

Zarah & Pharez

Part Four

Questions & Answers

**** One of the most commonly quoted scriptures in New Age literature is Luke 17:20-21. This is where, in response to the Pharisee's question concerning when the kingdom of God should come, Jesus said, 'The kingdom of God cometh not with observation...for behold, the kingdom of God is within you.' I've noticed that New Agers often use this to support their belief that the Spirit of God currently resides in every man, and that this is the truth to which all men should awaken. My question would be, is there a difference in the way teachers of sonship should interpret this passage, and, if so, how might that interpretation be expressed?***

We believe that there is a difference, and this is the way we would explain it.

First of all, it should be noted that the concept behind this interpretation actually originated from Eastern philosophy, and predates Christianity. It was borrowed by the gnostic community, and popularized through their texts. The strength of it lies in the fact that Jesus spoke this, not to His loyal followers, but to the Pharisees, to the very ones who rejected Him, who sought to have Him killed. New Agers are careful to point this out, saying that this is the biblical proof that God's indwelling Spirit is not limited to Christians alone, but is shared by all of mankind, regardless of belief, background or religious affiliation.

Traditionally, those who oppose this view have tried to get around it by saying that the word "within" should more accurately be rendered "in the midst of". Certain translations even word it that way. However, a simple examination of the original text, *Idou gar to basileia to theos entos humon esti* ("for lo, the kingdom of God within you is"), directly challenges that explanation. Had Jesus simply used the Greek word *en* in place of *entos*, there would be reason to justify an alternate rendering, such as "in the midst of". But the fact that He did not shows that He had something more specific in mind. The Greek word *entos* is restricted in its meaning to inside or within.

Others have argued that what Jesus *meant* to say was that when the kingdom of God *does* come, it will come from within, as a result of internal dealings and convictions pressed upon man's heart and mind. While this is not far from the truth, one still has to deal with the fact that Jesus told the Pharisees, "the kingdom of God **IS** within you".

Grammatically speaking, the word translated as "is" (Gr. *esti*) was used in the third person present indicative, thus making our Lord's intentions unmistakable. He was very clearly stating that the kingdom of God was and is presently within man, even in those who had and who have absolutely no intention of accepting Him as their Savior.

While it is true that the kingdom of God is in all men, we must not confuse God's possession with His presence. Furthermore, we must understand what it means to have the kingdom of God within us. It does NOT equate to having the Spirit of God within us. Herein lies what we believe to be the main source of misunderstanding between the two camps. The King should not be mistaken for His kingdom, nor should we assume that just because there is a kingdom, the King has already come and taken His abode in it. Without acknowledging these differences, great confusion can result.

The basic idea behind our English word "kingdom" is that it is literally "the king's domain". It's translated from the Greek word *basileia*, and means *royalty, i.e. rule or realm; kingdom, reign*. This is taken from another word which speaks of *a sovereign or a foundation of power*. Finally, this word stems from a primary root word, *basece*, which is defined as *a pace, i.e. the foot*. Taking all this into account, then, the kingdom might be described as the king's realm or domain; that place where he has chosen to establish a foundation for the moral, ethical, judicial and administrative outworking of his power. It speaks of that place where he has purposed to walk out his reign, and from whence he shall base all his conquests, eventually making all surrounding regions his footstool (that is, where all things are brought into complete submission to his will).

Isa. 66:1 says, "Thus saith the Lord, *The heaven is My throne, and the earth is My footstool.*" From this, it might easily be seen that the realm of Spirit is the place of His throne. God, being Spirit, abides in the realm of Spirit, and administers His righteous judgments from that high and lofty place. However, when God created man with a spirit within him, He did so with the intention of relocating the place of His throne. This intention is seen by the fact that one of the first things He commissioned the man to do was to have dominion over the fish of the sea, the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moved upon the earth. Man was to serve as a vassal king under the direct authority of the King of kings, who would go with him whithersoever he went. Therefore, it was through this marvelously creative act that God established a place within His creation from whence He would rule over all the rest of the works of His hands. O the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out!

It has always been God's purpose to base the reign of His kingdom in the spirit of man. This was the purpose for which it was created, and it remains so even to this day. Who among us would argue that the spirit of man is the place in which God has chosen to dwell, and from whence He has purposed to rule? This should be a generally accepted

fact. In spite of the fact that man rebelled, in spite of the fact that he sought independence from God's sovereign authority, and in spite of the fact that he desired another king to occupy the throne of his heart (that king being, the old "man of sin" who sits in the temple of God; II Thess. 2:3-4), it doesn't change the fact that his spirit is still the property of God, and, as such, has its place in God's eternal purposes.

