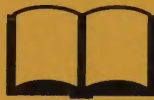




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LIGHT  
CONSCIOUSNESS

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**LIGHT  
CONSCIOUSNESS**

DWIGHT K. KALITA, Ph.D.

CONSCIOUSNESS AND THE  
UNCONSCIOUS

CONSCIOUSNESS  
LIGHT

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# LIGHT CONSCIOUSNESS

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Voices and Visions  
of the Poets and Prophets  
in the (newly released)  
*DEAD SEA SCROLLS,*  
*NAG HAMMADI LIBRARY,*  
and the BIBLE

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DWIGHT K. KALITA, Ph.D.

LIGHTHOUSE PUBLICATIONS  
Defiance, Ohio

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# IN THE BEGINNING

(Genesis 1: 1-3)

**"AND GOD SAID:**

**‘Let there be light’;  
and there was light."**



# AND THEN

**YEARS LATER: 800 B.C. (*Upanisads*)**

Radhakrishnan, *The Principal Upanisads* (NY: Harper, 1953), p. 390.

## A HINDU WRITER SAID:

"Now the light which shines above this heaven, above all, above everything, in the highest worlds beyond which there are no higher, verily, that is the same as this light which is here within the person."

**YEARS LATER: 566-480 B.C. (*Gospel of Buddha*)**

Carus, *The Gospel of Buddha* (London: Open Court, 1915), p. 143.

## BUDDHA SAID:

"A brother who with firm determination walks in the noble path is sure to come forth into the light..."

**YEARS LATER: 4 B.C.-29 A.D. (*Nag Hammadi Library*)**

Robinson, *The Nag Hammadi Library* (NY: Harper, 1988), pp. 33-34.

## JESUS SAID:

"Trust in me, brethren, understand what the great light is."

**YEARS LATER: 570-632 A.D. (*Koran*)**

Arberry, *The Koran Interpreted* (NY: MacMillan, 1955), p. 51.

## MOHAMMED SAID:

"And God guides to His Light whom He will."





# PROLOGUE

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VOICES & VISIONS OF THE POETS AND PROPHETS IN  
THE (newly released) *DEAD SEA SCROLLS*<sup>1</sup>  
THE NAG HAMMADI LIBRARY  
AND THE BIBLE

## NEW ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVIDENCE

A new archaeological finding has unearthed a collection of ancient religious documents (e.g., *The Gospel of Thomas*, -- which contain exactly 114 sayings of Jesus -- *The Gospel of Mary*, *The Gospel of Philip*, *The Gospel of Truth*, *The Apocalypse of Peter*, and others) called *The Nag Hammadi Library*. These historically censored writings, which scholars refer to as "the greatest and most important religious discovery of our century," were buried near Nag Hammadi, Egypt, by Pachomian monks around sixteen hundred years ago.

The recent discovery of these Nag Hammadi codices has radically changed our perception of the early Judeo-Christian tradition. We now understand that, in addition to the Bible, a collection of other Christian gospels were written during the first and second centuries. And this "Other Bible,"<sup>2</sup> if we may call it that, not only provides astonishing revelations into the man Jesus, His Spirit, and the way He thought, but it also offers refreshing new insights into His unique teachings. *Light-Consciousness* carefully examines these revelations and insights and discusses their meaning and significance for the modern world.

There is also some very exciting religious news about another twentieth century archaeological discovery. Specifically, on September 22, 1991, the news media announced that the Huntington Library would release the remaining unpublished *Dead Sea Scrolls*. It took over forty years since their discovery, but at last, all the frustrated scholars and curious laymen who have been denied access to these extremely important religious documents are now able to study them in an atmosphere of intellectual freedom and cooperation.

*Light-Consciousness* correlates these Nag Hammadi and Dead Sea Scroll documents and compares their presentation of Light and spiritual illumination to parallel patterns found in the Bible. In so doing, *Light-Consciousness* uncovers the surprising truth that Jesus and the Jewish Essene: Teacher of Righteousness (TOR), shared a common vision of Light. And it also demonstrates that they used a pool of strikingly similar poetic symbols to describe this vision. Indeed, the irrefutable facts contained within recent archaeological discoveries now confirm that the eloquent and ethical words written by the Teacher of Righteousness in *The Dead Sea Scrolls* often directly parallel those which were spoken by Jesus and then interpreted for us by Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Thomas, Philip, Peter, etc.

#### EXAMPLES OF A COMMON SYMBOLIC VISION OF LIGHT

(Jesus): Bible

1. And he [Jesus] was transfigured before them, and **his face shone like the sun and his garments became white as light.** (Matthew 17:2)

(Jesus): Bible

2. **Walk while you have the light...** While you have the light, believe in the light that **you may become sons of light.** (John 12:35-36)

(Jesus): *Nag Hammadi Library*

3. **There is light within a man of light, and he lights up the whole world.** If he [man] does not shine, he is **darkness.**<sup>3</sup>

(Jesus): *Nag Hammadi Library*

4. Trust in me, brethren; understand what **the great light** is.<sup>4</sup>

(TOR): *Dead Sea Scrolls*

1. **Thou [God] has illumined my [the Essene Teacher of Righteousness] face...And like a true dawn at daybreak** Thou has appeared unto me... All who walk in this Spirit, it consists of...[a] **garment of honor in everlasting light.** (211, 80)

(TOR): *Dead Sea Scrolls*

2. **They [i.e., "the sons of light"] walk in the ways of light.** (78)

(TOR): *Dead Sea Scrolls*

3. The sons of righteousness [or "the sons of light"] **shall lighten all the ends of the world,** until all moments of **darkness** are consumed. (170)<sup>5</sup>

(TOR) *Dead Sea Scrolls*

4. The splendor of Thy [God's] glory has become unto me as **a light** everlasting.<sup>6</sup>

Moreover, this book establishes that other poets and prophets throughout history have shared in this uniquely human yet very spiritual, universal, and/or archetypal consciousness of Light. And when describing this religious consciousness, they too interlaced common and/or overlapping symbols of Light throughout the poetic tapestry of their writings.

Finally, this book describes the wondrous and spiritual characteristics of "Light-consciousness," and considers how its awesome spiritual powers can be used and appreciated by modern man.

\*\*\*\*\*

#### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dwight Kalita, Ph.D., writer, lecturer, and researcher, has co-authored four books and has co-edited one book. Moreover, he has written numerous literary and theological articles in professional journals. His area of expertise is in the interdisciplinary field of interpreting poetic/religious symbolism. In addition to his past university teaching responsibilities in English, poetry, and religion, he is currently President of K.T.S., Inc. He is also Research Director of the Bio-Ecologic Research Center.

## REFERENCES (Prologue)

1. In this book, some references to the Essene Teacher of Righteousness will be abbreviated as TOR. **Bold face print** will be used throughout the book to highlight words, phrases, and figures of speech that are similar in nature. And when quoting from the (newly released) *Dead Sea Scrolls*, SMALL CAPS will be used. Otherwise, regular print will be used when quoting from the previously published Scroll materials.

The primary quotation source for the previously released Scroll documents will be Dupont-Sommer's *The Essene Writing from Qumran* (Massachusetts: Peter Smith, 1973). Unless otherwise noted, all subsequent Scroll page numbers listed within the text of *Light-Consciousness* -- e.g., (242) -- will come from this extremely accurate and beautifully poetic translation. Moreover, the primary quotation source for the newly released Scroll fragments will be: Robert Eisenman and Michael Wise, translators, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Uncovered* (Massachusetts: Element Books Limited, 1992). Unless otherwise noted, all subsequent unpublished Scroll fragment references listed within the text of *Light-Consciousness* -- e.g., 4Q541 (p. 240) -- will come from this distinguished and scholarly translation. The first number (4Q541) refers to the scholarly reference code of the Scroll fragment being quoted. The second number (p. 240) is its page location in *The Dead Sea Scrolls Uncovered*.

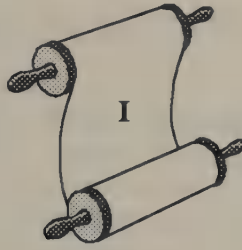
2. Willis Barnstone first coined this term in his book: *The Other Bible* (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1984). He used it to describe not only *The Nag Hammadi Library* but also a large group of other holy texts that the early Church Fathers excluded from the Old or New Testaments.

3. James M. Robinson, *The Nag Hammadi Library* (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1988), p. 129. All references to this book will be designated NHL.

4. NHL, pp. 33-34.

5. Identifying the precise author and date of each of the numerous newly released fragments and previously released Scrolls will be an exceedingly difficult -- if not impossible -- task to accomplish. However, when we occasionally quote a particular fragment or Scroll whose probable date of composition, choice of words, poetic technique, and theological content closely parallel those writings which have already been linked to the Teacher of Righteousness, we will assume that either the Teacher himself wrote the material or that some other unidentified Qumran author who had "faith in him" (263) -- and who was thus strongly influenced by the revered "voice of the Teacher" (141, 184) -- wrote it. In either case, such quotations, be they from new fragments or previously released Scrolls, will be listed under the TOR column; they also will be quoted as if the revered "voice of the Teacher" is speaking directly to us. Furthermore, unidentified comments about the Teacher of Righteousness will also be listed under the TOR column. For more details concerning the writings of the Teacher of Righteousness, see pp. 9-10.

6. Theodor H. Gaster, *The Dead Sea Scriptures* (New York: Doubleday Anchor Books, 1956), pp. 182-183.



## THE SONS OF LIGHT

---

I have reached the inner vision,  
and through the Spirit Thou has placed within me,  
come to know Thee, my God.  
Through Thy Holy Spirit,  
through Thy mystic insight,  
Thou has caused a spring of knowledge  
to well up within me,  
a fountain of strength,  
pouring forth waters unstinted,  
a floodtide of loving kindness and of all-consuming zeal.  
Thou hast put an end to my darkness  
and the splendor of Thy glory has become unto me as  
a light everlasting.<sup>1</sup>

The Teacher of Righteousness  
*The Dead Sea Scrolls*

---

In *The Literary Guide to the Bible*, Robert Alter writes about a common "symbolic framework" of expression that exists among all the books of the Old and New Testament. When describing what he calls the "degree of symbolic cohesiveness" within the Bible, he states:

It is clear that the various texts exploit recurrent symbols which, however dictated by the topography, geography, history, and climate of ancient Israel, become a unifying way of conceiving the world, of referring the discrete data of historical and individual experience to large interpretive patterns.<sup>2</sup>

Many of the Old and New Testament poets and prophets intentionally interlaced a collection of "recurrent symbols" throughout the poetic tapestry of the Bible. They did so because they wanted to create a unified allegorical design that would depict a common vision of reality.

We should not be surprised that many of the Biblical authors used "recurrent symbols" in their writings. Consider, for example, that most of the information we have about Jesus comes from people who interpreted His teachings many decades after His death. These people, of course, dearly loved to read the "sacred predecessors" of the Old Testament. In fact, when Mark (70-80 A.D.), Matthew (85-95 A.D.), Luke (90-100 A.D.), and John (100-110 A.D.), read their "Bible," they most assuredly studied the Psalms, Isaiah, or some other Old Testament narrative. This is a significant fact to keep in mind because the literary themes, images, and symbols of the Old Testament often reappear in the New Testament. Hence, as Frank Kermode suggests, the New Testament authors "authenticated their story" about Jesus, as well as "discovered" a considerable amount of this story's symbolic "materials," in the Old Testament. Writes Kermode:

The literary relations of the Gospels to the Old Testament are as close and intimate as any that one can imagine between two texts. In establishing this intimacy the evangelists not only authenticated their story but discovered its materials... The Old Testament, therefore, shapes the narrative of the New, which cannot be fully understood without reference to its sacred predecessor.<sup>3</sup>

In the light of this literary connection between the Old and New Testaments, our study will center on one category of "recurrent symbols" that appears throughout the Bible. The name of this category is: Light-symbolism.

Light-symbolism finds its source of inspiration in an extraordinary human experience called: Light-consciousness. In succinct terms, Light-consciousness is man's ecstatic experience of God's Light.<sup>4</sup> Such an experience is spiritual in nature, and those who share in it often proclaim its profoundly meaningful and universal nature.

Here at the outset, we must understand that many of the Biblical poets and prophets used Light-symbolism to describe their own spiritual consciousness of God's Light. The Genesis author, for instance, first associated God and Light when he had God say: "Let there be light"; and there was light."<sup>5</sup> Later on, other Biblical authors wrote symbolically about "garments" that were "white as light" and about "doves" that can "alight" upon man. They also wrote about "furnaces of fire" and insisted that man must behold "the light of life." Moreover, they reported to us that a man's "face" can shine "like the sun," and they said that his spirit can become like a "lamp" which brightens the whole world. They even talked about "the sons of light" and about "walking while you have the light."

We must also understand, however, that the various poetic expressions of Light-consciousness are not limited to the Bible alone. Many men in different parts of the world and throughout history have had this spiritual experience and have used the general category of Light-symbolism to represent its meaning. More specifically, this book will demonstrate that many of the symbolic figures of speech attributed directly to Jesus can be found in the "sacred predecessors" of such Old Testament writings as the Psalms. But in addition to this, we will learn that the symbolic cohesiveness which binds the words of Jesus and the Psalmist into a common pool of literary expression also exists in the recently discovered *The Nag Hammadi Library* and *The Dead Sea Scrolls*. In fact, in reference to Light-consciousness, we will unearth the astonishing news that the Jewish Essene "Messiah" and major contributor to *The Dead Sea Scrolls*: namely, the Teacher of Righteousness, often used the exact same nouns, adjectives, verbs, adverbs, and symbols as did Jesus.

And so, when we begin comparing the poetic and prophetic literature of the Old and New Testament, *The Nag Hammadi Library*, and *The Dead Sea Scrolls*, we will discover a universally expressed Light-symbolism that is scattered, like shining diamonds, throughout all of these religious books. But we will also begin to see a common Light, or a common and/or archetypal experience of Light, that glistens in the words of many poets and prophets of the past.

Concerning the common or universal nature of Light-consciousness, Abraham Maslow suggests that any genuine religious experience is like a transcendent and personal "peak-experience." And these "peak-experiences," as he continues, are the main source of inspiration for many of the historical prophets and spiritual leaders of the world:

The very beginning, the intrinsic core, the essence, the universal nucleus of every known high religion (unless Confucianism is also called a religion) has been the private, lonely, personal illumination, revelation, or ecstasy of some acutely sensitive prophet or seer... But it has recently begun to appear that these "revelations" or mystical illuminations can be subsumed under the head of the "peak-experiences" or "ecstasies" or "transcendent" experiences which are now being eagerly investigated by many psychologists.<sup>6</sup>

Maslow considers the peak-experience to be the universal foundation upon which all the major religions of the world were originally constructed. In his words, it is "the universal nucleus of every known high religion." Moreover, modern psychologists no longer classify the mystical illumination, or the peak-experience, as an unrealistic subject of investigation. On the contrary, many scientists, as he points out, are enthusiastically studying these experiences as important topics of research.

Maslow is not the only twentieth century scholar who contemplated the universal dimension of the prophetic religious consciousness. Eliade also studied the genuine spiritual experience. When doing so, he came to the conclusion that there are a series of "archetypes" within every human "hierophany." The word: "hierophany" means "to reveal or make known" (phainein) the "holy or sacred" (hieros). The word: "archetype" points to the universal nature of all hierophanies. Eliade explains his point:

The very dialectic of the sacred, tends to repeat a series of archetypes, so that a hierophany realized at a certain historical moment is structurally equivalent to a hierophany a thousand years earlier or



later.<sup>7</sup>

Using less technical jargon, we can translate Eliade's statement into the following words: As human beings, we experience reality in certain universal or archetypal ways. All men participate in these archetypal experiences because all human psyches are hard-wired with certain universal and pre-programmed responses. Observe, for instance, how most men react to the death of a loved one. No matter whether they are a Christian, a Buddhist, or a Hindu, the vast majority of people in this world mourn their loss with emotions of sorrow, depression, and/or melancholy.

In a similar fashion, when we genuinely experience God, we learn that God manifests Himself within an "archetypal" or universal model of human consciousness. This psychic model may appear in India, Israel, China, or any other part of the world. But wherever it appears, it is always the same because the spiritual building materials used in its construction are intrinsically part of the human psyche. Hence, all hierophanies, or peak-experiences, are essentially identical.

The Austrian psychiatrist, Carl Jung, states that "archetypes" are, figuratively speaking, like universally inherited "organs" of the human "psyche." We should not, therefore, consider it out of the ordinary that these psychic "structural components" are similar among mankind when the observable fact that we all share a common physical body is taken for granted. He says:

The original structural components [archetypes] of the psyche are of no less surprising a uniformity than are those of the visible body. The archetypes are, so to speak, organs of a prerational psyche. They are eternally inherited forms which have at first no specific content. Their specific content only appears in the course of the individual's life, when personal experience is taken up in precisely these forms.<sup>8</sup>

As Jung suggests, the specific "content" of the universally shared "archetypes" of the psyche "appears" to human consciousness only when man personally "experiences" this content "in the course of [an] individual's life." Consequently, each of us must intimately experience the content of archetypes if we are to understand their meaning.

In a more specific manner, Jung defines one of these "archetypes"

discovered within a "personal experience" of the human psyche as the "archetypal Light." This particular archetype "appears" in all genuine human experiences of the *Imago Dei* or God in man. Writes Jung:

For our purposes, this term ["archetypal light"] ...tells us that...we are dealing with archaic or -- I would say -- primordial types, that is, with universal images that have existed since remotest times.<sup>9</sup>

The "archetypal light" experience is, undoubtedly, a common "universal image" which has influenced the spiritual consciousness of many different men throughout history. In the words of Carl Jung, the archetypal Light experience has existed "since remotest times." For this same reason, Eliade insists that any genuine experience of the Sacred is, as he writes, "structurally equivalent to a hierophany a thousand years earlier or later." Indeed, all genuine visions of Light, peak-experiences (Maslow), hierophanies (Eliade), or "archetypal light" images of the human psyche (Jung), are the same wherever and whenever they appear on earth.

In reference to the "archetypal light," the poet: Dante, also recognized that Light-consciousness is a universally shared, human experience of "a single Light." He writes:

By an abundant grace, I fixed my eyes on the Eternal Light, and in its depths I saw contained, bound by love in one single volume, what is scattered on leaves throughout the world. All things fused together in such a way that what I tell is but a single Light.<sup>10</sup>

As Dante writes, the archetypal experience of God's "Eternal Light" is "scattered on leaves," or written on the pages, of various holy books throughout the world. In fact, we shall see that many poets and prophets representing many different nations and religions have described this Light's luminous effects upon human consciousness. However, even though this is true, the "Eternal Light," as Dante continues to explain, is still "but a single [or universally shared archetypal vision -- 'I saw' -- of] Light." With this thought in mind, our task is to investigate, evaluate, and illuminate some of these symbolic representations of the "single" -- or archetypal experience

of -- "Light." As we accomplish this task, we will "bind" the many "scattered leaves" describing Light-consciousness into "one single volume."

Regarding the symbolic expressions of Light-consciousness, Jesus once told us to consider how lilies grow. Any botanist will tell you that the lily begins its life as a seed which yearns for sunlight. Moreover, in the process of growing, maturing, and finally blossoming into breath-taking beauty, it constantly seeks to absorb the light of the sun. For sunlight gives the lily life! And in that life, the lily becomes so beautiful that "even Solomon," as Jesus says, "in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these." Certainly, therefore, if they contain such rare and wondrous beauty, let us continue to consider "how lilies grow."

At some point in your life, consider gazing into the bloom of an Easter lily. If you do, its pure white petals will reflect the light of day to your eyes. As you continue to contemplate the beauty of this flower and how it grows, your heart might experience an ecstatic state of wonder and awe. In that instant of flower magic, the inner eye of your heart will open up, like a lily, to the spiritual Light within yourself and the world around you. From that time on, the lily, with all its enchanting powers, will become your personal symbol of illumination. And you will always remember the time when your inmost being blossomed with love into a radiance of pure spiritual consciousness.

Speaking of love, Light, and lilies, both Jesus and the Essene Teacher of Righteousness considered how lilies grow. And, coincidentally, both of them spoke about "living water," about flowing "rivers," and about "fountains" and "springs" that last forever.

## SECTION I

### LIVING WATER, LIGHT, AND LILY MAGIC

Jesus:

1. Consider the lilies, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin; yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. (Matthew 6:28-29)

Teacher of Righteousness:

1. And I have flowered like a lily, and my heart has opened to the everlasting fountain and my support is in the might from above. (235-236)

## LIVING WATER, LIGHT, AND LILY MAGIC (continued)

2. **He who will drink from my mouth** will become like me, I myself shall become he, and the things that are hidden will be revealed to him. (*Gospel of Thomas*: #108)<sup>11</sup> If any one thirst, let him come to me and **drink**. He who believes in me, as the scripture has said, "**Out of his heart shall flow rivers of living water.**" (John 7:37-38) But whoever **drinks of the water** that I shall give him will never thirst; the water that I shall give him will become in him a **spring of water welling up to eternal life.** (John 4:14)

3. ...**the Knowledge of the Greatness** [of "the Father"...] **is from above** [i.e., from "the Most High" God] and from **a fountain of truth**...<sup>12</sup>

4. Show us the place where you are, since it is necessary for us to seek it. Jesus said to them: "Whoever has ears, let him hear. **There is light within a man of light, and he lights up the whole world.** If he does not shine, he is darkness... We came from the light... We are its children, and we are the elect of the living father." (*Thomas*: #24,50)<sup>13</sup> While you have the light, believe in the light, that you may become **sons of light.** (John 12:36) He (Jesus) said to us, "**You will see a light brighter than light and more perfect than perfection.**"<sup>14</sup>

2. Thou has opened a **fountain in the mouth of Thy servant**...(252) LISTEN TO ME AND BE STILL BEFORE ME. I HAVE UNDERSTOOD, SO **DRINK FROM THE WELL OF LIFE**... A WELL OF DEEP WATERS... A **FOUNTAIN OF LIVING WATER**... 4Q525 (p. 177); 4Q416,418 (p. 250) They ["**living waters**"] that were hidden in secret shall suddenly gush forth and shall **flow like rivers of ever-running waters**... And Thou [God] hast put in **my mouth** as it were an autumn rain for all the sons of men and **a spring of living waters** ["the everlasting spring"] which shall not run dry. (228, [110]) ...And it shall be a **well-spring of light as an eternal unailing fountain.** (219)

3. For He [God] has poured forth from the **fountain of His Knowledge** the light that enlightens me... (101) The origin of **Truth is in the fountain** of light... (78)

4. **The sons of righteousness shall lighten all the ends of the world** progressively, until all moments of **darkness** are consumed. Then in the time of God His sublime greatness shall shine...[and] shall be given to all the **sons of light.** (170) I WILL INFORM YOU THAT ALL THE **SONS OF LIGHT** WILL BE MADE LIGHT... 4Q543,545-8 (p. 156) **YOU SHALL SEE** [WITH "ETERNAL INSIGHT"], AND YOU SHALL REJOICE IN THE **ETERNAL LIGHT.** 4Q541 (p. 145, [p. 239])

In 1947, the Bedouin: Muhammaded Dib, discovered seven scrolls in a cave near a deep ravine called Wadi Qumran in Trans-Jordan. Since then, various teams of researchers have unearthed numerous scrolls, as well as thousands of individual fragments, from other caves in that general area. Most scholars agree that these scrolls and fragments, now referred to as *The Dead Sea Scrolls*, were the religious manuscripts of a Jewish sect named the Essenes. This particular sect was a rather large and widespread movement of anti-Pharisaic Jews. And while many of them established their base of operation near the discovery site, other Essenes involved in the movement more than likely lived in such nearby towns as Jerusalem or Bethlehem.

In *The Dead Sea Scrolls*, the Teacher of Righteousness often wrote about his "mystic insight" into the Light of the Father. He loved this Light so much that he once poetically compared it to "a spring of knowledge" and "a fountain of strength" in his now famous *Hymns of Thanksgiving*. This allegorical work is undoubtedly the literary jewel of *The Dead Sea Scrolls*. However, in addition to this dazzling poetic diamond of the desert, his unique and symbolic style of writing shines out in many of the scrolls discovered in the Qumran caves.

Some scholars, for instance, argue that the Teacher of Righteousness may have been responsible for writing not only the *Hymn Scroll* but also the *Scroll of the Rule*. Concerning this point, A. Dupont-Sommer made the following comment:

In short, the *Scroll of the Rule* may, basically, very easily derive from the Teacher of Righteousness himself, but may have undergone some alteration or adaptation, and also some expansion, after his death.<sup>15</sup>

If you closely examine the *Scroll of the Rule*, you can easily see that certain sections of this work exhibit a distinct poetic technique and a unique theological thesis that are also in the *Hymn Scroll*. We will, therefore, assume that the Teacher of Righteousness participated in the creation of not only the entire *Hymn Scroll* but also particular sections of the *Scroll of the Rule* and associated appendices and fragments.

We will also assume that the revered "voice of the Teacher" (141,

184) permeated into the minds, the hearts, as well as the words of those unidentified Qumran authors who wrote *The Damascus Document*, *The Scroll of the War Rule*, and even some of the recently published fragments. In reference to the first two documents, the author of the former speaks of the need to "heed the voice of the Teacher" (141) and/or to "lend their ear to the voice of the Teacher of Righteousness." Likewise, the author of *The Scroll of the War Rule* tells us that the Essene Teacher "shall read into their ears ['of those whose ear is opened'] all the words of their [Teacher's] *Hymns of Thanksgiving*." In this way, "the voice of the venerated Being" (i.e., the Essene Teacher), as the author continues, shall be heard by those "with intelligent understanding." And these people, he concludes, will "hear profound things." (191, 184)

Clearly, the Teacher's "profound" words were heard, "heed[ed]," and revered by both of these "intelligent" writers/students. In fact, they "lent their ear" so well that they sometimes used the Teacher's unique and symbolic expressions of thought in their own writings. We will, therefore, occasionally quote from *The Damascus Document* and *War Rule* as if the Teacher's sagacious "voice" is speaking directly to us.

But who, you ask, was this unique Teacher of Righteousness? Unfortunately, we neither know his real name nor his date of birth. But in spite of his stubborn anonymity, we do know that the newly released scientific carbon-14 date test suggests a first century composition time period for the Essene Teacher's *Hymn Scroll*. The objectively reached, scientific conclusions of this 1991 study state that the date of this scroll should be placed between **the years 10 B.C. and 60 A.D.**<sup>16</sup> The scientists involved in this investigation also tested four other Qumran-related documents that contained internal dates. However, these known dates within the documents were withheld from the scientists performing the tests. When all the testing was finished, the scientists accurately confirmed a date range that overlapped the known internal date of the document in three out of four cases. And in the fourth document, their C-14 test date range missed the known date by only ten years. This evidence implies that even though carbon C-14 testing is a relatively new scientific procedure, it is an accurate and a useful means of dating *The Dead Sea Scrolls*.

Moreover, of the 476 bronze coins unearthed at Qumran, 294, or 62%, were minted between **the years 4 B.C. and 68 A.D.** There were

also 144 coins, or 30%, minted between 104-76 B.C. The remaining 8% of the coins, most of which were found in small quantities of 1, 2, 4, or 5, range from a possible 135 B.C. to 136 A.D. This archaeological coin evidence<sup>17</sup> strongly indicates that the Qumran community was by far the most active, and therefore, the most populated, between the years 4 B.C. and 68 A.D.

But why was the vast majority of Essenes attracted to the parched sands and the inhospitably high cliffs of the Qumran desert between the years 4 B.C. and 68 A.D.? One conceivable answer to this important question is that the Essene Teacher of Righteousness was there composing his "10 B.C. to 60 A.D." *Hymn Scroll*. And if this is true, then like any revered spiritual leader, this "faithful Shepherd" (336) pulled his flock of Qumran admirers together by offering them the superior qualities of his own unique individuality. Indeed, his personal charisma and high moral character captivated the hearts of all those men and women who had "faith in [him]." (263) And his words of wisdom and "Knowledge" became like a "torch" that "enlighten[ed] the face" and illumined the minds "of many." (112)

When you begin reading the Light-filled words of the enigmatic Essene Teacher from Qumran, you discover that he was a poet *par excellence*. He decided, for example, to "consider the lilies,"<sup>18</sup> as Jesus said we must, and "how they grow." And when he considered, he wrote that his heart "opened" very much "like a lily" to a spiritual "well-spring of light...which shall never run dry." He continued to explain that within his blossoming spirit, the "everlasting" and spiritual "fountain of light," which "poured" into his heart, "enlightened" him. In this fashion, the Teacher of Righteousness not only poetically compared his heart to a blossoming lily, but he also said that "waters unstinted" flowed freely into his spirit. And being "unstinted" in nature, these unique "waters" became like "a floodtide of loving kindness and of all-consuming zeal" within the bloom of his heart. After tasting these "living waters," he realized that the "origin of Truth is in the fountain of light." All men, he thought, must eventually drink from this beautiful and spiritual "well-spring of light." For if they do, then "God's sublime greatness shall shine," as he concludes, "and shall be given to all the **sons of light**."

