



The Sharon Star

Veiled Sons of God

By Gilbert James

“A garden inclosed is my sister, my spouse; a spring shut up, a fountain sealed” (Song 4:12 KJV).

That’s the way Solomon describes his bride in Songs of Solomon. What an appropriate description this is indeed for the Church, the Bride of Christ, and of every believer who is a part of the Church, as they appear today! This metaphor gives the idea of a hidden resource — a power contained and concealed. If we examine it closely, we can see in this metaphor a description of the veiled sons of God: believers in Christ who possess the Spirit of the Son of God in earthen vessels of humanity.

Christ in a Many-Member-Body

We know that the Spirit and life of Christ streams within the sinews of the Church, the Body of Christ. The Psalmist David describes it this way: “There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacles of the most High. God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved” (Psa 46:4-5 KJV).

One songwriter wrote:

“A Fountain of life flows within me
Washing sins and corruption away;
God dwells every day in this vessel of
clay;

And a Fountain of Life flows within.”

Oh Hallelujah! God, the Spring and Fountain of life, wells up deep within the Church! Yet, the Church remains a Garden enclosed, a Spring that seems to be still shut up, and a Fountain still sealed.

This concept of the Church gives us wonderful insights into the present operation of God’s mighty power in the Church and in every believer who is a

living part of the Church. It challenges us to look beyond what we can see with our natural eyes, and behold the divine glory of the “Garden inclosed, the Spring shut up, and the Fountain sealed” within the Church and in each of us who are believers in the Lord Jesus Christ. Let us consider some of these wonderful insights — insights of what we can call the hidden potentials of believers, the veiled sons of God.

It is the Spirit and life of the risen Christ Himself that indwells the Church, His Body. The same Spirit and life of the risen Lord also indwells every believer who is a part of the Church, since every believer in Jesus Christ is a vital member of the Body of Christ. When we believe in Christ, the Holy Spirit incorporates or “baptizes” us into the Body of Christ to become members of the Body of Christ (1Co 12:13; 1Co 12:27). There is then an amazing store of divine resources that lie enclosed, shut up, and hidden in the Church and in each individual who is a part of the Church.

Those who view the Church with the natural eyes may see merely the band of frail human creatures, who claim to belong to the Church. Nevertheless, the Church is no less than Christ, the Son of God, in a Many-Member-Body. The nature and power of Christ permeates every part of His Body, and thus extends into every believer baptized into His Body.

Indeed, like a mighty “spring shut up, a fountain sealed”, the mighty power of the life and Spirit of Christ within His Body, the Church, seems veiled by the more visible limitations and frailties of the human forms that embody the

believers who are the members of the Body of Christ.

Treasure in Earthen Vessels

It seems pleasing to God to conceal at this time the glory and power of His Son in earthen vessels of humanity. Paul conveys to us this idea in 2 Co 4:6-7: “For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us” (KJV).

Within every believer in Christ, enclosed, shut up, and sealed in earthen vessels of humanity, resides the excellence of the power of the divine nature of the Son of God. It is a hidden force, an excellence or perfection, concealed from the natural mind and eye — “a garden inclosed, a spring shut up, a fountain sealed.”

Concealed Glory of God

We read frequently in the Bible of instances of God’s glory being concealed from the eyes and wisdom of man. For instance, it should amaze us that the Fountain of Life was made available to man in the Garden of Eden in the form of the Tree of Life, yet man seemed not to have been drawn to it (Gen 2:9). Eve allowed herself instead to be seduced by the devil into going after the forbidden fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil in her desire to become like God (Gen 3:1-7).

Another instance is the selection of David to be king over Israel. Neither Samuel nor Jesse at first perceived that, for the awesome responsibility and

authority of being King of Israel, God had chosen David, who was the youngest son of Jesse and a little shepherd boy, bypassing the seven older sons of Jesse (1Sam 16:5-13). God declared then that He does not see as man sees. "Man looks on the outward appearance, but Jehovah looks on the heart" (v.7 NIV).

Jehovah Himself, when he came down to earth to tabernacle among mankind, was born the Son of God, King of the Jews, not in the city of Jerusalem in King Herod's Palace where the three wise men expected to find Him, but in a humble stable in the small town of Bethlehem (Matt 2:1-11; Luke 2:7).

Despised and Rejected of Men

God did not only conceal His glory from the eyes of man in His birth but in His life on earth. This is how Isaiah summarizes the biography of Jesus life on earth: "Who has believed what we have heard? And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed? For he grew up before him like a young plant, and like a root out of dry ground; he had no form or comeliness that we should look at him, and no beauty that we should desire him. He was despised and rejected by men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and as one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that made us whole, and with his stripes we are healed" (Isa 53:1-5 MKJV).

This is a report that describes the appearance of the Son of the Almighty God, the Son of Righteousness, during His incarnation in humanity on earth — no form, no attractiveness, despised and rejected of men.... Truly, in the eyes of man, Jesus in His human form was then like "a spring shut up, a fountain sealed"; and, to this day, He seems to continue like this in the Church, His Body.

Foolishness of Preaching

Isaiah's description of the humbleness of the appearance of Christ on earth among mankind can be related to Paul's reference to the simplicity of the powerful gospel of salvation. Paul tells us in 1Co 1:21-25: "For since, in the wisdom of God, the world by wisdom did not know God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save those who believe. For the Jews ask for a sign, and the Greeks

seek after wisdom; but we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block, and to the Greeks foolishness. But to them, the called-out ones, both Jews and Greeks, Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God. Because the foolish thing of God is wiser than men, and the weak thing of God is stronger than men" (MKJV).

Paul goes on in this same chapter to describe the simplicity and humbleness that characterize those whom God calls into His service and the fellowship of the Church: "For you see your calling, brothers, that not many wise men according to the flesh are called, not many mighty, not many noble. But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God has chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and God has chosen the base things of the world, and things which are despised, and things which are not, in order to bring to nothing things that are; so that no flesh should glory in His presence. But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who of God is made to us wisdom and righteousness and sanctification and redemption; so that, according as it is written, 'He who glories, let him glory in the Lord'" (1Co 1:26-31 MKJV).

Paul from experience knew what he was talking about, and he demonstrated it in his own ministry. He writes in 1Co 2:1-5: "And I, brothers, when I came to you, did not come with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring to you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified. And I was with you in weakness and in fear, and in much trembling. And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, so that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God" (MKJV).

Hidden Wisdom of God

Paul goes on to point out how hidden and concealed the wisdom of God can be to the natural mind of man, but God reveals His wisdom and glory to those who believe by the Holy Spirit: "But, we speak wisdom among those who are perfect; yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the rulers of this world, that come to nothing. But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, which God has hidden, predetermining it before the world for our glory; which none of the rulers of this

world knew (for if they had known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory). But as it is written, 'Eye has not seen, nor ear heard,' nor has it entered into the heart of man, 'the things which God has prepared for those who love Him'. But God has revealed them to us by His Spirit; for the Spirit searches all things, yea, the deep things of God. For who among men knows the things of a man except the spirit of man within him? So also no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God. But we have not received the spirit of the world, but the Spirit from God, so that we might know the things that are freely given to us by God. These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches, but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned" (1Co 2:6-14 MKJV).

More Than Meets the Eye

What can we conclude from all this? The main conclusion is that God typically conceals or veils His power and glory and wisdom from the eyes and understanding of natural man. The Church, the Body of Christ on earth, is more than what is visible to the natural eyes. The believers in Christ who make up the Church are more than whom or what meet the eye of man. To the natural eyes, the Church may seem to consist only of human beings, and every human being who is a part of the Church seems to possess only the weak, frail nature of humanity. However, there is more in the Church, and in the believer who is in Church, than what meet the eye. A believer in Christ is not only human. The humanity of those of us who believe in Christ is just a veil, or an earthen vessel, that contains and conceals the excellence of the power and life of Christ in us.

There is an excellence of power within us that comes from the Son of God, who indwells us. This power may be hidden by our humanity, enclosed, shut up, and sealed, but the truth is that it is there within us. The Lord seems to allow it this way to keep every believer humbly depending absolutely on the inner life of Christ, and sincerely acknowledging Him, giving Him all honour and glory for every accomplishment. While it keeps us humble, it gives us confidence, not in ourselves, but in the Christ who indwells us, as we recognize that there is within

our weak frame “this treasure in earthen vessels,” the excellence of the power of God to deal with whatever challenge may confront us.

Dispensation of the Sons of the Living God

God is faithful to His word. He promised to bring forth “sons of the living God” upon the earth, even from among those who were not called His people. This promise was clearly prophesied in Hos 1:10: “Yet the number of the sons of Israel shall be as the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured nor numbered. And it shall be, in the place where it was said to them, You are not My people, there it shall be said to them, You are the sons of the living God” (MKJV).

A major question that confronts us is what is the time the Holy Spirit had in mind for the fulfilment of this prophecy? A careful examination of the Scriptures seems to show that the fulfilment of this promise began, according to God’s purpose, when Jesus Christ came to earth and ushered in the dispensation of the grace of God. We know that the Old Covenant, based on the Law of Moses, by which God dealt with the children of Israel, ended with the coming of Jesus Christ. “For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ” (John 1:17 NIV). Under the former dispensation of the Law, the Jewish nation was the only nation whose people were considered exclusively to be the people of God. Even then, while there were those among the Jews who enjoyed a very close relationship with God, the status of being children or sons of God was not yet given to mankind. It was through Jesus Christ that access was opened, not only to Jews, but also to all of mankind to become children or sons of God. John tells us in John 1:11-13: “He came unto his own, and they that were his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he the right to become children of God, even to them that believe on his name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God” (MKJV).