God lays claim to the spirit of man in two ways. First, it is His by right of creation. Secondly, it is His by right of redemption. And, mind you, this goes for the spirits of all men, not just of those who believe. It was the treasure hid in a field, for which a wise Man gave all that he had to purchase. It is in light of this redemptive act that we are told, "For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's" (I Cor. 6:20). The price that He paid was for all mankind, without distinction, and without exception. Jesus offered Himself once for all, and will never have to pay that awful price again. His one-time sacrifice was sufficient for the redemption of all men, past, present, or future. Having paid the price for our freedom as our Kinsman Redeemer, we now belong to Him.

Still, some would contend that in order for the King to possess a kingdom, He must necessarily inhabit it. But this is not so. Ownership does not equate to occupation. Consider, if you will, Psalm 24. It opens with the declaration, "The earth is the Lord's, and the fullness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein." That's pretty inclusive, wouldn't you say? The Lord unquestionably owns it all, and all who dwell upon the face of the earth. No one or no thing exists outside of His possession. And yet, in verses 7-10, the word is given, "Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; AND THE KING OF GLORY SHALL COME IN. Who is this King of glory? The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle...The Lord of hosts, He is the King of glory. Selah." You see, though He owns *it* all, and though He owns *them* all, the King of glory must still come in and take up His abode. Only then will the earth be filled with His glory.

In a very real way, this prophetic psalm began to be fulfilled on the Day of Pentecost. Though Christ had already paid the ultimate price for man's redemption, and though He had clearly established Himself as the rightful Heir to the Throne (as Creator and Redeemer), He nevertheless instructed His disciples to wait in an upper room for His return. And what was the purpose in this? THE KING WAS ABOUT TO ENTER INTO HIS KINGDOM! As you know, He made that return, just as He'd promised He would. Once they lifted up their heads like gates, and opened up their hearts like everlasting doors, the King of glory came into His kingdom like a victorious King returning from the battlefield. Through death, He'd conquered him who had the power of death. And after He'd led captivity captive, He gave gifts unto men! Praise God! Therefore, for those who looked for Him, and who received Him into their hearts by faith, the message was forever settled in their heavens. For them, the kingdom of God was not meat or drink, but righteousness, peace and joy *in the Holy Ghost!*

Be it known that since the outpouring of His Spirit on the Day of Pentecost, the Lord has been coming into His kingdom ONE PERSON AT A TIME. It is His realm, His rightful

domain; and He comes to claim His possession. (Some have made the mistake in assuming that He came into the hearts of all men at this time; but why would Peter have exhorted those inquiring about the upper room phenomena to *repent, and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye SHALL receive the gift of the Holy Ghost,*" if it had just been given to them?) In this sense, it could truly be said that He has come, He is come, and He will yet come. He is coming unto His own. He is like the nobleman who went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom and to return (Lk. 19:12). This He has done. And from the moment that He comes and takes His abode in each of us as individuals, He immediately begins the process of military and political occupation. He starts by evicting the old king (the Adamic nature), and making war with the kings of the earth (the ruling forces, i.e. lusts and desires which war within our members). He goes forth conquering, and to conquer, pulling down strongholds, and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God. To be sure, there are many things which remain a mystery concerning the operation of God through the Spirit. Exactly how He conquers the powers of the flesh and of the mind within us is more than we can say in words. But one thing we can be certain of is that when the King of glory does come in, He will show Himself strong and mighty, mighty in battle. There is no passivity on His part as He takes peace from our *earth.*" He removes any comfort we may have enjoyed while living in sin, by creating a conflict between the flesh and our newly born Spirit! For, you see, He's determined that when the work is finished experientially as well as legally, it shall be said that *the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever!*

Therefore, to get back to the question, a difference may be seen between the way New Agers interpret Lk. 17:21 and the way those in sonship do so, simply by noting a difference between possession and presence. Just because the kingdom of God is within man does not mean that the King of glory has come in. His indwelling presence is what distinguishes believers from unbelievers. To teach men otherwise is to deprive them of a most wonderful experience, the experience of having Christ come into their hearts by faith. After all, it is only when Christ is in us of a truth that we have any real hope of glory (Col. 1:27).