Jesus also spoke about "the sons of light." In the Bible, He tells us, for example, to "believe in the light, that you may become **sons of light**." In other non-canonical sources, He refers to these "sons of light" as a "solitary" group of men who "seek" the inner Light of God

within their hearts. More specifically, in the recently discovered *Gospel of Thomas*, Jesus' disciples say to Him: "Show us the place where you are, since it is necessary for us to seek it." Jesus answers them by first stating that whoever has ears must listen to what He is about to say. Obviously, He considered the question a very important subject. We can assume, therefore, that He wanted everyone to listen to and consider His answer.

After offering this initial statement, He begins to explain that the "place" in which He lives is the Light that is "within a man of light." As you can see, this "place" is really not some location outside of man. It is not, therefore, a vacation spot, a town, or some business locale to which we can travel. Nor is it some sort of activity that occurs outside of man's consciousness. Rather, the "place" of Jesus' life is the Light of the "living father," and this Light is "within a man of light."

Jesus' emphasis is obviously on the Light that is "within" the inner soul of Himself. Clearly, if we are to find this radiant "place" of His being, we too must look "within" ourselves. For in that inner "place" of the human spirit, we will discover the Light that "is necessary," as His disciples say, "for us to seek." Accordingly, it is not enough for this Light to be within Jesus alone. By implication, all men who follow Him must "seek it," or "seek" the Light of the Father, within their hearts. In this fashion, all men will discover the inner radiant "place" of Light "when you [they] come," as Jesus says, "to dwell in the light."<sup>19</sup>

For Jesus, those who do "dwell in the light" become like well-nourished children of the "living father." "We are its children," He says, "and we are the elect of the living father." Notice, if you will, that Jesus chose the word: "we," when referring to Himself and all the other "sons of light." He did so because He knew that the glory of the Father will shine in every person who genuinely "dwells" in the inner "place" of Light.

And so, all men can discover the "place where you [i.e., Jesus] are" by looking deep within their own spirits. The answer, therefore, to the disciples' question is, as Jesus insists, "within" man himself! "There is light within a man of light," He says, "and he lights up the whole world... We came from the light." In the context of *The Gospel of Thomas*, we can see that man's spirit, according to Jesus, comes from the Light of God. Furthermore, when a man's consciousness is filled with this Light, he "lights up the whole world" with his



spiritual radiance. Interestingly, the Essene Teacher also talks about this Light and its relation to "the world." He says that a "well-spring of light" flows through the hearts of all the "sons of righteousness." These spiritually-oriented men, as he continues, are those radiant human beings who **"shall lighten up the ends of the world."**

Concerning the flow of Light around the world, Jesus speaks about "rivers of living water" that must "flow" through the hearts of all men. Everyone, He implies, will taste this "living water" when they **"drink"** from **"a spring of water welling up to eternal life"** -- or from the **"fountain of truth"** -- that is in His **"mouth."** Jesus continues by explaining why it is so important to drink from this spiritual "fountain of truth." He says, for example, that **"the Knowledge of the Greatness [of 'the Father']...is from above [i.e., from 'the Most High' God] and from [this] fountain of truth..."** Understandably, therefore, those who "drink" this spring/fountain's "living water" also gain the "Knowledge" of the "Most High" God.

Jesus' symbolic words concerning the eternal and spiritual "fountain," "spring of water," or "living water," that is in His "mouth," have a remarkable resemblance to the ones used by the Teacher of Righteousness. Take, for instance, when the Teacher says that God also "put" in his **"mouth"** an eternal **"spring of living waters which shall not run dry"** and which is "for all the sons of men." He further states that "God has poured forth from **the fountain of His Knowledge** the light that enlightens me." It follows then that God's **"Truth is in the fountain."** All men, therefore, must **"DRINK FROM [THIS] WELL OF LIFE,"** "the fountain of light," and/or **"THE FOUNTAIN OF LIVING WATER."** Clearly, both of these two sons of Light emphasize the importance of "drink[ing]" the "living water," the "Knowledge," and the "truth" which flow from "the living father's" "fountain of truth/spring of water welling up to eternal life" (Jesus), and/or "fountain of light/everlasting well-spring of light" (TOR).

While interpreting all these parallel phrases of Jesus and the Teacher of Righteousness, we can say that man is much like a flower. As he grows and matures, his body needs, among other things, the life-giving light of the sun and the thirst-quenching waters of the earth. Likewise, the spiritual health and happiness of man's heart depends upon the blossoming of God's Spirit/Light within him. The Teacher of Righteousness understood these facts, and thus poetically said that God has "sent out a sprouting as a flower that shall bloom forever." This "sprouting," of course, occurs within the heart of man,

and the source of its eternal "bloom" is much like "a well-spring of light" that never runs dry. Obviously, therefore, if our hearts are to "bloom forever," we too must "drink" the eternal and "living water" that flows from this spiritual and "everlasting well-spring of light."

In one of the newly released Scroll fragments, an unidentified author -- presumably the Teacher of Righteousness -- emphasizes that all the sons of Light will experience and thus "see" their Father's "Eternal Light." He says, "I WILL INFORM YOU THAT ALL THE SONS OF LIGHT WILL BE MADE LIGHT." "YOU SHALL SEE [WITH 'ETERNAL INSIGHT']," he continues, "AND YOU SHALL REJOICE IN THE ETERNAL LIGHT." Interestingly, Jesus also speaks of man's potential for seeing Light. He says, "You will see a light brighter than [day]light and more perfect than perfection." Truly, those who "see" with "Eternal Insight" will "be made" to know "the Eternal Light."

God's eternal Light/Spirit shall thus "flow," as Jesus continues, like "rivers of living water" through the visionary hearts of all the "sons of light" from around the world. Obviously, however, this "living water" of the inner Light/Spirit must also "flow" like "rivers" through the heart of *every* person on earth. In short, it must circulate through all humanity and be everyone's ultimate concern! For as Jesus points out, "if he [man] does not shine" with this Light, then "he is darkness."

But again, Jesus was not the only one who concerned Himself with the "flow" of "living water" in a "man of light" and with the "darkness" of those men whose hearts are dry. The Essene Teacher of Righteousness also tells us that "the splendor of Thy [God's] glory has become unto me as a light everlasting." He continues to explain that he experienced this "everlasting light" within an "inner vision" of God's "fountain of light." As the visionary "LIVING WATER/living waters" from this inner "fountain" "gush forth" into the hearts of all men, they "shall flow," as he explains, "like rivers of ever-running waters" around the world. In these statements, it is clear that the Essene Teacher's words closely parallel those of Jesus concerning "the flow" of "rivers" of Light/Spirit "within" themselves and within all the "sons of light." Moreover, like Jesus, he insisted that the "flow" of this Light/Spirit within the human heart will light up man's soul and put an end to his spiritual "darkness." Or in the Essene's own words, he tells us that the "Holy Spirit," the "light everlasting," and/or God's holy "waters unstinted," well up within his soul and "put an end to my darkness."

In the subsequent pages of this chapter, we will begin tasting the "living water" of God's Light by discussing the ecstatic, Light-consciousness of various sons of Light. And like the blossoming of a beautiful lily, we shall see that God truly has opened their hearts to a universally experienced fountain of Light. After we examine the general "contents" of their Light-experience, we will in chapters II through VII become more specific by comparing how Jesus, the Essene Teacher, as well as the Psalmist, poetically portrayed this spiritual consciousness that blossomed within their souls.

In chapter II, we will concentrate on how Light-consciousness elevated these three sons of Light up to the "high mountain" peaks of spiritual vision. We will also probe the nature of "baptism" and investigate how Light-consciousness "cleansed" their spirits in the river of God. In chapters III and IV, we will discuss the intimate nature of Light-consciousness and discover how it was like a father-son relationship for all three of our sons of Light. In chapter V, we are going to jump into some fire symbolism and observe how God ignited their souls in a blaze of glory. In chapters VI and VII, we will study the interrelated subjects of Light and death, and learn how God crucified as well as resurrected their spirits into His Light. And after examining all this, we will discover that our three sons of Light did indeed symbolically speak in unison about resplendent and archetypal realities that illumined their minds as well as their hearts.

Speaking of vision and the Light of God, Robert Alter once made the following observation concerning the Old Testament Psalms. He said: "Religious experience attains a new contemplative and emotive inwardness in these [Psalms] poems."<sup>20</sup> Many modern scholars enthusiastically support Alter's assessment of the Psalms. In fact, the Psalter, or the entire one hundred and fifty Psalms, "furnish us," writes William Taylor in *The Interpreter's Bible*, "with the supreme example in the Old Testament of man's search and experience of the living God."<sup>21</sup> Hence, it is safe to say that the Psalter offers us one of the finest poetic expressions of Light-consciousness, or man's "experience of the living God," in the Old Testament.

We will, therefore, occasionally quote from the Psalter so as to present the various forms of Light-symbolism contained within it. In so doing, we will trace the poetic expression of the "experience of the living God" as an archetypal thread that was ingeniously woven into the entire fabric of the Psalter. Robert Alter tells us more about these "archetypal themes" that are present in the Psalter:

You can read two psalms that, for all anyone can tell, may be as far apart in time as Chaucer and Wordsworth, and yet justifiably perceive them as virtual contemporaries in idiom, poetic form, and generic assumption... The Book of Psalms reflects certain distinctive and recurrent thematic concerns... Many of the characteristic themes share the archetypicality we observed in psalmodic imagery, and the power with which these archetypal themes are evoked may explain a good deal about why the poems have continued to move readers, both believers and nonbelievers, in cultural and historical settings far different from those in which the poems were first made.<sup>22</sup>

Many different threads of archetypal themes, imagery, as well as poetic symbols, are woven into the fabric of the Psalter. The poetic expression of the religious experience of the "Most High God" is, as we shall see, one of these threads. But when considering this particular symbolic thread, we should remember that it appears in not only the Psalms, but also throughout the New Testament as well as in other non-canonical Christian writings of the first few centuries.

And so, what is really exciting about all this is that Jesus, the Essene Teacher, and the Psalmist spoke and/or wrote voluminously as one single consciousness of Light. "And Thou [God]," writes the Psalmist, "givest them ['the children of men'] **drink from the river of thy delights**. For with Thee, O God, is **the fountain of life**; in **Thy light** do we see light."<sup>23</sup> The Psalmist here implies that as we "see" God's "light" in the "fountain of life," so too do our spirits "drink" the "*delights*" [i.e., drink the light] of His holy "river." In this way, he -- like our other two sons of Light -- poetically links man's vision of God to drinking the Light-filled waters that spontaneously spring up and flow through the human heart.

Clearly, all three of our sons of Light offer us a message of Light that is very similar in nature. In essence, it boils down to this: man's vision of God's Light is like an experience of an eternal and radiant "fountain of life." And the experiential, luminous, and "living water" of this everlasting fountain will someday flow -- like a "river of thy [God's] *delights*" -- through the hearts of all men around the world.

Realizing the importance of the "everlasting spring," the Essene

Teacher "proclaims" it to others so they too might drink of its "Living Water." "Thou has opened a fountain in the mouth of Thy servant," he writes, "that he may proclaim [Thy precepts] unto creatures." (252) For sure, God's "fountain of light" is in the "heart" as well as the "mouth" of the Essene Teacher. He thus, as a newly released fragment describes, "OPEN[S] [HIS] LIPS AS A FOUNTAIN TO BLESS THE [ESSENE] HOLY ONES." 4Q416,418 (p. 249)

Regarding the "living water" that is in Jesus' mouth, He says, "He who will drink from my mouth will become like me, I myself shall become he, and the things that are hidden will be revealed to him." Indeed, if we drink of the spiritual "living water" that is flowing from the "mouths" of these sons of Light, then we too will become like them: namely, full of Light. And as we experience this inner Radiance, we will begin to understand that when they spoke about the flow of Light through their shining hearts, their "mouths" articulated Light-symbols.

Accordingly, let us momentarily consider how a small sample of men throughout history have poetically described the flowering of this Light, and the flowing of Its "living water," within their individual hearts. In so doing, we will begin to see how other men's hearts have opened, like a lily, to the Light of God. Then "the things that are hidden," as Jesus says, "will be revealed" to us, and our own spirits, as the Teacher of Righteousness writes, will "flower like a lily."

## SECTION II

### CONSIDER THE SONS OF LIGHT

1. Moses (around the 13th century B.C.)

And the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush; and he looked, and lo, the bush was burning, yet it was not consumed...God called to him out of the bush, "Moses, Moses!" And He said, "Here am I..." When Moses came down from Mount Sinai, with the two tables of the testimony in his hand as he came down from the mountain, Moses did not know that the skin of his face shone because he had been talking with God.<sup>24</sup>

2. The Upanisads (a composite work between the 8th and the 6th centuries B.C.)

Venerable Lord Brahman... Brahman: that is the ocean of light... the Brahman light... In the highest golden sheath is Brahman without stain, without parts; Pure is it, the light of light... What is luminous, what is subtler than the subtle, in which are centered all the worlds and those that dwell in them, that is the imperishable Brahman... Your face shines like that of one who knows Brahman... Now the

**light which shines above this heaven**, above all, above everything, in the highest worlds beyond which there are no higher, verily, that is the same as **this light which is here within the person**.<sup>25</sup>

3. Isaiah 60:19,1&5 (a composite work between the 8th and 6th centuries B.C.)

The sun shall be no more your light by day,

Nor for brightness shall the moon

Give light to you by night,

But **the Lord will be your everlasting light...**

Arise, shine; for **your light has come... Then you shall ~~see~~ and be radiant...**

4. Psalms 27:1 (a composite work between the 5th and 2nd centuries B.C.)

**The Lord ~~is~~ my light** and salvation.

5. Gotama Buddha (566-480 B.C.)

"For seven days he sat under the Bodhi-tree, the tree of Enlightenment, in the glory of emancipation... Presently **into Gotama's heart shone a light not of this world**, and joy and gladness and the consciousness of freedom... So beautiful was his spiritual radiance that the sun and the moon seemed dim beside him. For him the eternal morn had come."<sup>26</sup> Buddha: A brother who with firm determination walks in the noble path is sure to **come forth into the light**, sure to reach the higher wisdom, sure to attain the highest bliss of **enlightenment**.<sup>27</sup>

6. Plato (427-347 B.C.)

When he [man] approaches **the light** his eyes will be dazzled...

And, when seen, is also inferred to be the universal author of all things beautiful and right, **parent of light and lord of light** in this visible world.<sup>28</sup>

7. Daniel 2:20-22 (2nd century B.C.)

Blessed be the name of God for ever and ever...

He knows what is in the darkness,

And **the light dwells with him**.

8. Enoch (Jewish pseudepigrapha from 200 B.C. to 100 A.D)

This vision was shown to me... The great **Glory [God] sat there. His raiment shone more brightly than sun and was whiter than snow...** All the heavenly troops would come and stand on the ten steps according to their rank, and would bow down to the Lord, and would again go to their places in joy and felicity, singing songs in **the boundless light**.<sup>29</sup>

9. The Teacher of Righteousness (10 B.C.-68 A.D.?)

For Thou art **an everlasting light** unto me and hast established my feet on **an infinite plain**. (224) And as for the Visitation of all who walk in this Spirit, it consists of healing and abundance of bliss, with length of days and fruitfulness, and all blessings without end, and eternal joy in perpetual life, and the glorious crown and **garment of honor in everlasting light**. (80) They [**"the sons of light"**] walk in **the ways of light**. (78)

10. Jesus (4 B.C.-29 A.D.)

There is a light within a man of light, and he lights up the whole world... We come from the light... We are its children, and we are the elect of the living father... While you have the light, believe in the light, that you may become sons of light.<sup>30</sup>

11. Acts 26:12-13 (Paul's conversion: 30-35 A.D.)

Thus I journeyed to Damascus with the authority and commission of the chief priests. At midday, O king, I saw on the way a light from heaven, brighter than the sun, shining around me.

12. *The Odes of Solomon* (from the 1st to the 2nd century A.D.)

I discarded darkness and clothed myself in light... He [God] is my sun and his rays have lifted me up and chased all darkness from my face... I took on the face and ways of a new person... For the mouth of the Lord is the true word and the door of his light.<sup>31</sup>

13. *The Secret Book of John* (from the 1st to the 2nd century A.D.)

The Spirit is a Unity, over which no one rules. It is the God of Truth, the Father of the All... It is light... Those upon whom the Spirit of Life descends, when they are bound together with the power, will be saved and will become perfect and they will become worthy to rise upward to that great light.<sup>32</sup>

14. I John 1:5 (2nd century A.D.)

This is the message we have heard from him  
And proclaim to you:  
That God is light and in Him there is no darkness.

15. *The Poimandres* (late 2nd century A.D.)

In a flash everything opened before me and I saw an unbounded vista. All was light, a soothing and happy Light... Out of the Light a holy Word (logos) descended upon the water substance and I thought this Word the voice of Light... Understand that what sees and hears inside of you is the Word of the Lord... But think about the Light and understand it.<sup>33</sup>

16. Plotinus (205-270 A.D.)

Our vision is light or rather becomes light, and it sees light... This light shining within the soul enlightens it... For it is this light, itself lit from above, which gives the soul its brighter life... We may know we have had the vision when the soul has suddenly taken light. This light is from the Supreme and is the Supreme.<sup>34</sup>

17. *Apocalypse of Peter* (3rd century A.D.)

And there came in me fear with joy,  
For I saw a new light greater than the light of day.<sup>35</sup>

18. Saint Augustine (354-430 A.D.)

Divine things are the more clearly manifested to him who withdraws into the

recesses of his heart... And being thence warned to return to myself, I entered into my inward self... And with the eye of my soul saw above the same eye of my soul, above my mind, **the Unchangeable Light... He who knows the Truth knows that Light**; and he that knows it knoweth eternity.<sup>36</sup>

19. Mohammed (570-632 A.D.)

"As Mohammed, in the silent watches of the night, lay wrapped in his mantle, he heard a voice calling upon him. Uncovering his head, **■ flood of light** broke upon him of such intolerable splendor that he swooned."<sup>37</sup>

*The Koran:*

**God is the Light** of the heavens and the earth;  
 the likeness of His Light is as a niche  
     wherein is **■ lamp**  
     (the lamp in a glass,  
 the glass as it were **■ glittering star**)  
     kindled from **■ Blessed Tree**,  
**■ an olive** that is neither of the East nor of the West  
 whose oil wellnigh would shine, even if no fire touched it;  
     **Light upon Light**;  
 (God guides to His Light whom He will.)<sup>38</sup>

20. Meister Eckhart (1260-1327)

**The Father is light...** When God is seen it is in the light that is God himself... This light is more glorious than any corporal thing God every made... It is clearer and brighter than the sun and purifies things from both time and matter... **Spiritual perception ■ light... What I perceive in God is light...** He is the **blinding light...** For in this light the Father and the soul and all things and the Word **are one.**<sup>39</sup>

21. Dante (1265-1321)

O Divine Love, Who rules the heavens, know what this is, since it was You who lifted me with Your light... **We have advanced to the heaven of pure light, ■ light intellectual, full of love.**<sup>40</sup>

22. Cardinal Nicholas of Cusa (1401-1464)

But **Thou, O infinite Light**, makest answer within me that absolute potentiality is infinity itself... When I behold Thee as Absolute Infinity...then indeed I begin to behold Thee unveiled... For I see in **Thine intellectual light the very Fount of Light**, to wit, the Word of God which is truth, illumining every intellect.<sup>41</sup>

23. St. John of the Cross (1542-1591)

**The light which is here imparted to the soul is truly ■ most sublime Divine Light**, which transcends every natural light.<sup>42</sup>

24. Shakespeare (1564-1616)

Weary with toil, I haste me to my bed,



The dear repose for limbs with travel tired;  
 But then begins a journey in my head  
 To work by mind when body's work's expired.  
 For then my thoughts, from far where I abide,  
 Intend a zealous pilgrimage to thee

When most I wink [sleep], then do **mine eyes best see**,  
 For all the day they view things unrespected  
 But when I sleep, **in dreams they look on thee** ["**thy much clearer light**"...]  
 All days are nights to see till I see thee  
 And nights bright days when dreams do show thee me.

Even so **my sun** [i.e., "**heaven's sun**"] **one early morn did shine**  
 With all triumphant splendor on my brow;  
 But, out alack! he was but one hour mine.<sup>43</sup>

25. George Fox (1624-1691) Founder of the Society of Friends  
 So I charge you all in the presence of the living God, to dwell in **the Light**.<sup>44</sup>

26. Swedenborg (1688-1772)  
 Natural light is from the sun of the natural world, and therefore, in itself is dead; but **spiritual light is from the Sun of the spiritual world**, and is therefore in itself alive. Spiritual light enlightens the human understanding, not natural light... **Spiritual light is a white shining light**; That in its origin **spiritual Light is Divine Wisdom**...  
 Man's internal sight is enlightened by spiritual light.<sup>45</sup>

27. Balzac (1799-1850)  
**Man can achieve an inner union with the Light**... By it he acquires knowledge of the Word!<sup>46</sup>

28. Tennyson (1809-1892)  
 As in a dream I seemed to climb forever, at last I reached a door, a light was in the crannies... Along the hall **a beam of light seven times more clear than day**, and down the long beam stole the Holy Grail... Let visions of the night come as they will... **this light that strikes his eyeball is not light, but visions** -- in moments when he feels he cannot die.<sup>47</sup>

29. Whitman (1819-1892)  
 Divine am I inside and out...I loafe and invite my soul... Hast never come to thee an hour, **a sudden gleam divine**, precipitating, bursting all these bubbles, fashion, wealth, these eager business aims, books, politics, art, amours, to utter nothingness?... O Thou, transcendent, nameless, the fibre and breath, **Light of the light**... That **Thou O God my life hast lighted, with ray of light**, steady ineffable, vouchsafed of Thee, **Light rare untellable, lighting the very light**, beyond all signs, descriptions, languages; For that O God, be it my latest word, here on my knees, old, poor, and paralyzed, I thank Thee.<sup>48</sup>

Did you happen to notice any Light-symbolism in all the preceding quotations? Consider, for example, the "Fount of Light," the "ocean of light," the "flood of light," the "Light upon Light," the "Father's light," the "light that is God himself," the "pure light," "thy much clearer light," the "beam of light seven times more clear than day," the "Light rare untellable, lighting the very light," the "new light," the "Brahman light," the "light not of this world," the "light which shines above this heaven," the "heaven of pure Light," the "light from heaven," the "blinding light," the "happy Light," the "voice of Light," the "great light," the "Light of light," the "Unchangeable Light," the "infinite Light," the "everlasting light," the "boundless light," the "Divine Light," the "intellectual light," the "Spiritual Light," the "light which is here within the person," the "light shining within the soul," or just the "Light."

These previous examples of Light-symbolism indicate that God's "fountain of light" truly has sprung up, like an everlasting "well-spring of light," into the hearts of many well-known poets and prophets of the past. In fact, the universality of expression among these twenty-nine examples strongly suggests that the "living water" of this spiritual "fountain" has overflowed into "rivers" of Light that circulate around the world and through the hearts of men living in all ages.

Concerning the flow of this "light within a man of light," Jesus insists that we all "came from the light," and are "its children." "While you have the light," He says, "believe in the light, that you may become sons of light." The sons of Light are a somewhat rare but beautiful "race of men" who have seen the "holy nation" of God's Light within their souls. They are the ones who have experienced the "Lord" as an "everlasting Light" (Isaiah), or have, with the "eye of their soul" (Augustine), seen, in the words of *The Upanisads*, "what is luminous, what is subtler than the subtle." With excitement, wonder and awe, they have come to know "in the recesses of their heart" (Augustine), that their "eternal morn," like Buddha's, "has come." As a result, these men of Light "shall see and be radiant" (Isaiah), because "all the Sons of Light," as *The Dead Sea Scrolls* describe, "go towards the light" of God.<sup>49</sup>

But here is a real paradox: did you know that this "Light" within the sons of Light has nothing to do with the physical light of the sun? As Meister Eckhart explains, "this light is clearer and brighter than the sun." Or as Paul concurs, he saw a "light from heaven, brighter

than the sun, shining around me." Interestingly, Shakespeare also announces: "My sun [i.e., 'heaven's sun'] **one early morn did shine** with all triumphant splendor on my brow." And as he describes further, this spiritual "sun" was a **"much clearer light"** than the ordinary light of a "clear day."<sup>50</sup>

In much the same fashion, Tennyson tells us that this Light was, for him, a **"light seven times more clear than day."** And while Whitman insists that this "ray of light...lighted" his "life" with a **"Light rare, untellable, lighting the very [day]light,"** the author of *The Apocalypse of Peter* says that he "saw a **new light greater than the light of day."** Additionally, Jesus, as we have already discussed, insists that "you will see a **light brighter than [day]light** and more perfect than perfection."

St. John of the Cross also makes a distinction between a very bright "Divine Light" within his soul and "natural light." He reports that this "light which is here imparted to the soul is truly a most sublime **Divine Light**, which transcends every **natural light."** In a parallel manner, Swedenborg also differentiates between a "spiritual" and "natural" light when he writes:

**Natural light** is from the sun of the natural world... but **spiritual light** is from the Sun of the spiritual world...

All of these previous quotations suggest that the spiritual Light "imparted to the soul" always "transcends," or goes beyond, earthly sunlight. As such, it is always "brighter" and/or "clearer" than "natural light."

Plotinus tells us more about this transcendent, radiant, and spiritual Light when he says that it "gives the soul [within man] its brighter life." More specifically, this Light brightens man's soul with the spiritual radiance of what Swedenborg calls: "Divine Wisdom." This very special kind of "Wisdom" comes only to those individuals who, as Eckhart insists, have an *inner* "spiritual perception." Or in the words of Shakespeare, only those who embark on an inner journey of the soul, or on what he calls "a zealous pilgrimage [or 'a journey in my head'] to thee [i.e., to 'heaven's sun' or to 'thy much clearer light']," will spiritually perceive the luminous realm of "dreams" which "do show thee [to] me."

And so, "this light," as Tennyson asserts, "is not light [of a

physical nature], but **visions**" that occur "as in a dream." Or as Plotinus clarifies: "**Our vision is [spiritual] light** or rather becomes light...**This light is from the Supreme** and is the Supreme." Likewise, the Teacher of Righteousness informs us that when he "reached **the inner vision**," he came "to know Thee, **my God...as a light everlasting**." And in a similar fashion, Enoch states that when "this vision was shone to me...all the heavenly troops" began "singing songs in **the boundless light**."

Swedenborg describes this "vision" of spiritual perception as a "white shining light" that "enlightens the human understanding." Plato tells us that our "eyes will be dazzled" when we see the "**lord of light**." And while Meister Eckhart writes that "**the Father is light**" and that "when God is seen, **it is in the light that is God himself**," so too does John, Mohammed, and the Psalmist say that "**God [the Lord] is the [my] Light**." Obviously, all these sons of Light are referring to the visionary Light of God that illuminated their souls.

We thus conclude, along with Augustine, that the "divine things" of "the Unchangeable Light" are "more clearly manifested to him" who sees with "the eye of the soul." According to Whitman, therefore, we should all "loafe and invite" the "sudden gleam divine" of "the soul." Most surely, as Tennyson reminds us, "let visions of the night come." For only in the "visions" of Light-consciousness does man, as Nicholas of Cusa writes, "begin to behold Thee [God] unveiled."

I hope that it is becoming more clear that many individuals throughout history have declared, with Balzac, that "man can [and must] achieve an inner union with the Light." But the question obviously arises: what precisely is this "inner union," this "spiritual perception," this "vision of Thee"? What is this "sudden gleam divine," as Whitman writes, which bursts "all these bubbles, fashion, wealth, these eager business aims" to "utter nothingness"? And how, as Jesus put it, can a Light "within thee" be so bright as to "light up the whole world"?

These are important questions! To help us answer them, as well as other important points of concern, we will now center our attention on two twentieth century scholars: Abraham Maslow and Paul Tillich. These professors of the human psyche will enlighten our understanding of the "sons of Light" and the "vision" of Light-consciousness. In short, they will enable us to "think [more clearly] about the Light," as Poimandres insists we should, "and understand it."