In Rom 9:25-33, Paul’s reference to Hosea’s prophecy and his explanation of its fulfilment clearly situates the fulfilment of the prophecy in this dispensation of grace. Paul writes: “As He also says in Hosea, I will call those not My people, My people; and those not beloved, Beloved. And it shall be, in the

place where it was said to them, You are not My people; there they shall be called sons of the living God. What shall we say then? That the nations, who did not follow after righteousness have taken on righteousness, but a righteousness of faith. But Israel, who followed after a law of righteousness, did not arrive at a law of righteousness. Why? Because it was not of faith, but as it were by the works of the Law. For they stumbled at that Stumbling-stone; as it is written, Behold, I lay in Zion a Stumbling-stone and a Rock-of-offence, and everyone believing on Him shall not be put to shame” (v.25-26, v.30-35 MKJV).

Paul quotes Hosea’s prophecy to point to two important aspects of the basis for the fulfilment of the prophecy of “sons of the living God” emerging during the dispensation of the grace of God or under the New Covenant. Firstly, he points to the failure of the people of Israel to meet God’s standard of righteousness under the Old Covenant “by the works of the Law”. Secondly, he refers to, as a sequence of the former, God’s eventual extension of the universal opportunity to all mankind, even to those who were not His people, to become “sons of the Living God” through “a righteousness of faith”, and not by the Law.

The Scriptures, therefore, show that the dispensation of grace coincides with the adoption of sons by God. Paul, in his teaching on the subject, distinguishes between the two distinct status accorded to man by God under these two distinct periods or dispensations — the dispensation of the Law and the dispensation of the Grace of God.

According to Paul, under the Law, God accorded man a status in His household similar to the status of an infant or immature child being trained or tutored. The privileges and rights associated with such a status were no more than that of a slave or servant in a household. Under the dispensation of grace, God now accords to man the glorious status of a son of God. Paul writes in Gal 3:23-26: “Before this faith came, we Jews were perpetual prisoners under the Law, living under restraints and limitations in preparation for the faith which was soon to be revealed. So that the Law has acted the part of a tutor-slave to lead us to Christ, in order that through faith we may be declared to be free from guilt. But now that this faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor-slave. You are all sons of God through

faith in Christ Jesus” (Weymouth).

The Law could not give to man the divine life of God to enable him to become a mature child of God and to enter the status of a son of God. Heb 7:18-19 tells us: “For truly there is a putting away of the commandment which went before, because of the weakness and unprofitableness of it. For the Law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did, by which we draw near to God” (MKJV). The Law kept man in bondage to sin, carnality, and ritualism. The people of Israel could not obtain the status of sons of God by the works of the Law. However, the dispensation of grace, introduced to man by Jesus Christ, signalled that the “fullness of time” had come for believers to “receive the adoption of sons” by faith. Divine provision and access were now made available to man by the grace of God through Jesus Christ to receive the adoption of the status of sons.

Therefore, we read in Gal 4:3-7: “Even so we, when we were infants, were in bondage under the elements of the world. But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, coming into being out of a woman, having come under Law, that He might redeem those under Law, so that we might receive the adoption of sons. And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father, so that you are no longer a slave, but a son; and if a son, also an heir of God through Christ” (MKJV). According to Paul then “the fullness of time” for sons of the living God to come into being or be adopted by God coincides with the dispensation of the grace of God brought by Jesus Christ; and hence it represents the fulfilment of Hosea’s prophecy about the status of sons of the living God being made available to all mankind through faith.

The Adoption of Sons

What is the adoption of sons? The phrase is translated from the Greek word, *uiothesia* (hwee-oth-es-ee-ah), which means literally the placing as a son. It conveys the meaning of God bestowing the status of a son of God on a believer in Christ. The idea is that by adoption God on the basis of the redeeming work of Christ for mankind bestows the status of sons of God on believers who will receive it.

Paul uses the word son here in distinct contrast to the status of infant or babe, which in the Greek is *nepios* (nay-pee-

os), and is used also to refer to an immature person, a minor, or an under-age child. Paul explains the infant status in this manner: “Over so long a time the heir is an infant, he does not differ from a slave, though being lord of all; but he is under guardians and housemasters until the term appointed before by the father. Even so we, when we were infants, were in bondage under the elements of the world” (Gal 4:1-3).

The concept of *nepios*, or the minor status of a child, refers to a traditional situation in which the status of a minor, though a child and an heir, is similar to that of a servant because he is under the bondage of a tutor and housemaster for a specific period which the father has designated, and does not actually possess yet the privileges and authority of the inheritance to which he is an heir. The ancient custom was for a Hebrew father to appoint, as he pleased, a time in his last will or testament when a child could have the full rights and privileges of an inheritance. It meant that the child would remain a minor with no access to the inheritance until the appointed time when he would move from the status of a minor to one of an adult or mature person, and would receive full authority and rights over the inheritance. The time appointed by the father would be based on his estimation of the period that the child would take to show signs of maturity.

Likewise, according to the Scriptures, the end of the dispensation of the Law of Moses and the introduction of the dispensation of the grace of God by Jesus Christ marked the coming of the fullness of time in God’s plan for man to be delivered from the bondage of infancy under the Law and enter into the liberty of being appointed or placed as sons of the living God in Christ under the grace of God. It is unfortunate that many people still remain under the stunting yoke of the Law as spiritual infants and slaves, and have not recognized that, under the present dispensation of grace, God places or appoints those who believe as sons of God.

It is, however, quite possible for people to be born again in this dispensation of grace and remain infants or immature. The main reason for that is that such people do not have understanding and faith in the grace which God is offering in this dispensation for their growth and maturity. Some

remain under the yoke of legalism or the Law. Others through carelessness and worldliness continue in a carnal lifestyle and do not seek spiritual depth and maturity. Paul, therefore, refers to God’s people who are yet spiritually immature as infants — *nepios* (1Co 3:1; Gal 4:1). They are immature Christians, who do not know how to yield to the influence and leading of the Holy Spirit in doing the will of God. “For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God” (Rom 8:14 KJV). Usually they are very religious and self-righteous, and will function under a sense of strict obligation to religious rituals, rules, and commandments (Col 2:20-22); or they may be quite opposite and give way to licentiousness or lasciviousness, that is, they indulge in worldliness and carnality with no temperance or control (1Co 3:1; Jud 1:4).

According to Paul, it is true that for an appointed period in history, remaining in an infant or a minor status relationship with God was inevitable. This was especially during the dispensation of the Law, under the Old Covenant. God’s people were kept in bondage under the Law, and were considered as infants, until “when the fullness of time came, God sent forth His Son ... that He might redeem those under the Law, so that we might receive the adoption of sons” (Gal 4:4-5 MKJV).

Therefore, now that the fullness of time has come through the work of redemption by Christ, access to the status of being sons of God is opened to God’s people. The people of God can now grow into spiritual maturity and become sons of God by the grace of God. This is what Paul refers to as “the adoption of sons” (*uihorthesia*).

Adoption was a frequent practice among the ancient Hebrews, Greeks, and Romans. By adoption, a person was taken out of one family and placed or incorporated with another. Wealthy people who were childless adopted children of other families. The child thus adopted ceased to belong to his own family, and was in every respect considered a child of the person who had adopted him. The adopted child became an heir to the estate of his adopted parent. He must now fulfil the role and responsibilities of a son of the adopting family. In Greece, for instance, it is customary for a man during his lifetime, or by instruction in his will to take effect after his death, adopt any male citizen to

be his son, but with the invariable condition that the adopted son accepts the legal obligations and social duties of a real son.

It is interesting that Paul uses the concept of adoption to refer to the believer’s entrance into a son status relationship with God. Clearly, for the sinner it implies being taken from outside the family of God and placed or incorporated into the family of God by no self-merit but by the grace of God. However, what is even more interesting is that the believer in this dispensation enters into the family of God, no longer to remain as an infant or in a minor status in the family of God, but is given the grace to receive the placing or adoption into the status of a son — a son of God! Isn’t that wonderful?

Thus, the redemptive work of Christ does not only bring man justification, but through it God now places man into a son status relationship in His family. By justification God declares the sinner righteous and treats him as such, forgiving him of all sins and admitting him into a relationship of reconciliation and peace (Rom 5:1). However, redemption is also a precondition for the adoption, whereby God redeems the sinner from bondage and slavery to sin and Satan, and bestows on him the status and privileges of a son in His family (Gal 4:5).

It is necessary to note that the adoption is intended by God to be not merely a bestowal of a nominal status on the believer, but the receiving of an actual experience. In the case of human adoption, the adopting father cannot give the adopted son his nature; but in the case of the adoption of sons by God, God imparts His divine nature and Spirit into every son He receives in adoption. “And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father” (Gal 4:6 MKJV).

Therefore, in endowing the redeemed believer with the status of a son in the adoption, God imparts into his heart the Spirit of His Son. By imparting into the believer the Spirit of His Son, God brings the believer into the actual experience of being a son of God. The believer, having received the Spirit of the Son of God, receives within his innermost being a divine consciousness that convinces him and moves him to recognize and address God as Jesus does — “Abba, Father” (Gal 4:5-7; compare Mark 14:36). Therefore, the adoption is to us who are redeemed through faith an actual

Christian experience, which involves our profound recognition and affirmation that we are sons of God. The Spirit of the Son of God within us inspires us to recognize and affirm that we are no longer slaves, no longer minors, no longer infants or immature children, but sons of God, and if sons of God, also heirs of God through Christ.

We must note also the relevance to Hosea's prophecy of the fact that believers receive the adoption of sons or are placed into the status of sons of God not by self-achievement or any merit of theirs but by the grace of God. It signifies the fulfilment of God's promise in Hosea's prophecy: "And it shall be, in the place where it was said to them, You are not My people, there it shall be said to them, You are the sons of the living God" (Hos 1:10 MKJV).