**** One of the most common arguments I've heard against the teaching of Sonship is that it teaches that man can become a god. I know that the verse of scripture which is most commonly quoted in New Age writings to support this idea is John 10:34. This is where Jesus said to the Pharisees, 'Is it not written in your law, I have said, ye are gods?' My question, therefore, is twofold. First, does the message of Sonship actually teach this, and, secondly, since the Greek word used here, 'Theos,' is the same as is used in, say, John 1:1, wouldn't that suffice to show that Jesus was promoting polytheism?***

Through the course of this Q & A session, we hope to have other opportunities to address this most misunderstood subject. But for now, we'll focus our attention on the meaning of Jesus's words in this particular passage, and the ramifications that it has in regard to our subject. Was Jesus promoting polytheism when he told the Pharisees that they were

gods? Our answer to that would be an emphatic no, He was not. And in the course of our explanation as to why He was not, we believe that our position will become clearer to our readers.

It takes but a moment to see that the word *theos* was a word with varying applications to the Greek-speaking community of Jesus's day. To be sure of this, the number assigned to it in the Greek lexicon of Strong's concordance is # 2316, where it gives as its meaning, *a deity; especially (when used with # 3588) the supreme Divinity; figuratively a magistrate*. In other words, depending on the context in which it is used, *theos* can as easily refer to a magistrate as it can to the Most High. The definite article "the" (Gr. #3588) is often used to differentiate between the meanings (which is precisely the case in John 1:1).

Another point we should consider is the fact that when Jesus was speaking to the Pharisees about being "gods," He was quoting from the Old Testament. The passage which He cited is found in Psalm 82:6. Here, the Psalmist used the Hebrew word *elohim*. As you know, *elohim* is one of the most common words in the Hebrew language to be translated as God. And, like its Greek equivalent, *theos*, it, too, is a general word. Not only can it be used to speak of God, the supreme Being and Creator of the universe, but, also (as Strong's #430 defines it in the Hebrew lexicon), *gods in the ordinary sense* (that's *gods* with a little "g"). Wigram's Englishman's Hebrew Concordance of the Old Testament shows that the word *elohim* is used in Scripture to refer to the gods of the heathen nations; and it is sometimes used in reference to angels. It can even be used to describe the rulers and judges of Israel. In fact, in a purely generic sense, it can speak of anyone who is in a position of authority, or as the superlative of anything (for example, see Gen. 23:6; Ex. 18:11; 20:3; 22:8, 22; Psa. 8:5; 82:1; 138:1; Mal. 2:15; Jn. 10:34-35; Jon. 3:3; I Sam. 14:15).

If one will go back and read the 82nd Psalm, he will see the context in which it was used in verse 6. David's words were *not* directed toward a polytheistic group of deities, as some might suppose, but toward the judges of Israel, even "those to whom the Word of God came." The psalm opens with the statement, "God standeth in the congregation of the mighty; He judgeth among the gods." Then, for the next four verses, the Lord rebukes these "gods," or judges for their abuse of power. You see, the problem they were having was that they were judging unjustly, and were showing partiality to the wicked. They were neglecting their duty to protect the poor and the needy. And because they had failed to execute righteous judgment in the land, the foundations of the earth were out of course. In verse 6, God says to them through David, "I have said, ye are gods; and all of you are children of the Most High. But ye shall die like men, and fall like one of the princes...". These words might best be paraphrased this way: "...it was I who authorized you in the first place, to judge among My people. And it was I who caused you to be recognized as a part of My monarchical family of rulers, and seen in a symbolic light as 'the children of the Most High.' You were placed in your position for the sole purpose of representing Me. But somehow, you have imagined that you could do as you pleased, with no one to stop you. Don't you know that in spite of the fact that you are 'gods,' or judges over My people, you will die like men?" Clearly, He was not informing them of some deific state

which they may have possessed. He was simply telling them that in spite of the power which had been invested in them, they were still human, and subject to being judged like everyone else. In essence, the Lord was saying, "Your tenure is limited by your mortality; Mine is unlimited, and is infinite both in power and in jurisdiction. Remember this, O ye judges: you may be elohim; but I AM THE ELOHIM! You are under MY authority, and now you stand before Me!"

Taking this into account, then, we see that when Jesus told the Pharisees, "Is it not written in your law, I have said, ye are gods," He was no more telling them that they were in any sense divine than was David, when he was speaking in God's stead to the corrupt judges in his day. He was simply pointing out to them that being thought of as an elohim should not be considered blasphemy. After all, they were elohims, too. They were God's divinely-appointed representatives, who had been given power to execute His righteous judgments in the land. And along with this reminder was the rebuke originally issued through David. Despite their pious public appearance and their stringent demands for the keeping of the law, these hypocritical Pharisees were no different than those who'd gone before them.