## SECTION III

## LIGHT-CONSCIOUSNESS

As we have seen in the previously quoted poetic language, the particular words used to describe the holy moments of Light-consciousness may vary somewhat from land to land. This phenomenon occurs because inherited cultural and conceptual conditioning patterns always influence the way men verbally portray their religious experiences. Keep in mind, however, that the core-religious experience, which survives as the foundational structure inspiring all the various expressions of it, is always the same in nature. Human beings, no matter where they are born, experience the Sacred in a similar archetypal fashion. In a word, our spirits coincide at the mountain summit of the peak-experience. At that spiritual zenith in our own particular lives, the universal Spirit/Light of God unites all mankind. Writes Maslow:

To the extent that all mystical or peak-experiences are the same in their essence and have always been the same, all religions are the same in their essence and always have been the same... Whatever is different about these illuminations can fairly be taken to be localisms both in time and space, and are, therefore, peripheral, expendable, not essential. This something common, this something which is left over after we peel away all the localisms, all the accidents of particular languages or particular philosophies, all the ethnocentric phrasings, all those elements which are not common, we may call the "core-religious experience" or the "transcendent experience."<sup>51</sup>

Light-consciousness is, of course, the "core-religious experience." When portraying this archetypal consciousness, the visionary seer always used the specific symbols and/or metaphors that were available within his particular culture. Obviously, no man can avoid this phenomenon. Every human being, when trying to portray his or her inner religious consciousness of the Divine, employs the "accidents of particular languages" and/or the "ethnocentric phrasings"

which are both individually and culturally determined. From a modern perspective, some of these prophetic "ethnocentric phrasings" written centuries ago appear to be apocalyptic or supernatural in nature. In truth, however, they are merely the culturally determined materials which the original prophets used to embody their natural and human peak-experiences. Explains Maslow:

It is very likely, indeed almost certain, that these older reports, phrased in terms of supernatural revelation, were, in fact, perfectly natural, human peak-experiences of the kind that can easily be examined today, which, however, were phrased in terms of whatever conceptual, cultural, and linguistic framework the particular seer had available in his time... Much theology, much verbal religion through history and throughout the world, can be considered to be the more or less vain efforts to put into communicable words and formulae, and into symbolic rituals and ceremonies, the original mystical experience of the original prophets. In a word, organized religion can be thought of as an effort to communicate peak-experiences to non-peakers, to teach them, to apply them, etc. Often, to make it more difficult, this job falls into the hands of non-peakers.<sup>52</sup>

Much of the language used in today's world religions is a symbolic representation of the original prophet's mystical experience. The problem arises, however, when the original visionary poets and prophets (peakers) attempt to describe their spiritual vision to those who have not yet experienced Light-consciousness (non-peakers). What usually happens is that the uneducated, unenlightened, and the naïve first mistake all the symbolic language of Light-consciousness for literal fact. In the process, they make the words, the ceremonies, the religious myths, and even the original prophetic man, the sacred "things" in their religion instead of the original spiritual revelation to which all of the above are pointing. These sacred "things" then become the center of the non-peaker's religion because the unenlightened man tends to worship them instead of experiencing that spiritual Reality to which they all refer. As a result, non-peakers usually fail to perceive the beauty, wonder, and richness of the spiritually

transforming Light contained within the original prophet's peak-experience.

Non-peakers, therefore, not only have a perceptual deficiency of Spirit/Light, but they also fail to understand the true nature of the language of revelation. This language, of course, is the language of Light-consciousness. And since it is always symbolic in nature, we must interpret it accordingly. Writes Tillich:

Human words, whether in sacred or in secular language, are produced in the process of human history and are based on the experiential correlation between mind and reality. The ecstatic experience of revelation [i.e., the peak-experience], like any other experience, can contribute to the formation and transformation of a language... Revelation [i.e., the "ecstatic experience"] uses ordinary language, just as it uses nature and history, man's psyche, and spiritual life, as *mediums of revelation*. Ordinary language which expresses and denotes the ordinary experience of mind and reality in their categorical structure, is made a vehicle for expressing and denoting the extraordinary experience of mind and reality in ecstasy... The word as a medium of revelation points beyond its ordinary sense both in denotation and in expression... Something shines (more precisely, sounds) through ordinary language which is the self-manifestation of the depth of being and meaning.<sup>53</sup>

Certainly, human words are invariably based on the "experiential correlation between mind and reality." The words describing Light-consciousness are also a part of man's language structure and are as good a medium of expression as any other words describing other human experiences. However, the main difference here is that revelatory language always points beyond itself, or beyond a literal interpretation of the word, to a spiritual Reality which Tillich has called the "depth of being." This luminous and spiritual Depth of being "shines" through the words, as Tillich insists, for those who have the vision to see it.

The language of Light-consciousness, or the language of revelation, is thus a "vehicle" for pointing to the manifestation of Divine

Reality within human consciousness. But the language points to the Divine only if the individual reading the printed words can "see" that Reality within the symbolic representations of It. Switch the metaphor from visual to auditory, and we discover the same idea. We will truly understand the revelatory word that beats the air only when we hear the corresponding Word that sings to our heart.

Abraham Maslow once observed that after interviewing various people who had peak-experiences in their lives, he unconsciously developed a different kind of interview procedure. He describes what happened in the following way:

As I went on interviewing, I "learned," without realizing that I was learning, to shift over more and more to figures of speech, metaphors, similes, etc., and, in general, to use more and more poetic speech. It turns out that these are often more apt to "click," to touch off an echoing experience, a parallel, isomorphic vibration than are sober, cool, carefully descriptive phrases.<sup>54</sup>

Maslow's academic training was not in poetry but rather in psychology. He learned, however, that when trying to investigate and describe the peak-experience, symbols, metaphors, and other figures of speech were "more apt" to communicate the reality of that experience to another person than were analytic phrases or scientific language. Hence, he discovered that the Light of life "shines" through these type of poetic words better than It does through scientific language.

The poets, prophets, and peakers of the Bible, *The Nag Hammadi Library*, and *The Dead Sea Scrolls* understood this connection between the symbolic language of revelation and the consciousness of Light. Naturally, therefore, they too discovered that figurative language best described their consciousness of Light. In fact, they learned that they had to use poetic language when attempting to describe Light-consciousness. They knew, for example, that human language, which is comprised primarily of words that are based on empirical reality, can only symbolically point to the spiritual "fountain of Light" that flows within "a man of Light." Hence, when describing this spiritual Light, these poets, prophets, and peakers of the past knew that they had to use the material world surrounding them – i.e., mountains, rocks, garments, rivers, fountains, lilies, fire,



lamps, lions, yokes, tombs, trees, crosses, doves, etc. -- to represent the various immaterial/Spiritual dimensions of Light-consciousness. How else could they effectively describe the ecstatic and radiant Spirit of God within them?

Understand, however, that we as human beings will not find real spiritual Power in any *language* of revelation, be it symbolic or otherwise. Rather, we will discover spiritual Power only in the *experience* of revelation! Hence, if we fail to experience the underlying revelatory meaning of religious words, then no language of any form or structure will communicate the peak-experience to a non-peaker. Or as Maslow summarizes:

When the experience one is trying to communicate has no parallel in the other person, as in trying to describe color to the congenitally blind, then words fail almost (but not) entirely... Words can be repeated mindlessly and without touching the intrapersonal depths, no matter how true or beautiful their meaning, so also for symbolic actions of any kind, or for any ceremonies, rituals or myths. They can be extremely important in their effects upon the person and, through him, upon the world. But this is true only if he experiences them, truly lives them. Only then do they have meaning and effect.<sup>55</sup>

The relation of color to the congenitally blind is the same as symbolic language is to a literalist. Simply stated, there is no relation. No matter how hard the blind man tries, he simply cannot see color. Likewise, no matter how hard the literalist tries, he cannot "see" the Depth of being, or the Light of life, shining through what Tillich has called the "language of revelation."

And so, we must recognize that all vehicles of revelation, whether they come to us as religious myths, symbols, ceremonies, prayers, historical events of the past, etc., point to the transcendent peak-experience of Light-consciousness. But they are not the same as the experience itself. For in truth, they are only the tools used by the original seers to describe their individual revelation of transcendence, their personal "peak-experience," their private "hierophany," or their vision of Light-consciousness. Accordingly, words like "God" and "heaven" do not describe a separate divine personality or an actual

place somewhere up in the sky. Rather, these vehicles of revelation, or these sacred words, point to a heavenly yet very experiential Reality of Light within the consciousness of man himself.

William James once said in his now famous book: *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, "The plain truth is that to interpret religion one must in the end look at the immediate content of the religious consciousness."<sup>56</sup> As we have seen, poets and prophets of the past have often described the "immediate contents of [their] religious consciousness" in terms of a supernatural revelation or a heavenly vision. But in spite of their symbolic, mythical, and rather apocalyptic language, we have discussed that these experiences were, in fact, perfectly natural, human peak-experiences. In the light of this knowledge, some modern psychologists have stated that the so-called religious revelation has a lot in common with the powers of the "unconscious human mind."

The term: "unconscious mind" has its derivational roots in Europe. To help explain human behavior, Sigmund Freud, an Austrian neurologist who lived from 1856-1939, introduced two terms: namely, "conscious" and "unconscious" mental processes. Carl Jung, a Swiss psychiatrist who lived from 1875-1961, explored the spiritual implications of the unconscious mind to an even greater depth than did Freud. After studying both Freud and Jung, Thomas Blakeslee in 1980 came up with the intriguing notion that the characteristics of the "unconscious" and "conscious" mind "are strikingly similar to what we know about the right and left brains respectively."<sup>57</sup>

To fully understand Blakeslee's ideas on this subject, we must first define some terms. The left hemisphere, or the conscious mind, involves those everyday mental processes which primarily regulate language development and speech. The left hemisphere likes to analyze empirical reality and does so with the tools of language. In short, it enjoys classifying things into literally interpreted and analytic categories. However, the left hemisphere's limited abilities do not allow it to penetrate beyond the empirical aspects of reality.

When a serious accident causes left-side brain damage, the victim often loses a significant portion of his working vocabulary. When stripped of his only tool: chiefly, language in its literal and analytic context, he is unable to communicate with, as well as understand, other people. Hence, it becomes very difficult to converse with a left-hemisphere damaged person. Interestingly, however, the left-hemi-

sphere damaged individual does appreciate such natural sounds as a crashing surf or some beautiful music far more deeply than he did before his mishap. Since he is now unable to literally classify these sounds with words, the lack of competition from the left brain improves his performance of these tasks.<sup>58</sup>

Intuitions, instead of words, make up the "language" of the right hemisphere or the unconscious mind. As such, the right hemisphere of the brain involves those mental processes which activate immediate insight, direct perception, spiritual vision, and imagination. Light-consciousness, of course, is a right hemisphere form of cognition. The "man of light" perceives truth immediately, as in a flash of intuitive awareness. He knows truth not because he was taught it with the tools of language, but because he caught it within the immediate grasp of his own personal vision of reality.

The person with a damaged right hemisphere understands the precise literal meaning of language, but he cannot in any way fathom the poetic, emotional, or spiritual side of it. He becomes dull, monotonous, and colorless, almost like a computer, and is unable to recognize the non-verbal and symbolic meaning of words. Unfortunately, therefore, a person with a damaged right hemisphere loses personality, personal initiative, intuition, imagination, non-verbal recognition, spiritual insight, and the capacity for religious vision.<sup>59</sup>

But what has all this talk about the brain's right and left hemispheres have to do with the "contents of religious consciousness"? Blakeslee hints at an answer to this question:

What makes the unconscious mind unconscious is the fact that, though it influences our behavior, we have difficulty in *verbally* explaining its actions. While our right brain is also a part of our consciousness, its thoughts are necessarily separate from those of the verbal left brain. Since each hemisphere is organized differently and stores memories in a different "language," it would be chaotic if the thoughts of the two "mixed" freely. Nature's solution is to keep them separate except for certain limited interactions which are so subtle that they are hardly missed when they are cut in the split-brain patient.<sup>60</sup>

The implication of this type of reasoning is that the two halves of the

human brain literally "think" in different "languages." The left hemisphere thinks only in terms of the literal meaning of reality. The right hemisphere, on the other hand, thinks in terms of the intuitive meanings of reality. Furthermore, Blakeslee's ideas imply that the so-called "unconscious mind" is, in truth, but a metaphor that describes the non-verbal cognition of the brain's right hemisphere. The unconscious mind is, therefore, not really unconscious at all. Rather, it merely uses another type of language structure, namely, immediate insight and/or spiritual imagination, which the conscious, verbally-oriented left hemisphere cannot understand.

Granted, from a strictly left hemisphere's point of view, any flash of insight perceived, or non-verbal intuition experienced, in the right hemisphere is unconscious because lefty doesn't "think" in righty's terms. Lefty thus classifies -- as he loves to do -- anything going on in the other hemispheric area as "unconscious." But just because lefty fails to understand righty's language does not mean that the latter is in the center of the ring knocked out unconscious and almost dead. On the contrary, in the intuitive and imaginative cognition of Light-consciousness, both hemispheres become energized with Spirit and ultimately end up communicating with each other. Hence, as Blakeslee states, "nature" normally keeps these two hemispheres of the brain "separate." But in "certain" and very special "interactions," such as the birth of Light-consciousness in man, these two seemingly opposite dimensions of human consciousness become united in Light.

The Greek philosopher: Plato (427-347 B.C.), once symbolically described how the "unconscious" right hemisphere first perceives reality and then, in conjunction with the left hemisphere's language skills, how it communicates this perception to others. In many respects, Plato was telling us about the experience of Light-consciousness and how the sons of Light poetically portray their vision of Light to the world. In *The Dialogues of Plato*, for example, he presumes that the poet and the philosopher are the same person. They share what he calls the ecstatic "divine madness" of inspiration. Spirit-induced inspiration is, of course, a right hemisphere form of cognition. In this type of awareness, visionary poets and philosophers, according to Plato, approach the light "in a state of unconsciousness." This unique state of right hemisphere cognition is a form of "madness" because within this intuitive perception of the "most blessed beatific vision," the poet-philosopher's mind is, as Plato writes, "taken away" by God. But we should not confuse the madness of inspiration

with mental illness. On the contrary, Plato's inspirational madness is a "divine madness," and it occurs "when man approaches the light."

In the "upper world" of Light-consciousness, Plato continues to tell us that men see "the lord of light." In their vision, God "dazzles" men's "eyes" with the brightness of His Truth and Light. Obviously, Plato's symbolic language is pointing to a kind of right hemisphere perception that involves immediate insight and intuitive flashes of non-verbal cognition. But at this exact same moment of vision, men also, as Plato explains, become "ministers" of God's truth. God then speaks His "priceless words" concerning the "light" through the inspired "unconsciousness" of the poet-philosopher's right hemisphere cognition. And with the help of the brain's left hemisphere, the right hemisphere fashions these "priceless words" of God into an understandable human and symbolic language of revelation. In this manner, the peaker communicates the "prophecy" of divine madness to other men, and God "converses" with all mankind. Writes Plato:

We philosophers beheld the beatific vision and were initiated into a mystery which may be truly called most blessed... There is a madness which is a divine gift, and the source of the chiefest blessing granted to man. For prophecy is a madness... When man approaches the light his eyes will be dazzled, and he will not be able to see anything at all of what we now call realities... But he will require to grow accustomed to the sight of the upper world... and when seen, is also inferred to be the universal author of all things beautiful and right, parent of light and of the lord of light in this visible world... Therefore, God takes away the minds of poets [divine madness] and uses them as his ministers, as he also uses diviners and holy prophets, in order that we who hear them may know them to be speaking not of themselves who utter these priceless words in a state of unconsciousness, but that God himself is the speaker, and that through them he is conversing with us.<sup>61</sup>

For Plato, only the poet-philosopher receives God's "divine gift," and it is the "chiefest blessing granted to man." Obviously, Plato placed a very high value on the "divine madness" which was the

wellspring of inspiration for a good deal of his writings. He did so, even though as he warns, the "vulgar," who know nothing of the divine gift, deem him mad. "But, as he [man] forgets earthly interests," writes Plato, "and is rapt in the divine, the vulgar deem him mad, and rebuke him; they do not see that he is inspired."<sup>62</sup> Of course, being rapt in the ecstatic and "divine madness" of inspiration is not some form of dark and gloomy madness. Only the "vulgar" non-peaker interprets the inspiration of Light-consciousness in such a fashion. In truth, Light-consciousness is the supreme radiant source from which all visionary poets and prophets create their individual masterpieces. Or in the words of Plato:

All good poets compose their beautiful poems not by art, but because they are inspired and possessed... for not by art does the poet sing, but by power divine.<sup>63</sup>

In summation, there is one commandment we must all obey. This commandment is very simply stated: Man, as Plato suggests, must always look for the "power divine" that shines through the words, deeds, and actions of inspired men. If we truly live this commandment, we will understand that all vehicles of revelation are but symbols that point to the visionary "lord of light." On the other hand, if we lose sight of this commandment, then our half-brained, literal-minded consciousness will become enslaved to a left-hemispheric mental dictatorship that never listens to "the other side" of the story. Hence, we will not only fail to see the "power divine" within ourselves, but we will also fail to understand any whole-brained son of Light.

## SECTION IV

### CENSORSHIP OF THE LIGHT MOTIF

Unfortunately, left-hemispheric and non-peaking literalists literally abound throughout the history of religion! And since they are the ones who cannot understand the important distinction between the vehicles/images of Light and the experience of Light, they often become hostile to any mention of mysticism, Light-consciousness, or,

if you will, the very revelatory foundation upon which their religion was originally constructed. Explains Maslow:

Those non-peakers who consider themselves "believers of the faith" finally become hostile to the original mystical experience, to mystics, and to prophets in general, that is, to the very people that we might call from our present point of view the truly religious people. Most religions have wound up denying and being antagonistic to the very ground upon which they were originally based.<sup>64</sup>

Throughout history, many "believers of the faith" have "become hostile" to any mention of "the original mystical experience" upon which their religion was based. The early Church Fathers, for example, censored any "point of view" that connected the message of Jesus to mysticism, to the Christian "light motif," or to a visionary consciousness of Light. The story concerning this suppression of "the other side" of the Christian message involves the recently discovered *Nag Hammadi Library*. This collection of religious writings discovered near Nag Hammadi, Egypt -- hence its name: *The Nag Hammadi Library* -- consists of fourth century papyrus manuscripts. These manuscripts include *The Gospel of Thomas*, which is comprised of one hundred and fourteen sayings of Jesus, *The Gospel of Truth*, *The Gospel of Philip*, *The Gospel of Mary*, as well as other Christian and non-Christian documents. Most of these very important religious documents survived as Coptic translations of various Greek writings that date as far back as 50-100 A.D.,<sup>65</sup> or even earlier.

Charles W. Hedrick correctly states that Bishop Athanasius' paschal letter of 367 A.D. placed the Church's first official stamp of censorship on *The Nag Hammadi Library's* visionary "light motif."<sup>66</sup> More specifically, the Bishop's document declared which writings were -- and excluded those which were not -- considered by the hierarchy of the orthodox Church to "proclaim the doctrine of godliness." In his selected list of the only "true books" to be allowed into the New Testament, Bishop Athanasius rejected all those "other books," or all those other Christian writings -- including the sayings of Jesus in *The Gospel of Thomas* -- that emphasized a visionary and non-mediated experience of God's Light.

But in addition to censoring the visionary "light motif" in *The*

*Nag Hammadi Library*, the early Church Fathers also rejected any mystical and/or symbolic interpretations of the Bible that challenged their own self-imposed and exclusive role -- i.e., what they called "the Church's" role -- of mediating human salvation and interpreting divine truth. Bishop Irenaeus, who has been called the "first Church Father," clarifies this point in his book: *Against Heresies*. He insists, for example, that "the teaching of the Church [or more precisely: of the early Church Fathers] is alone true."<sup>67</sup> With this arrogation in mind, he continues by saying that those who abandon "the Church's" interpretations of scripture:

collect words and sayings at haphazard, and give them an unnatural and unreal connection... And, as the saying is, they attempt to make ropes out of sand in applying the parables of our Lord, or prophetic utterances, or Apostolic statements to their plausible scheme, in order that they may have foundation for it. But they alter the scriptural context and connection, and dismember the truth, as much as they can.<sup>68</sup>

Irenaeus could not believe the "unnatural and unreal [mystical] connection" which his theological Christian opponents perceived in "scriptural context." Quite clearly, their visionary and symbolic interpretations of Jesus' "prophetic utterances" contradicted his more literal perceptions of "truth." Irenaeus, therefore, condemned their "perverted methods of interpretation" and branded them as "blaspheming and impudent sophists" or "heretics." He then disdainfully rejected their Christian views as expressed in *The Gospel of Truth*. Writes Irenaeus:

Their perverted method of interpretation is quite apparent... Since this is so, they are foolish who introduce either more or fewer forms of the Gospel in order to pretend that they have discovered more than the truth...But the people of Valentinus, without any hesitation, put forward their own writings and boast that they are more in number than the Gospels. Indeed, they have reached such a pitch of audacity that they have named a recent writing of their own



"The Gospel of Truth," although it does not at all agree with [Irenaeus' and/or "the Church's" interpretation of] the Gospels of the Apostles... But they who abandon the preaching of the Church accuse the holy presbyters of ignorance, and do not see how superior a private Christian is to a blaspheming and impudent sophist. Such are all heretics and those who believe they have discovered something beyond the truth...It therefore behooves us to shun their opinions.<sup>69</sup>

We can easily see why the Church leaders saw no need to debate with anyone who held an opinion contrary to *their* specific interpretations of Christianity. If you set yourself up as an absolute standard for interpreting the truth -- i.e., "the teaching of the Church is alone true" -- then, obviously, anyone who disagrees with you is a "blaspheming and impudent sophist" who has a "perverted method of interpretation." "Such are all heretics," insists Irenaeus, "and those who believe they have discovered something beyond" what the leaders of the early Church thought was true. Accordingly, the Church Fathers did not need to debate their individual interpretations with anyone. In their own minds, they thought they possessed the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. Irenaeus concludes that "it behooves us to shun their [i.e., 'the heretics'] opinions."

When the military State of the fourth century became the "secular arm" of the orthodox "Catholic" Church, the penalties for heresy escalated. Elaine Pagels says that Bishop Irenaeus, in harmony with the orthodox church of Rome,

insisted that there could be only one church, and outside of that church, he declared, "there is no salvation." Members of this church [i.e., the church of Rome] alone are orthodox (literally, "straight-thinking") Christians. And he claimed, this church must be catholic -- that is, universal. Whoever challenged that consensus, arguing instead for other forms of Christian teaching, was declared to be a heretic, and expelled. When the orthodox gained military support, sometime after the Emperor Constantine became Christian in the fourth century, the penalty for heresy escalated.<sup>70</sup>

As Pagels points out, after the leaders of the orthodox Church gained Emperor Constantine's support, they urged the military establishment to enforce harsher and harsher laws against their heterodox rivals. We need only look to the Roman *Theodosian Code* of 438 A.D., to witness how the implementation of these uncharitable laws were "forcefully pressed to the full effect of their execution":

We command that those persons who follow this rule shall embrace the name of Catholic Christians. The rest, however, whom We adjudge demented and insane, shall sustain the infamy of heretical dogmas, their meeting places shall not receive the name of churches, and they shall be smitten first by divine vengeance and secondly by the retribution of Our own initiative... All heresies are forbidden by both divine and imperial laws and shall forever cease... All persons whatsoever who are tossed about by the false doctrine of diverse heresies...shall not assemble in any groups, shall not collect any multitude, shall not attract any people to themselves, shall not show any walls of private houses after the likeness of churches, and shall practice nothing publicly or privately which may be detrimental to Catholic sanctity... We order that the previous laws which We have issued for the destruction of sacrilegious minds shall be forcefully pressed to the full effect of their execution.<sup>71</sup>

These were indeed rigid and severe measures imposed upon those "demented and insane" Christian "heretics" who did not "embrace the name of Catholic Christians." They could neither assemble in groups nor worship in churches. Nor could they do anything publicly or privately -- including the reading and writing of any gospels -- that might "be detrimental to Catholic sanctity." In short, the early Church Fathers, in conjunction with the political powers of the State, believed that their interpretation of religious truth, and theirs alone, should be the iron fist of absolute control. It was even more important than freedom of thought and speech.

But how, you ask, are heretics, the one Universal Church, and the repression of free thought and speech, all connected to *The Nag*

*Hammadi Library*? The answer lies in the fact that the orthodox or "straight-thinking" Christians often silenced their fourth century Christian opposition with fire. Or as the Theodosian Code of 438 A.D. reveals:

Nor indeed shall any person dare to have or to read or to copy the impious books...written against the venerable sect of the orthodox and against the decrees of the most holy synod of bishops held at Ephesus. We decree that the aforesaid books shall be diligently and zealously sought out and publicly burned.<sup>72</sup>

As witnessed by these words, the Christian "heretics" could neither "have...read...or copy" any "impious books." If they did, their writings were "diligently and zealously sought out" and then "publicly burned." Obviously, you were literally playing with fire if you happened to express any ideas that were "written against the venerable sect of the orthodox."

In reference to fire and books, James Robinson, chief editor of *The Nag Hammadi Library*, describes how some fourth century orthodox Christians might have tried to ignite the Nag Hammadi codices and burn them into oblivion:

The Bible refers to burial in a jar as a way to preserve a book and to burning as the way to eliminate one (Jer. 32:14-15; 36:23). *The Life of St. Pachomius* reports that he got rid of a book by Origen, whom he considered a heretic, by throwing it in the water, with the comment that if the Lord's name had not been in it, he would have burned it. The burning of the greatest library in antiquity at Alexandria by Christians late in the fourth century C.E. suggests that such a ready solution would hardly have been overlooked if the intent had been to get rid of the Nag Hammadi Library. If the codices had been part of a Pachomian library, they must have been removed not by heresy-hunters, but by devotees who cherished them enough to bury them in a jar for safekeeping, perhaps for posterity.<sup>73</sup>

During the fourth century, fire was indeed a weapon of repression. And needless to say, "the burning of the greatest library in antiquity at Alexandria by Christians late in the fourth century C.E." tragically exemplifies this repression. This library, according to some estimates, originally contained over 700,000 scrolls, and was the depository of most, if not all, of the extant literature of that period. Fortunately for the modern world, those Christian "devotees" who "cherished" *The Nag Hammadi Library* decided to bury its codices. They probably assumed that if they did not hide them in some way, all traces of their particular Christian view would perish into ashes. And as hindsight clearly demonstrates, they were correct in their assumptions. For as Elaine Pagels suggests, the orthodox Church's efforts at repressing other rival Christian sects existing during that time "proved so successful that, until the discoveries at Nag Hammadi, nearly all our information concerning alternative forms of early Christianity came from the massive orthodox attacks upon them."<sup>74</sup>

But as fate would have it, those who considered themselves as the absolute "guardians of the one true faith" were not completely successful at suppressing rival religious opinions! In 1945, three Egyptian peasant boys foiled the early Church's policy to restrain free thought and speech when they unearthed *The Nag Hammadi Library*. And now, for the first time in almost two thousand years, those Christians who marched to a different drummer can speak freely for themselves!

If we choose to ignore what these Christians said in *The Nag Hammadi Library*, then we implicitly accept the early Church's "highly censored and distorted version of ancient religious literature."<sup>75</sup> Needless to say, this biased perspective failed to understand and appreciate the remarkable poetic beauty, the rich and diverse symbolism, as well as the theological and mystical significance of those Nag Hammadi Christian texts that are now at our disposal.

It would be foolish, therefore, for us to repeat the early Church Fathers' mistakes: namely, we should neither "shun" nor censor *The Nag Hammadi Library*! On the contrary, we must read all of its codices, including the new sayings of Jesus that appear in *Thomas* and elsewhere, with an enthusiastic and open mind. Then instead of being bound in the shackles of censorship, we will be able to judge for ourselves whether this distinguished work is a "perverted method of interpretation" or a very important collection of profound and meaningful statements of faith.