You Are Sons

It is worth emphasizing that the period in which we are, the dispensation of the grace of God, is also the dispensation of the adoption of sons of God. This dispensation of grace brings more than justification and forgiveness from our sins. It gives us by the grace of God the glorious privilege to be placed into the status of sons of God and to receive the impartation of the Spirit of the Son of God to walk as sons of God. Becoming sons of God is absolutely dependent on the grace of God. The dispensation of grace brought to mankind the divine resources he needs to be born again into the family of God, and, hence, to move on from spiritual infancy into mature sons of God. Paul writes in Gal 3:23-26, "But before faith came, we were kept under Law, having been shut up to the faith about to be revealed. So that the Law has become a trainer of us until Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But faith coming, we are no longer under a trainer. For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus" (MKJV).

So, Paul concludes in Gal 4:6: "And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father. So that you are no longer a slave, but a son; and if a son, also an heir of God through Christ" (MKJV).

Notice the use of the perfect tense by Paul to describe the believer's entrance into the status of sons of God: "because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father. So that you are no longer a slave, but a son; and if a son, also an heir

of God through Christ." The same declaration that Paul was making to the believers in the church at Galatia then — that they were sons of God; they were given the Spirit of God's Son by God; they were no longer like infants under bondage, but had been placed into the status of sons of God — is applicable to us today. One can note also that the same Greek word, *uihos* (hwee-hos), translated into Son and used in this passage and elsewhere in the New Testament to refer to Christ as the Son of God, is also used in the passage with reference to the believer's status of a son of God. Oh, that the Holy Spirit will give us the revelation and faith to receive the adoption of sons of God which God has extended by grace to His people since the coming of Christ.

It is clear from the Scriptures, then, that we are in the dispensation of the sons of God. It is now left for us, through revelation and faith, to receive the adoption of sons and affirm that we are sons of God by the Spirit of the Son, whom God has sent forth into our hearts. There is no Scriptural basis, as we have already noted, to say that God's appointed time to bring forth sons has not yet come. There is no Scriptural basis to think that believers in Christ cannot now have the moral character required to be sons of God; the moral character we need for the placing as sons of God is freely given to us by God's impartation of the Spirit of His Son into us.

God has imparted the Spirit of the Son into our hearts to convince us who have received the adoption of sons that we are now sons of God; to cause us to realize deep within that our relationship with the Father is no longer as strangers or infants but as sons. "For you have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption by which we cry, Abba, Father" (Rom 8:15).

The truth is that, whether we believe or not, God remains faithful to His word and purpose. From the beginning of this dispensation of grace, when Christ came and accomplished the work of man's redemption, God, according to the Scriptures, has been imparting the Spirit of His Son into the hearts of believers who have received the adoption of sons. Hence, it should be obvious to us now that sons of God, though concealed in human form, have emerged in their respective generations from the beginning of this dispensation to do and

teach in the Spirit of the Son of God the glorious things that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, began to do and to teach when He lived on earth in simple human form (Acts 1:1-2). God has not entrusted the work of the ministry of being "stewards of the mysteries of God" — to babes or immature Christians, but to sons of God (Eph 4:11-12; Heb 5:12; 1Co 4:1-2; 1Pe 4:10).

The work of the Lord on earth is centred on the establishing of His Church and His Kingdom (Matt 16:18). The first-born Son of God began the work when He lived on earth in His physical human form. Now, ascended into Heaven, He continues His work through sons of God in whom He dwells by His Spirit. Thus, hidden and concealed from the eyes of man, as the years have come and gone, like "a garden inclosed, a spring shut up, a fountain sealed", adopted sons of God have taken their places in the Church to accomplish God's purpose on the earth.

Hence, now that our turn in the unfolding history of God's purpose has come, let us humbly and boldly, here and now in the midst of our generation, take up the challenge and responsibility to live our lives by the Spirit of the Son of God, and function in the works God has ordained for us in the power of the Son of God. The call for sons of the living God to come forth from among the sons of men, from carnality and spiritual infancy, continues to resound from Heaven. Today, if we hear His voice let us not harden our hearts. Let us have faith to receive the adoption of sons, and arise and live in the midst of our generation in the meek and obedient Spirit of the Son of God.

It is the God-ordained destiny of every believer "to be conformed to the image of His Son". "For whom He foreknew, He also predestinated to be conformed to the image of His Son, for Him to be the First-born among many brothers" (Rom 8:29 MKJV). "When the fullness of time came, God sent forth His Son ... that He might redeem those under the Law, so that we might receive the adoption of sons" (Gal 4:4-5 MKJV). Knowing that the fullness of time has come, let us believe and receive the adoption of sons. Let us be willing not to leave our generation without receiving in faith that for which God destined us. Like in a relay race, let each of us seek not to end our segment without passing on the baton

of the sure hope of sonship.

We are grateful that God has been moving by His Spirit upon our hearts in our generation to stir us to the call to receive the adoption of sons of the living God. Therefore, let the prayer of David rise earnestly from our souls until we see the answer: “O God, You have taught me from my youth; and before now I have declared Your wonderful works. And now when I am old and gray-headed, O God, do not leave me; until I have declared Your strength to this generation, and Your power to everyone who is to come” (Psa 71:17-18 MKJV).

Hidden Mystery of Sonship

When the glorious truth of us being sons of God confronts us, our feeble natural minds may tend to persuade us to conceptualize it as being too lofty, and even impossible, for us to become in this life. Some may react with scepticism to the idea that any believer in Christ has yet entered into sonship. This is a normal reaction of the natural mind to the supernatural things of God. For instance, Jesus once explained to the disciples that it “is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God” (Mat_19:24). In utter amazement they asked, “Who then can be saved” (Mat_19:25)? The demands of salvation seemed to them beyond the capability of man. Indeed it was. Jesus Himself seemed to admit that it was something impossible for man to attain on his own: “with men, this is impossible...,” Jesus pointed out (Mat_19:26). Nevertheless, in their sense of despair, He was able to point out to them that this salvation, entering into the Kingdom of God, was never intended by God to be a result of human effort, natural capability, or self-merit. It was an accomplishment only God can and is willing to bring about in us. “With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible” (Mat_19:26 MKJV).

To enter into sonship, according to the Scriptures, is to receive the adoption or the Spirit of the Son of God. Truly, sonship — God indwelling humanity — is difficult, if not impossible, to perceive by the natural mind, or to apprehend without faith. It is something which a believer must grasp by revelation and faith. However, it is a real experience made available to man by God by grace, and not an elusive ideal. Paul refers to it in Colossians 1:26-28 as “the mystery which has been hidden from ages and

from generations, but now has been revealed to His saints. For to them God would make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the nations, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory, whom we preach, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, so that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus.” (MKJV). (We must note that the ages and generations when, according to Paul, the mystery of sonship had been hidden, refers to the period preceding the dispensation of grace. Paul thus began his ministry unfolding the truth of this glorious mystery at the beginning of the dispensation the grace of God.)

The truth is that the Spirit of the Son of God has come down to man, to tabernacle in and with man. The practical, down-to-earth reality of the operation of the life of the Son of God in humanity was distinctly exemplified in the lowly Jesus, the Nazarene: “God... in Christ reconciling the world to Himself” (2Co 5:19 MKJV); “Emmanuel ... God with us” (Matt 1:23 MKJV). Jesus Christ became the fore-runner and example of a Son of God in human form living in the midst of this present world. He is “the First-born among many brothers” (Rom 8:29 MKJV).

Moreover, Jesus Christ, during His sojourn on earth, did not only demonstrate the true character and disposition of sonship veiled in simple human form, God in man, but came to reproduce sonship in the sons of men “in bringing many sons into glory”. “For it became Him, for whom are all things and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons into glory, to perfect the Captain of their salvation through sufferings. For both He who sanctifies and they who are sanctified are all of One, for which cause He is not ashamed to call them brothers, saying, I will declare Your name to My brothers; in the midst of the assembly I will sing praise to You” (Heb 2:10-12 MKJV).

Therefore, the great mystery being unfolded in this dispensation is the revelation of the existence of sons of the living God concealed in earthen vessels of humanity. It is “Christ in you, the hope of glory, whom we preach, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, so that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus.” Thus Jesus Christ is the divine ensample and reproducer of sonship in man.

John puts it this way in 1John 3:1-2:

“Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. 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.” (KJV). (The Greek word, teknon, from which son is translated, means an offspring, and rather than implying spiritual infancy, it highlights sonship as being a reproduction of God’s own nature or an offspring of God.) The sobering truth is that if in the present form of sons of God we now possess the nature and character of Jesus Christ, God’s Son, we must be ready to live in the midst of this world in this dispensation without recognition in the manner that Jesus Christ lived when He walked upon the earth: “He has no form nor majesty that we should see Him, nor an appearance that we should desire Him” (Isa_53:2 NIV).

Jesus Christ, the Pattern Son

Jesus Christ, in His walk and life on earth, was the pattern Son of the living God. He became the first-born son of God and was the true pattern for all who would afterwards receive the adoption of sons of God by faith. Therefore, we who have come to believe in Jesus Christ and have gratefully received the adoption of sons in our simple human forms are called upon to walk in like manner as He walked, particularly without fanfare and showmanship. It pleases God to confine and conceal the glory of sonship within us for a season in the earthen vessels of our humanity — a garden enclosed, a spring shut up, a fountain sealed.

Paul, no doubt, is alluding to the walk of believers as sons of God when he instructs us in Phil 2:5-8: “Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross” (KJV).

Sonship, as exemplified in the life of Jesus Christ on earth, actually has not been a life of ostentatious earthly grandeur and fame as the carnal man would expect. Isaiah summarizes the life lived by the Son of God on earth in this way: “For He comes up before Him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry

ground; He has no form nor majesty that we should see Him, nor an appearance that we should desire Him. He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and He being despised, as one from men hide their faces; and we esteemed Him not” (Isa 53:2-3 NIV).