Those who assume (wrongly) that sonship teaches polytheism usually point out that the chief temptation presented to the first couple in the Garden was, "Ye *SHALL be as gods, knowing good and evil*" (Gen. 3:5). That point is well taken. And yet, in the light of what we have just shared above, we submit to you that Adam and his wife were, in fact, "gods" even before this encounter...though not in the way the tempter intended for them to understand the term. In the event that someone still might not comprehend what the difference would be, please suffer us a few more lines to explain.

As you know, male and female Adam had been given a limited authority over creation from the time that they were formed. Together, they had dominion over all things on the terrestrial plane, namely, "over the fish of the sea, the fowl of the air, the cattle, over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth." However, there was a higher place reserved for them in the realm of dominion. Once they demonstrated responsibility on that level, they were destined to advance to rulership over *all* the works of God's hands (which included "the works of His fingers," the celestial realm; compare Gen. 1:6 with Psa. 8:3-6). In this regard, Adam was already seen as a part of Elohim to the earthly creation; possessing power and authority to bring God's will to pass. And inasmuch as they were uniquely made in the image of God, they twain were to be admired as such. They were facets and concepts of God, showing forth the radiant glory of their resplendent Lord. They were kings over which He is King, lords over which He is Lord (Rev. 19:16). And further, they were gods over which He is God (Dan. 2:47). However, the status which they held was not to be confused with that of THE Elohim, Who alone is Self-sufficient, Self-existent, Self-sustaining (see Exodus 3:14, "I AM"), and Who is the sole Object of worship. Whenever folks have a problem with this subject, it seems that it can always be traced back to a misunderstanding of this one particular point.

The notion that Adam was, or ever could be a god in the divine sense is totally unfounded in scripture. However, the idea that he could possibly attain to such a status obviously served as a tremendous temptation to him. Even though he had not yet experienced the fullness of God's intentions for him, and even though he was not yet ruling over the celestial realm, he was somehow tempted to believe that it would not be enough. He wanted absolute power—unbridled and unmitigated power over all things—and he wanted it right then. Furthermore, he wanted independence from God's sovereignty. He wanted to rival the Most High...and he believed that the thing which would give him that equality was the knowledge of good and evil. It was in this sense that the temptation became so appealing to him; and it was for this reason that he fell. He wanted to be an *elohim* in a deific sense, rather than simply an authoritative one. This was his temptation then; and it remains his temptation now. To this day, Adam's dust-smothered offspring are still trying to devise ways through which they can become divine.

Let us acknowledge, then, that we can claim to be *Christ* without claiming to be THE Christ; we can claim to be *theos* without claiming to be THE Theos; and we can claim to be *elohim* without claiming to be THE Elohim. As long as we understand the differences, there is no error committed by making such professions. But if we think that being any of these things somehow places us in deified status, then we'd better think again.

**** More and more, we are hearing the term *paradigm shift* used by spiritual leaders. Was Paul suggesting a paradigm shift when he wrote to the believers in Romans 12:2, *And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind*?***

It might be described that way. But there needs to be some clarification before settling on this. First of all, we need to establish exactly what we mean by the term, "paradigm shift." The American Heritage Dictionary gives the meaning as "example, model: set side by side." It has to do with a showing by way of comparison. In modern usage, it generally speaks of a theoretical framework, and, in a loose definition can be used to mean "the predominant view of things." However, this is certainly not the way New Agers use it. Marilyn Ferguson describes it as the harmonization of conflicting ideas into a synthesis: "the insight that allows the information to come together in a new form or structure. Paradigm change attempts to heal the delusion of either-or, of this-or-that. In many ways, it is the most challenging kind of change because it relinquishes certainty. It allows for different interpretations from different perspectives at different times" (Aquarian Conspiracy, pg. 72). In other words, it is the theoretical insight that seeks to transcend the conceptual spheres surrounding right and wrong, by erasing the lines which separate them into two categories, and thus enlarging the circle to include them both. Therefore, with these things in mind, we could say that Paul was suggesting the adaptation of a new paradigm in the common usage of the word, but not in the relativistic way New Agers employ it.