In our study of Light-consciousness, we will, of course, use *The Dead Sea Scrolls* as a quotation source for the writings of the Teacher of Righteousness. However, when studying these *Scrolls*, we must always keep in mind what Morton Smith, Professor Emeritus of Columbia University, recently said about the "editorial disfigurements" contained within them:

The editors of the material thus far published have presented it as they reconstructed it. Their reconstructions have been based on similarities of details -- skins, ink, handwriting, vocabulary, grammar, contents, etc. -- as well as proximity sites and the like. Much has been written of the difficulties of deciding what pieces came from which documents, but not much has been said of the possibilities of error unavoidable in such studies. In fact, the resultant conglomerates have often been published as if they were single sheets, without any guidance to indicate the boundaries of the pieces from which they have been composed...I have singled out one egregious editorial error, but there have been many.<sup>76</sup>

Morton Smith insists that some of the scholars in charge of publishing *The Dead Sea Scrolls* have made "many editorial disfigurements" on the materials they have published to date. These editors, for example, have misplaced lines of one scroll into another, and have thus confounded the reader's understanding of the words.

Moreover, *The Dead Sea Scrolls* have come to us in a very unsatisfactory condition. Apart from all the physical damage caused by time, the first century scribes seem to have arranged some of the materials without regard to any recognizable logical order or pattern. It is as if they copied many different groups of materials on the same scroll in the order in which they received them.

If you combine the first century copyist's disregard of logical order with the twentieth century scholars' "editorial disfigurements," you end up with a kind of disorganized scrapbook-like collection of some of the most important religious writings ever to be discovered by modern man. Hence, when quoting from this highly valued scrapbook, we will sometimes combine quotations from various *Scrolls* so as to present a more logical pattern of thought and

meaning.<sup>77</sup>

Many of the editorial problems and uncertainties associated with *The Dead Sea Scrolls* are connected to the restrictive publication policy of the original manuscript photos. For example, while the Roman Catholic scholar: Pere Roland de Vaux, who has been characterized as "anti-Semitic,"<sup>78</sup> was the chief editor (1953-1971) of the tightly knit monopoly of scroll scholars, he denied the public any access to over fifty percent of the scroll material discovered in 1947. He also would not allow any Jews to work on the Jewish scrolls that he controlled up until his death in 1971. Father Pierre Benoit, a Dominican priest and the chief scroll editor from 1971-1987, as well as John Strugnell, another Catholic chief editor from 1987-1991 and an admitted "anti-Judaist,"<sup>79</sup> continued the de Vaux tradition by refusing to allow publication of most of the materials in question. To add insult to injury, these three chief editors have, for over forty years, flatly denied all scholars outside of their small and selected group access to the photos of the original unpublished scrolls.

Even when a major American philanthropic foundation offered one hundred thousand dollars to John Strugnell, who has been quoted as saying that the religion of Judaism "is a horrible religion" and should, therefore, "disappear,"<sup>80</sup> as well as to J.T. Milik, an ex-Roman Catholic priest who possesses over fifty unpublished texts, they refused all those outside their monopolistic clique permission to even look at the remaining unpublished scrolls!<sup>81</sup>

These rather unfortunate circumstances surrounding *The Dead Sea Scrolls* raise the question as to why only Roman Catholic chief editors have had a forty year iron-fist rule of control over ancient Jewish literature.<sup>82</sup> Perhaps we will never really know the answer to this question. What we do know, however, is that these monopolists have abused the public trust originally granted to them. Hershel Shanks, editor of *Biblical Archaeology Review*, explains:

When the now-aged scholars did this assembling 30 years ago, they were acting as trustees, as fiduciaries for mankind. These documents did not belong to them. They were working on our documents... Whether the scrolls received worse treatment during the 2,000 years they spent in the caves than they have since being taken out of the caves about 40

years ago is debatable... The change from the dry hot air of the Judean desert to the moist air of the bank basement in Amman was disastrous. *Mildew set in* and it took several months to re-clean the scrolls when they were returned to Jerusalem... *Some of the fragmentary scrolls have been stolen, lost or misplaced.* Texts that have disappeared include a manuscript of the Biblical Book of Daniel and a manuscript of the Damascus Document, which may be the most important text for ferreting out the origin of the Dead Sea Scroll sectarians.<sup>83</sup>

It is difficult for those of us who have waited over forty years to now learn about the harsh reality of "mildew," "stolen, lost or misplaced" documents, and/or scholarly mismanagement. Obviously, tragic and slipshod events of this kind should never have happened! And they will never occur again if the public learns its lesson about how the promises of scholarly monopolists often contradict what happens in reality. Perhaps the Huntington Library in California learned this lesson when it finally released the unpublished *Dead Sea Scrolls* in September of 1991. Due to this long overdue act of good judgment, all mankind can now interpret, learn from, and be inspired by these extremely valuable writings.

## SECTION V

### WALKING IN THE WAYS OF LIGHT

But now let us turn our attention back to the first century Essenes. In 68 A.D., an armed Roman attack occurred against the Essene community. At that time, the Romans disbanded most, if not all, of the Wadi Qumran citizenry. This peace-loving desert community had thrived for hundreds of years, even through the years of Jesus' ministry. But when the Romans launched their invasion, the community's activities as a whole came to a sudden and violent end.

Most of the Essenes neither married nor owned private property. As a religious order, these "sons of light" lived their lives so as to "walk in the ways of light." (78) But the question now surfaces: was the unmarried Jesus -- who insisted we must not only "walk while

you have the light" (John 12:35), but also "believe in the light," and/or "dwell in the light," in order to "become sons of light" -- actually acquainted with the Essene "sons of light"? Or is it just pure coincidence that Jesus used symbols and metaphors that have the same "flavor," and in many instances, the exact same content and meaning as those found in the Essene scrolls? A. Powell Davies, for one, answers this question with the following logic:

It may seem as though we are assuming too much in supposing that Jesus was brought up as an Essene. But he was certainly not brought up as a Sadducee; and in view of his hostility to the Pharisees, he is not likely to have been brought up in that sect either. So it was an Essenic sect or nothing. As Jesus obviously knew the scriptures well, it is impossible that he had not been schooled. We cannot believe, then, that he belonged to no sect at all. Thus, even by a process of elimination, we see the strong probability that his education was Essenic, and as we know from previous sections, his teachings and his entire outlook relate him to the Essenes.<sup>84</sup>

Obviously, Davies' thesis is speculative. No one to date can prove precisely where Jesus was the first twenty-five years of His life. Even when He spent "forty days in the wilderness," we cannot know for sure whether He went to the isolated desert monastery at Qumran or whether He lived by Himself without shelter in the desert.

What we do know, however, is that there were many other stunning similarities between the lives of Jesus and the Teacher of Righteousness. Take, for example, what Willis Barnstone has said about the leadership of the Essene church:

The community calls itself by the same name ('edah) as was used by the early Christians of Palestine to denote the Church. There are twelve "men of holiness" who act as general guides of the community -- a remarkable correspondence with the Twelve Apostles.<sup>85</sup>

To say the least, the twelve "men of holiness" who acted under



the leadership of the Teacher of Righteousness conjure up memories of Jesus and his twelve apostles. But the resemblances do not stop here. Dupont-Sommer suggests the following:

Everything in the Jewish New Covenant heralds and prepares the way for the Christian New Covenant. The Galilean Master [Jesus], as He is presented to us in the writings of the New Testament, appears in many respects as an astonishing reincarnation of the Teacher of Righteousness. Like the latter, He preached penitence, poverty, humility, love of one's neighbor, chastity. Like him, He prescribed the observance of the Law of Moses, the whole Law, but the Law finished and perfected, thanks to His own revelations. Like him He was the Elect and the Messiah of God, the Messiah redeemer of the world. Like him, He was the object of the hostility of the priests, the party of the Sadducees. Like him, He was condemned and put to death... Like him, at the end of time, He will be the supreme judge. Like him He founded a Church whose adherents fervently awaited His glorious return. In the Christian Church, just as in the Essene Church, the essential rite is the sacred meal, whose ministers are the priests... And the ideal of both Churches is essentially that of unity, communion in love -- even going so far as the sharing of common property.<sup>86</sup>

These similarities, as well as those presented earlier in this chapter, are indeed extraordinary! Throughout this book, we will, of course, discuss many additional *literary* affinities that exist between the righteous Jesus and the Teacher of Righteousness. As previously mentioned, we will discover that when these two spiritual leaders discussed specific and common subjects of concern, they quite often used the exact same nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, and symbolic structures of thought.

After examining all this remarkable evidence, one might feel compelled to conjecture that Jesus was the Teacher of Righteousness. But at this particular time in history, such conjectural thinking will remain what it is: namely, hypothetical! Nevertheless, what we can

now state with certainty is that the parallels existing between Jesus and the Teacher of Righteousness are the reflections of a universal consciousness which both of them experienced. In fact, if there truly is an archetypal experience of Light-consciousness, then we should expect comparable symbols, metaphors, sayings, parables, and even life-styles from those men who "walk in the ways of light."

Speaking of metaphors and symbols, "the Lord [Christ]," writes the author of the *Acts of John*, "had performed everything as a symbol and a dispensation for the conversion and salvation of man."<sup>87</sup> Certainly, Jesus knew that whenever any human being speaks of Spiritual realities, he must use symbolic language. He, too, therefore, like all the sons of Light, was bound by the limitations of human communication. Likewise, Philo, the early first century historian, tells us that all religious instruction within the Essene community, including that which was contributed by the Teacher of Righteousness, was "given to them by means of symbol."<sup>88</sup> Accordingly, in the next six chapters of this book, we are going to look at some of the words of Jesus, the Teacher of Righteousness, as well as the Psalmist, and examine them as poetic symbols that point to a spiritual transformation within human consciousness. Indeed, if "the Lord performed everything as a symbol...for the salvation of man," then it is a duty incumbent upon us to look at His words, as well as the words of others, from this unique perspective.

I was once with a three year old girl named Susie. As she, her father: Jim, and I approached their house, Susie begged her father to "let her unlock the door to the house." Jim obliged her, and we stood at the door for about five minutes while Susie unsuccessfully fiddled with the key. Finally, a bit frustrated, Jim blurted out: "Susie, use your head!" At the tender age of three, Susie did literally that; she started pounding her head against the door! Unfortunately for Susie's head, as well as her feelings, she had unknowingly mistaken a figure of speech for literal fact. As she ran to her father with tears in her eyes and a big bump on her head, we both explained to her what Jim had really meant by his statement. Her reply was: "I didn't understand, father."

As Susie learned, whenever one attempts to decipher the meaning of figurative language, there is always the potential of either gaining the power that opens doors or creating a problem that keeps the doors forever locked. In reference to the task of this book, we will be approaching various poetic descriptions of the door that leads to our

heavenly Father's house. "You will begin to stand outside," writes Luke, "and to knock at the door, saying, 'Lord, open to us.'"<sup>89</sup> When knocking at this very special and spiritual entrance way, may we not bang our heads against it by mistaking figures of speech for literal fact. If we do, God will answer and say: "I tell you, I do not know where you come from; depart from me."<sup>90</sup> Then try as we may, we will be frustrated and end up saying, like Susie: "I didn't understand, Father."

The Teacher of Righteousness was one man who truly did understand his spiritual Father. In fact, his unique wisdom was so great that he often summarized an entire sermon in a sentence. Let us, therefore, examine some of his words that poetically highlight the main points in this first chapter. They are beautifully written, and they are also concise and full of meaning:

Thou has acted for Thyself and for Thy glory,  
that the Law may come to fruition,  
and has sent among mankind  
men that be schooled in Thy counsel  
to tell forth Thy wonders through the ages,  
world without end,  
to rehearse Thy deeds of power  
without surcease,  
that all nations may know Thy truth  
and all peoples Thy glory.  
All these men hast Thou brought  
into communion with Thee,  
and hast given them common estate  
with the Angels of Thy Presence.  
There stands no intermediary among them  
to approach Thee in their behalf  
and bring them back Thy word  
filtered through their mind  
for they themselves are answered  
from out of Thy glorious mouth.  
They are Thy courtiers,  
sharing the high estate  
of all the heavenly beings.  
The seed which these men sow  
shall yield a flower unfading...

it shall thrive beyond all bounds...  
I give thanks unto Thee, O Lord.  
Thou has raised up among them [thy people]  
men of truth  
and sons of light.<sup>91</sup>

We will now turn our attention, in the words of the Teacher of Righteousness, to the spiritual "communion with Thee" experienced by the "sons of Light." As a result of "filtering" God's "Word" through their "mind[s]," each of these "men of truth" has described "Thy [God's] wonders through the ages." Hopefully, the "seed" of eternal Light and truth, which their inspired words sow, "shall yield ■ flower unfading" in the hearts and souls of every man on earth. If it does, then all men's hearts will "flower like a lily," God's Light "shall thrive beyond all bounds," and "all nations may [will] know Thy [God's] truth."

Furthermore, there "stands no intermediary among them" because God "has acted for [Himself]" and has "raised up" these "men of truth" or these "sons of light." In so doing, God has "schooled" these Spiritually-minded "courtiers," or "heavenly beings," in the "counsel" of His "wonders." It behooves us, therefore, to investigate what they have to say about the archetypal or "common estate" nature of their God-inspired consciousness.

And so, let us now begin our spiritual ascent to what the Essene Teacher calls the "high estate" of Light-consciousness. For if "all these men," or "all" the sons of Light, "share" in this lofty region of the human heart, then we too must climb and explore its mysteries. In short, we too must mount the high peaks of what Plato calls the "upper world" and search for "the lord of light" who distinctly "dazzles" human consciousness with Light.

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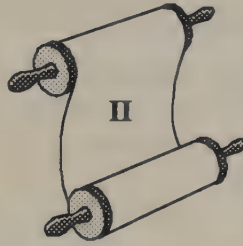
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3. Robert Alter, Frank Kermode, pp. 382-383 & 378.
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11. *NHL*, p. 137. Note: The best translation of *The Gospel of Thomas* appears in: James M. Robinson, ed., *The Nag Hammadi Library* (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1988). All references to *The Nag Hammadi Library*, including this one, will be designated as *NHL*.
12. *NHL*, p. 367.
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- "infantile" paleographical attempts at dating the Teacher's documents. Accordingly, Baigent and Leigh correctly conclude that all the past paleographic efforts to prove a pre-Christian date for the Teacher of Righteousness are fundamentally unsound. See: Baigent and Leigh, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Deception* (New York: Summit Books, 1991), pp. 160-164. Moreover, Eisenman & Wise suggest that the paleographical methods of dating Scroll material "have in the past too often been employed illegitimately in Qumran research to confuse the non-specialist." (p. 12)
18. Matthew has Jesus introduce the subject of "lilies" with the following words: "And why are you anxious about clothing." For a more in-depth discussion of clothing symbolism and its relationship to flowers and the Light, see chapter II, section II.
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# THE MOUNTAIN OF LIGHT & THE RIVER OF GOD

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This high mountain which you have seen, whose summit is like the throne of God, is the throne of God. It is where the holy great one, the Lord of glory, the eternal king, will sit when He comes to visit the earth with goodness... And I [God] set a throne up for myself [on earth] and sat down on it. I said to the light, "Go higher, become firm, and be a foundation for the highest." But there is nothing higher than the light.<sup>1</sup>

*The Book of Enoch*

Praise the most high God...Exalt His exaltation on high...and His glorious divinity above all the highest heights... AND THE MOST HIGH GOD FOR ALL ETERNITY SHALL SHINE DOWN AS A LIGHT UPON YOU.<sup>2</sup>

*The Dead Sea Scrolls*

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Abraham Maslow once compared the peak-experience to an inner

spiritual experience in which man perceives reality "in a higher than usual way." Within this higher level of consciousness, man's spirit grasps a dimension of "truth" that transcends his everyday perceptions of life. Observes Maslow:

The peak-experience seems to lift us to greater than normal heights so that we can see and perceive in a higher than usual way.... It can therefore be understood as lifting him "higher," making him "taller," etc., so that he becomes "deserving" of more difficult truths...<sup>3</sup>

In the same fashion, the human experience of Light-consciousness "lifts" a man's heart into a "higher" level of spiritual perception. Once on this high peak of Light and vision, a man can see "more difficult truths" that were once hidden from his view.

Light-consciousness, or a peak-experience, is such a profound and personal event that it often becomes that spiritual happening which not only justifies itself, but also living itself. As such, a man often discovers his entire life's value system in the spiritual high of a peak-experience. Writes Maslow:

The peak-experience is felt as a self-validating, self-justifying moment which carries its own intrinsic value with it. It is felt to be a highly valuable -- even uniquely valuable -- experience... As a matter of fact, so many people find this so great and high an experience that it justifies not only itself but even living itself.<sup>4</sup>

The brilliant and spiritual "peak" of Light-consciousness is certainly one "uniquely valuable" experience that any man or woman can have. In essence, it is a very "great and high" and holy human experience. Knowing this, our three sons of Light symbolically refer to it as being "led up a high mountain" (Jesus), "ascend[ing] the high mount" (Psalmist), and/or "rising to [the] everlasting heights" (Teacher of Righteousness), of God's "everlasting light." Let us, therefore, begin our illuminating journey to this peak of human experience and examine its contents. For if we do, then we shall begin to understand precisely why we must all worship at God's high

and holy mountain. We will also begin to discern the ways in which God's Light "lifts us to greater than normal heights so that we can see and perceive in a higher than usual way."

## SECTION I

### WORSHIP GOD ON THE EVERLASTING HEIGHTS

Jesus:

1. And after six days, Jesus took with him Peter and James and John, and **led them up a high mountain** apart by themselves; (Mark 9:2) Jesus said: "But to you I am speaking, and listen to what I speak. I put into your mind to **come up to this mountain so that you may hear what a disciple should learn from his teacher and a man from God.**" And when he had said this he showed me [John] a **Cross of Light.** (*Acts of John*)<sup>5</sup>

Teacher of Righteousness:

1. To the **Most High God** belong all the works of righteousness... (213) Thou hast **made me rise to everlasting heights**, and I have walked in an infinite plain! (209) And Thou, O my **God, hast succored my soul** and lifted my horn **on high, And I will shine with a seven-fold light** in the Eden which Thou has made for Thy glory. For Thou art an everlasting light unto me and hast established my feet on an infinite plain. (224)

Ask yourself the following question. Could men living thousands of years ago have chosen a better symbol than a towering mountain to describe the "greater than normal heights" of a peak-experience? The answer, of course, is: no, they could not! For back in those days, a tall mountain was about the only choice they had to symbolize their spiritually high encounters with God. Jesus, for one, recognized this symbolic relationship between mountains and man's experience of the Divine. And He succinctly expressed it when He spoke to John in the *Acts of John*. Jesus told him "to come up to this mountain so that you may hear what a disciple should learn from his teacher and a man from God." In this passage, Jesus tells us that if we are going to "hear...from God," we must first "come up to this mountain." He thus intimately connects the human experience of God with man's climb "up" to the symbolic "mountain."

John continues his story about Jesus with the following words. "And when He had said this He showed me [John] a **Cross of Light.**"

As you can see, after Jesus invites John to "come up to this mountain" where God is, He shows him a "Cross of Light." But what has a "Cross" and a "Light" to do with mountains? To answer this question, you must understand the following symbolic thought: If man encounters God by climbing -- within himself -- the mountain peaks of a spiritual experience, then in that very special experience he simultaneously sees the Light of God. In essence, therefore, man discovers God's Light on the peaks of spiritual vision.

In subsequent chapters, we will discuss the symbolic representations of God's Light. In particular, chapters VI and VII will consider the symbolic value of the "Cross of Light." Moreover, section II of this chapter will examine the relationship of "the Light" to Jesus when He "led them [Peter, James, and John] up a high mountain apart by themselves." But for now, let us understand that in a visionary, mountain-top, or "peak" experience, we begin to perceive what a man should learn from his God.

On the mountain peaks of Light-consciousness, the first thing man learns is that he experiences God as a burst of Light. "Oh send out thy light and thy truth," exclaims the Psalmist, "let them lead me, let them bring me to thy holy hill and to thy dwelling."<sup>6</sup> Certainly, the "Light" and "Truth" are like beacons that God places on the top of His "holy hill." When we ascend this "high mount" within our own spirit, we discover, as the Psalmist continues to explain, that the "Most High" God "daily bears us up" to "worship at His holy mountain." Or in other words, when man climbs the ecstatic peaks of God's "holy hill," he "daily" sees the "Light" of the Lord within his own spirit. In this way, man learns that the vision of Light, or the peak-experience, occurs on those "high" and "holy" places of the heart that are not only "beautiful in elevation" but also the "joy of all the earth."

In reference to God's "everlasting light," and its connection to the spiritual and "everlasting heights" of man's vision, the Teacher said:

Thou [Most High God] hast made me rise to everlasting heights... Thou, O my God, hast succored my soul and lifted my horn on high, And I will shine with a seven-fold light... For Thou are an everlasting light unto me...

Like Jesus and the Psalmist, the Essene Teacher here tells us that the

Light of God is on the peaks, or on the "everlasting heights," of his own religious consciousness. In that heightened spiritual awareness, he experienced his "Most High God" in the form of an "everlasting light." He also expresses the wisdom that the vision of God's everlasting Light made his spirit shine with glory. God "lifted" his "horn," as he continues to inform us, or "succored" his soul, "on high." As a result, he concludes that "I will shine with a seven-fold light" which God "made for [His] glory."

Obviously, the Teacher of Righteousness discovered the "Most High God" when his heart rose to the "everlasting heights" within his own being and saw "the everlasting light." It is no wonder then that a recently discovered Scroll fragment celebrates "THE HIGHNESS OF [GOD'S] GLORY," as well as "THE HIGHNESS OF THE BEAUTY OF THE FOUNTAIN [OF LIGHT]." 4Q286-7 (p. 229) Every time a man "drinks" the "Living Water" of God's high and eternal "Fountain of Light," so too does he experience the sacred "highness" of the Most High's everlasting Light.

If other men are to discover this lofty "dwelling" place of the "Most High" God, then they too must see His Light on the "everlasting heights" of spiritual vision. For only on the "everlasting heights" (Essene Teacher), or on the "high mountain" (Jesus), or on the "high mount" (Psalmist), will man discover the "peaks" of vision that enable him to adore the Light of the Divine.

## SECTION II

### MOUNTAINS, FACES, AND GARMENTS

Jesus:

1. And He was transfigured before them, and **his face shone like the sun, and his garments became white as light.** (Matthew 17:2) You will **clothe yourselves in light...** But when you see the Eternal Existent, that is **the great vision.** (*Dialogue of the Savior*: #50, 42)<sup>7</sup>

Teacher of Righteousness:

1. I give Thee thanks, O God, for **Thou has illumined my face** by Thy Covenant...and **like a true dawn at daybreak** Thou has appeared unto me. (211) As for the Visitation of all who walk in this Spirit, it consists of...[a] **garment of honor in everlasting light.** (80) Thou [God] wilt adorn him ["men of Thy vision"] with Thy brightness. (243)

All three of our sons of Light loved to worship at God's holy mountain. During these elevated moments of "vision," they saw the bright Light of the Father's holy dwelling place within their own spirits. To express the pure and inner radiance of this spiritually transfiguring experience, they developed a symbolic language of shining faces and bright garments. But keep in mind that this poetic language does not describe a literal transfiguration. Rather, their "illuminated faces" and their "garments of light" symbolically represent the effect of God's dazzling brightness within the hearts of these "men of Thy vision."

Imbued by their particular "vision" of the Lord, our three sons of Light tell us about the radiance of God's Light. The Psalmist, for example, sings out: "Thou didst speak in a vision to Thy faithful one... Look to Him and be radiant."<sup>8</sup> Radiant, indeed, were these men's visionary souls! In fact, when Jesus "looked" to God on the "high mountain" peak of "the great vision," His Spirit was so radiant that Matthew says His "face shone like the sun." In a strikingly similar fashion, the Teacher of Righteousness declares that when he "rose" to the "everlasting heights" and became a "man of Thy vision," God also transfigured his "face" with the brightness of "a true dawn at daybreak." "For Thou," he writes, "has illumined my face...and like a true dawn at daybreak Thou has appeared to me."

The Psalmist, however, approaches this type of "face" symbolism from a slightly different angle. He praises the Most High God as his "light and salvation." He then invokes the Divine to

make His face to shine upon us, that Thy way may be known upon earth, Thy saving power among all nations.<sup>9</sup>

Obviously, God "didst speak in a vision" to his "faithful" servant: the Psalmist. And when He did, the latter saw that God's radiant face can indeed "shine upon" man's face. In such a transcendent experience, man's heart learns to "look" to God "and be radiant." In short, man's heart beams with the brightness of God's spiritual Light, and God's "way" becomes "known upon earth." Certainly, therefore, the "vision" of God's Light truly is, as the Psalmist concludes, the source for the "saving power among all nations."

But in addition to shining faces, our three sons of Light also symbolically associate bright "garments" with their inner vision of

God's Light. Consider, for example, that while Jesus' **"garments became white as light"** on the "high mountain" of spiritual vision, the Teacher of Righteousness climbed to "the everlasting heights" and wore a **"garment of honor in everlasting light."** In a similar symbolic portrayal of visionary illumination, the Teacher of Righteousness states that God "wilt adorn [His men of vision] with Thy brightness." Whichever symbolic representation you may choose, these men wore the symbolic "garments" that were "white as light" because God made the inner fabric of their souls bright with the radiant vision of His Light.

Again, the Psalmist presents his particular garment symbol of Light from a slightly different perspective. For instance, he makes the Lord be the one who **"coverest Thyself with light as with a garment."** In this way, God is the one who first wears the symbolic "garment" of Light. But the Psalmist does not stop here. He tells us that man must also **"worship the Lord in holy array."** By implication, therefore, man's heart must "be radiant" with the bright "garment" that "coverest" the Lord "with light." For only when we put on the garment of Light, and thus "worship the Lord in holy array," will our "radiant" hearts be able to "look to God."

In summary, those "men of Thy vision" who "rise to the everlasting heights" and wear the "garment of honor in everlasting light" (Essene Teacher), or those men who "will clothe [themselves] in light" as they "come up to this mountain" (Jesus), are those individuals who "ascend the high mount" within themselves and "worship [in holy array] at His [God's] holy mountain" (Psalmist). God thus adorns the human heart with a flash of holy Light that appears on the mountain peaks of "vision." At this particularly "radiant" time of the human spirit, man discovers that God truly does "shine forth."

But here is a curious point. Worshiping the Lord "in holy array" (Psalmist), and considering how the lilies of the field grow (Jesus), might just have a common symbolic denominator. For example, let us first consider that as the Israeli *Lilium Candidum L.*, or Madonna lily, turns toward the sun, its bloom reflects the bright sunlight to our eyes. But now notice the verb Jesus chooses when He personifies the lily. He tells us that "Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these."

Symbolically speaking, Jesus' choice of words is significant. Consider that on the mountain peaks of vision, God arrayed Jesus'

heart in symbolic "garments" that "became white as light." If we now combine the symbols of bright garments and lilies of the field, we learn that when the Light of God opens our hearts like a lily in the sunlight, that spiritual Light will also shine upon the bloom of our spirit. We also discover that in our blossoming radiance, God will "array" our hearts with the spiritual garments that are "white as light." In this way, we will, as the Psalmist insists, "worship the Lord in holy array."

Unfortunately, however, even the most glorious kings on earth are "not arrayed" with these bright garments of the heart until they become, as Jesus warns, less "anxious about [physical] clothing." In Matthew 6:28, Jesus asks right before His famous lily quotation, "Why are you anxious about clothing?" In *The Gospel of Thomas*, He echoes these sentiments, "Do not be concerned from morning until evening and from evening until morning about what you will wear."<sup>10</sup> Obviously, only those who replace their concerns "about what they will [physically] wear" with the more spiritual concerns of how their hearts must blossom, like a lily, to the Father's Light, will be "arrayed" in the "garments" that are "white as light." We must, therefore, be more concerned about putting on these Light-garments. And we will accomplish this only when we learn to consider how the lilies of the field grow and how our own spirits must blossom into blooms of radiant spiritual beauty.

The Teacher of Righteousness summarizes these complex and interlaced symbols of fabrics, flowers, and Light with the following poetry. The symbolic complexity, beauty, and creative thought in these poetic lines easily compare to the writings of Shakespeare, Whitman, or Milton. He writes:

And Thy truth fills my soul with delights. And I  
 have flowered like a lily and my heart has opened to  
 the everlasting fountain [of Light]...I will wait until  
 Thou cause salvation to flower and the Shoot to grow  
 by giving strength and vigor and by uplifting the  
 heart... For Thou [God] hast sent out a sprouting as  
 a flower that shall bloom for ever that the Shoot may  
 grow into the branches of the eternal planting... And  
 the assembly of the holy Fabric shall belong to an  
 eternal planting for all time to come. (235-6, 223,  
 219, 102)



The Essene Teacher's heart, as we have discussed, "flowered like a lily" when it "opened" to the "everlasting fountain" of Light. This "uplifting" experience of "the heart" occurred when he saw "the everlasting light" on the "everlasting heights" of Light-consciousness. At that holy time, he became a member of "the assembly of the holy Fabric" because his heart put on the "garment of honor in everlasting light."

