

STUDY II

THE NEW CREATION

The New Creation Separate and Distinct from All Others--Why Chosen from Amongst the Human Creation Rather Than from Others--The Object of Its Election--Present and Future Missions--How Begotten and Born to the New Nature--The Close Relationship of All Its Members with Each Other and with Their Captain, Head and Bridegroom--Development and Tests of Membership--The Sixth, or Spiritual, Sense of the New Creation for the Discernment of Spiritual Things--By What Name Should the New Creation be Known, in Order to be Loyal to the Head and to Separate from None of the Brethren?

THE CHURCH of the Gospel age is frequently spoken of in the Scriptures as a New Creation--its ultimate members, the overcomers, being specifically mentioned as "New Creatures" in Christ Jesus. (*2 Cor. 5:17*) Unfortunately, however, it has become customary with fully consecrated Christians, as well as with others, to read the words of divine inspiration in a mazy, hazy manner, which fails to give to its utterances their real import, and deprives the reader of much of the blessing and comfort and instruction which might be his if he but pursued a more reasonable course and were more thoroughly filled with the spirit of discipleship --with a desire to comprehend the divine revelation.

The difficulty in large measure appears to be that ordinary readers of the Word do not expect to be taught by it, but read it rather in a perfunctory manner as a duty, or as a rest; and when they desire information respecting the divine plan they go to commentaries and catechisms. These and living teachers should be helping hands to guide Zion's pilgrims to a clearer knowledge of the divine character and

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plan; but, unfortunately, they often are the reverse. Frequently they becloud and perplex the judgment and misconstrue the divine Word, and those who trust in them are led away from the light rather than toward it.

This misleading is not intentional, for both teachers and authors, we should suppose, set forth to their readers the best they possess. The fountainhead of the trouble is a long way off. Over 1800 years ago, when the apostles "fell asleep," the enemy, Satan, got a free hand in the Church, the Lord's wheat-field; and as our Lord's parable prophesied, he sowed the tares of error unstintingly. (*Matt. 13:24,36-43*) Those errors more or less twisted and distorted every truth of the divine revelation, with the result that before the fourth century had dawned the Lord's wheat-field had practically become a tare-field with only a proportionately small minority of true wheat in it. The darkness of error more and more settled down upon the Church, and for ten centuries the "Mystery of Iniquity" prevailed, and gross darkness covered the people. Those ten centuries are today denominated the "Dark Ages" by a large proportion of the most intelligent people of the "Christian world," and we are to remember that it was in the midst of this gross darkness that the Reformation Movement had its start. The light of the Reformers began to shine amidst the darkness, and, thank God, it has been growing brighter and brighter ever since! We can not wonder, however, that the Reformers themselves, educated in that gross darkness, were more or less contaminated with it, and that they did not instantly succeed in purging themselves of its defiling errors: rather we would have considered it nothing short of a miracle had they slipped from the gross darkness into the full, clear light of the divine character and plan.

The difficulty amongst the followers of the Reformers in the past three centuries has been that they have considered it meritorious to accept the creeds formulated in that reformation period, and have gloried in them, and have considered unorthodox any further progress toward the light.

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On the contrary, they and we, while honoring the Reformers and rejoicing in their fidelity, should remember that they were not the lights of the Church, that they were not given to the Church to be her guides, and were but

helpers at the very most. The divinely appointed guides were, first of all, our Lord; and, secondly, his inspired and kept and guided apostles; and, thirdly, God's holy men of old, who spake and wrote as they were moved by the holy Spirit, for our admonition. It was because the Reformers were granted by the Lord a glimpse of true light that they were enabled to discern partially how gross was the darkness which surrounded them, and to make the heroic effort which they did make to escape from it and to get again into the light of the knowledge of God, which shines in the face of Jesus Christ our Lord, and which, through his words and the words of the apostles, is given us to be a lamp to our feet and a lantern to our footsteps, causing the path of the just to shine "more and more unto the perfect day." Whoever now would be a follower of the Lord and a follower of the light, should take heed that, while not ignoring human instrumentalities and their ministries, orally and through the printed page, they should accept from these only such assistance as will aid them in appreciating the inspired message recorded in the Scriptures: "If they speak not according to this Word, it is because they have no light in them."

In previous studies we have seen that our Lord Jesus, long before he became "the man Christ Jesus," was "the beginning of the creation of God"; we have seen a progressive development among God's creations accomplished by and through the Beloved Son--cherubim, seraphim, angels, the various orders of spirit beings, respecting whom little has been revealed to us. We have just closed an examination of the earthly creation and through the light of divine revelation, have seen how grand is to be its consummation during the "times of restitution of all things spoken." But the Scriptures introduce to us the New Creation, now under

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consideration, as entirely separate and distinct from the angelic orders and from man. The Heavenly Father was pleased with every feature of his work, for "all his work is perfect," and each class, or order, is perfect in itself, or will be by the time the great Jubilee, referred to in a previous chapter, shall be introduced. The creation of these various orders, then, is not to be understood as signifying a dissatisfaction on the part of the Creator, and an attempt to make something better or more satisfactory, but rather we are to see in this an illustration of the "much diversified wisdom of God." The variety which we see in nature in the

flowers, the grasses, the trees, and amongst the animals, illustrates this--each is perfect in its own kind and plane. It was not dissatisfaction with the rose that led to the production of the pink or the pansy, but the varieties in form and beauty and in odor give us a glimpse of the lengths and breadths and heights and depths of the divine mind--diversity in harmony; beauty and perfection expressed in various forms and patterns and colors. So, too, it is with the intelligent creations--sons of God on various planes of being.