Secondly, the apostle was not implying that it was merely the act of shifting from one paradigm to another that initiates the transformation of an individual. Instead, it has to do with the substance of that shift. Basically, what Paul meant was that when an individual

makes a conscious shift from the paradigm of this world to the paradigm of Christ, he can expect to see the quickening, transforming power of the resurrection at work in his life. Note well, however, that the emphasis is not from one paradigm which no longer seems to work for you, to another which may better suit your interests at the time. It is from a wrong paradigm or paradigms to the right one. And the right one is very specific in its definition. It has to do with the mind of Christ, as opposed to every other mind set or worldview available. You see, those who promote the New Age message emphasize the need to shift *from* any message or belief system which is exclusive to all others, but that *to* which the shift is made is usually somewhat ambiguous (this, in turn, explains why so many within the movement jump from one relativistic paradigm to another, without ever settling on anything). This was not the case with Paul. He had something definitely in mind when he wrote these words in Rom. 12:2. This raises another question:

*** *Was Paul encouraging his readers to enter into an altered state of consciousness?***

Again, before answering that, we must establish what is meant by the term, and also, remember to whom he was speaking. Paul, in his writing, was targeting a specific audience ~~YYY~~whom he referred to as brethren (Rom. 12:1). This is important to note, because *only those who have first been born again have a mind which might be in need of an alteration.* All others have a fleshly mind, a corrupted mind, a mind blinded by the god of this world, and, as such, are in need of receiving an entirely new mind altogether. Perhaps we need to explain what we mean by this a little more in detail.

Whenever an individual partakes of the New Covenant, God gives him a new heart, and a new spirit (Ezek. 11:19; 36:26; Jer. 31:33). He puts His laws into his mind, and writes them in his heart (Heb. 8:10; 10:16). When this occurs, the individual becomes a new creature (II Cor. 5:17), and, as such, becomes the recipient of the mind of Christ (I Cor. 2:16). What this means is that God's mind in Christ is made available to that individual, so that he may think in accordance with God's will. He can know all things by the witness of the indwelling Spirit (I John 2:27), and can see all things as God sees them through the eyes of Christ (John 16:12-15; I Cor. 2:9-16). However, as we have all learned by way of experience, there are certainly times when we need to be reminded of this, and times when we need to have our thinking altered to line up with His. This is why Paul encouraged us in Eph. 4:23 to *be renewed in the spirit of your mind*; and why Peter said *I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance* (II Pet. 3:1). Periodically, we need to be awakened to the mind of Christ within, so that we can walk together in the same mind and the same judgment. Therefore, when Paul wrote of being *transformed by the renewing of your mind*, this renewal, or alteration in consciousness can only be made in those to whom the mind of Christ has first been given. Any alteration of consciousness made by an unbeliever, no matter how *spiritual* it might seem, is but an alteration of the natural Adamic mind, the mind with which all men are naturally born. It only stands to reason, then, that any attempt to use this verse to support New Age practices would be a gross misappropriation of the Word.

The error of New Age thinking is that it assumes the mind of Christ (referred to in metaphysical circles as *Universal Mind*, or *the Oversoul*) to be assessable to all,

and through a variety of different ways. Marilyn Ferguson wrote of what is known as psychotechnologies systems which are designed to bring about deliberate change in consciousness. These systems include the innumerable meditation techniques now popular in Western culture such as Zen, Transcendental, kundalini, raja and tantric yoga, and psychosynthesis. They also include certain consciousness-raising methods which involve the assistance of others, such as biofeedback, hypnosis, and Rolfing, as well as the various mind/body disciplines and therapies, such as T'ai Chi, bionergetics, aromatherapy, reflexology, iridology, and Applied Kinesiology. To quote from her own words: "Individuals may independently discover a new way of paying attention and may learn to induce such states by methods of their own devising. **Anything can work.**" (The Aquarian Conspiracy, Chapter 4, pg. 87). And when she says anything, she means it. Even the use of hallucinogenic drugs is sanctioned, as long as it's acknowledged that the door which they open is but a temporary one at best; nor should they be considered a true discipline.

In Eastern philosophy, Hinduism in particular, the Sanscrit word *dharma* is used to describe the many doors which one may find to gain access into the higher spiritual realms of existence. By applying the principle found in the words of Jesus, then, we might say that the Eastern mind represents the broad way of inclusivism, which could actually be envisioned as a hallway. Within this hallway, there are multitudinous *dharma doors*, all of which lead to destruction. The mind of Christ, however, is straight and narrow, and directly leads one into the realm wherein is life and peace. It is not a general entranceway, but a very specific one. And Jesus claimed to be the only legitimate Door, the embodiment of the Way, the Truth, and the Life. In fact, He said that if anyone attempts to enter any other way, he is a thief and robber. Therefore, if we were to use the term, "paradigm shift," we would have to say that Paul was encouraging his readers not to think in conformance with the general worldview, the mindset which allows for many different ways, but to be transformed by the renewing of their minds, by letting this mind be in them that was also in Christ Jesus (Phil. 2:5). And His mind is always in agreement with the Scriptures. Remember, "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death" (Prov. 14:12). Only with the mind of Christ can we find the results after which all men seek..