Moreover, since God did array his heart in Light, he now "belongs to an eternal planting" of the "sons of Light." As you may remember, God sows this "eternal planting," or what the newly released Scroll fragments call "His [GOD'S] SUBLIME RADIANCE OF AN ETERNAL PLANTING," 4Q416,418 (p. 249), in the hearts of men only when they "flower like a lily" to the "everlasting fountain" of Light. In this fashion, God implants His spiritual Light on the visionary peaks of man's soul. And being spiritual in nature, this visionary Light is eternal. God, therefore, "hast sent out a sprouting [of Light] as a flower that shall bloom forever" in the hearts of men. As more and more men join "the assembly of the holy Fabric," and thus put on the "garment of honor in everlasting light," the "Shoot [of Light] will grow into the branches of the eternal planting" within all "the men of Thy vision."

In conclusion, the sons of Light often symbolically compare Light-consciousness to the blossoming of flowers, or to an eternal planting, within their hearts. They also liken it to wearing "holy fabrics" on a "high mountain" (Jesus), or on "His holy mountain" (Psalmist), or on the "everlasting heights" (Teacher of Righteousness), of "vision." We should note, however, that all this talk about the consciousness of spiritual heights does not deny the possibility that our three sons of Light did, in fact, visit the literal mountains at least once, twice, or more in their lives. No one in his right mind would repudiate that historical probability. But people in today's world will not find ultimate meaning and value in these types of physical/historical events of the past. On the contrary, we moderns will discover meaning only if we interpret these physical events as symbols that point to a corresponding and more important spiritual consciousness within ourselves.

This very special spiritual consciousness comes, as we have discussed, only to those who, like our three sons of Light, can climb the mountain peaks within themselves and be "transfigured" by the Light of God. In short, it comes to any man who learns to "extol the

Lord our God" on the "high" peak "vision" of the holy and "eternal Light."

Meister Eckhart (1260-1327), for one, understood these lofty "peaks" of Light-consciousness. And in the following words, he explained what happened when he became a spiritual mountain climber:

Whoever would be taught by God has to ascend this **mountain**; there God will perfect them in the day of eternity when **the light** is full. What I perceive in God is light... **Spiritual perception is light...** For in this light the Father and the soul and all things and the Word itself are one.<sup>11</sup>

If we are to "be taught by God," we must, as Eckhart explains, "ascend this mountain." However, always remember that mountain climbers are, in truth, spiritual Light-perceivers. Or as Eckhart tells us, the steep climb to the heights of God's Light within man is strictly a matter of "spiritual perception." Hence, "spiritual perception," as he succinctly writes, "is light." And there on the bright peaks of visionary perception, or on the heights of Light-consciousness, God "will perfect" our hearts "when the light is full" and when His Word, His Light, and the human soul, "are one."

Other sons of Light have linked seeing God with high mountains. For instance, *The Book of Enoch* -- which is a composite Jewish work composed at different times during the last two centuries B.C. -- tells us that God's radiant throne is at the "summit" of a "high mountain which you have seen." Enoch continues to say that God, in all His "glory," sits on His throne and is covered with a "raiment" that not only shines "more brightly than sun" but is also "whiter than snow." Writes Enoch:

This **vision** was shown to me... This **high mountain** which you have seen, whose summit is like the throne of God, **is the throne of God...** The great Glory sat there. **His raiment shone more brightly than sun and was whiter than snow...** It is where the holy great one, the Lord of glory, the eternal king, will sit when he comes to visit the earth with goodness.<sup>12</sup>

According to Enoch's "vision," God will "sit" on the mountain-top "throne" of glory "when He comes to visit the earth with goodness." Enoch further states that, like God, those who climb this mountain "will [also] be clothed with garments of glory, the garments of life from the Lord of Spirits... **Their garments were white and their faces shone like snow.**"<sup>13</sup> As you might have noticed, Enoch's first or second century B.C. description of spiritual mountain climbing is remarkably similar to the words that portray Jesus' mountain-top transfiguration. In both accounts, "garments" are "white" as light/snow and "faces" shine with God's Glory!

This type of archetypal Light/garment/face symbolism is quite common throughout visionary literature. For example, the author of the *Odes of Solomon* tells us more about his radiant face and bright garments:

I discarded darkness and **clothed myself in light...** He [God] is my sun and his rays have **lifted me up and chased all the darkness from my face.**<sup>14</sup>

Again, God, or the bright "sun" of the spiritual world, "lifts" man's soul out of "darkness" and into His Light. In doing so, God "chase[s] all the darkness from [his] face" and "clothe[s]" man "in light." As in previous examples, this symbolic representation describes the visionary brightness of God's Light in man's heart. These words, like those of other sons of Light, thus poetically point to what Swedenborg (1688-1782) once succinctly stated. "Man's internal sight," he writes, "is enlightened by spiritual light...Spiritual light is a *white shining light!*"<sup>15</sup>

There is another mountain climber who lived around the year 1300 B.C. His name was Moses. When he "talked with God" on "Mount Sinai," the "skin of his face," like that of Jesus and Enoch, also "shone" with the brightness of God's glory:

When Moses came down from **Mount Sinai**, with the two tables of the testimony in his hand as he came down from the mountain, Moses did not know that the skin of **his face shone** because he had been talking with God.<sup>16</sup>

In this mountain-top "peak" vision, God enlightened Moses' heart with the Spiritual brilliance of His Light! Quite naturally, therefore, Moses' entire spirit, as well as "the skin of his face," would shine with the Spiritual splendor of God's glory.

In chapter I, we learned that the ancient Hindu Upanisads symbolize "the Brahman [God] light" by describing the "shining faces" of those who know "the highest worlds." "Your face shines," says the author, "like that of ~~one~~ who knows Brahman [God] light...in the highest worlds beyond which there is ~~no~~ higher." And he continues by saying that this Light "is the same as this light which is here within the person." After reading these words, we can safely conclude that Brahman's, and/or God's, "high" Light "within the person" also made men's "faces" in India "shine" with spiritual glory as far back as the 8th century B.C.

Not too surprisingly, we find other symbolic expressions of climbing to the spiritual heights ("mountains") of Light in *Isaiah*. For example, first *Isaiah* (1-39), which dates back to the 8th century B.C., begins by stating that God's "house" is located on the "highest of the mountains." *Isaiah* then invites "us" to "go up to the mountain of the Lord" because he knew that spiritual mountain climbers of the human heart will "walk in the light of the Lord."

It shall come to pass in the latter day, that the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be established as the highest of the mountains... Come, let us **go up to the mountain of the Lord**, to the house of the God of Jacob... Come, let **us walk in the light of the Lord.**<sup>17</sup>

Third *Isaiah* (56-66), which dates back to around the 6th century B.C., presents a similar "vision of *Isaiah*." In this section, we learn how Light "arises upon you" and how man puts on the "garments of salvation."

The sun shall be no more your light by day, nor for brightness shall the moon give light to you by night, but **the Lord will be your everlasting light...** Arise, shine; for your light has **come** and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you... The Lord will arise upon you... Then you shall **see and be radiant...** For

he [God] has clothed me with the garments of salvation.<sup>18</sup>

Isaiah is obviously not concerned with the brightness of the sun or the moon. Rather, he loves God because the Lord is an "everlasting light." And with love in his heart, Isaiah insists that all men must "arise" to the "vision" of the "everlasting light" of the Lord! Indeed, like the Psalmist's words: "look to Him [God] and be radiant," Isaiah hopes that someday we will all truly "see and be radiant," know the "glory of the Lord," and thus be "clothed" with "the ['radiant'] garments of salvation."

Before we conclude that only the visionaries of ancient times spoke about God's Light and spiritual mountain climbing, we should read how Tennyson (1809-1892) poetically describes the spiritual heights of his visionary Light-consciousness. He writes:

As in a dream I seemed to climb forever, at last  
I reached a door, a light was in the crannies... Along  
the hall a beam of light seven times more clear  
than day, and down the long beam stole the Holy  
Grail... Let visions of the night come as they will.<sup>19</sup>

Tennyson is a spiritual mountain climber. In fact, he is one of those brilliant visionaries who "climb forever" the ecstatic and spiritual heights of human consciousness. And he continues to mount these visionary peaks within his own heart until he reaches the "light that is seven times more clear than day." Upon seeing this high Light, Tennyson concludes, "let visions of the night come as they will!" For only in the high and holy "visions" of Light-consciousness does man learn that God's Holy Spirit, or His "Holy Grail," is like "a beam of light."

The Light-language of Moses, Isaiah, the Psalmist, Enoch, Jesus, the Teacher of Righteousness, Eckhart, and Tennyson is dazzlingly analogous! As we have seen, "mountains," shining "faces," bright "garments," and "Light" penetrate, in one form or another, all of their thoughts. So whether we read in the thirteenth century B.C. (Moses), or all the way through time to the nineteenth century A.D. (Tennyson), the archetypal experience of Light-consciousness, and its universal poetic representations, are in essence the same.

## SECTION III

## MOUNTAINS, ROCKS, AND CHURCHES

Jesus:

1. And I tell you, you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church, and the powers of death shall not prevail against it. (Matthew 16:18)

2. Everyone who comes to me and hears my words and does them, I will show you what he is like: he is like a man building a house, who dug deep and laid the foundation upon rock. (Luke 6:47-48)

3. God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth. (John 4:24)

Teacher of Righteousness:

1. For it is **Thou [God] who wilt set the foundation [of "the Congregation of Truth"] upon rock** and the frame-work on the cord of righteousness and the plumb-line of truth to test the tried stones in order to build a stout building such as will not shake and that none who enter there shall stagger... For Thou, O my God, art my refuge, my stronghold, my stout rock, my fortress. (220, 233). God established to build for Himself **the Congregation of Truth**...they will possess the sublime Mountain of Israel and **will taste everlasting delights** in His holiness. (272) And Thou...has established my fabric upon rock and everlasting foundations serve me for my ground. (222)

2. And He [God] built for them a **sure House in Israel**. (126) **Its foundations shall not tremble nor flee from their place**. It ["the House of Light"<sup>20</sup>] is the Dwelling of infinite holiness...It is the **House of perfection** and truth in Israel. (91)

3. I have known Thee, O my God, because of the Spirit that **Thou has put in me**. (240) [This Spirit is] the Institution of the Spirit of holiness founded in accordance with eternal Truth. (93)

Mountains had significant symbolic value for Jesus, the Teacher of Righteousness and the Psalmist. Mountains, of course, are made of hard rock. As you might expect, therefore, rocks also entered into the symbolic framework upon which these men constructed their statements of faith. Jesus, for instance, once told Peter that "**upon this rock** I will build my church." Moreover, Jesus insists that those who truly hear His words are "like a man building a house, who dug deep and laid the foundation upon rock."

With an almost uncanny parallelism, the Teacher of Righteousness, like Jesus, also informs us that the "foundation" of his place of worship is "set...**upon rock**." He writes:

God established to build for Himself the Congregation of Truth...For it is Thou [the Lord] who will set the foundation [of his church or "the Congregation of Truth"] **upon rock** and the frame-work on the cord of righteousness.

This "Congregation of Truth," or those enlightened men who worship God in the church that is "set upon rock," will, as the Essene Teacher continues, "possess the sublime Mountain of Israel and will taste everlasting delights in His holiness." Clearly, those who worship in God's rock-bound building will "possess" the mountain. "Congregations of Truth," mountains, and rocks, therefore, are all a part of the symbolic framework upon which the Teacher of Righteousness constructs his faith. But fear not! He, like Jesus, did not forget to comment about the "House" of the Lord. God, as he writes, also "will build for them a sure House in Israel." And since God is constructing this "House," it will, of course, be a "dwelling of infinite holiness."

The Psalmist also writes about the "house of the Lord," or God's holy "temple," and he implies that it is built upon a rock "that is higher than I." In particular, he first calls upon the Lord, "[his] rock,"<sup>21</sup> as he "lifts up his hands toward Thy most holy sanctuary." The Psalmist then explains that "God will set me high **upon a rock**." With these words, he suggests that the Most High God will "set" him in a "sanctuary" that is built "upon" the solid foundation of the eternal Rock: Himself. There on the "rock that is higher than I" will the Psalmist worship his God and "dwell in the house [or thy holy temple] of the Lord all the days of my life." With joy in his heart, he lifts his hands in praise to the Lord, "his rock," and to His "most holy

sanctuary," -- the "house of the Lord" -- located on the high and "holy mountain."

Ok, you say, these three sons of Light did, in fact, write about buildings in which they and their followers could worship God. But the important question remains: What kind of structures were these houses and churches? And why were these men making such an issue about building them "upon" a rock? We will answer these questions by first presenting the hard facts about rocks and other religious symbols. To begin, most everyone would agree that rock is a much more solid substructure for a building than is sand. But that interpretation only touches upon the superficial meaning of the symbol. Jesus, for one, insisted that we must "dig deep" and lay the foundation of His house/church upon rock. Accordingly, we must look deeper than the superficial interpretation of the rock/mountain/church symbol to answer the previous questions.

First, let us consider the symbolism of the Teacher of Righteousness. He tells us, for instance, that rocks and fabric are all bound together. "God has established my fabric," he writes, "upon rock." The "fabric" of which he refers is, of course, the "garment of honor in everlasting light." When he wore this garment on the "everlasting heights" of Light-consciousness, his heart was "adorned with Thy [God's] brightness." He then proceeds to explain that God, in essence, is his "stout rock." God, therefore, "established" the Teacher's "fabric," or the inner fabric of his heart's vision of Light, on the secure, solid, and safe mountain "rock" of Himself. These rocky "everlasting foundations" of the "everlasting light" now "serve" as a "ground" upon which his fabric of vision is laid.

Those men whose "fabric" is laid "upon rock" will, as the Teacher says, "*taste everlasting delights* in His [God's] holiness." They do so because they, like their Teacher, know that "God's truth is the [eternal] rock of my [their] steps...and His wondrous Mysteries is the light in my [their] heart." (101) They also know that they are members of the endless and rock-bound "GATHERING PLACE OF POWER, HONOR, PRAISE, AND MIGHTY WONDERS AND HEALINGS, AND MIRACULOUS WORKS, SECRET WISDOM." 4Q286-7 (p. 229) Henceforth, they will join the everlasting "Congregation of Truth" which -- like Jesus' rock-bound ["**upon this rock**"] and death-defying ["**death shall not prevail against it**"] "church" -- is also set "**upon rock.**"

In essence, the Teacher of Righteousness is saying that we must live our lives, construct our churches, and raise our faith upon "the



Institution of the Spirit of holiness founded in accordance with eternal Truth." Those blessed individuals who understand this "eternal Truth" perceive that the spiritual "Institution" of which the Essene Teacher speaks is really within the heart of man. For they are "the people endowed with His [God's] glorious understanding, the 'gods' who are close to...the fountain of holiness [i.e., the 'fountain of Light']...and the priests of the highest heights [i.e., those who have experienced the peaks of Light-consciousness] who are near to [God]."<sup>22</sup> In short, those who worship in "the Institution of the Spirit" are those "priests of the *inner* Temple,"<sup>23</sup> who enter into and love "*the House of Light*" within themselves. They are like the "spirits of knowledge, truth and righteousness in the holy of holies ['House of Light']."<sup>24</sup>

Obviously, the Teacher of Righteousness was such a "luminous spiritual figure" and "figure of a glorious light"<sup>25</sup> because he was an enlightened "priest," or a "minister of the [spiritual] Presence," in the "House of Light." He was also one of those "wonderful spirits of the most holy inner Temple" who knew that man's true "glory is in the perfect light of knowledge"<sup>26</sup> within himself. "I have known Thee, O my God," he concludes, "because of the Spirit that Thou has put in me."

The Essene Teacher's symbolic portrayal of the "Congregation of Truth" that is "set upon [the] rock" of man's inner Spiritual vision closely parallels Abraham Maslow's ideas concerning the Spirituality of the peak-experience. Maslow insists that the high, revelatory, peak-experience often ends up being the foundational structure upon which the peaker builds his entire religion.<sup>27</sup> If we put his idea in more Biblical terms, we could say that the spiritually bright mountain-top vision, in which man's face shines like the sun, is the solid rock upon which we should construct our faith. And so, when the sons of Light experience the highest and strongest meaning in life on the mountain "peaks" of Light-consciousness, they build their church, their value system, and/or their entire religion, upon the solid rocky underpinnings of that high spiritual experience.

For the Psalmist, the spiritual "Institution" of God is the "house of the Lord." This spiritual "house" is located, as we have said, on no other place than the rock "that is higher than I." And when you stop and think about it, this type of symbolic language makes a lot of sense. For where else can we see the vision of God's Light except on the "Most High's" mountain rock "dwelling" of strength and power? Or in the Psalmist's own words, where else can God "put a new and

right spirit within me" except if He "send[s] out thy light and thy truth" and "bring[s] me to thy holy hill and to thy dwelling"?

We must never forget that man's visionary trip to the "holy hill" of Light and truth is spiritual in nature. Or as Jesus reminds us, we must always "worship" God "in spirit and truth." And if this is true, then the "churches" and "houses" of which He speaks and in which we must "worship" are, quite naturally, located "upon" the "rock"-bound and "high mountain" peaks within our own hearts.

Hence, from the enlightened perspective of a son of Light, God's true "dwelling place," which is, of course, man's genuine place of worship, is on the mountain-top peak of His spiritual Light. And man discovers this bright peak of Light on the ecstatic heights within his own soul. There on the rocks of God's high and holy hill will we all discover the "House of Light" and join "the Congregation of Truth."

## SECTION IV

### THE SECRET WISDOM OF THE INWARD MAN

Jesus:

1. But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and **pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret** will reward you. (Matthew 6:6) Blessed are the solitary and elect, for you will find the kingdom. (*The Gospel of Thomas*: #49)<sup>28</sup>

2. **The Kingdom [i.e., the "kingdom of light"<sup>29</sup>] is inside of you... There is a light within a man of light**, and he lights up the whole world. If he does not shine, he is **darkness**... That which you have will save you if you bring it forth from yourselves. (*The Gospel of Thomas*: #3, 24, 70)<sup>30</sup>

Teacher of Righteousness:

1. **For Thou [God] has made me know the secret of truth** and hast revealed Thy wonder to me. (237) I [Teacher of Righteousness] give thanks, O God, because of **the secrets** which Thou has revealed to **Thine elect**. (249) **BRING FORTH THE KNOWLEDGE ["SECRET WISDOM"] OF YOUR INNER SELF... 4Q525** (p. 176)

2. **It is of the Spirit of truth to enlighten the heart of man.** (79) I have known Thee, O God, because of the **Spirit ["light"]** that Thou hast put in me... And Thou wilt bring to an end the dominion of **darkness** and **the shining of Thy glory shall be an everlasting light.** (240)

Now that we are in the "Institution of the Spirit" that is "set upon rock" (Teacher of Righteousness), or in the "church built upon rock" (Jesus), or in that "sanctuary," "holy temple," or "house of the Lord" that is on "the rock that is higher than I" (Psalmist), how do we worship in these spiritual structures? The Psalmist answers this question when he says, "Behold, Thou desirest truth in the **inward being**; therefore, teach me wisdom in my **secret heart**."<sup>31</sup> As you can see, man discovers the "truth" and the "wisdom" of the Lord when he searches the "inward being" of his "secret heart." For only in the "secret heart" of vision will man learn how his own spirit can become "whiter than snow" with the Light of God. "The Lord is my light," exclaims the Psalmist, and "He is my only rock." Indeed, the vision of Light is the foundational rock upon which we build our religion! It supports the wise man who can "commune with" his own "heart," and thus "meditate" on, and "search" for, the "wisdom" of his silent and "inward being."

Jesus parallels the Psalmist's thoughts when He directs our attention to the subject of prayer. He says:

When you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father in **secret**... Blessed are the solitary and **elect**, for you will find the kingdom.

Jesus here implies that the "secret" worshiper is the "solitary" and "elect" man who "finds the Kingdom" of God and Light that "is within a man of light." "There is a light **within man**," He continues, "and if he does not shine, he is in darkness." Certainly, man must see the Light of God within the "solitary" and spiritual worship of a peak-experience. If he does not, then he is in spiritual darkness.

But the "solitary" man is not alone. On the contrary, he understands that his spiritual "Father," as Jesus says, "sees in secret." Naturally, therefore, if God "sees in secret," He will "reward" the human heart when man learns to "shut the door and pray to the Father who is in secret." This door of which Jesus speaks is, of course, part of the spiritual sanctuary in man's heart. If we are to know human salvation, we must learn to "shut" this door occasionally to the outer and transitory world around us. Then we can "pray" to the inner and eternal Father who is within our "secret" heart. "That which you have will save you," Jesus concludes, "if you bring it forth from yourselves." Indeed, salvation comes to those who can, in secret,

"see" the "light" of God that is "within a man of light."

The Teacher of Righteousness was also "a man of Thy vision" who liked to dig deep for "the Spirit that Thou has put **inside of me.**" And he, like Jesus, also knew that if man was to find God, he must look for "**the secrets** which Thou has revealed to Thine **elect.**" The emphasis here, as with all sons of Light, is on the inner revelation of God's Light to the secret heart of man. "It is of the Spirit of truth," he continues, "to enlighten the heart of man." As you can discern, personal enlightenment does not come from outside of man. Rather, it comes from inside of man's secret heart.

Speaking of inner enlightenment, the Essene Teacher continues to explain his point:

I have known Thee, O God, because of the Spirit ["light"] that Thou hast put in me... For Thou [God] has made me know the **secret of truth** and hast revealed Thy wonders to me.

This "marvelous secret" of God's Spirit, or this "certain" and "secret of truth" in man, is none other than the "everlasting light." "And Thou wilt bring an end to darkness," continues the Teacher, "and the shining of Thy glory shall be an everlasting light." Obviously, the elect "men of Thy vision," or those who "BRING FORTH THE KNOWLEDGE ['SECRET WISDOM'] OF YOUR [THEIR] INNER SELF," are those individuals who not only seek the spiritual privacy of solitude, but who also see with "ETERNAL INSIGHT" and "meditate [within their secret heart] on Thy [God's] truth the whole day long." (235)

The "solitary" men of Light thus worship in the stable, rock-bound, unseen, and spiritual houses, churches, and "holy temples" of God. And when these men pray, they "go into the room and shut the door...in secret." Naturally, therefore, they love to worship God in the private and inner "Institution of the Spirit of holiness founded in accordance with eternal Truth." This Institution, as they say, is in the silent, "secret" and "living" heart of man. And those who worship in it will "rise to those everlasting heights" of Light-consciousness.

In conclusion, Maslow had the following to say about the "private" and "personal" "core-religious experience." He writes:

To sum it up, from this point of view, the two religions of mankind tend to be the peakers and the

non-peakers, that is to say, those who have private, personal, transcendent, core-religious experiences easily and often and who accept them and make use of them, and, on the other hand, those who have never had them or who repress or suppress them and who, therefore, cannot make use of them for their personal therapy, personal growth, or personal fulfillment.<sup>32</sup>

Jesus, for one, knew the "personal fulfillment" of the "private" religious experience. He insisted that when we "pray in secret," we must also worship "in spirit and in truth." In such a spirit of worship, we come to see the spiritual "Light" that is "within a man of light." Moreover, Jesus, like our other two sons of Light, wanted us to build our religion upon this solid rock of spiritual vision. "I put into your mind," He says, "to come up to this mountain." Certainly, if we are to build our "churches," and/or our religions, "upon rock," then we must all "come up" to that same spiritually "high mountain" within ourselves which all the sons of Light loved to climb. On that "holy hill" of "vision" and "Light," our hearts, as the Psalmist writes, will "be whiter than snow," our ears, as Jesus says, will "hear what a disciple should learn from his teacher and a man from God," our spirits, as He continues, "will become worthy to rise upward to that great light,"<sup>33</sup> and our feet, as the Teacher of Righteousness concludes, will "walk in the ways of the light." (78)

## SECTION V

### THE ALIGHTING DOVE OF BAPTISM

Jesus:

1. **Those upon whom the Spirit of Life descends**, when they are bound together with this power, will be saved and will become perfect and they **will become worthy to rise upward to that great light.** (*The Secret Book of John*)<sup>34</sup>

Teacher of Righteousness:

1. **Thou has ever wafted Thy Holy Spirit on him** who is Thy servant, **illuminating for him the dark place of his heart with light** like the sun.<sup>35</sup>

## THE ALIGHTING DOVE OF BAPTISM (continued)

2. **And when Jesus was baptized**, he went up immediately from the water, and behold, **the heavens were opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and alighting on him.** (Matthew 3:16)

2. By his souls humility towards all the precepts of God shall his flesh be cleansed when sprinkled with lustral water and **sanctified in flowing water.** (77) **Angels of Holiness... [near] visions of streams...and shining creatures clothed in glorious brocades, many colored marvelous garments, more brilliant than pure salt, spirits of the living God...** when they rise, they rise marvelously, and when **they alight** and are still... (334) **OVER THE MEEK ["THE POOR," THE "SONS OF LIGHT"] WILL HIS [GOD'S] SPIRIT HOVER... HE [GOD] HID THEM ["SONS OF LIGHT"] IN THE SHADOW OF HIS [GOD'S] WINGS, AND MADE THE DARK PLACE LIGHT FOR THEM... 4Q521 (p. 23); 4Q434,436 (p. 240)**

As we have seen, our three sons of Light used the symbol of a "high mountain" to represent the elevated and exalted nature of Light-consciousness. They also used the symbols of bright "garments" and radiant "faces" to suggest that Light-consciousness spiritually transfigures not only the inner fabric of a man's soul but also the countenance of his entire being. Furthermore, they have suggested that we build our ideas, values, morals, indeed, our entire religion, "upon" the solid "rock" of this transfiguring and lofty vision of God's Light in man. But Jesus, the Teacher of Righteousness, and the Psalmist also used "water" to symbolize how Light-consciousness cleanses a man's spirit. And they added that this cleansing action of God's Light in man is much like a "heavenly" experience, or a heavenly baptismal conversion, within the heart of man.

Abraham Maslow tells us more about heaven and the heaven-like conversion within the human spirit:

Peak-experiences sometimes have immediate

effects or after effects upon the person. Sometimes their after effects are so profound and so great as to remind us of the profound religious conversions which forever changed the person... This is an easy concept for religious people to accept, accustomed as they are to thinking in terms of conversions, of great illuminations, of great moments of insight, etc... I have likened the peak-experience in a metaphor to a visit to a personally defined heaven from which the person then returns to earth. Of course, this is quite different from the conception of heaven as a place somewhere into which one physically steps after life on this earth is over... In my own experience I have two subjects who, because of such an experience, were totally, immediately, and permanently cured of (in one case) chronic anxiety neurosis and, in the other case, of strong obsessional thoughts of suicide.<sup>36</sup>

Due to its profound and meaningful spirituality, the mountain-top "peak" of Light-consciousness radically changes a man's perspective on life. This transformation is always positive in nature and creates within man a sense of true freedom. In short, Light-consciousness releases man's consciousness from the bonds of anxiety, hopelessness, boredom, and despair. Or as Maslow's comparable words imply, the peak-experience cleanses man's spirit of "anxiety, fear, inhibition, of defense and control, of perplexity, confusion, conflict [and changes it] into clean and unadulterated completeness."<sup>37</sup>

Stated in a more positive way, Light-consciousness is like visiting a personal heaven within oneself. Quite consciously, therefore, our three sons of Light compare their visionary consciousness to a heavenly immersion in water. And when you consider this for a moment, they could not have made a better choice of symbolic words! For like water, Light-consciousness cleanses all those negative elements within man -- e.g., anxiety, despair, fear, etc. -- that are contrary to the Light of God. Let us now look more closely at the words of our three sons of Light so we can see precisely how God's Light purifies the human spirit.

Light-consciousness, as we have learned, is entirely Spirit-oriented. Or as Jesus reminds us, "God is spirit, and those who

worship him must worship in spirit and truth." Understandably, therefore, spiritual worship here on earth comes like an experience in which, as Jesus says, "the heavens were opened." Jesus further describes the cleansing effects of His "heavenly" peak-experience with the following poetic language: "And when He went up from the [baptismal] water," the "heavens were opened" and he "saw the Spirit of God **descending** like a dove and **alighting** on him." Obviously, God's Holy Spirit did "descend" as well as "alight" upon Jesus.