From this standpoint we perceive that, however many creations God shall bring forth, there will be no room for jealousies between them, because each being perfect in its own plane and sphere will be satisfied to the full with its own condition, and will really prefer that to any other; just as a fish is better satisfied to be a fish than to be a bird, and, *vice versa*, the bird is best satisfied with its nature: so mankind, when restored to human perfection under Edenic conditions, will be absolutely satisfied with those conditions, so that they will not covet to be angels of any grade or station, nor will they covet the highest nature of all granted to the new creation; namely, "the divine nature." (**2 Pet. 1:4**) Neither will the angels covet the nature and conditions of the cherubim and seraphim or man--nor yet of the divine nature. All will ultimately understand that the divine nature is the highest of all; that it has qualities and conditions which outrank those of all other natures; yet under

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the divine arrangement each nature will be so thoroughly in accord with its own conditions and environments and perfection that each will have satisfaction in his own state.

When Jehovah God purposed the New Creation--partakers of the divine nature (**2 Pet. 1:4**)--partakers of his own "glory, honor and immortality" (**Rom. 2:7**)--he determined that none could be created to so high a station and *then* be given a trial; but that, on the contrary, whoever should be constituted members of this New Creation must have their trial first, and must prove their loyalty to their Creator and to the principles of his righteous government most absolutely before they could be exalted to this high estate --to this New Creation of the divine nature. We have just seen how man's trial and testing as to worthiness of life eternal has been arranged for--the original human perfection in which he was created; his fall; his redemption; and the recovery and restitution of all of his race found worthy. We have just seen, too, that the angels were created

in the holiness and perfection of their nature and were *subsequently* tried and tested; but it is evident that a similar procedure in connection with the New Creatures of the divine nature (namely, their creation to the perfection of this nature and their *subsequent* trial) would not do. Why? Because a most important element of the divine nature is immortality, and when we come to understand that this word signifies a death-proof condition,* we can readily see that to have created any beings on the divine plane, immortal, death-proof, and then subsequently to have tried, tested them, would have meant that had any failed to come up to the required standard of absolute loyalty to God, they would have been immortal transgressors who could not have been destroyed, and whose continued existence throughout eternity as transgressors, as sinners, would have been so many blemishes, so many blots upon the fair creation of the universe, as God intends it eventually shall be. We perceive then the deep wisdom of the plan which God

*See Vol. V, p. 389.

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has adopted in respect to this most highly favored class of all his creatures--in testing them severely, crucially, while still they are mortals, members of another creation of dieable nature.

If in mind we place ourselves with the great Creator, as his intimate friends, and imagine the philosophy of the divine arrangement for this New Creation, we can fancy Jehovah God musing with himself respecting this New Creation thus: To what class of the sons of God shall I proffer this distinguished privilege of being transformed to this supreme order, or class of my creatures? Each order is already in my image--man, angels, cherubim, seraphim and the archangel; all will be supremely happy, each in his own perfection and estate, when my plan has reached its culmination and the testings are all ended--but to which of them shall I offer this grandest of blessings and opportunities--of becoming "partakers of the divine nature"? Naturally the First Begotten would come promptly to the Father's mind as the one who was already the highest, the chiefest of all myriads, already next to himself; the god, the mighty one through whom he had created all things, and who, in every particular, had shown his fidelity and loyalty to his Father and Creator. To him first, therefore, would be granted the opportunity of attaining to the divine nature and its glory,

honor and immortality. "It pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell"--"that in all things he might have the pre-eminence." (*Col. 1:18,19*) He already had pre-eminence above all others, and having used it faithfully, he was naturally first in the order of advancement to whatever higher honors and dignities the Father had to give. To him that hath shall be given, and he shall have more abundance; faithfulness shall have its reward even though this shall mean that the faithful one must be subjected to trials, experiences and disciplines of the most crucial kind. Even though a son, a most loyal son, a most devoted son, he could not be granted a share in this divine nature unless, first of all, his faith and loyalty be put to most crucial tests.

