. She sat at His feet when Martha thought she should be working for Him. Jesus set the record straight. He would rather have worshipers than workers. He received more comfort from Mary's adoration, than from Martha's meals. He said that she had chosen the good part. And, because of Mary's devotion and the time she spent listening to Him, she understood Him more than anyone else of that time. She knew more about Him than did the twelve apostles. She knew that He was going to the Cross, and she anointed Him before His burial. She learned more than the others, because she spent some time with Him. No doubt, she was the same one who came to Him in Simon the Pharisee's house, and washed His feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. Jesus told this Pharisee that she loved more, because she realized how much she had been forgiven. This love for Jesus never waned; it grew and grew. And we see her, just before He went to the Cross, kneeling at His feet again. This time though, she did not use tears of repentance, because that milestone had already been passed. She anointed Him with a fragrant ointment that filled the house. She was having fellowship with His sufferings and death. She and the Godhead were aware of what was taking place. Again, she was criticized; and, again, Jesus defended her. Can you not see, through these instances, Jesus' love and care of some more than others? If we pour out our love and substance upon Him, He will surely return that love. If we are indifferent to Him and to His feelings, can we be so foolish as to imagine that He will smile upon us? He will be hurt, and will turn away in sadness. We become too busy with our activities, to acknowledge Him as we should. We become too occupied with ourselves, and with our own spiritual beauty and attainment. We forget the One who made us that way. The Shulamite of the Song of Solomon, at one point, was so busy putting on perfumes and spices that when she went to let her Lover in He had gone away - Song of Solomon 5:2-8. We must give Him first place in our lives. We must not forsake that preeminent love for Him as our Bridegroom. We must put all other things aside, and concentrate on making Him happy. We must keep away from everything that will distract us from that sweet and intimate fellowship. We must know what is important to Him, and what is not. We must be His always, and always ready to listen to His Voice. This is a lifetime occupation, and should have no interruptions. He does not require too much of us. He knows that we are still frail and unable to give Him every moment of every day. But He fellowships with us in our hearts and spirits. Our hands may be occupied with mundane things, but our spirits can be in touch with Him. Our hearts or souls can be full of His love for us. He will woo us and encourage us to follow Him.

There are other types of this relationship, but we have given enough for you to think upon now. This is a wonderful truth, and so neglected in the Church. When we love Christ in this way, we can hardly wait for Him to return for us. We see nothing else in this world that can compare with the prospect of being with Christ in Heaven. We will want no activity that He does not want. We will want no religious fellowship that He does not want. We will make Him the Head in our lives, and honor Him as our spiritual Husband. We have not exhausted this study, nor could we. There are other Scriptures we could bring out; but we believe that enough have been given for the careful reader. This truth, as well as all truths, must be spiritually discerned. This is one of the mysteries that the Apostle Paul speaks of; and we must have a desire to know the Truth, before the Spirit will give us a revelation. Many people disagree with us, and that is their right. God does not force people to believe in Him; and we are not trying to force any teaching upon one who does not want it. We are sure though that there will be some who will read this booklet and find the answer to the longing in their hearts. Amen. CORRECTION In "Ranks in the Resurrection" in paragraph six under the heading "The Time of the Resurrection," a sentence is misleading. We stated, "They all believed God for 'a better resurrection'." This should read, "Some believed God for 'a better resurrection'," because all of these alluded to in Hebrews eleven were not raised when Jesus was. Verses thirty-nine and forty indicate this: "And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise: God having provided some better things for us, that they without us should not be made perfect."