**** Would it be proper to refer to the process under which we have been going as an evolution?***

First, let's consider the meaning of the word. Evolution, according to Webster's Third New International Dictionary has as its primary meaning, *a series of changes in a certain direction: a process of change: organic development: unfolding, movement, transformation.* As far as we can tell, there is nothing here which would disqualify the use of this word in describing the process of spiritual transformation. However, we should keep in mind the popular implication that it has. *Cosmic Evolution*, as liberal theologian Matthew Fox has referred to it in his writings, is the evolutionary process humankind has been experiencing since the beginning of creation. It includes natural evolution as Darwin explained it in its past, and a quantum transformation into the Divine in its future. Furthermore, it transpires, not only over the course of one's lifetime, but

over the course of many incarnations, evolving upward in its development when one's karma is "positive", and devolving when it is "negative." On the other hand, the evolutionary process of the Spirit (if we were to refer to it as that) begins at the point of one's conversion, and moves the individual in a fixed and predetermined direction: toward conformity to the image of the Son, that He might be the Firstborn of many brethren (Rom. 8:29).

If we accept Paul's words to be the inspired word of God when he said, "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (II Cor. 5:17), then we must also believe that this constitutes our starting point as a part of the new species of God. At the moment that this occurs, we are translated from darkness to light, from the old creation to the new, from Adam to Christ. We are "caught up," as it were, out of a fallen species, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and into a heavenly species, "the new Genos," you might say, which is created in righteousness and true holiness. Thus it can truly be said that we are now in Christ Jesus, having come into being by the will of God (John 12-13). And even as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the Heavenly.

For those who have experienced the initial work of regeneration, therefore, we could say that we are evolving in spirit. And the way that this evolution transpires could be described something like this. Just as a baby evolves mentally, physically, and emotionally toward the measure of the stature of full manhood, even so does God's children in the Spirit. Within every Word-begotten son or daughter of His resides the seed of His life. And within this seed lies the potential to grow into the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. This means that our Father has already given us everything that we will ever need as pertains to life and godliness. It's a part of our genetic makeup. Now, all that is necessary is the guidance of our heavenly Tutor to bring us to an expected end, and an awareness of every good thing that is in us in Christ Jesus.

Phil. 1:6 says that "He who has begun a good work in you will not fail to perform it until the Day of Christ." This suggests that there is an ongoing work of the Holy Spirit in us, to bring us through the seasons of spiritual life. We should know that the Holy Spirit, from the moment that He takes His abode in us, works incessantly to change us into His glorious image, "from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord" (II Cor. 3:18). Once we have been born again, He then begins the process of moving us from the glory of a spiritual infant (Gr. *technion*, ref. Matt. 18:2) to the glory of a spiritual adolescent (Gr. *technon*, ref. I Jn. 3:2). From there, He continues His good work in us by moving us to the next dimension of glory, which is the glory of a mature son (Gr. *huios*, ref. Rom. 8:14, 19). This is the realm where we are totally led by the Spirit of God, doing all things exactly as He would do them, since we have come to see Christ as He is. In this sense, we could say that we undergo an evolution in the Spirit, moving from infancy to puberty to manhood, growing continuously in wisdom and in stature, and taking on the likeness of the Son of God.

The chief difference between the two concepts of evolution would be found in the fact that, while so-called Cosmic evolutionists incorporate the idea of reincarnation, and of

multiple quantum leaps from species to species until one finally arrives at a state of pure and unadulterated Deity, the message of sonship promotes the idea that there is but one grand leap, from the old creation to the new, and that this leap is accomplished, from start to finish, by the power of resurrection. For those of us who have been born from above, this leap began when our spirits were translated from death unto life, continues through the transformation of our souls, and will be consummated at the transfiguration of our bodies. For us, there will never be another leap, nor will we ever be anything other than what we already are in spirit. And while we can truthfully say that it does not yet appear what we shall be, we can also say that any other change which is slated to occur in us will *not* be from species to species, but will be within the new species, which species we are. (The fact of the matter is, we are just now learning what it means to be the children of God!)

**** Was the instantaneous transformation of which Paul spoke in I Corinthians 15:51 to be understood as what Pere Teilhard de Chardin referred to in his writings as the Omega Point?***

To answer this in a single word, no. It is often made to sound the same, and the passage is often quoted to lend biblical support for this concept, but it is not the same.