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This outline of the New Creation and this selection of the Only Begotten to be the head and chief of the New Creation --subject to the trials, disciplines, humiliations and other necessary experiences to prove his worthiness--had already been determined upon in the divine counsel before man was created. It was foreknown to God that his human creature would fall; he had determined that his sentence should be death; and he had prearranged that the test he would impose upon his Only Begotten would be that he should, of his own free will, become the Redeemer of mankind, and, by so great a sacrifice as this implied, manifest his loyalty to the Father, and his faith in him. Thus, in the divine plan he was the "Lamb slain before the foundation of the world." From this standpoint we perceive that so far from being forced to be man's redeemer--so far from the Father's practicing injustice toward the Son in this requirement, it was the Father's preparation of him for the great exaltation--far above angels, principalities and powers and every name that is named, as partaker of his own nature and sharer of his own throne. *Heb. 1:4; Eph. 1:21*

From this standpoint we can not wonder that the Apostle speaks of our Lord's undertaking to be our Redeemer "for the joy that was set before him." (*Heb. 12:2*) The joy was not merely the anticipation of the highest place in the New Creation, far above all other creations; but we may reasonably suppose that this was a part of it. Nevertheless, we notice in our Redeemer's prayer to the Father while passing through the trials, that, with characteristic modesty, he did not refer to the great dignity and glory and immortality promised him and expected; but with a beautiful simplicity and humility asked merely that he should be restored to his

previous station; as though he esteemed it honor enough that he should have been chosen of the Father as his agent to carry forward other features of the divine plan, as he already had been the honored agent in the creation of all things that were made. (*John 1:3*) His simple words were, "Father, glorify me with the glory that I had with thee before

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the world was." (*John 17:5*) But the Father's answer was full of meaning when he said, "I have already glorified [honored] thee, and I will glorify [honor] thee additionally." *John 12:28*, Vatican MS.

But, further, the Father purposed in himself that the New Creation should consist, not merely of one individual, but that he should have "brethren." (*Heb. 2:17*) Who should these brethren be? from what class would they be selected? from cherubim? from seraphim? from angels? or from man? Of whichever class, they must be subjected to precisely the same tests required of the Only Begotten; for the same reason, because they are to share his glory, honor and immortality. The test put upon him was that of obedience--"even unto death" (*Phil. 2:8*), and all, therefore, who would share with him, as New Creatures, the divine nature, must also share with him in trials and sufferings and testings, and must prove faithful even unto *death*. If the offer had been made to the members of any of the angelic classes, or natures, it would have meant a different divine program from that which we see now being carried out. We have seen that the holy angels have been receiving their experience and knowledge through observation, rather than by contact with sin and death, and to suppose such a condition amongst the angels as would have permitted some of them to die, would imply a condition of actual sin amongst the angels, persecution one of another, etc., in order to bring about such death conditions; or that some of the angels should do, as our Lord Jesus did, lay aside their higher nature and become men "for the suffering of death." God did not adopt this plan; but since in his purpose sin and its penalty, death, would be illustrated in mankind, he determined to select the remainder of the New Creation from amongst men. Thus not only the testing of the Only Begotten One alone would be in connection with humanity and the sin and death prevailing amongst men, but similarly all who would be joint-heirs with him in the New Nature would have like opportunities, experiences and testings.

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Thus the Only Begotten, called Jesus, subsequently the Christ, the Anointed, would become a pattern and ensample for the other members of the New Creation, all of whom would be required to conform to his character-likeness --to become "*copies* of the likeness of his Son." (*Rom. 8:29, Diaglott*) Herein, as everywhere, we see a manifestation of economy in the various features of the divine plan: the operation of sin and death in one department of creation would be sufficient; it would prove not only a great lesson and testing for men, and a great object lesson for the angels, but also as a crucial testing for those who would be counted worthy of a share in the New Creation.

The fact that the New Testament writings--the teachings of Jesus and the apostles--are addressed to this "New Creature" class, or to those contemplating the steps of faith and obedience necessary to place them amongst this class, has caused many to infer, contrary to the Scriptures, that God's purposes are the same in respect to all mankind. It has caused them to overlook the fact that the calling of this present Gospel age is specially stated to be a "high calling," a "heavenly calling." (*Phil. 3:14; Heb. 3:1*) The failure to recognize that God had, and still has, a plan of salvation for the whole world, and a somewhat different plan of special salvation for the Church of this Gospel age, has led to a confusion of mind amongst commentators, who do not discern the difference between the elect class and its blessings, and the much larger non-elect class and the blessings to come to it in due time through the very elect. They have supposed that God's plan will end when the election is completed, instead of seeing that it will be then only beginning as respects the human nature and the restitution salvation designed for the world at large--as many as will receive it on the Lord's terms.

This uncertainty of thought, and failure to recognize the difference between the two salvations--that of the Church to a new nature, the divine, and that of the world by restitution

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to the full perfection of human nature--have led to much confusion and conglomeration, in the minds of these teachers of the Scriptures which apply to these two salvations, so that now they think of the saved from one standpoint

and again from another. Some think and speak of them as spirit beings, yet confound those spirit beings in glory, honor and immortality with human beings, and imagine them as having flesh, bones, etc., in the spiritual condition. Others take human restitution as the center of their thought, and imagine a restored paradise-earth with the Lord and the saints residing in it in what they term spiritual bodies, not discerning the real meaning of the word spiritual; otherwise they would know that while a spiritual body is adapted to a spiritual condition and would be only encumbered by fleshly conditions or elements, so, likewise, the human, or earthly body is properly one adapted to the earthly conditions, and if it were in any degree etherealized would be a monstrosity, unsuitable alike to the divine intention and the human nature.