Like Matthew's poetic description of the "descending" dove, Jesus tells John in *The Secret Book of John* that as the "Spirit of Life descends" upon man, he "will be saved" and "will become worthy to rise upward to the great light." Says Jesus:

**Those upon whom the Spirit of Life descends,  
when they are bound together with the power, will be  
saved and will become perfect and they will become  
worthy to rise upward to that great light.**

John's non-canonical presentation of Jesus' thoughts parallels -- almost word for word -- Matthew's canonical account of the Jordan River baptism. Matthew, for example, tells us that as Jesus "went up immediately from the water," the sanctified Dove/Spirit descended upon Him. Obviously, in both of John's and Matthew's accounts, the Spirit is descending while Jesus is rising upward.

But now notice the verb: "alight," which Matthew uses to describe how the Dove/Spirit of God "descends" upon Jesus. When we interpret this verb from a visionary and symbolic point of view, it connotes a special meaning. That is, when the Dove/Holy Spirit from heaven descends like a sanctified bird, it *alights* upon Jesus. In this fashion, the "*alighting*" Dove/Spirit of God brings a heavenly Light into His rising consciousness. Or as Jesus says in *The Secret Book of John*, when the "Spirit of Life descends" upon man, he "rises to that great light." And when this happens to a man, then, as Jesus concludes, "your whole body is *full of light*."<sup>38</sup>

It is noteworthy to mention that the Pagan Gnostic: Hermes Trismegistus, following a mystically-oriented, literary tradition reaching back hundreds of years before Jesus, also wrote about the Spirit of God "descending upon the water." Keep in mind, however, that the streams he was talking about run directly through the heart of a "man of light." In *The Poimandres*, for example, Hermes



Trismegistus speaks of his vision of God and how the Light "descends upon the watery substance":

When I raised my head I saw in my mind the Light... This is what I saw and understood from the words of Poimandres. I was amazed, and he spoke to me again, "You have seen in your mind the archetypal form..." In a flash everything opened before me and I saw an unbounded vista. All was Light, a soothing and happy Light... Out of the Light a **holy Word (Logos) descended upon the watery substance and I thought this Word the voice Light...** I became God-inspired, God-minded, and came with the Truth.<sup>39</sup>

Trismegistus says that the Word/Spirit of God proceeds out of his vision of Light. It then "descends upon the watery substance" of his heart. With these words, he implies that God cleanses man's heart as man becomes "God-inspired" or "God-minded." Man gains this "archetypal form" of God-consciousness because the descent of God's Spirit into the human spirit fills man with the radiance of the Most High's Light/Word. As God's "holy Logos" descends "upon the watery substance" of man's heart, man thus enters into God-consciousness and hears the "voice of Light."

In another non-Christian source: *The Paraphrase of Shem*, we discover that the words used to describe this archetypal psychic process are slightly different, but their meaning is the same. "Then I shall come up from the water," writes the author of *The Paraphrase of Shem*, "having put on the light of Faith."<sup>40</sup> Obviously, as this non-Christian author "comes up from the water," so too does he "put on" the garments of Light. Accordingly, these and other non-Christian types of water, garment, and Light symbols may have influenced some of the early Christian writers. As Willis Barnstone once commented:

The *Paraphrase of Shem* is important for the study of Christian origins, and may contribute significantly to the understanding of the development of Christology in the New Testament.<sup>41</sup>

Archetypal Light/water symbolism thus appears in many writings throughout the world. It even surfaces in the written works of the Teacher of Righteousness. Consider, for example, what he says about water, heaven, and Light. He tells us that his being was "cleansed when sprinkled with lustral water and sanctified in flowing water." Obviously, the "flowing water" of God's Spirit "sanctified" the Essene Teacher's spirit. But the important point here is that this sanctification came to him in the form of a "heavenly light." The Holy Spirit, he writes, "pours" its waters "upon Thy servant," as with a "heavenly light." In this sense of the word, the Holy Spirit of God, which "pours" like water into his heart, and the "heavenly light" of the Father, are essentially one. The Light, therefore, is like "flowing water," and/or "like rivers of ever-running waters," that circulate throughout his entire spirit. Its pure Radiance cleanses him and "sanctifies" his innermost being.

In Theodore Gaster's translation of *The Dead Sea Scrolls*, God, according to the Teacher of Righteousness, "wafts," or carries lightly over water, "Thy Holy Spirit on him who is Thy servant." In this fashion, God sends His Holy Spirit across the waters and then gently places it on the Essene Teacher, or "on him who is Thy servant." This encounter with the Holy Spirit then "illumines" his "heart with light like the sun." While reading these quotations, you might have noticed that the "wafting" of the Holy Spirit upon the Teacher of Righteousness has a remarkable resemblance to the "alighting" of God's holy Dove (i.e., the symbol of the Holy Spirit) upon Jesus at the River Jordan. The question arises whether the Essene Teacher's "sanctification in flowing water" has the same symbolic meaning as Jesus' baptism in which "he went up immediately from the water."

We can find a partial answer to this question in a spiritually-oriented yet broken fragment from *The Dead Sea Scrolls*. In this fragment, we read about "shining creatures," "angels of holiness," or "spirits of the living God," who locate themselves near "visions of streams." As with much visionary literature, these "shining creatures," which symbolically represent man's vision of what the Teacher of Righteousness calls "the heavenly light," wear "garments more brilliant than pure salt." Curiously, the fragment goes on to mention that "when they rise, they rise marvelously, and when they alight" they are "still...in the camp of God."

Other quotations in the newly released Scroll fragments further strengthen the connection between the Teacher's baptism symbolism

and the Light of God in man's heart. An unknown author -- possibly the Teacher himself -- says: "HE [GOD] HID THEM ['SONS OF LIGHT'] IN THE SHADOW OF HIS WINGS, AND MADE THE DARK PLACE LIGHT BEFORE THEM... OVER THE MEEK [OR THE 'SONS OF LIGHT'] WILL HIS [GOD'S] SPIRIT HOVER..." Clearly, when man's heart is graced under the "wings" of God, and/or when God's "Spirit hover[s]" over man's spirit, so too does God make "THE DARK PLACE [within the human soul] LIGHT BEFORE THEM..."

For both our two sons of Light, various kinds of "creatures" or "spirits" associated with the "heavenly light" (Teacher of Righteousness), or with "the heavens" that "were opened" (Jesus), seem to "descend," "waft," and to "alight" here and there and everywhere near rivers and streams. In fact, in both *The Dead Sea Scrolls* and the Bible, creatures representing God's Holy Spirit "alight" on the "servants" of God. Then each of these men's "whole body is full of light" (Jesus), and they come to know, as the Teacher of Righteousness writes, that "with Thee is the light." (251) We conclude, therefore, that "baptism" (Jesus), and being "sanctified in flowing water" (Teacher of Righteousness), do in fact, have a common symbolic meaning.

The Psalmist also knew of a "dove" and the spiritually cleansing "waters" of God.<sup>42</sup> He develops his unique symbolic presentation by first telling us that "there is a river whose streams make glad the city of God." He then implies that this "river," which flows through "the city of God," also flows through the human heart. In particular, he tells us that "the voice [or the 'Word that is firmly fixed in the heavens'] of the Lord," as he writes, "is upon the[se] waters." He then says that these special "waters" have the power to cleanse his heart of all those qualities within him that are contrary to the Light of God. Or in his own words, he understands that these "waters" will "wash me thoroughly of my iniquity and cleanse me of my sin."

After being cleansed by the "voice" of God that is "upon the waters" of the human heart, the Psalmist is happy to learn that he will "be safe under the shelter of thy [God's] wings ['wings like a dove']." With these poetic words, the Psalmist suggests that God's "wings," like His "voice," hover upon the waters of the human heart. And those who listen to His voice know the peace and love of being "shelter[ed]" by these holy "wings" of the Most High.

As we have previously discussed, the Psalmist also implies that God creates a state of enlightenment in the human heart when man

"drink[s]" of "Thy *light*" from "*the river of Thy delights*." Writes the Psalmist:

And Thou givest them drink from the river of  
Thy delights. For with Thee is the fountain of life; in  
Thy light do we see light.

The fountain of life has its source in God's spiritual "river of Thy delights." Being spiritual in nature, the waters from both of these sources enlighten man's spirit because, as the Psalmist says, "in Thy light do we see light." Man thus experiences the cleansing action of God's Light when he is "washed thoroughly" in the "river whose streams make glad the city of God." But God also cleanses man's spirit when he drinks "from the river of Thy [God's] delights." This experience is so refreshing that it is like tasting the sweet waters from the "fountain of life." In fact, when man "sees" the "Light" of God within himself, it is like discovering a radiant fountain of eternal life which flows through the hearts of all the sons of Light.

In conclusion, the symbols: water and Light, point to the heavenly conversion-like experience in which God "cleanses" man's heart. God's "Holy Spirit," "Dove," or "Spirit of Life" (Jesus), truly does "alight" on man while he is in "the water." In turn, this spiritual experience "washes him [man] thoroughly of his sin" (Psalmist), and thus, as the Essene Teacher concludes, "sanctifies" his spirit "in flowing water" or in the "rivers of ever-running waters."

When considering these previously mentioned symbols of Light and water, it is interesting to note that comparable expressions of Light-symbolism can be found in the first account of creation:

And the Spirit of God was moving over the face  
of the waters. And God said, "Let there be light";  
and there was light. And God saw that the light was  
good. (Genesis 1: 2-3)

Since the sun and moon were not created until the fourth day (Genesis 1:14-19), the "light" here mentioned had to be spiritual in nature. For this reason, the author connects the Spirit of God, which "was moving over the face of the waters," with God saying: "Let there be light." He does so because he knows that whenever God's Spirit is moving "over" the waters, His Light as well as His Word

must also be present. Truly, indeed, "the mouth of the Lord [i.e., 'God said'] is...the door of His Light." But keep in mind that right from the beginning (Genesis 1: 6-7), there were two kinds of waters. There were "waters *under* the firmament," or the literal waters on earth, and there were the more spiritual "waters which were *above* the firmament." In the case of Genesis, the Word/Light/Spirit of God was obviously "on" the latter, since these more elevated and spiritual waters flow through God's high kingdom of Light in man's heart.

And so, whether we read about the "Spirit/Light of God" that is on "the waters which were above the firmament" in Genesis, or about "the voice of the Lord is upon the waters" in the Psalms, or about the "Spirit of God" descending and "alighting" upon Jesus and the Teacher of Righteousness in "the water," the meaning behind all these symbolic expressions is the same: God's Light flows on the dynamic and "living water" of man's high vision! This visionary stream of Light-consciousness is "above the firmament" of our everyday consciousness. In fact, man's spiritually cleansed consciousness of God's Light is so high and holy, and so full of meaning and value, that it can be nothing other than, as the Most High God says, "good."

## SECTION VI

### HYPOCRITES AND CUPS

Jesus:

1. Woe to you blind guides...So you also outwardly appear righteous to men, but within you are full of hypocrisy and iniquity. (Mat. 23: 16,28) Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, **hypocrites!** for you cleanse the outside of the cup and of the plate, but inside they are full of extortion and rapacity. You blind Pharisee! first **cleanse the inside of the cup** and of the plate, that the outside also may be clean. (Matthew 23:25-26) **And with the baptism with which I am baptized, you will be baptized.** (Mark 10:39)

Teacher of Righteousness:

1. As for them, they are **hypocrites**...and they seek Thee with a **double heart**...For they have not heeded Thy voice nor lent their ear to Thy word; for they have said of the vision of knowledge, It is not true. (212) But Thou, O God, wilt answer them... When he [man] beholds the light of life, **By the Holy Spirit** of the Community, in His truth, **shall he [man] be cleansed of all his sins.** (212,77) Then **God will cleanse by His Truth** all the works of every man... (81)

The sons of Light denounce the fact that the purifying and "living water" of God does not flow through the inner nature of some men's hearts. Jesus, for one, laments what He calls the hypocritical washing of the "outside" of the cup." "Woe to you," He says, "scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you cleanse the outside of the cup and of the plate, but inside they are full of extortion and rapacity." Jesus directed His concern towards anyone who loses site of the inner man and "light within a man of light." Unfortunately, the hypocrite is an example of such a man because he is, in truth, a self-deceiving phantom of disguise. While dramatizing this fictitious role, he begins to play act a stage performance in which he wears imaginary masks that confound his audience's perception of reality. The intent of his performance is, of course, to direct all attention towards the "outside of the cup." In this way, the hypocrite hopes that "inside of [his] cup," which is empty and which has never been cleansed by the radiant Reality of the "light within a man of light," will not be seen.

But Jesus warns that we must "first cleanse the inside of the cup" if we are to be truly clean. It is not enough, He insists, to "outwardly appear righteous." The inner heart of man, He continues, must "first" be cleansed "with the baptism with which I am baptized." Then, as He concludes, "you will be baptized" into the "living water" of God.

A true baptism, therefore, like that which Jesus experienced at the Jordan River, occurs when God's holy Dove/Spirit "alights" on the inner soul of man. In this sense of the word, baptism is not an "outwardly righteous," physical act of immersing oneself in water. Rather, the word: "baptism" points to the cleansing of the human spirit, or the "cleansing" of the "inside of the cup." In short, baptism symbolically directs our attention to the more deeply experienced purifying action of God's Light in man's heart.

*The Gospel of Philip* offers additional insights into this important distinction between the physical act of going "down into the water" and the genuine inward cleansing of man's spirit by the Holy Spirit/Light of God:

If one go[es] down into the water and come[s] up without having received anything [i.e., the Holy Spirit/Light of God] and says, "I am a Christian," he has borrowed the name at interest. But if he receive[s] the Holy Spirit, he has the name as a gift. He who has received a gift does not have to give it

back, but of him who has borrowed it at interest, payment is demanded.<sup>43</sup>

Philip here explains that the physical and symbolic act of going "down into the water" is not what makes a man a Christian. If anyone thinks that it does, then he, according to Philip, has only "borrowed" the name: "Christian," from God. Unfortunately, however, if you borrow the name of your religion, you do not, in reality, own it. As a result, you must "give it back" someday to the original owner. Knowing this fact, Philip says that the lender -- in this case: God -- "demands payment" of the name: "Christian," back from any borrower who has not experienced the Holy Spirit. In this way, Philip reminds us that all those who are not inwardly and/or spiritually affected by the practice of their outwardly righteous religious acts literally have no religion! This rather surprising irony is true because the hearts of such borrowers have not "received anything" from God.

But if a man's heart does step into the "living water" of the Holy Spirit/Light, then that man does not have to borrow the name: "Christian," from God. Instead, his enlightened consciousness "receives" the name in the form of a grace-filled "gift." This gift, which is like a Dove/Holy Spirit that spontaneously "alights" upon human consciousness, cleanses man's heart forever in the "living water" and/or streams of Light-consciousness. Those graced individuals, or sons of Light, who receive such a spiritual "gift" forever own the name of their religion. For in truth, God has given them the eternal grace of His Dove/Holy Spirit/Light with no expectations of return.

When considering this baptismal, or spiritually transforming, "living water" within man, Jesus had compassion on the harlot who had never tasted its sweetness or its refreshing purity. But "woe unto you," He exclaims, the "hypocrites" of life! Woe indeed unto you "blind guides," who preach the "light of life" from the dark valleys of an unenlightened soul. Woe unto you "blind guides" who believe in other bright mountain climbers but who never mount the peaks of Light within yourselves. Yes indeed, it is time to take off the performing masks of life and look inside of man for value, purpose and ultimate meaning. The dove of life is certainly a bird, and the flowing waters are, in reality, rivers. But they are also symbols of an experience that happens "inside of the cup" of man.

Concerning the "double hearted" hypocrites, the Teacher of

Righteousness also complains about their inner darkness. He writes:

They [the hypocrites] have not heeded Thy voice,  
nor lent their ear to Thy word; for they have said of  
the vision of knowledge, It is not true!

The hypocrites obviously talk about God, but their hearts deny the "vision" of Light in which man directly experiences Him. But "God," speaking through the Teacher of Righteousness, "wilt answer" these "double hearted" men. And God says: man cannot talk about divine realities and, at the same time, "deny" the heavenly baptism of the "everlasting light." Nor can he speak about God and, at the same time, denounce the experience of the "vision of Knowledge." However, what man can say is this: We only know God, and all the cleansing effects of His Spirit, when we experientially "behold" His Light. "When he [man] beholds the light of life," writes the Teacher of Righteousness, "he [man] will be cleansed of his sins." Ultimately, therefore, without the experiential "vision of knowledge," man will forever be trapped in the darkness of "doubled hearted" hypocrisy and "sin."

The word: "sin," as used by the Teacher of Righteousness, may upset certain people. Remember, however, that it is only a word that points to various experiences within man. We could, therefore, translate it into the jargon that psychologists and psychiatrists use today. They would rather talk about man's sense of alienation or anxiety. In place of the word: "sin," their vocabulary might include such words as conflict or estrangement. But whichever words we use, this fact remains clear: Light-consciousness "cleanses" man's innermost soul of all these negative and disruptive characteristics that plague the ancient as well as the modern soul of man. Or as the Teacher of Righteousness says: When man "beholds the light of life," then God will "cleanses by His Truth all the works of man."

God, as the Psalmist says, "desirest truth in the inward being" of man. Accordingly, he, like our other two sons of Light, dislikes "the double-minded men...who speak peace with their neighbors while mischief is in their hearts."<sup>44</sup> And curiously, the Psalmist also considers the "cleansing" of this "mischief" in man's inward being. "Thou desirest truth," he writes, "in the inward being...purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean." Obviously, the Psalmist wants God to "cleanses me from my sin." In fact, he prays to "the Most High" and



asks Him to "wash me" with the Light that cleanses his spirit "whiter than snow."

In summary, each of our sons of Light chose similar words to express the cleansing action of God's Light in man. For example, when "your whole body is full of light," you, like Jesus, will be "baptized" by the "Spirit of God descending like a dove," and "alighting" upon you. Then, as He concludes, "with the baptism with which I am baptized, you will be baptized." Likewise, when you hear "the voice of the Lord is upon the waters," and say with the Psalmist: "in Thy light do we see light," then you will be "cleansed" in the "river whose streams make glad the city of God," be "wash[ed] thoroughly from my [your] sin," and "be safe under the shelter of Thy [God's] wings." Or when your spirit is "sanctified in flowing water...and shining creatures alight and are still," then that experience, as the Teacher of Righteousness implies, "brings to an end the dominion of darkness," and "he [man] beholds the light of life."

All these different symbolic representations point to a common experience of Light that "**cleanses me from my sin**" (Psalmist), "**cleanses the inside of the cup**" (Jesus), or as The Teacher of Righteousness concludes, "**cleanses by His truth all the works of man.**" And this cleansing consciousness of Light is precisely that human experience which all the "double-heart[ed]" and/or hypocritical "blind guides" of the world must have.

## SECTION VII

### WALK ON THE LIGHT OF LIFE

Jesus:

1. **Walk while you have the light**, lest darkness overtake you. (John 12:35) He who follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have **the light of life**. (John 8:12)

Teacher of Righteousness:

1. All his [man's] sins shall be atoned when he beholds **the light of life**... And he shall establish his steps to walk perfectly in all the ways of God. (77) **They [i.e., "the sons of light"] walk in the ways of light.** (78)

The Word of God, as we have discussed, is a Spiritual Reality that man hears in his "secret heart." When describing this Spirituality

of the heart, all three of our sons of Light talked about "walk[ing] in," "behold[ing]," or simply "hav[ing]" "the light of life." In particular, the Psalmist sometimes interconnected his auditory and visual symbolic representations of God's Spirit. He said, for example, that "Thy word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path."<sup>45</sup> In this way, the Word of God becomes like a Light which brightens the paths upon which the Psalmist's heart now walks. And walk it did! In another passage, he tells us that his heart was graced to "**walk before God in the light of life.**"

But how does one's "inward being" walk on "the light of life"? The answer is: it is no easy trick to stroll on the Light of God. It requires total trust in God and a vision of His most holy Light. The Teacher of Righteousness possessed this trust and vision and thus spoke about walking on the Light of God. He said, for example, that "when he [man] **beholds the light of life,**" he "shall establish his steps to walk perfectly in all the ways of God." In this fashion, man's inner vision -- i.e., his Light-consciousness or his "behold[ing] the light of life" -- empowers the human heart to "**walk in the ways of light.**"

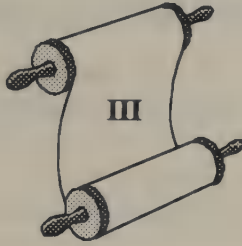
"**Walk,**" says Jesus, "**while you have the light,** lest darkness overtake you." When interpreting this passage, we must understand that as a man enters into Light-consciousness, and thus "follows" along the bright paths illumined by the sons of Light, so too does his visionary spirit learn to "walk" in the Light "while" he has "the light" of God in his heart. In this manner, man's innermost being, as Jesus assures us, will begin to "**have the light of life.**"

In conclusion, we moderns must wash the literal waters of misinterpretation down the drain of the unfaithful! In so doing, we will become like the sons of Light who know how to worship in true faith. A man of true faith understands that we must all first climb the *spiritual* mountain of the Most High. Then, and only then, can we wear radiant *spiritual* garments, shine with bright *spiritual* faces, cleanse ourselves in *spiritual* streams, have *spiritual* doves "alight" upon us, and thus "walk in the ways of light."

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3. Abraham Maslow, pp. 61-62, 80.
4. Abraham Maslow, p. 62.
5. Wilhelm Schneemelcher, p. 232.
6. Throughout this book, Psalmic quotations within each separate section will be listed in a single footnote. In this section, for example, Psalmic references containing either mountain and/or Light symbolism are: 43:3, 48:1-2, 99:9, 68:18-19, 9:2.
7. *NHL*, pp. 252, 251.
8. Psalms: 89-19, 34:5.
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10. *NHL*, p. 130.
11. Franz Pfeiffer, trans., pp. 244 & 226.
12. Willis Barnstone, p. 489 & 487.
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14. Willis Barnstone, pp. 280, 276.
15. Emanuel Swedenborg, *Heaven and its Wonders and Hell*, p. 140-141. (Italics added for emphasis)
16. Exodus 34:29.
17. *Isaiah* 2:2-5.
18. *Isaiah* 60: 19, 1-2, 5, 61:10.
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24. G. Vermes, p. 228.
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26. G. Vermes, p. 226.
27. Abraham Maslow, pp. 28-29.
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29. Wilhelm Schneemelcher, Volume I, p. 272. For more information about "the kingdom of light" and Jesus, See chapter III, section II
30. *NHL*, pp. 126, 129, 134.
31. Psalmic references to man's "inward being" and "secret heart": 51:6, 77:6, 62:1.
32. Abraham Maslow, p. 29.
33. Willis Barnstone, p. 60. For more details on this quote, see section V.
34. Willis Barnstone, p. 60.
35. Theodor H. Gaster, p. 199.
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38. Matthew 6:22. (*Italics added for emphasis*)
39. Willis Barnstone, p. 570, 573. (**Bold added for emphasis**)
40. Willis Barnstone, p. 111.
41. Willis Barnstone, p. 102.
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44. Psalmic references to the "double-minded" hypocrites and the spiritual cleansing of mankind: 119:113, 28:3, 51:2, 51:6-7.
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## THE SONS OF GOD

In a *Bible Review* article, James Vanderkam discusses the remarkable similarities of two "messianic titles" that were assigned to both Jesus in the New Testament and to some unidentified holy person -- presumably the Teacher of Righteousness -- in a newly released Qumran fragment. In particular, the New Testament and *The Dead Sea Scrolls* refer to a "Son of God" and to a "Son of the Most High." And in addition, both of these references state that this Son's "kingdom" will last "forever." Writes Vanderkam:

One of the messianic titles given to Jesus in the New Testament is now attested at Qumran -- for the first time in its Semitic form. In Luke 1:32-33, the angel who appears to Mary to announce that she would conceive a wondrous child, describes him this way: "He will be great and will be called the **Son of the Most High**; and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever; and of **his kingdom there will be no end.**" The child will also be called "holy, the **Son of God**" (Luke 1:35).

An intriguing and still only partially published parallel to some of these titles comes from a Qumran document. The relevant portion reads: "[HE] SHALL BE GREAT UPON THE EARTH, [O KING! ALL SHALL] MAKE [PEACE], AND ALL SHALL SERVE [HIM. HE SHALL BE CALLED THE SON OF] THE [G]REAT [GOD], AND BY HIS NAME SHALL HE BE NAMED. HE SHALL BE HAILED **THE SON OF GOD**, AND THEY SHALL

CALL HIM SON OF THE MOST HIGH..., AND HIS KINGDOM WILL BE A KINGDOM FOREVER."<sup>1</sup>

After reading these two remarkably similar passages, some people might be astonished to learn there are now *two* "Sons of God," or two "Sons of the Most High," who -- while abiding in the same general geographic area of the world -- spoke about "kingdoms" that last "forever." Obviously, this rather perplexing fact contradicts the two thousand year old, exclusive, Christian claim to the term: Son of God. It also forces us to now assume that the term: Son of God, as it appears in Aramaic -- i.e., the language of Jesus -- in *The Dead Sea Scrolls*, is a part of the Christian *and* the Jewish heritage.<sup>2</sup>

## SECTION I

### THE SONS OF GOD

Jesus:

1. We came from the light... **We are its [the light's] children**, and we are the elect of the living father. (*Gospel of Thomas* #50) When you **come to know yourselves**, then you will become known, and you will realize that it is **you who are the sons of the living father.** (*Thomas* #3)<sup>3</sup>

2. **He [Jesus] will be great... [and] will be called holy, the Son of God.** (Luke 1:32,35) ...of his [Jesus] **kingdom there will be no end.** (Luke 1:33) And **Jesus increased in wisdom** and in stature, and in favor with God and man. (Luke 2:52) ...I [Jesus] do nothing of my own authority but **speak thus as the Father taught me.** (John 8:28)

Teacher of Righteousness:

1. **For Thou art a father to all Thy sons of truth...** (233) **BY HIS [GOD'S] WILL, DEVOTE YOURSELF TO HIS SERVICE...AND BECOME FOR HIM A FIRST BORN SON, AND HE SHALL LOVE YOU AS A MAN LOVES HIS ONLY CHILD.** 4Q416-418 (p. 253)

2. **HE [TOR] SHALL BE GREAT UPON THE EARTH... HE [TOR] SHALL BE CALLED THE SON OF THE GREAT GOD, AND BY HIS NAME SHALL HE BE NAMED. HE SHALL BE HAILED THE SON OF GOD...AND HIS [TOR] KINGDOM WILL BE AN ETERNAL KINGDOM... (VANDERKAM) HIS [TOR] WISDOM WILL BE GREAT... HIS [TOR] WORD SHALL BE AS THE WORLD OF HEAVEN AND HIS [TOR] TEACHING SHALL BE ACCORDING TO THE WILL OF GOD. HIS ETERNAL SUN SHALL BURN BRILLIANTLY...** 4Q541 (p. 145)

Light-consciousness radically transforms a man's inner being because it transfigures a man's heart with the Light and love of God. Our three sons of Light compare this spiritual transfiguration of Light and love to an experience of entering into a new relationship with God. Jesus, for example, had the following to say concerning man in relation to God:

When you come to know yourselves, then you will become known, and you will realize that it is you who are the sons of the living father.

When a man truly experiences himself, he comes to know the ecstatic heights of God's Light and love within his own heart. In such an experience, a man also "becomes known" by the "living father" and thus "realizes" a new consciousness of intimacy that he had heretofore not known. This new, loving, and intimate consciousness of God's Light is, as Jesus says, very much like a Father-son relationship. As such, it fosters the human awareness that, as He concludes, "we [all the 'sons of light,' each of whom is a 'man of light'] came from the light... We are its [i.e., the light's] children, and we are the elect of the living father."

Regarding this very special relationship of sons/children to their living Father's Light, Jesus continues to clarify His position with the following words:

And they arose...having put on the new man, since they have come to know that perfect Blessed One of the eternal and incomprehensible Father and the infinite light, which is I, since I came to my own and united them with myself.<sup>4</sup>

In this passage, Jesus tells us that the Father's "infinite light" in Him is the "I" of which He continually speaks. He also says that His inner self is so close to this Light that His consciousness, or the principal "I" of His existence, has become like a "new man." And as Jesus continues to explain, this "new man" within Him is the same as His new consciousness that has "come to my own" true self-realization. In the final analysis, therefore, the inner human experience of coming "to know" the "infinite light" of the "incomprehensible Father" is the same experience as coming "to know yourselves." In short, Light-con-

sciousness is true self-realization.