It is true that Jesus Christ, during His sojourn on earth, went about doing good, but it seems that, in the end, all the amazingly good deeds He performed were inadequate to gain for Him the adulation of most of the people of His time. He did not seem to have impressed the media of His time, and scarcely any author, outside of His disciples (who wrote the Gospels and epistles) seemed to have thought that His story was worth recording. He lamented to His disciples in John: “If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before it hated you.... If I had not done among them the works which no other did, they would not have had sin. But now they have both seen and hated Me and My Father. But that the Word might be fulfilled that is written in their Law, ‘They hated Me without a cause’” (John 15:18, 24-25 MKJV). Moreover, Jesus’ sobering reminder to all is: “If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me” (Luke 9:23 MKJV).

This is the unappealing aspect of sonship veiled in humanity in this dispensation and patterned after the life of the first born Son of God when He walked upon the earth.

The three wise men in their venerated wisdom expected to find Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who was born King of the Jews, in Herod’s palace in the capital city of Jerusalem, not in a stable in an obscure town called Bethlehem.

Consider the Apostle Paul’s account of his experiences of the ministry of sonship on earth. 2 Co 4:1-18 presents a ministry stripped of worldly pomp and glamour.

Today, many celebrated, high profile preachers of the gospel may not be identified with a Son of God in a manger because, today, preachers seem entitled to palatial houses and sprawling edifices; they will not be identified with a Son of God, sitting by a country well, for the best part of a day, even neglecting His lunch, to share the gospel of the Kingdom with a disreputable, vulgar woman, because the greatness of so-called ministries is heralded in terms of busy

schedules, shuttling between countries and cities, preaching to multitudes in city convention centres and large church auditoriums; they won’t identify with a Son of God submitting to the Cross, allowing Himself to be spat upon, ridiculed, stripped, and crucified, when He could have called ten thousand angels to defend Himself, because they understand their security and defence only in the squad of well-armed bodyguards and the battery of elite lawyers they have hired to ensure protection for themselves and their interests.

Yet, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the epitome of sonship, was here on earth veiled in human form, “despised, and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and as one from whom men hide their face he was despised; and we esteemed him not” (Isa 53:3 MKJV).

The Temptations of a Son of God

The temptations with which Satan confronted Jesus in the wilderness demonstrate the challenges which confront the life of a son of God in this present world. Also, the response of Jesus Christ to these temptations exemplifies the true disposition of a son of God in the midst of the culture of materialism, showmanship, and pride of this perverse world. What do these three categorical temptations demonstrate to us about sonship? It is worth reviewing the account briefly here.

Consider, first of all, the event that immediately preceded these temptations recorded in Matt 4. At the end of the previous chapter, in Matt 3:16-17, we read: “And Jesus, when He had been baptized, went up immediately out of the water. And lo, the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and lighting upon Him. And lo, a voice from Heaven, saying, ‘This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased’” (MKJV).

Here is a dramatic scene depicting the entrance of Jesus Christ into His public ministry as the first-born Son of God. Immediately after His baptism, the Holy Spirit descends upon Him, anointing Him, and a voice announces from Heaven: “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” Indeed, we see here a dramatic divine confirmation that Jesus Christ is the Son of God by a word that proceeded from God.

Then the following chapter, Matt 4, begins by telling us: “Then Jesus was led

by the Spirit up into the wilderness, to be tempted by the Devil” (Matt 4:1 MKJV). It seems that the Scriptures are carefully presenting an account here of a sequence of events divinely orchestrated by the Spirit of God to establish an important point.

In the first temptation, Jesus Christ is challenged by the Devil to prove His sonship by a rational and humanitarian act. Jesus must show the importance of His Sonship to humanity by demonstrating His ability to produce bread from stones. Obviously, to a world of poor, hungry people, and at a time when He himself was experiencing the pain of intense hunger, proving His Sonship by performing such a miracle seemed useful. We read in Matt 4:2-3: “And when He had fasted forty days and forty nights, He was afterwards hungry. And when the tempter came to Him, he said, If You are the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread” (MKJV).

In the second temptation, the Devil prescribes a Scriptural way for Jesus to confirm His Sonship, in a very sacred environment: “Then the Devil took Him up into the holy city and set Him upon a pinnacle of the Temple. And he said to Him, If You are the Son of God, cast Yourself down. For it is written, He shall give His angels charge concerning You, and in their hands they shall bear You up, lest at any time You dash Your foot against a stone” (Matt 4:5-6 MKJV). Since Jesus had rejected the Devil’s first suggestion by appealing to what is written in the word of God, it seemed logical that He would agree to a suggestion by the Devil based on what is written in the word of God.

In the third temptation, the Devil presents to Jesus an alternative way to the shameful and painful way of the Cross, which God had designed for Jesus to accomplish His Messianic mission as a Son to deliver the kingdoms of this world from the Devil to the Father — a quicker, painless way into the grandeur of the royalty of Sonship. All it required from Jesus Christ was a bit of diplomatic negotiation — a little compromise — fall down and worship the Devil: “Again, the Devil took Him up into a very high mountain and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. And he said to Him, All these things I will give You if You will fall down and worship me” (Matt 4:8-9 MKJV). Jesus Christ is presented with a plausible

alternative means to accomplish the mission of His Sonship on earth. It is the Devil's well-known adage: the end justifies the means.

Let us briefly summarize the event in its sequence. God, by His word uttered from heaven, divinely confirms the Sonship of Jesus Christ at His baptism. Immediately following the divine confirmation by the word of God of the Sonship of Jesus Christ, the Devil confronts Jesus Christ with a series of temptations. Then, of particular relevance to us here on the subject of sonship, in the first two of these three categorical temptations, the Devil challenges Jesus Christ to prove, to demonstrate His sonship, by certain signs that the Devil himself specifies. Then, when Jesus will not submit, the Devil, accepting the fact that Jesus Christ was sufficiently convinced by the word of God of His Sonship and had rejected the Devil's suggestions for any further validation of His Sonship, proceeded to offer Jesus a diplomatic option to accomplish one of the principal missions of His Sonship to deliver the kingdoms of this world from the Devil to the Father (1Co 15:24-25).

You will notice that all of these suggestions made by the Devil appeal to nothing obviously evil of itself; rather, they allude to certain supernatural, humanitarian, godly, and rational elements, which a son of God is expected to be in line with.

We generally have regarded temptations as influences to do evil. Here Jesus Christ was being tempted with what I consider the temptation to do what seems good. Here, to me, lies a most crucial challenge to sonship. It is the challenge to discern the good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God from among what seems good and commendable in the eyes and values of this world.

Was the Sonship of Jesus Christ dependent on the Devil's validation? Were the things the Devil was challenging Him to perform necessary to the integrity or the reality of His Sonship? Was performing these seemingly good deeds the will of the Father on that occasion for Him?

Jesus' response to the Devil's suggestions was a demonstration that sonship essentially meant complete obedience and submission to precisely what the Lord had given Him to be and to do. In that crucial period of temptations, He stood on His conviction that His

Sonship was not to be proven or demonstrated by accomplishing Devil-inspired ego projects, but was a life to be lived by the word of God in humble submission to and faith in nothing else but the truth which God had revealed and declared - "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." It was the word of God that had declared Him to be a Son of God, and nothing but the word of God will confirm and sustain Him as a Son of God.

To our Lord Jesus Christ, the pattern Son, sonship meant a life produced and sustained by nothing else but the living word of God, and lived in constant obedience to the on-going direction of every word that would proceed from the mouth of God. Obedience, simple, complete obedience to the Father, is the hallmark of sonship. A son of God is one constantly led by the Spirit of God. The temptation was for Jesus Christ to promote Himself, to prove who He was, and to submit to an alternative way of accomplishing the work the Lord had given Him to do, in ways prescribed by the Devil. This, to me, has been over the centuries since the adoption of sons became available to mankind the crucial challenge of the veiled sons of God.

Jesus Christ in the wilderness decided to accept the option to live by the word, by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God, and not by the prescribed ways of the Devil, regardless of how supernatural, humanitarian, godly, and rational they seemed to be; regardless whether it meant forfeiting an opportunity to obtain food when he was so hungry, to prove the power of His ministry, or to achieve His objective in an easier manner.

Jesus Christ did not balk under the diabolical pressure, but was decisive and forthright with the option He chose. It is written, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God." It is written again, "You shall not tempt the Lord your God." Jesus said to him, Go, Satan! For it is written, "You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him only you shall serve" (Matt 4:4,7,10 MKJV).

Jesus is demonstrating that being a son of God is not an ego promotion; it is not a grand performance for the approval and recognition by man of one's spiritual status. Being a Son of God is simple, meek, and lowly obedience to the word of God — accepting and submitting in faith to the word of God; living by the word of God and nothing else. For the

sons of God, obedience to the will of God is of crucial importance rather than performing good deeds of themselves.

According to Jesus, many will at the last day present records loaded with accounts of their heroic deeds and ambitious ministry projects, claiming to have prophesied, cast out demons, and performed many wonderful works in the name of the Lord (Matt 7:22). To their utter disappointment, Jesus said, "And then I will say to them, I never knew you! Depart from Me, those working lawlessness! (Matt 7:23 MKJV)" Alas! It may be too late when they discover that while they were acclaimed in their success in wonderful works, they failed in the simple obedience of sons; and rather than walking in obedience to God, being led by the Spirit, they pursued ambitions inspired by the Devil. Their apparent good deeds were judged as lawlessness by the Lord because, somehow, they neglected to subject their deeds to the will of God.

Jesus further elaborates: "Therefore whosoever hears these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock. And every one that hears these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it" (Matt 7:24-27 KJV).

The principal challenge which has confronted sons of God throughout this dispensation is the challenge of submitting to being veiled sons of God — to abide in submission under the hand of God, like Jesus did, walking in obedience, even to death, seeking no reputation, assuming the role of a servant, facing the trials that are common to man, yet knowing deep within and affirming with conviction by the Spirit of the Son within that they are sons of the living God. Instead of exercising pomp and grandeur, sons of God are called to humble themselves and be "obedient unto death, even the death of the cross" (Phil 2:8 KJV). A garden enclosed, a spring shut up, and a fountain sealed by earthen vessels of humanity; veiled sons of God. This was the pattern of the firstborn Son of God; this has remained

the pattern of sonship reproduced in everyone who has received the adoption of sons in this dispensation until the time appointed by God for the manifestation of the sons of God.