The beauty and symmetry of the divine plan can only be seen clearly by the recognition of the New Creation; that its prospective members are called of God to be separate, distinct from the human nature; that there is a "heavenly calling" or "high calling"; and that aside from making their own calling and election sure, they have a twofold work to do in connection with the human family from which they are selected. (1) To be God's agents in the gathering of the elect class, delivering the while a witness-message to the world, as members of the atonement priesthood, suffering at the hands of the world because of their faithfulness and the world's blindness. (2) They shall, with their Lord and Chief, constitute a divine, a royal, spiritual priesthood into whose hands the interests and affairs of the world will be committed for the correction and uplifting of each obedient member of the race--mediating between God and man and establishing amongst men a kingdom of righteousness in

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accord with the divine program for man's instruction and restitution.

It will readily be seen that no other class of beings could be found so well adapted to the divine intention of ruling and blessing the world. Their original identity with mankind, as "children of wrath even as others," fully acquaints them with the weaknesses, the imperfections, the besetments and trials to which humanity is exposed through sin and constitutional weaknesses: and this prepares them to be moderate rulers and merciful priests, as their full perfection in the divine nature will qualify them to be absolutely just as well as loving in all their decisions as the

judges of the world in that, the world's judgment day.*

But while this great and important work of uplifting, ruling, blessing and judging the world of mankind and the fallen angels will, as a work, be specially committed to these New Creatures of the divine nature, and while no other beings in all the universe will be so well prepared as they to do this work (for which under divine guidance they are being specially trained and prepared), nevertheless, this is not by any means their entire mission or work. On the contrary, the thousand years of the Millennial reign will constitute but a beginning of the exercise of the glory, honor and immortality of these New Creatures. At its close when the Kingdom shall be delivered up to "God, even the Father," and to mankind as the glorified agents of the Father to rule the earth, a still larger sphere for the exercise of their glory, honor and immortality will open before the New Creation; for is it not written that the Heavenly Father has not only made his Son a partaker of his own divine nature but also a sharer of his throne--and that the Son is set down with the Father in his throne? (*Rev. 3:21*) And even though in a sense he leaves that official position during the Millennial age in order that he may specially administer the affairs

*See Vol. I, Chap. viii--The Day of Judgment.

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of his earthly purchase and dominion, it surely does not mean that having in the fullest sense finished the work that the Father gave him to do, he will be any less glorious or occupy a position any less dignified than that accorded him when he ascended up on high after having, by the sacrifice of himself, paid for us the penalty of sin.

We know not what great works in respect to the future our Creator may have in view for his Only Begotten and well-beloved Son, whom "he hath appointed heir of all things"; but we do know from our Master's own lips that the promise is ours that when glorified we shall be like him and see him as he is, and share his glory, "and so shall we ever be with the Lord." Whatever, therefore, shall be the future activities of the Only Begotten as the "heir of all things," we shall be with him and share his work and share his glory as we shall share his nature also. While this is as far as the written Word of God carries us, it can not be sacrilegious for us to look into the book of nature in the light of the divine plan, and, using the divine Word as the telescope, to discern that the various planets or worlds all about us in

every direction are not being formed in vain either; and that some time or other there will be works of creation in these; and that when that time comes he who in all things has had the pre-eminence will continue to have pre-eminence and will still be the chief in the direction of all the divine forces. We need not anticipate a repetition in the other planets of the sin-experiences of our world, the earth; but, on the contrary, may rest assured that this one exhibition of "the exceeding sinfulness of sin" and of its terrible results can be, and will be, used of the Lord as a perpetual lesson to the beings yet to be created in his image in other worlds, who shall learn by observation and instruction instead of by experience.

With Satan and all his emissaries and every evil and blighting influence destroyed--with the glorified Church wise in experience, to instruct these perfect creatures of other worlds--with teachers, possibly taken to them from

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this earth, possessed of knowledge and experience in contact with sin, and with the uplifting and blessing of the Lord, how wise may not these become respecting right and wrong and their rewards! Their teachers will be able to tell the particulars of the great rebellion of Satan, the great deceiver of mankind; of the terrible fall of mankind into sin and misery; of the great redemption from it; of the high reward of the Redeemer and his joint-heirs; of the blessed restitution privileges granted to men; and that these were all lessons and examples for God's entire creation forever. These instructions should be all-powerful in restraining from sin, and in teaching all the necessity for character-development in accord with the divine law of love.

The work of these "New Creatures" in the present time, as has already been shown,* is a twofold one, their begetting of the holy Spirit constitutes them priests, but it is only their minds that are begotten--their bodies are still of the earth, earthy, and, hence, as the Apostle declares, "We have this treasure [the new nature] in earthen vessels, that the glory may be of God and not of us." (*2 Cor. 4:7*) The newly begotten mind, or will, is all there is at present to represent the new nature, and all there will be until in the First Resurrection that new will, developed in character, shall be provided a suitable body, a heavenly body, a spiritual body, perfect and complete and in absolute harmony with the divine will. Meantime the divine power, the holy Spirit, operating thus in our minds and constituting us "New

Creatures" and priests, leads us in the direction of sacrifice, and points us to our natural human interests, ambitions, preferences, etc., as the proper things to be sacrificed, wherever they conflict in any degree with the ambitions and conditions provided of God for the "New Creatures." Thus the victory of the New Creature is attained at the sacrifice of his own human nature, and this victory glorifies God and his power to "work in us to will and to do" through his

*See *Tabernacle Shadows of the Better Sacrifices*, pp. 20-23.