For the sake of clarity, we need to establish exactly what it is that we are talking about here. The change to which Paul referred is the climax of the resurrection process; the crowning achievement of the resurrected Christ. It will be actual, physical, and will effect the bodies of those who are asleep in Christ, as well as of those who are alive and remain at His coming. When the apostle was inspired to write that *we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye,*" he used the Greek word *atomos*. Though the concept of time can be factored into it, this word refers not so much to time as it does to substance. It is from thence that we get our English word ATOM. Simply stated, this change, this metamorphosis, this mighty transfiguration shall occur in the very cells of our bodies, in the minutest subatomic particles of our beings. There shall come such a radical change that it will transform even the blood which courses through our veins, wherein the life of the flesh is found. At such a time, the work of regeneration will be complete; and those of us who are in Christ will know in its fullest sense what it means to be the *re-gened* ones, that is, children of the regeneration. For us, death will be swallowed up of life, mortality will put on immortality, that which is corruptible shall put on incorruption, and we shall be changed.

Like Paul, Teilhard also taught that a change was coming which would involve the literal transfiguration of our bodies. He believed that this change will so effect our mortal flesh that it will place it beyond the reach of death and decay. However, unlike the apostle, he reached an entirely different conclusion concerning that from which this change will result. Teilhard believed that there will come a point in which mankind will reach an Omega state, which, to hear him tell it, will be the ultimate and final state of man's evolutionary process. According to his theory, it will be in this state that man, through the progressive evolution of his consciousness, will have lifted himself out of the miry mud puddle of mortality, and into a state of oneness with (to use his terms) *the Impersonal*

Universal, the All." Once this reunification has taken place in the realm of consciousness, and man has fully awakened to his true identity, it will quite naturally result in a quickening of his body, wherein the illusory effects of sickness, disease, and death will simply disappear.

While there are several things which deserve to be addressed here, we'll limit our comments to one—the idea that all that is needed to bring about the glorification of one's body is to harness, and thus redirect the course of one's thoughts. It has become quite popular to believe that if we can just get enough people to think differently about their evolutionary destiny, the power of that positive thinking will result in bodily transformation.

In essence, this concept can also be found in the writings of one who has occasionally been mistaken as a teacher of sonship, Annalee Skarin. In 1952, she wrote, *"In the next stage of existence we may no longer use symbols but deal in the actual, eternal substance of vibration itself. The vibration of light and love will be the eternal elements of our existence—and back of all vibration is the force of thought or intelligence that created the vibration originally. When we arrive at the point where we will no longer be dealing in symbols but in eternal substance of thought and vibrations, each individual will be measured, not by what he has, or even by what he knows, or who he is, but by WHAT HE IS. He will find that he is the personification of all the thoughts and vibrations he created and sent forth in life...Happy joyous thoughts send a rhythmic current of singing health vibrations surging through our physical bodies, for the physical body, if seen in its true spiritual or scientific sense, is vibration or Spirit... we are no more or less than the thoughts we hold and the vibrations we send out into the universe.*

"Learn to control vibrations by controlling thoughts and you will hold the keys of eternal life in your hands. The eternal energy surging through all matter, the power of existence in atoms with their whirling molecules and electrons in all earthly substances are nothing more or less than vibrations condensed to the point of slow, heavy, mortal tangibility. Control vibrations and the power to control substance and material energy will eventually be given, that is, the keys of handling eternal life, for energy is life. And life and light and love and energy are the eternal elements and are vibrations created by mental thinking. Every thought sent forth is a never ending vibration winging its way across the universe to bring us back just what we sent forth. We can control the vibrations that emanate from us ~~and~~ and we can thereby control our destinies.

*"Thus science and religion can at last join hands and step across into the spiritual realm of eternal progress and happiness together. One reaches the higher knowledge through a complete understanding of the material elements which melt into light and energy and vibration through investigation; the other through its direct search into the spiritual, for both the material and the spiritual are one, expressed in varied degrees of intensity and vibration" (end of quote from her book, *Ye are Gods*).*

As we say, there are many within the New Age community who believe that the merger between New Age spirituality and modern medical science will eventually result in the

creation of the new, immortal body for mankind. In her book, *Revelation: the Book of Co-creation*, Barbara Marx Hubbard wrote, *“The transformation is about to begin. Those who are to evolve are even now transforming their material bodies. A new material is being generated out of the old. The body-change, the inner radiation which some of you now feel, is a preliminary experience to prepare you for the alchemy you are about to undergo.*

“You must begin the transformation of your body. Signal your system that the co-creative capacities must turn on. Stimulate the mechanisms of rejuvenation by the intention to evolve and by the willingness to release yourselves from the limits of the creature/human condition. Support your scientific research into the aging mechanism. Learn how you are programmed to degenerate, and reprogram the mechanism to regenerate. Learn to repair your cells and regenerate your world.