Receiving the Adoption of Sons and the Manifestation of the Sons of God

To be a son of God, to be like Jesus Christ was, in the midst of this world means to deny one's self, and to take up one's cross daily, and follow Christ. We must understand this clearly if we are going to appreciate and understand the existence of sons of God in this dispensation. As we have noted, God has been fulfilling His promise faithfully to bring forth sons of the Living God from among the nations and to give those whom He has called "the spirit of the adoption of sons" in this dispensation of grace. Yet, why is it that the sons of God have remained unrecognized throughout this dispensation?

The crux of the matter here is that we must distinguish between being sons of God by receiving the spirit of the adoption of sons and the manifestation of the sons of God. Being sons of God by receiving the spirit of the adoption of sons, or by possessing the Spirit of the Son of God, and being manifested sons of God are two distinct events. If we do not make that distinction, the tendency is for us to believe that becoming sons of God is not yet possible for believers in Jesus Christ, and that believers will eventually become sons when they are manifested as sons of God. Usually, this misguided perception of sonship rests on this one Scripture passage in Rom 8:19: "For the earnest expectation of the creation waits for the manifestation of the sons of God" (MKJV). The misguided idea is that since the manifestation of the sons of God is an event yet to come, sonship itself is yet to come.

This, unfortunately, may blind our eyes to the glory of the Son of God lived steadfastly in ordinary Christian lives upon the earth in the midst of the mundane and difficult circumstances of this present corrupt world. We may miss the beauty and perfection of the Son of God reflected through a godly personality matured through the patient and painful endurance of the hardships and afflictions that beset us all in this vessel of clay.

To receive means to take; accept; admit; embrace; believe. Manifestation means the act of disclosing what is secret, unseen or obscure; discovery to the eye

or to the understanding; the exhibition of any thing by clear evidence; display; as the manifestation of God's power in creation, or of his benevolence in redemption.

We have already elaborated on the truth that, in this dispensation of grace through the redemptive work of Christ, it is now possible for believers in Christ to receive the adoption of sons. To help us distinguish between the concept of receiving the adoption of sons of God and the manifestation of sons of God, let us carefully examine the Scripture verse that refers to the manifestation of the sons of God in Rom 8:19 ("For the earnest expectation of the creation waits for the manifestation of the sons of God") in its wider Scriptural context. I have found Weymouth Translation to be very helpful in this. Let us read the Scripture passage which forms the context for Rom 8:19, using the Weymouth Translation.

"You, however, are not devoted to earthly, but to spiritual things, if the Spirit of God is really dwelling in you; whereas if any man has not the Spirit of Christ, such a one does not belong to Him. But if Christ is in you, though your body must die because of sin, yet your spirit has Life because of righteousness. And if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus up from the dead is dwelling in you, He who raised Christ up from the dead will give Life also to your mortal bodies because of His Spirit who dwells in you. Therefore, brethren, it is not to our lower natures that we are under obligation that we should live by their rule. For if you so live, death is near; but if, through being under the sway of the spirit, you are putting your old bodily habits to death, you will live. For those who are led by God's Spirit are, all of them, God's sons. You have not for the second time acquired the consciousness of being—a consciousness which fills you with terror. But you have acquired a deep inward conviction of having been adopted as sons—a conviction which prompts us to cry aloud, 'Abba! our Father!' The Spirit Himself bears witness, along with our own spirits, to the fact that we are children of God; and if children, then heirs too— heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ; if indeed we are sharers in Christ's sufferings, in order that we may also be sharers in His glory. Why, what we now suffer I count as nothing in comparison with the glory which is soon to be manifested in us. For all creation, gazing

eagerly as if with outstretched neck, is waiting and longing to see the manifestation of the sons of God. For the Creation fell into subjection to failure and unreality (not of its own choice, but by the will of Him who so subjected it). Yet there was always the hope that at last the Creation itself would also be set free from the thralldom of decay so as to enjoy the liberty that will attend the glory of the children of God. For we know that the whole of Creation is groaning together in the pains of childbirth until this hour. And more than that, we ourselves, though we possess the Spirit as a foretaste and pledge of the glorious future, yet we ourselves inwardly sigh, as we wait and long for open recognition as sons through the deliverance of our bodies. It is in hope that we have been saved. But an object of hope is such no longer when it is present to view; for when a man has a thing before his eyes, how can he be said to hope for it? But if we hope for something which we do not see, then we eagerly and patiently wait for it" (Rom 8:9-25).

There are, therefore, two distinct concepts related to sonship revealed in this Scripture passage that we often fail to distinguish. Receiving the spirit of adoption or, as Weymouth puts it, having "acquired the consciousness of being... acquired a deep inward conviction of having been adopted as sons" on the one hand, and the manifestation of the sons of God, or, according to Weymouth, "the open recognition as sons through the deliverance of our bodies." In other words, what many fail to have realized is that what is yet to come to the Creation is not the receiving or acquiring of the adoption of sons or the Spirit of the Son of God by believers in Christ. What is yet to come is the manifestation or the open recognition of the sons of God through the transformation of the mortal bodies in which the sons of God are tabernacled and veiled in subjection, not by their own will, but by the will of God Himself who have subjected us in hope.

Let us read again in this light Rom 8:19-23 from Weymouth: "For all creation, gazing eagerly as if with outstretched neck, is waiting and longing to see the manifestation of the sons of God. For the Creation fell into subjection to failure and unreality (not of its own choice, but by the will of Him who so subjected it). Yet there was always the hope that at last the Creation itself would also be set free from the thralldom of

decay so as to enjoy the liberty that will attend the glory of the children of God. For we know that the whole of Creation is groaning together in the pains of childbirth until this hour. And more than that, we ourselves, though we possess the Spirit as a foretaste and pledge of the glorious future, yet we ourselves inwardly sigh, as we wait and long for open recognition as sons through the deliverance of our bodies.”

In our zeal and eagerness for the manifestation of sons of God, we have ignored an important divinely ordained precondition of the creation that must precede the manifestation of the sons of God. The present creation, which includes the mortal physical body of man in its present form, has been subjected by God to go through a divinely decreed course of decay, failure, and vanity. “For the Creation fell into subjection to failure and unreality (not of its own choice, but by the will of Him who so subjected it)” (Rom 8:20). God Himself, in embodying Himself with the human body in the form of the first-born Son of God, submitted to this decree of decay. “Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross” (Phil 2:6-8 KJV).

Nevertheless, we know that the creation or creature of failure, vanity, decay, afflictions, and death in which Jesus Christ, the first-born Son of God, tabernacled until His eventual exaltation did not take away from the fullness of His Sonship — in Him dwelt the fullness of God bodily. It was to Jesus Christ an experience of obedience and subjection to the decree of God as a Son of God. He would subsequently lead His Bride, the Church, a company of many sons, into the same experience of submission in hope. This highlights the amazing mystery of Sonship — it is that Deity, God Himself, should demonstrate obedience in submitting to the decree of decay of the creation to which He had attached Himself in the Son of God to bring redemption to mankind.

However, the decree is not without hope. Paul goes on to assure us in Rom 8:21: “Yet there was always the hope that at last the Creation itself would also be set free from the thralldom of decay so

as to enjoy the liberty that will attend the glory of the children of God.” This is the hope of the manifestation of the sons of God. Therefore, we see that sonship, as demonstrated by Jesus Christ, the first-born Son of God, and as to be lived by every son of God He brings to glory, has two necessary aspects. One is sonship veiled, that is, Deity in humanity contained by decaying earthen vessels of clay, and the other aspect is sonship unveiled or manifest, that is, Deity in humanity freed from the bondage of human mortality and decay, bringing deliverance to the creation from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.

Therefore, we should not perceive the manifestation aspect of sonship as the only state or reality of sonship. It requires the grace and character of the Son of God for any believer to submit to the sufferings that attend living as veiled sons of God in this dispensation as it requires for being eventually manifest sons of God. Nonetheless, like the creation waits in great anticipation, we, who have received the adoption of sons, eagerly and earnestly wait for our manifestation or recognition as sons of the living God. Now we are veiled sons of God, a garden enclosed, a spring shut up, a fountain sealed; but it is actually to express the glory that lies within us that we who have received the Spirit of the Son of God yearn for our manifestation to the creation. Spurgeon wrote: “Our very happiness makes us groan after more; our joy, like a swollen spring, longs to well up like an Iceland geyser, leaping to the skies, and it heaves and groans within our spirit for want of space and room by which to manifest itself to men.”

Veiled Sons of God

Thus, to remain meekly tabernacled in the nature of the corrupt creation, subjected temporarily to vanity, failure, and unreality by God Himself in this dispensation is an important part and a divine aspect of the journey of sons of God upon the earth. Jesus pioneered the way, and experienced true obedience in being found in the form of a man, in tabernacling in the nature of the fallen creature, in the midst of a perverse and crooked generation, according to God’s divine decree and plan. Heb 5:7-8 describes that aspect of the Sonship of Jesus Christ in this way: “For Jesus, in the days of His flesh, when He had

offered up prayers and supplications with strong cryings and tears to Him who was able to save Him from death, and was heard in that He feared, though being a Son, yet He learned obedience by the things which He suffered” (MKJV). Likewise, we, who will receive the spirit of the adoption of sons of God, must follow on faithfully and in hope.

Paul writes in 2Co 4:16-18: “For this cause we do not faint; but though our outward man perishes, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day. For the lightness of our present affliction works out for us a far more excellent eternal weight of glory, we not considering the things which are seen, but the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are not lasting, but the things which are not seen are everlasting” (MKJV).