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promises, in a manner in which he could not be glorified were all of our natural conditions in accord with his requirements, so that no sacrificing would be necessary. But as the faith, consecration and sacrificing of the "New Creatures" in the present life answer to, or correspond to, and were typified by, the Aaronic priesthood of Israel and their typical sacrifices, so, as the Apostle explains, the future priesthood of these New Creatures is represented in, or typified by, the glorious priesthood of Melchizedek.

Melchizedek was not a priest who offered sacrifices in a linen robe; he was a priest who was at the same time a king--"A priest upon his throne." As such his position was higher in the type than the position of Aaron; for Aaron was the son of Abraham, and Abraham, great as he was, paid tithes to Melchizedek and received a blessing at his hands, typifying, as the Apostle explains, that the under priesthood of sacrifice represents a lower plane, or condition, than the higher priesthood of kingship, glory and honor. These New Creatures then, in the glorious work of the Millennial Kingdom (Christ, their Head, and they reckoned as members of his body), were typified by Melchizedek. With these the sacrificing feature of the work will all be at an end, the reigning, the ruling, the blessing, the assisting will all have begun and they will be entirely competent to accomplish the divine promise; namely, that "all the families of the earth shall be blessed" through these, God's agents, through whom "whosoever will" may come back into full harmony with the Creator and his laws. *Gen. 22:18; Gal. 3:16,29*

All the various figures by which the Lord represents the intimate relationship between his Only Begotten, the Savior, and the elect Church, called and being prepared to be "New Creatures" and associates with him in the divine nature, show most strikingly the closeness, the intimacy, the

oneness which will exist between them. As though the Lord realized that his human creatures of humble mind would necessarily stagger in faith at the thought of such a boundless

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interest and love for them on the part of the Creator as to invite them to the highest position in all creation next to his Son and next to himself, we find that the matter is presented repeatedly and under different figures, as though the more completely to set at rest our every question, doubt and fear respecting his faithfulness--respecting the genuineness of this "high calling." We refresh our minds respecting some of these: in one our Lord is represented as the "top-stone" of a pyramid, and the elect Church as living stones drawn to him and shaped and prepared in harmony with the lines of his character, that they may be members with him in the great pyramidal structure which God is erecting during this Gospel age, and which in the coming age will bless the world, and through whom to all eternity he will be glorified.

This pyramid picture is closely related to the temple picture; and we are assured that the temple built by Solomon was typical of this greater spiritual temple which, with still greater wisdom, God is building. (*1 Pet. 2:5*) We are shown that, as in the type every beam and every stone was originally marked out for its place and shaped to fit its place, so with the Church of the New Creation--its members will each be fitted and prepared for his place. As this permitted the construction of the typical temple "without the sound of a hammer," without jar or commotion or noise, so under the divine Architect the Church complete as the New Creation will, in the end of this Gospel age, be born from the dead as the Lord, the Head of this temple, was the "firstborn from the dead" in his resurrection at the beginning of the age. *1 Kings 6:7*

Another of these figures we remember is that of a human body with its various members. It is the Apostle Paul that so clearly and distinctly points us to this illustration of the close relationship which the elect bear to the Lord, the Head of the Church, which is his body. (*Rom. 12:4,5; 1 Cor. 12:12*) As the head controls the body, thinks for it, plans for it, oversees its affairs and directs, or uses, one or

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another member of the body for the assistance of others, so does the Lord in his Church supervise and set the various members of the body as it pleases him; to such an extent overruling in respect to the interests of all those who are seeking to "make their calling and election sure," that they have his guarantee that so long as they are in this right attitude of heart, humble and faithful, "all things shall work together for good to them," because they "love God and are called according to his purpose."

Another figure showing the intimate relationship between Christ and his Church, is that of the captain and his soldiers; another that of the shepherd and the sheep; and though all of these figures bring us precious thoughts of the consecrated relationship of the Head of the New Creation to his brethren, the Church, none perhaps gives us a fuller and more complete view of the Master's interest in us and love for us than the figure of the Bridegroom and the Bride. A noble Bridegroom surely is the Only Begotten One to all whose eyes of understanding are open to behold his grandeur of character and his faithfulness! Well is it expressed prophetically as the sentiment of his Church, his body, that he is "The chiefest among ten thousand, the one altogether lovely." The Apostle using this figure and addressing the Church declares, "I have espoused you to one husband that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ." (*2 Cor. 11:2*) He here refers to the Jewish custom of marriage, quite different from the usage of the present day throughout "Christendom." Today an espousal is merely a tentative engagement subject to change if either of the parties concludes that the engagement was unwise or unprofitable; but the Jewish marriage engagement was evidently intended of the Lord to be a type of the engagement between Christ, the Bridegroom, and the Church, his Bride. In the Jewish custom the espousal is the real marriage; it is accompanied by a definite contract, usually in writing, in which the representatives of the bridegroom and the bride mutually agree as to dower, etc., and the matter becomes absolutely

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binding forthwith, although it is the usual custom to defer the wedding festivities and the actual union for nearly a year. So is the agreement, or contract, between the Lord, the heavenly Bridegroom, and those who are accepted of him in espousal. Neither on his part nor on ours is it a slack contract; but a positive union of heart, of interest, of love, of devotion; and any abrogation of this our covenant

would be a serious matter, and of the Bridegroom the Apostle assures us: "Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it." (*1 Thess. 5:24*) The entire stress of the matter, therefore, rests upon us.