“Your genes can be reached two ways: One, through inner communication, mind-to-DNA, through intense focus on becoming a new human, a natural Christ. The information already exists that can build you a new body more sensitive to thought. Your intention will trigger the information into action. The second way to reach the genes is through outer communication. Your molecular biologists are now examining the degeneration mechanism. They will discover that essential to the reprogramming is the total intention of the person to marry me, to become, not an eternal creature/human (a monstrosity), but an ever-evolving natural Christ (a divinity). Your transformation to natural Christhood will require the fusion of your scientific and spiritual capacities. You must mature your science to see how God works, while at the same time you mature your spirit to experience yourself working as God works, by creative intention and love. The rest will be a wonderful surprise.” ---end quote.

This “transmutation,” as she refers to it throughout her book, will be the result of longevity research and genetic engineering, the product of men’s thoughts and the work of men’s hands. From this perspective, even the dead can be resurrected to life through the process of cloning. (While this might have been thought of as absurd only a few years ago, it seems that nothing will be restrained from them now, which they have imagined to do.)

While we have taken up considerable space with these quotes, our response to all this need not be lengthy. Jesus said, *“Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit to his stature?”* (Matt. 6:27). It is as unlikely as an Ethiopian changing the color of his skin, or a leopard changing his spots. Why, then, should we believe that we can think our way into glorification?

We are aware of the fact that much can be effected through the realignment of one’s thought patterns. Solomon also acknowledged this, when he said, *“For as [a man] thinketh in his heart, so is he”* (Prov. 23:7). By changing the way one thinks about things in life, he can become a happy, healthy, and successful individual in the realm of human affairs. Furthermore, there is no denying that medical science has done much to alleviate the suffering of mankind, bringing comfort to millions who would otherwise find their

situation in life unbearable. Admittedly, our lives and health are much more manageable than were those of previous generations as a result of modern medical and biological discoveries. But let's make no mistake about it; the process whereby we are resurrected out from among the dead, lifted into the newness of life, and ultimately quickened in our mortal bodies, is solely the work of Christ from within. In regard to this, we can only wait until our change comes (Job 14:14).

Two scriptures come to mind which pertain to this subject. The first is Phil. 3:20-21. *For our conversation is in heaven; from whence we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself.*" The second is Rom. 8:11. *But if the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in you.*" Let it be clearly understood, therefore, that our hope of glory lies not in our ability to exercise mind-over-matter, by contacting, controlling and thus quickening the vibratory rate of our genes; neither is it in the discoveries of genetic tinkering to extend the lifespan of, or add new life to the earthy house of this tabernacle. Far be it from the truth! Christ in us is our ONLY hope of glory; and He performs His glorious work, from start to finish, according to the working whereby He subdues all things unto Himself!

We recognize that the unholy union of 21st century science and New Age spirituality may indeed produce its transmutations." It may bring forth clones by working off of the information provided in the DNA molecules of others. But know of a surety that this will be Adam's last, best effort to imitate the life-giving power of the Spirit! You see, while the power of God has often been imitated; it has never been replicated (and the problems which will emerge from man's God-playing game will require solutions from the wisdom of that One greater than Solomon!)

In the tradition of Paul's fine reasoning, we ask: having begun in the Spirit, shall we now be made perfect by the flesh? The work of resurrection and transfiguration is the operation of God by the Spirit, NOT the operation of men by the power of his intellect. After all, the natural man receives not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; neither indeed can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. That means that they cannot be discerned through a microscope, and they cannot be produced in a test tube. It takes the Spirit of God to reveal the things of the Spirit...and only the Spirit of Life can produce the life of the Spirit!

It's our conviction that if the firstborn Son didn't need a team of scientists to help Him come forth from the grave, then neither will His many brethren. And since He didn't have to rely on the meditations of like-minded believers to assist in His ascension, then neither will we in ours. It was THE INDWELLING HOLY SPIRIT that raised Christ from the dead; and it will be that same Spirit dwelling within us that shall quicken OUR mortal bodies, and make them like unto His glorious body. Ah, dear friend, let us place our absolute trust in Him who is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we can

ask or think, according to the power which worketh in us (ref. Eph. 3:20)! THIS is the hope of sonship...for we have His word on it! Hallelujah!

to be continued...

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