Veiled sons of God, through the centuries since the coming of this dispensation, have walked upon earth, with great expectation that the unveiling, the manifestation of their sonship, will come as surely as they have received the spirit of the adoption of sons. They are among the acclaimed heroes of the faith as well as among the unsung, unknown “others [who] were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection; ... had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings; yes, more, of bonds and imprisonments. They were stoned; they were sawed in two, were tempted, and were slain with the sword. They wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented. The world was not worthy of them. They wandered in deserts and mountains and dens and caves of the earth” (Heb 11:35-38 MKJV). Such were and are the veiled sons of God. Spiritual infants, immature and carnal Christians cannot endure what they endured. The Spirit of the Son of God within them empowered them to suffer with Christ that they might reign with Him, with whom they are joint-heirs of God.

Born to Grow

In the natural, we are born to grow and become mature. Infanthood is wonderful, but the wonder vanishes if infanthood exceeds its period and will not enter into maturity. We all know the disappointments of the irresponsibility of those who act like children when they ought to be adults. As it is in the natural, so it is in the spiritual.

Sons of God are mature children of God. Believers in Christ cannot go on

perceiving themselves as remaining babes or spiritual infants in Christ all through their pilgrimage in this world. The idea of a believer's continual infanthood in this world may lull us into a false sense of piety and humbleness, and may provide a sink for our excuses for the on-going failures of our humanity and carnality. However, just as retarded human growth brings disappointments, continual spiritual infanthood is definitely disappointing, and retards us from taking up the responsibilities of our divine calling and destined roles in this life as mature sons of God.

It is many years now since someone in our time was inspired to write these words for a chorus: "It is time for the saints to take the Kingdom...." And another wrote: "Sons of God, march forward...." They wrote by the inspiration of the Spirit, calling believers to receive the adoption of sons. Today, we are expected to have heeded the call and stand before God as sons. If the exhortation to walk as sons of God seems to re-echo in our souls, and hearts, and minds the familiar parental rebuke: "Act like an adult!", it is likely because we have been thinking and acting like spiritual infants too long, feeding on milky tit-bits, and playing too much. In the words of a dear elder, it is time to "pull up our socks" and to get rid of "all this manner of quality of nonsense" which we seem to accept and compromise with in our Christian walk. Let us begin to act like mature sons of God!

One can sense the disappointment and frustration of the writer of the Book of Hebrews with the believers who remained spiritual babes when he expected them to have become spiritually mature. He writes in Heb 5:12-14: "For indeed because of the time, you ought to be teachers, you have need that one teach you again what are the first principles of the oracles of God. And you have become in need of milk, and not of solid food. For everyone partaking of milk is unskilful in the Word of Righteousness, for he is an infant. But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, even those who because of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil" (MKJV).

Paul expresses similar sentiments in 1Co 3:1-3: "And I, brothers, could not speak to you as to spiritual ones, but as to fleshly, as to babes in Christ. I have fed you with milk and not with solid food, for you were not yet able to bear it; nor are you able even now. For you are yet

carnal..." (MKJV).

If these Scripture writers in their time expected spiritual maturity in the lives of believers, then why should it be deferred in the lives of believers in our generation so many centuries afterwards?

Walking as Sons of God

There are believers who have learned by God's grace through the power of the life of the Son of God to deny in their daily ordinary lives "ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world" (Tit 2:12 MKJV). Such a life cannot be lived by spiritual infants or carnal Christians or by self-righteous efforts. Such a life is only made possible in a believer by no less than the power of the indwelling Son of God.

Believers are called and destined to live as Sons of God. Becoming mature Sons of God involves learning to walk, not by the zeal and efforts of our own frail nature, but by the power of the holiness of the Son of God who indwells us.

This learning to walk as Sons is not achieved in the form of human education through mental and personal development in a certain religious philosophy or behaviour. It is a becoming, an acquiring of a consciousness of being sons of God. Such a consciousness of being alive as sons of God invariably follows a consciousness of being dead, of the destruction of our body of sin. According to Paul, it is the reckoning of ourselves "to be truly dead to sin, but alive to God through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom 6:11 MKJV).

This process is accomplished by the Spirit of God in us, breaking and melting our ego and self-righteousness, and establishing the life of the Son of God in us. It takes us through a process of dying to self. Broken by our miserable failures and melted by the shame of our inadequacy, we cry out earnestly then, "Oh wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from my body of death" (Rom 7:24 MKJV)? It is then we are ready to submit to the Spirit of Christ within and to rise up and walk in the power of the Son of God, and to become truly convinced that it is "not I, but Christ" who lives in us and empowers us to walk as sons of God (Gal 2:20). It is this experience that takes us into the reality of recognizing and appropriating our hidden potential to walk in true holiness and perfection before God right here in this present world. We learn to

look beyond the veil of our frail nature, and be conscious of the holy and righteous nature of the Son of God who indwells us.

God Energizes Us

God has embedded deep within our innermost beings the divine potentials to live and function mightily as Sons of God in this present world. Paul states in Phi 2:13-15, "For it is God who works in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure. Do all things without murmurings and disputings, so that you may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation. Among these you shine as lights in the world" (MKJV).

The word "works in" used in Phi 2:13 is translated from the Greek word *energeo* (en-erg-eh-o), which also means to be active in, to work effectually and fervently in, to be mighty in, to provide energy. Yes, indeed, the power of God operating — being active, or working effectually, fervently and mightily — within us, who are members of the Body of Christ, enables or energizes us to "be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke (fault), in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation." This means that, right here on earth in the midst of this present corrupt world, God can enable us to walk, as sons of God, in holiness, perfection, and power! This is really the life of sonship, the life of the Son of God, lived in the believer in the practicalities of life on earth in this present world. Therefore, to walk as sons of God is to walk by the energizing power of God operating in us through the life and authority of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who lives in us, who believe.

Overcoming in the Power of Sonship

The life of the Son of God in a believer is a supernatural life wrought by the Almighty God. Intense trials and tribulations may confront us in this world. However, it is by the power of the life of the Son of God that we shall overcome. When God appeared to Moses in the burning bush, the bush burned, but was not consumed (Exo 3:2). The divine nature of the Son of God in the believer can keep him spotless and unmovable in the midst of the fiery trials and corrupt influences of this world.

When God brings us against challenges, He will enable us to confront and overcome them as sons of God with faith and boldness. In the midst of

adversities, we need to be able to resort to the divine resources of the life of the Son of God within us, having, as Paul puts it, "... such trust through Christ toward God, not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think anything as of ourselves, but our sufficiency is of God" (2Co 3:4-5 MKJV).

Indeed, the source of the capabilities of believers in Christ is not in themselves or in their humanity. It is rooted in the spring and fountain of the eternal life of the Son of God Himself who indwells every believer in Christ. Glory to God! Our potentials lie in the power of the Holy Spirit who quickens us; in the supernatural gifts with which God endows us; in the life of the Son of God within us. Hallelujah! Hence, like Paul, we can do all things through Christ who strengthens us (Phi 4:13).

The time has come when we should not hesitate to employ the resources of the power and life of the Son of God in us in our daily lives. We must let whoever or whatever confronts us confront the power of the Son of God within us.

For instance, we may confront some task or challenge, for which in our opinion, or that of others, we are inadequate. It is easy then in such a situation to allow ourselves to become intimidated or to feel inferior, or even paralyzed by the opinions of others or ourselves. However, that's where the faith of the Son of God within us must come in. Whether the task is religious or secular, as sons of God on the rise, we must look beyond what we or others see in us according to the natural mind, and realize that, as Paul said, "not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think anything as of ourselves, but our sufficiency is of God..."

Yes, indeed, it is God who makes His sons adequate and competent for any task. "God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all things, have abundance for every good work" (2Co 9:8 MKJV). This generation must begin to see the good works of the sons of God in the daily and practical outworking of the life of the Son of God in the lives of believers in Christ on earth, and glorify the Father who is in Heaven (Matt 5:16 MKJV).

I know that there are some overwhelming adversities that sometimes seek to smother our zeal and optimism concerning our sonship and its present possibilities in our lives.

However, I know too that even in experiences of utter weakness, we can through faith rise above our sense of weakness, and accomplish our tasks, and maintain our hope in the mighty power and strength of the Christ within us. Paul discovered that, and left us his testimony. Constantly buffeted by some sort of infirmity, he turned to God. Paul tells us: "And He said to me, My grace is sufficient for you, for My power is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore I will rather glory in my weaknesses, that the power of Christ may overshadow me. Therefore I am pleased in weaknesses, in insults, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake; for when I am weak, then I am powerful" (2Co 12:9-10 MKJV).

Let our faith in the Spirit of the Son who indwells us be an unwavering one. For those who are facing intense adversities in their health and otherwise, the timely words of Paul are comforting: "For this cause we do not faint; but though our outward man perishes, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day. For the lightness of our present affliction works out for us a far more excellent eternal weight of glory, we not considering the things which are seen, but the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are not lasting, but the things which are not seen are everlasting" (2Co 4:16-18 MKJV).

An Indestructible Life

The power of the life of the Son of God within us makes us invincible. The writer of the book of Hebrews refers to the life of the Son of God in us as "an indestructible life" (Heb 7:16 NIV). It is not easy to see this while the ravages and pain of sickness and death seem to loom around us and in our midst. But let us have faith while we cannot see. The Lord will remove the veil.

We must believe in the indestructible life of sonship all the way, even to the grave, if this be our route. This may be a paradox, but it is true. We may be pronounced medically dead by the diagnosis of medical science, but we, who possess the indestructible life of the Son, must believe in the divine prognosis: "death no longer has dominion over Him" whose life we possess (Rom 6:9 MKJV). Physical death may mean the end of our natural phase of life, but if we believe, we continue on in the glory and power of the indestructible life of sonship.

This is no fancy. It stems from a faith

rooted in the sound doctrines of the Scriptures. Paul writes: "For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.... Then being always confident, knowing that while we are at home in the body, we are away from home from the Lord; for we walk by faith, not by sight; then we are confident and we are pleased rather to go away from home out of the body, and to come home to the Lord. Therefore we are also labouring to be well-pleasing to Him, whether at home or away from home" (2Co 5:1; 2Co 5:6-9 MKJV).