In the close of the age our Lord comes as the Bridegroom to receive the Bride, but he will accept only the "wise virgins." Those who, having made a covenant, have been foolish in that they have lived carelessly, will not be counted worthy of acceptance; will not be known in connection with the marriage; the door will be shut against them as shown in the parable (*Matt. 25:1-12*); they will be shut out from the great privileges and blessings they might through faithfulness have enjoyed. But we rejoice that although their unfaithfulness may bring them into the great time of trouble and may occasion a loss of a share in the Kingdom and of the divine nature, yet it will not mean to them that they shall be on this account shut up to an eternity of torture. No, thank God, the light of his Word is shining more clearly now! The making of our "calling and election sure" will mean great and eternal riches of grace to those of us who shall attain; and the loss of such blessings will of itself be no small punishment for carelessness in respect to the covenant relationship and becoming contaminated with the world and its spirit.

Though for the most part these "New Creatures in Christ Jesus" are chosen from the lower strata of society, rather than from its upper crust, and although on this account the world knoweth us not even as it knew him not, nevertheless, the Scriptures assure us that God who looketh at the heart and not upon the outward appearance, appreciates very

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highly the faithful ones of this class now being sought out and developed for the New Creation. Not only does he tell of the divine supervision of their affairs, causing all things to work together for their ultimate good, but he even explains in some measure how this supervision of their interests is accomplished--that the angels are "ministering spirits sent forth to minister unto those who shall be heirs of salvation"; and that "the angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that are his and delivereth them"; and, also, that these guardian angels for his little flock do always have access to his Father's face and, figuratively speaking, that not even a hair of their heads could be injured without the Father's knowledge. It is in full accord with all these tender assurances of divine care that we are told through

the inspired word, "The Lord knoweth them that are his," and "They shall be mine in that day that I come to make up my jewels." *2 Tim. 2:19; Mal. 3:17*

It is germane to our subject to consider that the New Creation, because of its call to newness of life, is instructed by the Lord--"Ye must be born again." Here the natural birth as earthly creatures of the human nature, is used to carry to our minds the thought of a new birth for the New Creation. The natural birth is preceded by a begetting, then a quickening and, finally, the birth. So in the arrangement for the New Creation: (1) we must be begotten by the Word and Spirit of God; (2) we must be quickened, energized by the spirit of the truth received; (3) if the process of development continues, if the Word of God abides in us richly and abounds, causing us to be neither barren [idle] nor unfruitful, we shall by and by come to the birth--to a share in the First Resurrection as members in the body of Christ. Concerning that resurrection and that complete change from natural, earthly, human beings to spiritual, heavenly beings of the divine nature, we shall have more to say by and by,* but here we remark more particularly the begetting.

*Chapter vi.

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The Word distinctly points out to us that the begetting of these sons of God is "not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God." (*John 1:13*) The Apostle Paul also points this out when, writing of the elect class of "New Creatures" and their Head, Christ Jesus, and the honorable condition to which they have been called, he says, "No man taketh this honor unto himself but he that is called of God, as was Aaron." *Heb. 5:4*

The Scriptures continually distinguish clearly between these elect "New Creatures" and the general human family; but here we may give briefly but two illustrations. (1) In speaking of the redemption of the world, the Apostle clearly divides the atonement sacrifice into two parts, one for the Church, the other for the world; saying, "He is a propitiation for our sins [the Church's sins], and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." (*1 John 2:2*) (2) The same Apostle distinguishes between the Church's trials and difficulties in the present life, and those of the world, and also between the hopes of the elect Church and the hopes of the world. He says, "Ourselves also, which have the first fruits of the spirit,...groan within ourselves,

waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption [deliverance] of our body"--the one body, the Church, of which Christ is the Head, whose deliverance is promised in the First Resurrection at his second advent. (**Rom. 8:23**) We do not groan outwardly as does the world, because we have received from the Lord, through our begetting of his spirit, an antidote for the disappointments and trials and difficulties of this present time, even the glorious hopes and promises, which are an anchor to our souls, entering into that which is within the veil. In our various difficulties and trials, we sorrow not as others who have no hope. In the same connection the Apostle refers to the world and its hope; saying, "The whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now"; they have little to palliate or assuage the wounds and aches and smarts which belong to this travailing time, in which they are learning merely the lesson of

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the exceeding sinfulness of sin and of the severity of its just deserts--dying and death. But pointing us beyond to the world's hope, the Apostle declares that they are "waiting for the manifestation of the sons of God." (**Rom. 8:19,22**) They are not waiting in hope that they may be found amongst those sons of God, but waiting for the blessings which those sons of the New Creation, invested with the glory and power of the Millennial Kingdom, will bring to this earth according to divine promise, for the blessing of all the families of the earth.