But here is the important point of all this discussion. The experience of coming "to [one's] own" true self-realization is the same experience as entering into sonship with the Father. And this human experience of spiritual sonship is available for all mankind! "When you come to know yourselves," says Jesus, "then you will become known [by the Father] and you will realize that it is you who are the sons of the living father." Indeed, if we "come to know" our true selves, which is "the infinite light," then we will arise, as Jesus further explains, to this "infinite light" within all mankind. Then just as Jesus "arose" on His mountain-top transfiguration, so too will "we" rise up and be "united" to the Light of the "incomprehensible Father" that is in Him. And in our unified and/or archetypal consciousness of Light, we all will "realize" that "*we* came from the light... [and] *we* are its children."

Understandably, therefore, the Light of the Father is not outside of man's consciousness in some faraway place called heaven. Nor is the Light in Jesus alone. On the contrary, the heavenly Light of the Father is in every man on earth. The trick, however, is for every man to become aware of, or to "realize," as Jesus insists, this Light. At that moment of personal illumination, or Light-consciousness, all men will "come to know" their inner-most Spiritual selves -- i.e., "know yourselves" -- which is "the infinite light." They will then be "united" to the "I," or the Light, in Jesus, and "will realize," as He concludes, "that it is you who are the sons of the living father."

Jesus, of course, knew Himself and the eternal Light of the Father within Him. In short, He learned to "dwell in the light." And while being in this radiant place, the Father's Light radiated throughout His entire being and made His "**face sh[i]ne like the sun.**" As such, He "**increased in wisdom,**" and He "**spoke as the Father taught me [Him].**" Quite expectedly, therefore, "**He will be great**" in the eyes of men and "**will be called holy, the Son of God.**"

The Teacher of Righteousness also knew the eternal Father's Light. He once said that the "men of Thy vision" not only perceive the Light of the Father within themselves, but they also "stand before Thee [God] always in the everlasting place where shines the eternal light of the dawn without any darkness."<sup>5</sup> As we now know, this "everlasting place" where the "eternal Light" shines is within man himself.

While the Teacher of Righteousness lived in this inner and



radiant "place," it was said of him that he, like Jesus, "SHALL BECOME GREAT," and his "WISDOM WILL BE GREAT." Moreover, while abiding "in the everlasting place," "the eternal Light" of the Father's "ETERNAL SUN SHALL BURN BRILLIANTLY" within him. As such, the Father's Light also radiated throughout the Essene Teacher's entire being and "illuminated his face." Henceforth, his "TEACHING," like Jesus', "SHALL BE ACCORDING TO THE WILL OF GOD." And he, like Jesus, became "THE SON OF THE GREAT GOD."

One of the Essene Teacher's "teachings" is: "**Thou [God] art a father to all Thy sons of truth.**" Certainly, the "eternal Light" is like a loving and spiritual Father within the "place" of man's adoring spirit. As a man comes closer to this Light within himself, so too does he "BECOME FOR HIM [GOD] A FIRST BORN SON." Sonship with the living Father is, therefore, a matter of man's spiritual perception of the inner Light. Or as Jesus concludes: "When you come to know yourselves...[and the 'light within a man of light'], **you will realize that it is you who are the sons of the living father.**"

In the fourteenth century, Meister Eckhart clarified this idea concerning sonship with God. He summarizes his position, which parallels the intent of the sons of Light, with the following birth symbolism:

The Father is light... "God sent his only-begotten Son into the world," by which ye are to understand not the external world; it must be taken of the inner world [within man]. What fruits or gifts are granted to the soul in whom the eternal Word is spoken? The first is that he is united with God [the light]. Next, he becomes God's Son by grace... When the Father gives birth to his Son in me I am his very Son, and not another... Here it is just as true to say that man became God as that God became man. For human nature was transformed by taking the divine form which is the image of the Father... Here God's ground is my ground and my ground God's ground... According to the scriptures, "No man knoweth the Father but the Son," and hence, if ye desire to know God, ye have to be not merely like the Son, ye have to be the very Son himself... This means that the Son is ever being born of the Father... The Father is

begetting his Son unceasingly.... And his substance and his nature and his essence being mine, therefore I am the Son of God.<sup>6</sup>

The experience of entering into sonship with the Father, who is the Light, is not something that occurs in the "external world." God, the living Father, does not deliver His son in the same fashion as a human being is born into this world. Hence, as Eckhart implies, sons of the eternal Father are not born in manglers! Rather, the holy Father delivers His son to the "inner world" of man's enlightened consciousness. In this way, the Father "gives birth to His Son within me," as Eckhart concludes, because the Father has "transformed" -- or transfigured -- human nature into a spiritually "divine form."

Sonship with the eternal Father, or the transfiguration/transformation of human nature into a radiant and "divine form," thus occurs within the inner recesses of man's living consciousness. If we advance this thinking one step further, we come to the conclusion that sonship with the Father is born when human consciousness is grasped by the "Ground" of all being. At this particularly radiant time of human consciousness, the spiritual "Ground" of all life, or the Light within all existence, enters the human spirit. Then "God's ground [which is Light]," as Eckhart explains, "is my ground and my ground is God's ground." In fact, then, as Jesus says, man "comes to know" the eternal and "infinite light" of the "incomprehensible Father," which is the spiritual Ground of all existence, as well as the inner and essential "I" of any son of Light.

Abraham Maslow once said that the peak-experience "is another way of becoming 'god-like...'"<sup>7</sup> What he meant by this statement can be summarized in the following way. The soul-transfiguring peak-experience is so great a spiritual event that men perceive their inner selves in a totally new fashion. In essence, they sense that a "god-like" dimension of Spirituality has entered into their being and has illumined their consciousness. Naturally, therefore, these men of Light symbolically compare this new and intimate dimension of Spirituality within themselves to an experience of being born into sonship with the living Father. Consider, for example, what the Psalmist has to say about sonship with the Father. "Thou ['my Father']<sup>8</sup>," he writes, "hast made man little less than God." Certainly, from the point of view of a son of Light, God exalts man's inner being to a level of sonship that is a "little less" than Himself! Knowing this, the Psalmist

has God say: "He [God] said to me, 'You are my son, today I have begotten you.'"<sup>9</sup>

We should now perceive that the Father does not limit the exaltation of man's spirit, or the delivery of man's inner being into sonship with Him, to only one or two men in history. If God did restrict His revelation to a select few, it would imply that the Spirit of His revelation has literally ceased to be in human history. This would mean that from the human point of view, God is dead. But for man, God is not dead! Rather, He is, as Jesus tells us, a "living father" who dwells in the heart of every man who truly "knows" himself and the "infinite light" that is "within a man of light."

As you may have surmised, all this talk about entering into a "god-like" state of sonship with the living Father also implies that the son of God is not an exclusive property owned by any one man. Meister Eckhart understood this implication when he wrote: God, the living Father, "is begetting His son unceasingly" within human history. Oh yes, the Bible states that man can only come to the Father by way of His son. And this symbolic statement of faith is, of course, correct. Nevertheless, this Biblical declaration does not deny the possibility that all men can travel on that one path to sonship with the Father! For you see, even though there is only one spiritual sonship with the Father, this fact does not limit the number of human beings who can enter into it. Hence, we must all "arise," as Jesus said, and become "united" to the "I" of His being. Then our inner being will be "united" to the son of the Father, to the "new man," to the "New Being," or to the "infinite Light" of the Father, in Jesus.

Jesus poetically expresses this same concept of universal sonship when He says in *The Gospel of Thomas*:

I am not your master... He who will drink from my mouth will become like me. I myself shall become he, and the things that are hidden will be revealed to him.<sup>10</sup>

If we "drink" the "living water" from God's fountain of Light, then we "will become like" the essential "I" of Light-consciousness that was in the man Jesus. Or as Jesus says, "I myself [the Light] shall become he." Moreover, in this unity of Light and love, all men will be "united" -- by sonship -- to the "incomprehensible Father," and "the things that are hidden will be revealed" to the consciousness of

man. Accordingly, Jesus, or any other son of Light, is "not your master." Rather, all these men of Light are like spiritual beacons that point you in the direction of the "Light within a man of light."

The great twentieth century theologian: Paul Tillich, once had the following to say concerning "the son of God" symbol:

The Christ is not an isolated event which happened "once upon a time"; he is the power of the New Being... He is present wherever the New Being is present... "Son of God" becomes the title of the one in whom the essential unity of God and man has appeared under the conditions of existence... But this uniqueness is not exclusive. Everyone who participates in the New Being actualized in him receives the power of becoming a child of God himself... The symbol [Son of God] becomes distorted if it is taken literally and a human family situation is projected into the inner life of the divine. Literalists often ask whether one believes that "Jesus was the Son of God." Those who ask this question think that they know what the term "Son of God" means and that the only problem is whether this known designation can be attributed to the man Jesus of Nazareth... If one receives a literalistic answer to this question, one must reject it as superstitious. If one receives an answer which affirms the symbolic character of the term "Son of God," the meaning of this symbol can then be discussed. Much harm has been done in Christianity by a literalistic understanding of the symbol "Son of God."<sup>11</sup>

A problem occurs, according to Tillich, when the "literalists" mistake the sonship "symbol," which points to a dynamic Spiritualization of human consciousness, for literal truth. In their literal misinterpretations, they degrade the inner dynamics of Light-consciousness to a detached, non-participatory, intellectual "belief" system in an outward "human family situation" of Jesus, Joseph and Mary. Such a literalistic misunderstanding of poetic symbolism is, at best, "superstitious" because it implicitly states that the "believer" cannot enter into sonship with the Father or cannot enter into an

"essential unity of God and man." As such, man cannot directly know God. Only Jesus, insists the literal-minded believer, did that "once upon a time ago." Everyone after Him can only believe in or observe His sonship, but they cannot directly participate in it for themselves.

The literalists, therefore, intellectually believe in other spiritual mountain climbers. But they themselves never experientially participate in the climb to the Light's ecstatic peak. As a result, they believe in something they have never experienced. They thus academically talk about the Light from an experientially dark classroom of human unenlightenment. And according to Tillich, those who maintain such "superstitious" beliefs have done "much harm" to Christianity. Indeed, by mistaking poetic symbolism for literal fact, they have imprisoned the Light of the Father in only one historical being.

God, however, resists man's superstitious attempts to imprison His Light! He does so because God is a "living Father" who continually manifests Himself throughout human history. With this in mind, Tillich says that the man Jesus did indeed participate in the "New Being" of the "infinite light." But he also insists that this "essential unity of God and man" is "not exclusive" to Jesus alone. Every human being who participates in what Jesus calls "the new man," or what Tillich calls the "New Being," or what others call the "Light of life," "receives the power of becoming a child of God himself." Or as Jesus insists, those who "drink from my mouth will become like me, I myself shall become he."

We conclude that the Light to which all the sons of Light -- including Jesus -- refer is not a particular being among other beings. To confuse the eternal Light with one man, or any single thing or being within this finite world, is to practice idolatry. We dare not, therefore, make idols out of the historical hands, feet, eyes and personality of any single being who lived and died. Rather, we must understand that the Light of the Father is the "Ground" of all being and/or the foundational Spirit of all life. As such, the Light pervades and envelopes all existence, but the Light is not finite existence.

It is also important to realize that when man sees this Light within all life, then "the Father," as Meister Eckhart explains, "gives birth to His Son in me." If man is to know God, he must, therefore, enter into sonship with his holy Father. Or as Eckhart insists:

If you desire to know God, you have to be not  
merely like the Son, you have to be the very Son

himself.

Eckhart was certainly one son of Light who saw the brilliance of God's Light within his soul. "What I perceive in God," he says, "is light...He is the blinding light." Because of his vision, it was quite natural for him to symbolize this Light in his heart as an experience of entering into sonship with the Father. "Therefore, I am," exclaims Eckhart, "the Son of God." For some people, this statement may seem like a bold declaration. But it is certainly in keeping with what Jesus once said about "being as I am." "If you hear me," says Jesus, "you also as hearer shall be as I am."<sup>12</sup> Unquestionably, Eckhart was a good listener to the Light/Word of God that was in Jesus. How else could he have become a "son of the living father"?

## SECTION II

### SONS, KINGS, AND KINGDOMS

Jesus:

1. **Jesus...led them up ■ high mountain** apart. And he was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun, and **his garments became white ■ light**... When lo, a bright cloud overshadowed them, and a voice from the cloud said. "**This is my beloved Son with whom I am well pleased.**" (Matthew 17:1-5)

2. **In Him was life and the life was the light of men.** (John 1:4) He is the **King** of Israel. (Matthew 27:42) The grace of God was upon Him (Luke 2: 40) And He went about all Galilee, **teaching** in their synagogues and **preaching the gospel of the kingdom** [i.e., "the kingdom of light"<sup>13</sup>] and healing every disease and every infirmity among the people. (Matthew 4:23)

Teacher of Righteousness:

1. For Thou has made me rise to **everlasting heights**... (209) As for the Visitation of all who walk in this Spirit, it consists of...[a] **garment of honor in everlasting light.** (80) **...My being proceeds from Thee...** (206) HE [TOR] SHALL BE CALLED THE SON OF THE GREAT GOD. (Vanderkam)

2. Thou didst appoint **the Prince of Light...to save the light in truth**... (189) I ["THE PRINCE OF LIGHT AND KING OF RIGHTEOUSNESS"] RULE OVER ALL LIGHT, AND OVER ALL THAT IS OF GOD. 4Q543,545-8 (p. 156) Thou has created me for Thy sake...to **teach by my mouth** (218-19)... **preaching the gospel** to the humble...and consoling the contrite of spirit and the afflicted to bring them to everlasting joy. (252)

In chapter II, section I, we discussed mountain symbolism and man's "vision" of the "Most High" God. So far in this chapter, we have learned that as man "comes to know" the peak "vision" of the Most High's "infinite light," so too does he enter into an intimate son-like relationship with the eternal Father. We now will show that our three sons of Light poetically linked these "son" and "mountain" symbols to other symbols of "kings" and "kingdoms" because they wanted to emphasize the all-powerful and everlasting nature of Light-consciousness. Or more precisely, they wanted to show us that mounting the "high" peaks of Light-consciousness and becoming a "son" of the "Father" is like being crowned by the Lord as a "mighty," "exalted," and royal "King" and/or "Prince of Light." They also wanted to state that man's ascent into Light-consciousness is like climbing to the Most High's rock-bound, holy and eternal "kingdom" of Light.

Each of our sons of Light speaks of entering a spiritually high and everlasting kingdom. The Psalmist, for one, says that God "sends out" His "light and truth" to "Zion, my holy hill."<sup>14</sup> As he enters this elevated kingdom of Light located on the peaks of vision, God "enthrones" His "mighty servant...forever" as "the highest of the kings of the earth." And being "the highest of the kings," the Psalmist is also "the fairest of the sons of men." God thus "sets" this "fairest" and "highest" of all men (i.e., "my **king**") directly "on Zion" or on His own eternal "dwelling" place.

On this high and holy mountain peak of Light-consciousness, the Psalmist then has the Most High God announce a "decree" that only those "highest of the kings of the earth" can understand. It reads as follows: "You are my son, today I have begotten you." Now on the high mountain peaks of Light-consciousness, the Psalmist is not only a "king" in God's eternal kingdom, but he is also the "royal son" of the "Father." God's grace, therefore, is "poured" upon His king/son's lips, and the Lord "has blessed" him with His "steadfast love" forever. Henceforth, the Psalmist "shall cry" unto the Lord, his visionary "Rock of salvation": "Thou art my Father, my God..."

With the preceding symbolism, the Psalmist ingeniously compares the experience of entering into sonship with the Father to a spiritually-elevated experience of becoming a royal member of the Lord's holy and eternal "kingdom." Both of these spiritual experiences happen on the "holy hill" of man's visionary consciousness and not in the external world. For the Father delivers His "son" and crowns

him "king" in the inner world of man's heightened spiritual consciousness of Light. Or as the Psalmist insists: his delivery into sonship with the Father, and his crowning as one of God's kings, occur when "of old, Thou [God] didst speak in a vision to Thy faithful one." Symbolically speaking, where else except on the visionary peaks of Light-consciousness, or on God's holy "Rock of salvation," can a man experience the birth of sonship as well as the "crowning" of his soul as "the highest of the kings of the earth"? And where else except on the mountain peaks of a spiritual experience does a man "worship the Lord in holy array," "coverest" himself "with light as with a garment," and thus experience the "grace," the "exaltation," and the "steadfast love" of the "Most High" God?

Note, however, that even though the Psalmist: "David," is the "first born," the "highest of the kings of the earth," the "royal son," and "the fairest of the sons of man" whom God has "begotten," he is still a man. But he is a very special man because God's "grace" "is poured" upon his lips. And with graced lips, God's beloved son proclaims the following message:

Righteousness and justice are the foundation of  
Thy throne; steadfast love and faithfulness go before  
Thee. Blessed are the people...who walk, O Lord, in  
the light of Thy countenance.<sup>15</sup>

Certainly, the "first born," the "royal son," or the "highest of the kings of the earth," walks before God "in the light of [His] countenance." And when he walks in the Light, he begins to understand that righteousness and justice form the eternal foundation of God's holy "throne" within man's heart. Therefore, "blessed," indeed, are those who "walk in the light" of God's everlasting, bright and holy "countenance."

Jesus is another beloved "Son of God." But notice how Matthew presents Jesus' entrance into sonship with the Father. He introduces this subject by first telling us that the Holy Spirit/Dove "alights" upon Jesus' spirit. As we have discussed in chapter II, section V, this descent of God's Spirit into Jesus fills Him with the splendor of God's Light. "Those upon whom the Spirit of Life descends...," says Jesus, "will become worthy to rise upward to that great light." The point here is that at His spiritual baptism of Light, Jesus did, in fact, "become worthy" of rising "upward" to God's Light. And when He



did, Matthew tells us that "a voice from heaven [God's 'voice'] said: 'This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.'"16

Under similar symbolic circumstances, God repeats His proclamation that Jesus is His "beloved Son." And the "Most High" God does so on the "high mountain" of vision. At this unique peak moment of consciousness, Jesus wore the symbolic inner garments that "became white as light." And His "face," which also represents the countenance of His bright Spirit, "shone like the sun." The next thing we read about Jesus is that "a voice," which is presumably God's voice, says, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased." Observe that at the exact same moment when Jesus enters Light-consciousness, so too does God announce, as He did on the "high mount" of "Zion" with the Psalmist, that "this is my beloved Son." Symbolically speaking, therefore, entering into sonship with the Father occurs when man climbs the "high" vision of Light-consciousness.

We conclude that both the Old and New Testament authors symbolically connect man's entrance into sonship with the Father to man's "high" vision of the Father's Light. The Psalmist, for example, climbs the "holy hill" of "vision," "light," and "truth" and becomes the "first born," "begotten," and "royal son" of the "Most High." But so too does Jesus become "the Son of the Most High."<sup>17</sup> He does so when God's Holy Spirit "alights" upon Him, and He rises out of the water. At this particularly bright peak of His life, He enters into sonship with the Light of the Most High. Likewise, as He climbs the "high mountain" of Light-consciousness, and thus wears the "garments [which] became white as light," God announces: "This is my beloved Son with whom I am well pleased."

As a "Son of God," Jesus, like the Psalmist, is also a royal "King." And while being a "King" in God's holy kingdom of Light, He quite naturally "went about all Galilee, **teaching** in their synagogues and **preaching the gospel of the kingdom** [i.e., 'the kingdom of light'] and **healing of every disease and every infirmity among the people.**" Jesus obviously loved to preach the "gospel" of God's radiant, eternal, and heart-shaped "kingdom." And why shouldn't He? This "kingdom of light," as He called it in *The Gospel of Philip*, was His ultimate concern! In fact, it was the essential "I" of His being as well as the royal realm of His heart. And so, with the Spirit of God upon Him, Jesus proclaims the "good news" of the gospel of God's kingdom of Light within His heart.

Concerning this "kingdom of light," Jesus says the following:

If those who lead you say to you, "See the kingdom is in the sky," then the birds of the sky will precede you. If they say to you, "It is in the sea" then the fish will precede you. Rather, the kingdom is inside of you, and it is outside of you.<sup>18</sup>

In this passage, Jesus implies that men will not discover the "kingdom of light" somewhere up "in the sky." The Big-Man-in-the-sky theory may be great for a child's sophomoric mind, but it has little value for the consciousness of a mature adult. Likewise, those who think that they can retrieve the kingdom of Light in the depths of the "sea" are fishing in the wrong place. "Rather," as Jesus insists, the kingdom of Light is "inside of you." And come to think of it, that is precisely what Jesus has been saying over and over and over: namely, "there is a light *within* a man of light."

Notice, however, that "the kingdom of light" is also "outside of you." But how can a "kingdom" be both "inside" as well as "outside" of man? The answer is simple: once you truly come to know yourself and the holy kingdom of Light "within" your spirit, you see that Light everywhere. Naturally, therefore, the Light of the Father that "is within a man of light," as Jesus says, also "lights up the whole world." Indeed, for all the sons of Light, the whole universe, including their own spirits, "proclaims the handiwork" of God's radiant and powerful "Right Hand." Or as the Psalmist so beautifully writes, "The heavens are telling the glory of God, and the firmament proclaims His handiwork."<sup>19</sup>

The Teacher of Righteousness is also a royal member of God's kingdom. For he is the "PRINCE OF LIGHT AND KING OF RIGHTEOUSNESS." As a "King/Prince" in God's monarchy, he too correlates the heights of vision and Light to working with God in His kingdom. He writes, for instance, that God "made" him "rise" to "the everlasting heights" within his soul. On these inner "heights" of vision, he explains that "because of the Spirit that Thou hast put in me," God "has revealed to me...[that] the shining of Thy glory shall be an everlasting light." With these words in mind, the luminous "Prince of Light," along with his radiant "garment of honor in everlasting light," begins working "in the company of God...that God may restore the [Light-filled] kingdom of His people forever." And together, God and His resplendent "King/Prince" become very "busy" helping "His people" and "ministering [to them] in the royal palace." (111-112)

Keep in mind, however, that God works only with those related "sons" who "do His work." Therefore, as a royal "Prince of Light" who "RULE[S] OVER ALL LIGHT AND OVER ALL THAT IS OF GOD," the Essene Teacher must also be a "SON OF GOD" and/or "SON OF THE MOST HIGH." "My being proceeds from Thee...," he writes, "for Thou art a Father to all thy sons of truth." Like our other two sons of Light, the Essene Teacher is now not only a royal member of God's kingdom, but he is also God's beloved son. And doesn't this type of symbolism make sense? To "restore" any "kingdom," be it the kingdom of Light or otherwise, fathers and sons must always work together as a family. The Teacher of Righteousness, like Jesus, thus went about His Father's kingdom **"teach[ing] by mouth," "preaching the gospel," and "consoling the contrite of spirit and the afflicted."**

In conclusion, the spiritual family of those sons of Light who walk in God's kingdom, or who walk before God "in the Light of [His] countenance," spans the centuries of time. The Psalmist, Jesus, as well as the Essene Teacher, are thus connected in Spirit -- and in sonship with the Father -- by the eternal and universal kingdom of Light they now inhabit. The Psalmist understood this eternal nature of God's "kingdom" of Light when he described it as a **throne that "shall endure forever."** Likewise, while the Essene Teacher's **"kingdom will be a kingdom forever,"** we know that **"of his [Jesus'] kingdom there will be no end."** And, of course, we should never forget that the eternal God, as a new Scroll fragment so triumphantly concludes, **"SHALL GLORIFY THE[SE] PIOUS ONES ['SONS OF LIGHT'] ON THE THRONE OF THE ETERNAL KINGDOM."** 4Q521 (p. 23)

The Essene Teacher summarizes the previous ideas concerning man's consciousness of "the heights of eternal things." He writes:

For Thou has made them ["sons of light"] to know Thy deep, deep truth and divine Thine inscrutable wonders. And for Thy glory's sake, Thou hast granted it unto man to be purged of transgression, that he may hallow himself...and to be one with them that possess Thy truth and to share the lot of Thy Holy Beings, to the end that this worm which is man may be lifted out of the dust to the height of eternal things and rise from a spirit perverse to an holy understanding and stand in one company [like a "choir invisible"] before Thee.<sup>20</sup>

The sons of Light "know" the "deep, deep truth," and the "divine inscrutable wonders," of God. This "holy understanding" -- or inner wisdom -- "purges" all human "transgressions" and, at the same time, "hallows" human life. As a hallowed son of Light, a man is "lifted out of the dust" of an unenlightened heart, and his consciousness is raised into the "height of eternal things." Here in the company of the one and eternal "choir invisible," all the sons of Light sing out -- in perfect harmony -- concerning the universal joy and eternal love of the one kingdom of Light.

The members of the "choir invisible" also sing about being transfigured human beings who are "one with them that possess Thy truth and share the lot of Thy Holy Beings." As such, these "Holy Beings" are the "begotten sons" of the holy Father as well as the royal "kings" in His eternal "kingdom." Moreover, as united sons/kings of God, "the light will shine with a seven-fold light" (Teacher of Righteousness), within the "kingdom" of their hearts, and "the grace" (Psalmist), of God's "light" and "truth" will be "upon" their "lips." And finally, as Jesus concludes, all these men of light will joyfully sing out: "We came from the light... We are its children."

### SECTION III<sup>21</sup>

#### MESSIAHS AND SAVIORS

Jesus:

1. We have found **the Messiah** which means Christ. (John 1:41) The woman said to him, "I know **the Messiah** is coming..." Jesus said to her, "I who speak to you am he." (John 4:25-26)

2. Behold, the Lamb of God, [Jesus: the "**Savior**"] **who takes away the sin** of the world! (John 1:29) And he [Jesus] answered them, "...the poor have **good tidings** preached to them." (Luke 7:22)

Teacher of Righteousness:

1. THE HOLY SPIRIT SETTLED UPON HIS [GOD'S] **MESSIAH**. 4Q286-7 (p. 230) The Priest ["**the Messiah among them**"] shall enter at the head of all the Congregation of Israel... (108)

2. And **Thou** [God] **wilt** forgive them and **raise up a Savior to deliver them from sin**. (250) And He [God] raised up for them ■ Teacher of Righteousness to lead them in the way of His heart. (122) [This Teacher/Savior is] ...the one who announces **good tidings** in the time of Thy goodness... (252)

Sons who are born into their eternal Father's radiant "kingdom" love to carry on the traditions of that spiritual kingdom. One of these traditions in which the sons of Light participate is "ministering" the Light of the "kingdom" to all the people of the world. As ministers of God's Light, the sons of Light become like "Saviors/Messiahs" who proclaim that the Light will "restore the kingdom of His [God's] people forever."

Regarding the subject of Messiahs, some readers might mistake the Qumran text's reference: "the Priest Messiah" and "the Messiah of Israel" (108) to mean there are two separate Messiahs.<sup>22</sup> The fact is, however, the authors of these ancient texts symbolized the Teacher of Righteousness in various ways: e.g., "the venerated Being," "the Unique Teacher," "the Poor One," "the Prince of Light," "the Star," "the faithful Shepherd," etc. In addition, they used two messianic titles to differentiate between the mortal and the everlasting spiritual nature of their one revered Teacher.

For example, "the Priest Messiah" or the "Messiah among them," represents the mortal Essene Teacher. Even though this human "Messiah" was "put to death" (272), he will -- "afterwards" (108) -- be represented on earth by his spiritual counterpart: the "Messiah of Israel." With such a representation, the Teacher eternally governs as "THE MESSIAH OF RIGHTEOUSNESS, THE BRANCH OF [KING] DAVID" 4Q252 (p. 89) in the hearts of all those human devotees who have "faith in him." And so, in spite of his mortality, he, as a member of the "everlasting priesthood," and "in the company of God," continues "to enlighten the face of many" and to "restore the kingdom of His people forever." (111-112)

A Scroll fragment says: "THE HOLY SPIRIT SETTLED UPON HIS [GOD'S] MESSIAH." This passage has a noticeable resemblance to Matthew's description of "the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and alighting on him [Jesus the 'Messiah']." A Messiah, as you know, is a holy man who reveals his vision of the Light of God's Holy Spirit to the world. He does so by announcing the "good tidings" of God and by proclaiming that God's Light is not only manifest in him but is also a potentiality for all men. In the eyes of the men around him, a Messiah thus becomes like a divine "Savior" who declares that the saving power of God's Light is within all men.