Revelation and Faith

The subject of sonship is a marvellous truth that many believers still ignore. Sonship refers to the divine status and character of sons of God. It is Deity indwelling humanity in many sons of God. The subject of sonship deals with the transformation of sons of men into sons of God. It is the state of spiritual or moral maturity that every believer in Christ after being born again as a spiritual babe must grow into and lives by during his pilgrim journey in this present world. It is an amazing truth that is beyond the natural mind to comprehend.

However, the truth of sonship, like all divine truths, though veiled to the natural mind, can be grasped by believers in Christ through the revelation of the Holy Spirit. Paul reminds us in 1Co 2:9-10: "But as it is written, Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God has prepared for them that love him. But God has revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searches all things, yea, the deep things of God" (MKJV).

Not only is revelation necessary to grasp divine truths, faith is also important to appropriate the reality of what God reveals. Today, the power of the life of the Son of God within a believer in Christ seems to be hidden, if not unreachable. It is like "a garden inclosed, a spring shut up, and a fountain sealed". How then do we, who truly believe in Christ, transcend the veil and partake of the abundance of this fruitful garden, refresh our souls in this eternal fountain, and draw from this mighty spring of supernatural life that lies hidden within us? How do we recognize and yield to the life and power of the Son of God in our lives? The key is two-fold: revelation and faith.

We need the right mindset and faith to know and appropriate the things that God has given to us to experience now. We need to move up from the carnal realm of natural reasoning into the divine realm of revelation and faith, if we are going to understand and experience the reality of sonship. We need to know and believe in the possibility that we can be and walk as sons of God in this world now.

When we refer to divine revelation, we are not referring to a dramatic coming into some sort of an unusual illumination of some complex theology or philosophy. By divine revelation we mean simply the inspiration and ability the Holy Spirit gives to hear, understand, and accept the truth of the word of God. Revelation and faith go together with regard to the things of the Spirit. They are needed together in order to know the truth and appropriate the experience of the promises that God has given us in the Son, Christ Jesus. Rom 10:14 tells us, "How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without preaching?" (KJV). Christ has given to the Church apostolic ministries who will minister the word of God with an anointing that will generate revelation and faith in the minds and hearts of believers (Eph 4:11-12).

Revelation is an uncovering, a bringing to light, of that which had been previously wholly hidden or only obscurely seen. Revelation comes from the unction or anointing of the Spirit and is a supernatural communication of truth to the mind (1John 2:27; 1Co 2:9-14). Faith is that which enables us to grasp the revelation. Faith is in general the persuasion of the mind, or a firm conviction, that a certain statement is true. Faith is defined in the Scriptures as the "substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen" (Heb 11:1). Faith in God, therefore, is the full persuasion that God is able and faithful to accomplish what He has promised.

The effect of revelation and faith is to lift us into the supernatural realm, high above the norm of conventional Christian religion. It will free our minds and faith from the blindness and paralysis of the religions of the god of this world, natural reasoning and philosophy, the vain doctrines of men, and the fear of thinking and believing differently, and of being different. This, essentially, was the

Apostle Paul's earnest prayer for the saints of the church at Ephesus. Paul mentioned to them that his prayers for them were "that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him the eyes of your understanding being enlightened, that you may know what is the hope of His calling, and what is the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us, the ones believing according to the working of His mighty strength" (Eph 1:17-19 MKJV).

Therefore, to see and grasp the glory and power of our sonship, to come to the deep realization that the life of the Son of God is within us, we need to receive the revelation and believe it. Our thinking, our speech, our attitude, and our behaviour must be saturated and motivated by the divine inspiration of the possibility of being sons of God now in the midst of this present world. It presents to us a challenge to see with the eyes of the Spirit, and to look within rather than without, to focus on the things that are invisible rather than the visible and external things of the natural. To be willing to think and believe according to the word of God, even if it may be strange to many, is necessary for any believer who seeks to walk in the realm of sonship today because the truth of sonship remains outside the general concerns of conventional Christian religion.

The Glory Is Breaking Forth

Yes, like Solomon's bride, the Church, the Bride of Christ, in this dispensation appears to be like "a garden inclosed, a spring shut up, a fountain sealed". Hidden seems to be the power of the life of the Son of God in the believer in Christ. But, in the hearts and lives of many, there is a stir that the glory and power of the Church is breaking forth. Sons of God are being unveiled.

Let us have faith, and humble ourselves, and obediently, like the first-born Son of God, submit to our destined path as veiled sons of God, a garden enclosed, a spring shut up, and a fountain sealed in hope until our manifestation or recognition as sons of God. Let us who believe and have received the adoption of sons awaken to the consciousness of being sons of the living God. While we wait in hope for our recognition and manifestation as sons of God, let us walk

and function by faith in the midst of the decay and corruption of the creation, knowing that, though for a time the glory of Spirit and power of the Son of God within seem hidden by the veil of the earthen vessels of our humanity, we are no less sons of God in the midst of the Church.

"A Fountain of life flows within me
Washing sins and corruption away;
God dwells every day in this vessel of
clay;

And a Fountain of Life flows within."

Yes, though now a garden enclosed, a spring shut up, and a fountain sealed; the Church is alive, triumphant, and well. There is a lot that God has been accomplishing within, veiled from the eye of natural man. Sons of the living God are being born and are being appointed to their places by the eternal Father, and have been accomplishing the will of God as they are led by the Spirit of God. Another appropriate metaphorical description of the Church by Solomon expresses so well the wonderful growth and development occurring in the Church, and can be seen and experienced by those who can enter and view beyond the veil, which has veiled the sons of God in this dispensation. We will end with it. "I have come into My garden, My sister, My spouse; I have gathered My myrrh with My spice; I have eaten My honeycomb with My honey; I have drunk My wine with My milk. Eat, O friends; drink, yea, drink abundantly, O Beloved" (Song 5:1 MKJV).

PINELOW FALL CAMP FAMILY CAMP

November 8-11, 2003

Contact: Daryl Martz
Fax (604) 795-5365
e-mail: martz@shelbrook.com

BIG SPRING TEXAS MEETING

**Contact
Loraine Carson
(915) 267-8542**

To the Young People and the Rest of Us

“Church” Manners

Recently, it was necessary for me to sit in the back row in the church service. This area in our assembly has often been the domain of young people, and the place where families with young children sit. I was saddened by what I saw. I wondered how much people received back there, because there was so much other activity in those rows than what actually pertained to the service. I began to wonder if we parents have become lax in teaching our children “church” manners.

In our family, our parents taught us how to act at home, at school, on the job, and at church. The training began early, while we were still babes in arms. We all gathered in Family Worship once a day. The Brethren have taught us that the family is like miniature church. So when the family gathers for Worship, this is a miniature church service. Father is the Elder, and mother is his helper. And the children are the people in that little assembly. So the behavior used in Family Worship is similar to what is used when we gather as an Assembly. And the home is a wonderful place to practice that behavior.

In our home, everyone, from our aged grandfather to my baby sister, attended Family Worship. So we had to find a time in the day when everyone was present. More often when our friends came calling, we just told them we were busy with Family Worship now. They were welcome to join us. Generally, we kept a specific time of day for Family Worship, and we worked other things around Worship. And it wasn't long before others began to respect that time of day. They began calling at a different time. The point I want to make is that Worship was important, and other interests were secondary. In time we, came to also appreciate the time for Service, and other things, including sports and work, were secondary. I saw a young lady work on her schedule at work, until she had every Sunday morning off, and she was blessed for her diligence. I met another family who hesitated to put their son into football, because it meant that he would miss a number of Sundays and church. It was hard for that lad to miss out on football, but to this day he thanks his parents for encouraging him to go to Ser-

vice: he is a valued member of his Assembly.

We all, including baby sister, had to sit quietly as the Word was read. In fact, as we got older we followed along in our Bibles, or even took turns reading. Then we were encouraged to ask questions about what we had read, or we could add some insight we had gained from what we read. We began to participate in this tiny church service. And as we participated, we began to feel we were part of that service. When the children became older teenagers, they were given a particular day to tell what they had been reading in their own devotions. And they were encouraged to tell what it had meant to them. This was all practice for Sunday Service. They had to be still, and listen and participate in an orderly manner.

The first Family Worship after our Sunday meeting, each child would be asked if they had a verse from their own reading they would like to memorize for next Sunday service. If they didn't, then my parents had one ready for us. We practised that verse ALL week, and we knew it well before the next Sunday service. It was so well learned it stuck with us well into adulthood. Often I rely on those verses I learned long ago at Family Worship.

My folks were sticklers for us being quiet and sitting during Family Worship and Sunday Service. It took real persistence on their part, to keep a full-of-life brother anywhere near still, but it was important for him to learn to be still so he could hear the voice of God's Word. It also taught him reverence. I can still hear my mother, who really looked up to Queen Elizabeth, ask him, “Would you wiggle around, and make such a fuss, if the Queen were here.” Of course he wouldn't; he would be in awe of her regal presence. And we must teach our children to be in awe of His presence. We must also teach them that the Bible is the Word of God that is to be revered. When someone prophesies, that is the Word of God, too; or sings in the Spirit, or exhorts, or teaches, or ministers in any way. That is the Word of God, and is to be respected with quietness. Also, it is a good idea to close one's eyes when praying, or singing, or listening to

a prophecy, because it shuts out other things that would disturb and take one's mind off the message. This is taught in childhood, before the years of adolescence when they are so self-conscious of what their peers think if they close their eyes, etc.

My parents were also strict about us moving about in church service. We went to the bathroom before we entered the assembly room. Then, we only left that room in the most dire of circumstances. We picked a moment when no one was praying or prophesying, so we wouldn't disturb the meeting. If we were taken out of the meeting room by our parents, we knew we needed correction!