The test of membership in the New Creation will not be membership in any earthly organization, but union with the Lord as a member of his mystical body; as saith the Apostle, "If any man be in Christ, he is a New Creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." (**2 Cor. 5:17**) In order to be counted a member of the body of Christ at all, it is necessary that the old things, or earthly things--ambitions, hopes, prides, vanities and follies--shall have passed from the will, even though to some extent they may harass us because in a measure attractive to our flesh. It is the new mind that the Lord recognizes as the "New Creature"; it is the progress and development of the new mind that he is interested in and promises to reward.

In order to abide in Christ, the Scriptures clearly show us that more than the mere making of a consecration is necessary. Consecration opens the door and gives us the standing,

gives us the relationship, gives us the backing and encouragement of the divine promises, and puts us in the way, therefore, to cultivate the various fruits of the Spirit, and finally to attain joint-heirship with our Lord in the heavenly glory. But to maintain this standing in the body of Christ now requires that fruits shall be produced, evidences of love and devotion, even as the Master expressed in the parable of the vine, saying, "Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth [pruneth] it, that it may bring forth more fruit." (*John 15:2*) To have been accepted of the

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Lord as a New Creature in Christ Jesus some years in the past would seem, therefore, to imply a more or less regular growth in grace and knowledge and the fruits of the Spirit; otherwise our relationship to him would be forfeited and another would take our place amongst the elect, and the crown originally counted and set apart for us would pass to another more appreciative of the privileges, more zealous to attain to the glorious things which God hath promised to them that love him, and more willing, therefore, to count all earthly things but loss and dross that they may win Christ--win a place in the anointed company. Not only is this standing in Christ illustrated by such a growth in the fruits of the Spirit, but, as the Apostle Peter says, "If ye do these things ye shall never fall; for so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." (*2 Pet. 1:10,11*)

However, this means, as expressed by the Apostle Paul, that the new mind, the "New Creature," is to be so thoroughly conformed to the will of God that he will daily seek to "put off the old man with his affections and desires." For the New Creation is figuratively represented as a new man--Christ the Head, the Church the members of the body--which is to edify or build up itself and come, figuratively, to the full stature of a man in Christ Jesus, every member being completed and fully developed--completed not in our own strength, in the flesh, but complete in him who is our living Head, his righteousness compensating for our unintentional blemishes.

Humanity judges of its affairs by its five senses--sight, hearing, touch, smell and taste--all of which the New Creatures may freely use so long as they have the new mind in the earthen vessel. But these are not sufficient for the New Creation, which needs other senses whereby to apprehend

spiritual things that can neither be seen, felt, tasted, heard, nor smelled by the human organism. And this lack the Lord has supplied through the holy Spirit, as the Apostle explains: "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God,...neither can he know them, because they

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are *spiritually discerned*." "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of *man* [by any other sense or power of perception] the things which God hath in reservation for those who love him--but God *hath revealed them unto us* [the "New Creation"] by his Spirit; for the Spirit searcheth [out] all things, yea the deep things of God."

1 Cor. 2:9,10,14

This spiritual sense may be called the *sixth* sense of those begotten to the New Creation; or they may be considered as having a complete set of spiritual senses--five additional senses corresponding to their earthly senses. Gradually "the eyes of their understanding" open wider and wider to the things not seen by the natural eye; by degrees the *hearing* of faith increases until every good promise of the Divine Word is forceful and meaningful; in time they come into *touch* with the Lord and his invisible powers; little by little they *taste* that the Lord is very gracious; after a time they come to appreciate those sacrifices and incense-prayers which are of *sweet* odor to the Lord. But as the natural senses can be cultivated, so can the spiritual; and the cultivation of these spiritual senses (or, at least, the endeavors to cultivate them) constitute marks indicating our growth in grace--our development as embryo New Creatures for the resurrection birth--to the completeness of our new selves in the glory, honor and immortality of the divine nature.

By What Name Should the New Creation Be Known?

From one standpoint this is a peculiar question, a strange question. When we consider that the Church is the espoused of the Lord, betrothed to him as the Bride, it seems peculiar to ask what name shall she have. Surely no name would be appropriate to the Bride other than the name of the Bridegroom, and the very suggestion of any other name implies a misconception of the relationship subsisting between the Lord and his consecrated ones, the "members of his body," "the Bride, the Lamb's Wife." The Scriptural name seems quite sufficient; viz., the *Ecclesia*; that is, the

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Body, the Church of Christ. If further designation be desired, the Scriptures supply this in the expression, "The Ecclesia of *Christ*," or Church of Christ, "The Ecclesia of *God*," or Church of God. (*Rom. 16:16; Acts 20:28*) The two names are synonymous, because our Lord and the Father have one interest in us. As the Church is the body of Christ, of which he is the Head, so the whole Church, Head and Body, is the company, or group, or anointed of the Father, through whom he is pleased to accomplish all the great and wonderful features of his redemptive work already outlined in the exceeding great and precious promises of his Word. The Apostle further elaborates the name by designating the faithful to be "The Church of the Living God," as though he would thus contrast this Church or body or people, of whom Christ is the Head, with other bodies or religious systems not properly recognizing the true God nor recognized by the true God as his Ecclesia, or Church.