I remember my mother prompting me: “They are singing, now, so you should sing too.” This was not a time to be flipping through my Bible, or looking around; it was a time to sing. And when the order of the meeting was prophecy, then I later knew it was time for me to focus on prophecy. I encourage parents to teach their children at an early age to participate as much as they can. Sing when the people are singing, clap when the people are clapping, close your eyes and pray along with whoever is praying, lift your hands in praise and submission, etc. If it is taught early, they are much more aware of what is going on in the service.

It is hard to keep a toddler quiet for extended periods of time, so we brought along a favorite book and a small toy, even a small snack if the meeting was longer. They were only brought out as a last resort, and by the time a child could understand, we left those things at home. Church is not a time to play or eat, but to praise and worship our Lord.

Now, I want to talk directly to the Young People. You are wonderful, and I don't want to scold you. I only want to encourage you in your walk with the Lord. When I became an older teenager, I wanted to sit with my friends rather than Mom or Dad in Service. But, you know, the farther back I got, the easier it was to lose track of what was going on. I knew I was there to meet the Lord, and closer to the front, where there were fewer distractions, I got more out of the Service.

Often the week seemed so long, and

by Saturday night I was anxious to see my friends. We often got together Saturday evening. And the more fun we had, often the hour got pretty late. Next morning, it was hard to get up in time for church, and harder still to concentrate on what the Meeting held for me. Finally, I realized if I had fun with my friends Friday night, and then kept Saturday night free to go to bed early, I was up much earlier, and got much more out of the service.

Finally, Adults, are you in your seat, quietly meditating, praying or reading the Word for a length of time before the

Meeting starts? Are you built up, ready to give that psalm, hymn or spiritual song, that prophecy, teaching or exhortation? Are you respectful of all the members of the Body? We are examples to our children, and it is us they will imitate.

When I was a child, I heard much about the Order of the home, and the Order of the Church Manners are part of that Order. They help you and others to get the most out of a Service. They portray reverence for our Lord, and consideration for others.

-- A Member of the Body

New York/New Jersey Camp Meeting October 31 to November 2, 2003

Leibenzel Retreat Center,
Schooley's Mountain,

80 Pleasant Grove Road, New Jersey 07879

Please bring your own linens (single bed), towels & pillows, as these will not be available at the campground. A limited amount of linens can be rented for \$5/set for those travelling from further away. Registration begins at 3:00 p.m. on Friday, October 31. Meals will be served in the dining hall, beginning at 5:30 p.m. on Friday, followed by the first meeting at 7:30 p.m. The camp will conclude with the noon meal on Sunday, November 2, 2003.

Charges for your room & board:
Under 3 years of age - no charge
Age 3-10 - \$20.00
Age 11 - Adult - \$60.00

Please RSVP by October 13th to:
New York, New Jersey Camp
c/o Brad & Carrie Wensley
10 Penn Commons
Yaphank, NY 11980 or
Phone: 631-924-7626 or email: carriemw@optonline.net

For transportation contact Cleveland Gajee at debgaj@aol.com or Phone: 201-486-5644

This is the rate schedule for accommodation regarding the Scripture Studies October 5 - November 1, 2003.

Room & Board - Rate Schedule

Per Month	Per Week	Daily
Singles - \$300.00	Singles - \$75.00	Singles - \$12.00
Couples - \$500.00	Couples - \$125.00	1 Parent with
1 Parent with 1 child - \$500.00	1 Parent with	1 Child - \$20.00
	1 Child - \$125.00	

REGISTRATION FORM

Sharon Scripture Studies Oct. 5 - Nov. 1, 2003

Name: _____

Address: _____

Arrival Date: _____

Departure Date: _____

Mail to: Sharon Scripture Studies, Box 878, North Battleford, SK S9A 2Z3

NORTH BATTLEFORD NEW YEAR'S YOUTH RETREAT

Dec. 29, 2003 - Jan. 3, 2004

As part of Sharon Schools Educational Program the North Battleford Young Peoples' Gathering will begin with the supper meal Monday, Dec. 29, 2003 and will run through until after breakfast Jan. 3, 2004. Bring your usual things: bedding, towel, toilet articles, warm clothing, musical instrument, Bible, notebooks, skates and broomball brooms and hockey gear, gym clothes and footwear. We thank the Mothers for their past contributions of baking and suggest that similar offerings would be gratefully received again this year. (If the Elders feel to send any financial help from the churches, it will be greatly appreciated). This invitation is extended to teenagers and older singles and young married couples. We would like to encourage older singles to attend with a focus on their ministry and issues. We also would like to encourage young married couples to come for fellowship and to assist with the ministry. Please have one of your young people write at an early date stating approximately the number of boys and girls hoping to attend. Send to Sharon Schools, Box 878, North Battleford, Sask. S9A 2Z3. Registration Fee: \$25.00 on arrival.

INDIANA YOUNG PEOPLE'S MEETING December 2003

Sat. evening, Dec. 27 thru Wed., noon, Dec. 31, 2003. Mt. St. Francis Retreat Center, St. Francis, Indiana, 47146, phone (812) 923-8817. Location just 10 miles from downtown Louisville, KY. All under one roof, gym, recreation rooms, hundreds of acres of woods and hills to hike and sled on. 53 private rooms w/ bath and air conditioning. **How to Get There.** From West (St. Louis, etc.) I 64 to U.S. I 50 West, go 2 miles on US I 50 to 2nd set of flashing lights, the center is on the left. From North: I 65 South to I 265 West 10 miles to U.S. I 50 exit, go 2 miles on I 50 to 2nd set of flashing lights, center on left. From South and East: I 64 West thru Louisville across Ohio River then 4 miles to U.S. I 50 East highway. Go 2 miles on I 50 to 2nd set of flashing lights. Center is on left. **Come one and all, bring your friends and let's have a great time learning and sharing together.**

Bring: Bibles, notebooks, pens and pencils, personals, extra towels and washcloths if desired, snacks for after service.

Contact Ken Jones
190 Grove Ave.,
Hampshire, IL 60140
Phone: 847-683-3448
or email: KenBrenJones@juno.com
Costs: Adults \$65,
Teens \$54 (11-17)
Children \$32 (2-10)

DATES OF IMPORTANCE

Pinelow Family Camp November 8 - 11, 2003
 Indiana Young Peoples December 27 - 31, 2003
 North Battleford New Year's Youth Retreat Dec. 29, 2003 - Jan. 3, 2004
 Big Spring Texas January 30 - February 1, 2004
 North Carolina Winter Camp February 27 - 29, 2004
 Feast North Battleford April 8 - 11, 2004
 Illinois Gathering (King's House) April 30 - May 2, 2004
 Camp North Battleford July 4 - 11, 2004

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 Minden, NE 68959
 Permit No. 40

CALLED HOME

PAUL E. HINE
Elder
Charlotte NC
July 18, 2003

North Carolina Winter Camp 2004

to be held at Cornerstone Conference Center, WNC Pentecostal Holiness Church Hwy 29 North, Brown Summit, NC
 The site of the camp is about 12 miles north of Greensboro of US Highway 29, on the left, 1 block north of NC Hwy 150 interchange with Hwy 29. Traveling south on Hwy 29 from Virginia, the camp is located on the right just after passing the Benaja Road overpass.
 The camp will begin with the 7:30 pm meeting on Friday, February 27, and conclude with the noon meal on Sunday, February 29, 2004. Other meetings will be at 9:30 am and 7:30 pm on Saturday.
*Camp Registration: Dave Heath ph. (336) 841-0607 email: ddpack@juno.com or
 Jim Marion ph. (336) 883-1845 email: marion3196@aol.com*

Schedule for Sharon Scripture Studies and Fellowship October 5th to November 1st, 2003

Four weeks, Monday through Saturday

Breakfast 7:30 am to 8:00 am	Dinner 12:00 pm to 12:30 pm	
Class 9:00 am to 10:15 am	Class 2:30 pm to 3:45 pm	
Class 10:30 am to 11:45 am	Supper 5:30 pm to 6:00 pm	

Meetings 7:30 pm on Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday

1st Week - 16 Classes

- Sons & Sonship - 4 classes
- The Beatitudes and I Corinthians - 4 classes
- God's Great Eternal Plan and Purpose - 4 classes
- The Home - 2 classes
- The Presence of God - Brief Look - 2 classes

2nd Week - 16 Classes

- Our Calling, Walk and Example - 4 classes
- Eternal Life, Humility - 4 classes
- Present Truth - 4 classes
- The End of the Age - 2 classes
- Walking in the Spirit - 2 classes

3rd Week - 16 Classes

- Local Church - 4 classes
- Sonship - 4 classes
- Unity - 4 classes
- Gospel of the Kingdom and our Role in It - 2 classes
- Cannon of Scripture and Church History - 2 classes

4th Week - 15 Classes

- Abiding in the Truth - 4 classes
- Tithing - 1 class
- Living in the Seventh Day - 2 classes
- Jesus: The Christ, the Only Begotten Son - 2 classes
- Attitudes - 2 classes
- Sonship - 2 classes

SCRIPTURE STUDIES AND FELLOWSHIP

October 5 to November 1, 2003
 at Sharon Homes & Schools, North Battleford, SK, Canada
 . . .

Pre-registration is necessary - see Registration Form.

The unfolding revelation of the Holy Spirit has brought many glorious truths whereby,
 "It is more blessed to give than to receive." "The things that thou hast heard...among many
 witnesses, commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also."
 II Timothy 2:2.

**THE TRAVELLING MINISTRIES WILL BE CONTRIBUTING TO CLASSES
 ON THE REVELATION OF THE PLAN AND PURPOSE OF GOD BY THE
 "ECCLESIA", WHICH IS HIS BODY, AND IT'S SPIRITUAL STRUCTURE
 AND FUNCTION. PRAY, PLAN, AND PURPOSE TO SIT AT THE
 FEET OF JESUS DURING THESE DAYS!**

Sharon Children's Homes and Schools
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