The tendency toward other names than those set before us by the Lord and the apostles has been manifest from a very early period. As some today are disposed to say, "I am of Luther," "I am of Calvin," "I am of Wesley," or "I am of Knox," and yet are all claiming to be of Christ, so we see the same disposition was manifest in the primitive Church, for the Apostle calls our attention to the fact in his letter to the Corinthians. (*1 Cor. 3:4-6*) The factional or sectarian spirit had broken out amongst the Corinthian brethren; and not satisfied with the names of Christ and of God, they were seeking to add to these, and were Pauline Christians and Peterite Christians and Apollosian Christians. The Apostle, under inspiration, reproves this spirit, and points out that it is not the holy Spirit, but a carnal one, which prompts to this division of the body and the following of one or another of the Lord's servants. The Apostle's argument fits equally well today. His interrogation, "Is Christ divided?" means, Are there many bodies of Christ? Are there many churches of Christ, or only one? And if only one, why should it be divided? "Who then is Paul? Who is Apollos? Who is Peter?" They were merely servants of the Head of the Church,

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whom he used for the blessing of his body--his Ecclesia. Had they been unwilling, he could have found others to have done the work which they did. The praise, therefore,

and the honor for whatever blessing has come through the apostles, belongs chiefly, especially, to the Head of the Church, who made this provision for the necessities of his body. This does not mean that we are not to recognize and properly to honor all whom the Lord recognizes and honors, but it does mean that we are in no sense of the word to recognize them as heads of the Church, nor to divide the Church into sects and parties--followers of different men. To the extent that the apostles or any of the servants of the Lord have been used of him, it has been not to divide the Church, but to draw the members of it together, to unite the various consecrated believers the more firmly to the one Head, the one Lord, through the one faith and the one baptism.

What can we think would be the language of the Apostle if he stood with us today in the flesh, and witnessed the present division into various denominations? Assuredly he would tell us that it indicated a large measure of carnality--a large measure of the spirit of the world. This does not mean that all connected with these systems are carnal and wholly without the spirit of the Lord. It would, however, signify that in proportion as we have the Spirit of the Lord, and in proportion as we are freed from the carnal mind and its leadings and influence, in those same proportions we will feel out of sympathy with the divisions which we see about us, under various sectarian names; and in proportion as the holy Spirit of the Lord increases and abounds in us more and more, it will make us the more dissatisfied with every other name than the name of our Lord, until at last we shall, under the guidance of the Spirit, come to the place where we can recognize only the one Church, and the one membership, viz., "the Church of the First-born ones, whose names are written in heaven"; and the one method of induction into that Church, viz., by being baptized into our Master's body, his Ecclesia, and by being baptized into

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his death, thus becoming united to him and to all the other members by the one Spirit.

It is not for us to change the entire sentiment of Christendom on this subject--that is too great a contract for any human being. It is for us to be personally faithful to the Bridegroom--for each one who has named the name of Christ to depart from all iniquity, from everything wrong in respect to his own faith, conduct and customs. Such will

not be willing to be known by any other name than that of the Bridegroom, and when asked will take pleasure in owning his name and his alone--the only name given under heaven or amongst men whereby we must be saved. In obedience to the spirit of this truth, we will be separated from all sectarian names, as well as from all sectarian institutions, that we may stand free in the Lord. This will not mean that we must repudiate those who have the Lord's Spirit but are still connected with sectarian systems. We are, on the contrary, to recognize that our Lord's words, "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues," imply that some of his people are in Babylon and, therefore, laboring under misconceptions respecting sectarian institutions and names. It is for us to let our light shine, and to leave the results with the Lord.

Not only do we deprecate the taking of any human name, but we deprecate any name that is or might become a sectarian or party name, and thus separate some of the Lord's people from all others who are his. We would avoid the special use of the term "Christian Church," or the term "Church of God," as these names are used to identify particular faiths and communions amongst the Lord's people. Rather, we would use and answer to *all* the various *Scriptural names*, Disciples, Church of God, Church of Christ, Church of the Living God, Church at Corinth, Church at Allegheny, etc. We cannot avoid the fact that many will misunderstand us in this matter; nor should we take offense at them if, to some extent, they apply to us some peculiar designations, after the usual customs amongst Christian

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people. For instance, they may call us "Restitutionists," or "Dawnists," or "Watch Tower People," etc. We are not *recognize* any of these names, to the extent of applying them to ourselves--yet the spirit of meekness, of patience, of peace and of love, would indicate that we should not take offense at the application of such names, but charitably presume that the motive was not bad, or, at least, not vicious; and we should answer to such names kindly and not combatively--implying that we understand that we are meant, and as briefly and gently as possible indicate that we prefer to recognize no sectarian or party names, but stand on the name Christian, in its broadest and fullest sense, as signifying that we have no head other than our Lord Jesus Christ, and that we recognize no organization other than that which he organized

--the one Church of the Living God, the Ecclesia or Body of Christ, whose names are written in heaven.