With these definitions in mind, let us now consider the overlapping words that characterize both Jesus and the Teacher of Righteousness as the "Messiah/Savior" who brings "good tidings" and who

takes away the "sin" of the world. Write John and Luke:

And he [Jesus: "**the Messiah**"] answered them, "...the poor have **good tidings preached to them.**" Behold, the Lamb of God ["**the Savior, who is Christ the Lord**"]... [and] **who takes away the sin of the world...**

In a remarkably similar fashion, *The Dead Sea Scrolls* presents the Teacher of Righteousness as the

one who **announces good tidings** in the time of Thy goodness... And Thou [God] wilt forgive them and raise up **a Savior to deliver them from sin...** And God raised up for them a Teacher of Righteousness... **the Messiah** among them.

Obviously, these two sons of Light have a lot in common. They are not only "sons" of "the Father" who "preach the gospel" in His "kingdom," but they are also "Messiah/Saviors" who announce "good tidings" and "deliver" mankind from "sin."

## SECTION IV

### LAMPS, SHEPHERDS, AND LIGHT

Jesus:

1. **The true light** that enlightens every man was coming into the world... (John 1:9) **I am a lamp** to you who see me. (*Acts of John*)<sup>23</sup>

2. I [Jesus] am **the good shepherd.** (John 10:11)

Teacher of Righteousness:

1. And **my light** has shone out in Thy glory. (232) And **may He [God] make of thee** [i.e., the TOR] an object of holiness in the midst of His people, and **a torch to shine upon the world** in Knowledge... (112)

2. Thou [God] has raised up for them **a faithful Shepherd** [Teacher of Righteousness]. (336)

There are more similarities between Jesus and the Teacher of Righteousness. For example, as Messiah/Saviors, both of these spiritual leaders are like "lamps" and/or "torches" that brighten the paths of all who follow them. They are also like "shepherds" who lead their flock of human followers into the kingdom of Light and truth.

Light-consciousness makes the human participant a luminous "object of holiness" within an unenlightened world of ignorance and spiritual darkness. In fact, the peaker's "god-like" wisdom, compassion, and love have such an enormous impact upon other people that the sons of Light "shine upon the [whole] world." In short, a man of Light becomes like a "lamp" or a "torch" that radiates God's Light on earth. Says Jesus:

I am a **lamp**, to you who see me... Walk while you have the light, lest the darkness overtake you... While you have light, believe in the light that you may become sons of light.

The message of the sons of Light is simple and direct: Every man's heart must "walk" in the Light! Those who do walk in this way "become sons of Light."

Switch the metaphor from a "lamp" (Jesus), to a "torch" (Teacher of Righteousness), and you discover a very similar meaning. Writes the Teacher of Righteousness:

And may God make of thee [Essene Teacher] an object of holiness in the midst of His people...and a **torch** to shine upon the world in Knowledge... They [the "sons of light"] walk in the way of light.

The "sons of light" are those men who walk through the kingdom of Light. While they travel and continue their journey here on earth, they love to speak of the Light. When proclaiming it to all who are still in darkness, their spirits shine like "lamps" or "torches" upon the whole world.

As bright lamps/torches in a world of darkness, our two sons of Light are also like "shepherds" who lead men to the Light. Jesus says, for example, that "I am the **good shepherd**." Compare His words to what is written about the Teacher of Righteousness: "Thou [God] has

raised up for them [the flock of Essenes] a faithful Shepherd." In either case, wisdom will come to those who follow in the paths of the bright and shining "Shepherds" of life. It also will come to those who see the bright Spirit within themselves and within all the sons of Light.

## SECTION V

### THE HOLY MEAL

Jesus:

1. **Jesus took bread, and blessed, and broke it, and gave it to His disciples... And He took a cup [of "wine" or "the fruit of the vine" Mat 26:29], and when He had given thanks He gave it to them, saying, "Drink of it all of you." (Matthew 26:26-27) Have you not read what David did, when he was hungry, and those who were with him: how he entered the house of God and ate the bread of the Presence... (Matthew 12:3-4) As my Father appointed a kingdom for me, so do I appoint for you that you [Jesus' twelve apostles] may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel. (Luke 22:28-30)**

2. Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going to God, **rose from supper, laid aside his garments, and girded himself with a towel. (John 13:3-5)**

Teacher of Righteousness:

1. Let no man stretch out his hand over the first-fruits of bread and wine before **the Priest** [the Essene Teacher or "Messiah among them"]. For it is he who **shall bless the first-fruits of bread and wine... And afterwards, the Messiah of Israel shall enter and the ["twelve men"] chiefs of the tribes of Israel shall sit before him, each according to his rank. (108-09) In the Council of the Community there shall be twelve men ["the twelve laymen represent the twelve tribes of Israel"] ... to practice truth, righteousness, justice, loving charity, and modesty one towards the other... and to guard the faith. (90)**

2. Josephus: "Before the meal the priest says a prayer and no one is permitted to taste the food before the prayer... **Afterwards they lay aside the garments which they have worn for the meal, since they are sacred garments, and apply themselves again to work until the evening.**" (29)



Abraham Maslow states that the visionary individual who does see the world of Spirit

becomes less an object, less a thing, less a thing of the world living under the laws of the physical world, and he becomes more a psyche, more a person, more subject to the psychological laws, especially the laws of what people have called the "higher life..."<sup>24</sup>

In the "higher life" of Light-consciousness, the sons of Light center their attention on the spiritual or "psychic" aspects of human life. In fact, the Spiritual Realities of life become the driving force for all their activities. And this includes, of course, the activity of eating. We must, therefore, consider how some men have described the living feast which only God can serve to the human heart. It is a feast of "truth, righteousness, justice, loving charity...and faith." And those who partake of it must "lay aside" one set of garments so they can put on the "garment of honor in everlasting light."

Before our hearts sit down at the spiritual table in God's kingdom of Light, let us consider the following coincidences. Luke tells us that the eternal Father "appointed" His "kingdom" to Jesus. Jesus, in turn, "appoints" this radiant and spiritual "kingdom" to His **"twelve" apostles** so they too might eat the holy **"bread of the Presence,"** and "drink" the **"wine,"** "at my table in the kingdom." These twelve men will then "sit on the throne" -- like appointed and holy kings -- judging **"the twelve tribes of Israel."**

In parallel fashion, the Teacher of Righteousness also has **"twelve men"** to rule over the **"twelve tribes of Israel."** Moreover, they also participate in a "holy sacramental" meal of **"bread and wine."** And like Jesus' twelve apostles, these "laymen" will "practice truth, righteousness, justice, loving charity, and modesty one towards the other...and guard the faith." To say the least, all these coincidences of history as well as parallel expressions of faith are indeed striking!

Concerning the subject of food symbolism, the historian: Josephus, once said that the Essene meal of bread and wine was a holy "sacrament." More importantly, he reported that the Essenes considered the holy meal to be the most sacred "sacrament" of all and reserved it for only those members truly dedicated to God.<sup>25</sup> When participating in it, the "Priest/Messiah," i.e., the Teacher of Right-

eousness, would first **"bless"** the "bread and wine." *The Scroll of the Rule's* description of this holy event evokes memories of Jesus' **"blessing"** of the "bread" and the "fruit of the vine" (i.e., "wine") during the Last Supper:

Let no man stretch out his hand over the first-fruits of bread and wine before the Priest. For it is he who shall bless the first fruits of bread and wine.

The food that the Essene Teacher loved most was the sacramental "first-fruits of bread and wine." And with this love in his heart, he states that "on my tongue shall be fruit of holiness...and my tongue shall ever recount the deeds of God." (100) In a similar fashion, Jesus says: "My food is to do the will of Him who sent me, and to accomplish His works."<sup>26</sup> Clearly, both of these spiritual leaders dearly loved and were nourished by the sacramental "food," or the "first-fruits of bread and wine," that only the Most High God could serve at **"my table in my kingdom"** (Jesus), or at what *The Dead Sea Scrolls* refer to as **"the table of glory."** (172)

The Essenes adhered to other very special rules of behavior when participating in this sacramental meal of bread and wine. For example, Josephus tells us that all Essene members, including the Priest-Messiah, were required to **"lay aside"** their everyday clothes and put on the "sacred garments" of Spirit.<sup>27</sup> When considering this specific sacramental rule, we should understand that the Essenes had to change their garments – i.e., put on "the garment of honor in everlasting light" – whenever they partook of the holy meal. For without this bright garment, how could they ever take part in the spiritual feast of Light within their own hearts?

In the same manner, when the Essenes finished their sacramental meal, they were required to **"lay aside the garments which they have worn for the meal..."** and put on their everyday clothes. They did so because the "sacred garments" worn during the holy meal represented their hearts' worship of, as well as participation in, the Light of God. And so, the Essenes had to "lay aside" these very spiritual and symbolic garments when they began to "apply themselves again to work until the evening."

In *The Dialogue of the Savior*, Jesus tells us more about the various "garments" of life and why we must "strip" ourselves of certain types of clothing:

The governors and the administrators possess garments only for a time, which do not last. But you as children of truth, not with these transitory garments are you to clothe yourselves. Rather, I say to you that you will become blessed when you strip yourselves...strive to rid yourselves of anger and jealousy and to strip yourselves... you will clothe yourselves in light.<sup>28</sup>

The men of the world, or the "governors" and the "administrators," etc., possess garments "which do not last" because they are not "children of truth," or sons of Light. In the words of Jesus, these rulers are like Solomon "in all his glory" of wealth and power. They possess great sums of money, but unfortunately, they are not "arrayed" in the "garments" that are "white as light." Hence, they are not "arrayed" in the eternal clothing of God's Light. Such is the sad lot of too many of "the governors" and "the administrators" of the world. Their "garments only for a time" are not of the eternal Light. As a result, their symbolic apparel, which represents their consciousness, consists only of transitory things.

Jesus continues to say that we will "become blessed" when we "strip" ourselves of these transitory garments of "anger," "jealousy," vanity, greed, and power. The blessing occurs, of course, when we humbly "clothe" ourselves "in Light." But here is the important point of all this clothing symbolism. John tells us that during the Passover feast, Jesus "rose from supper, [and] **laid aside his garments.**" As you can see, both Jesus and the Teacher of Righteousness "lay aside" their symbolic and sacred "garments" which they wear during the holy/sacramental meal. In this fashion, these two spiritual leaders symbolize the sacredness of not only these "garments" of Light but also of the spiritually delicious meal at which they wear them. And they also imply that if we are to ever "**eat and drink at my table in my kingdom**" (Jesus), or if we are to ever "**feed before Him [God] perpetually at the table of glory**" (Teacher of Righteousness: 172), then we too must recognize the difference between the transitory "garments only for a time" and the eternal "garments" in which we "clothe [our]selves in light."

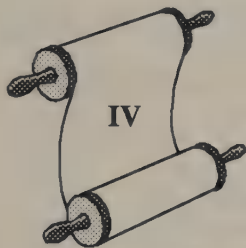
In conclusion, we can now say that having one's "garments become white as light" on the transfiguring mountain peaks of vision, and wearing the garments of light at a sacramental meal, have one

very important and common ingredient. This ingredient is Light-consciousness! For you see, Light-consciousness is the same whether you symbolically represent it as mountain climbing or as eating a holy and sacramental meal. In either event, the sons of Light feast on the eternal, luminous, and holy "bread of the Presence" of God's high and Holy Spirit as they "lay aside" their transitory garments and "clothe themselves in light."

## REFERENCES (Chapter III)

1. James C. Vanderkam, "The Dead Sea Scrolls and Early Christianity," *Bible Review* VIII, #1 (February, 1992): 21.
2. The phrases: "sons of God," "son" of "the Lord," or "first-born" of the "Father," appear throughout the Old Testament: Genesis 6:1-4, 2 Samuel 7:14, Job 1:6, 2:1, 38:7, and the Psalms 2:7, 89:26-27. Furthermore, some quotations within *The Dead Sea Scrolls* and *The Nag Hammadi Library* do not capitalize the words: "son" and "father," when referring to man in relation to God. Other quotations, however, do capitalize these holy words. In cases like these, the discretion of the translator often determines a word's status. Hence, there is no significance to this variability of capitalization. When not directly quoting these sources, *Light-Consciousness* will always capitalize the word: Father, but will not capitalize the word: son.
3. *NHL*, pp. 132, 126.
4. *NHL*, p. 366.
5. A. Dupont-Sommer, *The Essene Writings From Qumran*, p. 253.
6. Franz Pfeiffer, pp. 408, 339, 110, 124, 49, 52, 377, 162, 33.
7. Abraham Maslow, p. 64.
8. Psalms 89:26.
9. Psalms 2:7.
10. *NHL*, pp. 127, 137.
11. Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, p. 180, Vol. II and p. 157, Vol II and p. 110, Vol. II.
12. Wilhelm Schneemelcher, p. 234.
13. Wilhelm Schneemelcher, Volume I, p. 272.
14. Psalmic references containing either son-father, king-kingdom, mountain, and/or Light symbolism: 2:6-7, 89:26, 45:2, 72:1, 89:19-20 & 27, 61:7, 89:36, 43:3.
15. Psalms 89:14-15.
16. Matthew 3:16-17.
17. Luke 1:32.
18. *NHL*, p. 126.
19. Psalms 19:1.
20. Theodore Gaster, p. 178.
21. In Sections III through V, we will concentrate our attention only on Jesus and the Teacher of Righteousness. We will limit the field of comparison to these two sons of Light so as to highlight their remarkably similar use of ideas and symbolic language.
22. Michael Wise & James Tabor, "The Messiah at Qumran," *Biblical Archaeology Review* XVIII, #6 (November/December, 1992): 60-65, suggest that "there is not much evidence in the previously published scrolls that straightforwardly supports a putative doctrine of two [separate] messiahs." In fact, these two authors continue to say: a newly-released Scroll (4Q521) offers us a "messianic figure or priest [that] is described in extremely exalted terms, much like the Christian messiah."
23. Wilhelm Schneemelcher, p. 230.
24. Abraham Maslow, p. 67.

25. A. Dupont-Sommer, *The Essene Writings from Qumran*, p. 49-50.
26. John 4:34.
27. A. Dupont-Sommer, *The Essene Writings from Qumran*, p. 49.
28. *NHL*, pp. 252-255.



# LOVE THY FATHER

The sons of Light dearly love their spiritual Father. As sons of "the living Father," they manifest this love by living the Father's Will "on earth as it is" in their heavenly vision of His Light. In this chapter, we will examine five ways in which the sons of Light accomplish this task. First, they sign everlasting covenants with God. Second, after signing these formal agreements between themselves and God, they sing out in joy and play upon "the harp of salvation." Third, they praise God and tell men of His "mighty Right Hand." Fourth, they hallow the Father's "name." And finally, they "fulfil the law" of God by loving their Father and "their neighbor as themselves," by living a life of righteousness, mercy, and peace, and by giving to "the poor."

## SECTION I

### EVERLASTING COVENANTS

Jesus:

1. This cup which is poured out for you is **the new covenant** in my blood. (Luke 22:20) Now may God of peace who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of **the everlasting covenant** equip you with everything good... (Hebrews 13:20-21)

Teacher of Righteousness:

1. I give Thee thanks, O God, for Thou hast illumined my face by **Thy Covenant**. (211) And **Thou hast renewed for them Thy Covenant** ["the New Covenant" (140, 259)] founded on the vision of Glory. (336) Thou shouldst... cause him [man] to **enter the Covenant** with Thee, and that he should stand before Thee always **in the everlasting place** where shines the eternal light of the dawn without any darkness. (253)

## EVERLASTING COVENANTS (continued)

2. **Seek, and you will find;** knock and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and **he who seeks finds,** and to him who knocks it will be opened. (Matthew 7:7-8)

2. And I will put my support in no man and I will look to no human covenant; but **it is Thy Covenant that I will seek, for they that seek it find it** and they that meditate upon it and love it shall live for everlasting ages. (251)

Abraham Maslow once said that those who have peak-experiences characteristically become disoriented in time and space. To express this idea in more positive and symbolic terms, a peak-experience is like walking into an eternal kingdom of timelessness and spacelessness within one's heart. Writes Maslow:

In the peak-experience there is a very characteristic disorientation in time and space, or even the lack of consciousness of time and space. Phrased positively, this is like experiencing universality and eternity. Certainly we have here, in a very operational sense, a real and scientific meaning of "under the aspect of eternity." This kind of timelessness and spacelessness contrasts very sharply with normal experience. The person in the peak-experience may feel a day passing as if it were minutes or also a minute so intensely lived that it might feel like a day or a year or an eternity even.<sup>1</sup>

Light-consciousness, like a peak-experience, is a timeless experience of the eternal Spirit/Light of God. Those who enter into this eternal dimension of consciousness come to realize that the Spirit of God is not located in some imagined and heavenly place "out there." Instead, they know that this Spirit is a real, heavenly, and eternal dimension of their own human consciousness. As such, they understand that they can experience this everlasting and heavenly consciousness while they live.

Our three sons of Light represent this eternalized dimension of human consciousness by speaking of the human need to seek "ever-



lasting" covenants with the living Father. A covenant, as you know, is a signed, formal agreement between two or more people. Such an agreement binds the individuals involved in it to do or not to do something specified within a certain time. Nevertheless, when the sons of Light enter into agreements, they sign "everlasting" covenants because they are always dealing with the eternal Father. Typically, therefore, our three sons of Light symbolically compare the new and "higher life" of God's Light within them to a "new Covenant," or to an "everlasting" spiritual agreement, that they sign with God in the divine kingdom of the human heart. In this way, they symbolically represent the eternal and spiritually-binding nature of Light-consciousness.

When considering covenants, the Teacher of Righteousness tells us that he "will put [his] support in no man and will look to no human covenant." Human covenants, or covenants which men make among themselves, can be broken. They are, therefore, not everlasting. Obviously, the Essene Teacher is not interested in this type of fallible agreement. On the other hand, he is interested in covenants between man and God. He thus centers his attention on the covenants of Light because they are based on man's "vision" of the eternal Spirit. He writes:

I give Thee thanks, O God, for Thou has illumined my face by Thy Covenant.

As you may recall in chapter II, section II, God "illumined" the Essene Teacher's "face." At this time, the Teacher's spirit climbed the "everlasting heights," and he saw God's "everlasting light." Likewise, when a man signs a "Covenant" which is, as the Essene Teacher says, "founded on [this] vision of Glory," his "face" and spirit also become "illumined" with the eternal Light. Man, as we now know, cannot break this bright and binding "New Covenant" with God because it is signed in an atmosphere of pure and timeless Light. In short, such a radiant Covenant is "everlasting" because the living Father continually "renews" it by "illuminating" man's "face" with the eternal Light. In this way, man, as the Teacher of Righteousness concludes, begins to "stand before" God "always **in the everlasting place where shines the eternal light** of the dawn without any darkness."

With these thoughts in mind, the Essene Teacher continues to

say:

It is Thy Covenant that I will seek, for **they that seek it find it** and they that meditate upon it and love it shall live for everlasting ages.

Since covenants that are founded on the "vision of Glory" are eternal in nature, those men who sign these contracts with God "live" in the "place" of eternal Light "for everlasting ages." Moreover, God will sign these types of spiritual covenants only with those men who "seek," "meditate upon," and ultimately "love" the "vision of Glory." For again, only in the vision of the eternal Spirit does man's spirit enter the "everlasting" place or kingdom of Light. And only those who "seek" and ultimately "find" this radiant kingdom "within man" can sign "the Covenant of the Community [of the sons of Light]." (112) Henceforth, the Teacher of Righteousness tells us: **"It is Thy Covenant that I will seek, for they that seek it find it."**

Jesus, of course, was another son of Light who taught us to **"seek and you will find."** And like the Teacher of Righteousness, He too spoke of a **"new covenant"** that is, as the author of Hebrews says, like **an "everlasting covenant."** And as you may recall, Jesus also spoke of a very special **"place"** of Light that is **"within a man of light."** This spiritual place, as we have discussed, is located within the heart of man, and it is "necessary," **as** Jesus' disciples insist, for all men to "seek it."

But what, you ask, is the symbolic connection between "new covenants" and the "place" of Light? We will discover **an** answer to this question if we explore why both Jesus and the Essene Teacher tell mankind to "seek, and you will find." First, their analogous words imply that all men must search for the Covenant of God within their "secret" hearts. More specifically, you may recall what Jesus' apostles said about seeking the "place" where "you [Jesus] are." "Show us the place where you are," they say in *The Gospel of Thomas*, "since it is necessary for us to seek it." The place in which Jesus lives is, as we have discussed, the Light that is "within a man of light." When we "seek" this spiritual "place" of Light within our "secret" heart, we also "seek" to sign the holy and eternal Covenant of God. And this Covenant binds our inner being to the same radiant Life/Light Force that flows, like holy "blood," through Jesus' enlightened heart.

Speaking of blood and covenants, Jesus further clarifies His

symbolic thought with the following words:

This cup which is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood.

In this passage, Jesus tells us that "the new covenant" is "in" the "blood" of His being. While being in His blood, this spiritual and "everlasting covenant" is the bright soul-stuff which flows through His heart. It is thus the spiritual and radiant Life/Light Force, and "everything good," that circulates throughout His entire soul. With love in His heart, Jesus "pours" this "new covenant in my blood" into the hearts of all those men who "seek it." As more and more men "find" this "new covenant," His poured blood will become like "rivers of living water" that circle the world. Eventually, all men will understand that "the blood of [this] everlasting covenant," as Hebrews suggests, "[will] equip you [and your heart] with everything good."

When the Teacher of Righteousness "seeks" to sign the "Covenant founded on the vision of Glory," so too does he "enter" into the "everlasting place [of his heart] where shines the eternal light of the dawn without any darkness." While living in this radiant "place" of the human heart, he also hopes that the "living water" of God's Light will circulate through not only his being but through the being of others. And if it does, then all men will finally come to know the "New Covenant" which is the most intimate and everlasting of all contracts on this earth!

The Essene Teacher once wrote that those who enter into a "glorious Covenant" with God, or into "Thy Covenant founded on the vision of Glory," "shall be [like him] Thy [God's] princes ['the Prince of Light'] in the lot of light." He continues to say that all the sons of Light shall share in this "glorious Covenant" of God:

For Thou [God] has caused them [sons of Light] to enter Thy glorious Covenant with all the men of Thy council...And they shall be converted by Thy glorious mouth [i.e., God's Word] and shall be Thy princes in the lot of light. (219)

Covenants with God can indeed be "glorious" and full of Light because all who sign them with their Father "shall be converted" by the Word/Spirit in His "glorious mouth." May we all, therefore,

"seek" God's "glorious Covenant" within ourselves. For when we do, we too will "find" it and "shall be converted by Thy [God's] glorious mouth." At that time, all mankind will become "Thy princes in the lot of light."

The Psalmist also understood the eternal nature of Light-consciousness. He, therefore, like our other two sons of Light, also signs an everlasting covenant. Regarding this everlasting covenant, the Psalmist has God say: "I [God] have made a covenant with my chosen one."<sup>2</sup> God's "chosen one" is none other than David, the Psalmist, or the "first-born...son" and "the highest of the kings of the earth." And as you may remember, this "son" is the one who "worships the [eternal] Lord in [the] holy array" of Light-consciousness. Understandably, God's covenant with His own adoring and visionary son will thus "stand firm" and His "steadfast love will keep him [David] forever."

The Psalmist's reply to God's covenant of "steadfast love" that lasts "forever" is similar to what our other two sons of Light say about "everlasting" covenants. "**With my whole heart,**" he writes, "**I will seek Thee.**" All three of our sons of Light "seek" God and His everlasting covenant because they know, as the Psalmist writes, that "**the steadfast love of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting... to those who keep His [God's] covenant.**" They also know that, in truth, all men must "seek" the eternal covenant which binds man to God's Light "for everlasting ages." And all men must do so, as the Psalmist insists, "with [their] whole heart." If this is true, then these visionary sons of Light are not talking about some form of half-hearted effort. On the contrary, they are unequivocally saying that man's ultimate concern must be the vision of God's Spirit/Light. And they reassure us that if we "seek" this spiritual Reality within our "secret" heart, we will, as they say, "find" it.

The sons of Light celebrate their official signing of God's "Covenant" with great joy and jubilation. In fact, those men who enter into a spiritual contract with their Most High God and His Light are so full of happiness that they bring out their harps, their lutes, and their trumpets and sing praises to the Lord. And they also demonstrate the thanksgiving of their grateful hearts by "sing[ing] a hymn to the Father...Glory be to the Father" (Jesus), or by, as the Essene Teacher says, "sing[ing] in Knowledge...to the Glory of God." Let us, therefore, listen to their "songs of salvation."

## SECTION II

## SINGING THE SONGS OF SALVATION

Jesus:

1. Jesus said: "Before I am delivered to them, let **■ sing ■ hymn to the Father... Glory be to the Father... We thank thee, Light: In whom darkness dwelleth not. Amen.**"(*Acts of John*)<sup>3</sup>

Teacher of Righteousness:

1. **I will sing in Knowledge** and my whole lyre shall throb to the **Glory of God... (98) I give Thee thanks, O God, for Thou has illumined my face** by Thy Covenant, and I have sought Thee and **like a true dawn at daybreak** Thou hast appeared unto me. (211) Thou has widened my soul...**In my tent I will sing on the harp of salvation** and praise Thy Name... (239)

The Psalmist sings praises to God because the Most High "has given us light." He writes:

The Lord is God and **He has given us light... I will sing praises to Thee with the harp, O Holy one of Israel... Praise Him with trumpet sound, Praise Him with lute and harp.**<sup>4</sup>

The Lord has indeed "given" the Psalmist "light." And with Light in his ecstatic heart, he "will sing praises" unto the Lord!

But the Psalmist is not the only one singing praises of joy to God. Jesus, for example, exclaims:

**Let us sing ■ hymn to the Father... Glory be to the Father... We thank thee Light: In whom darkness dwelleth not...**

As you can see, Jesus' heart is full of joy. He thus gives thanks to "the Light" of the Father. He also sings a hymn in His praise. And when you consider His situation, why shouldn't He be singing with joy? As a son of Light, He experienced the vision of Light. Such a visionary peak-experience contains, as Maslow writes, the "most

blissful and perfect moments of life."<sup>5</sup> Quite naturally, therefore, those who experience these "perfect moments of life" want to "sing" out, with an ecstatic heart, to not only God but to the entire world!

The Essene Teacher is also a happy man. He knows that God "hast illumined [his] face by Thy Covenant" of Light. At this spiritual "daybreak" within his heart, the Light of God's Covenant "appeared to him." As a result, he also feels compelled to "sing" out in the "tent" of his heart. In fact, he tells us: "**I will sing upon the harp of salvation**" because God "hast widened my [his] soul." Needless to say, a man experiences considerable joy when his soul is "widened" and his face is "illumined by God's everlasting Covenant." With joy in his heart, he thus feels an urge deep within himself to "**sing in Knowledge... to the Glory of God,**" and to make the "whole lyre throb" like his pulsating and adoring heart.

### SECTION III

#### THE FATHER IS GREATER THAN I

Jesus:

1. **I speak of what I have seen with my Father...** (John 8:38) **My teaching is not mine, but His who sent me.** (John 7:16) He who believes in me, believes not in me but in Him [God] who sent me. (John 12:44) **I go to the Father for the Father is greater than I.** (John 14:28)

2. **But from now on the Son of man shall be seated at the right hand of the power of God.** (Luke: 22:69)

Teacher of Righteousness:

1. **For Thou art a Father to all Thy ~~word~~ of truth...** (233) I have known Thee, O my God, because of the Spirit that Thou has put in me. (240) **What can I say unless Thou open my mouth...?** (241) Truly, **nothing is strong like Thy strength...** (232) And in Thy might all power and all glory is with Thee. (237)

2. **For Thou has upheld Thy servant with Thy strong Right Hand...** (251)

Maslow once said the following about peak-experiences:

Peak-experiences often report something that might be called a particular kind of abstract percep-

tion, i.e., perception of essence, of "the hidden order of things," the X-ray texture of the world, normally obscured by layers of irrelevancy... It can therefore be understood as lifting him [i.e., the peaker] "higher," making him "taller," etc., so that he becomes "deserving" of more difficult truths... Health brings one "up to" higher levels of reality...realizing that the knowledge revealed was there all the time, ready to be perceived, if only the perceiver were "up to it," ready for it. This is a change in perspicuity, in the efficiency of the perceiver, in his spectacles, so to speak, not a change in the nature of reality or the invention of a new piece of reality which wasn't there before.<sup>6</sup>

The peaker has seen "the hidden order of things." He has also perceived "the more difficult truths" of the world that are "normally obscured by layers of irrelevancy." Their "perception of essence," or their "X-ray" vision of Spirit, thus reveals to them an elevated level of reality -- or a higher kingdom -- that is open to all mankind. Our three sons of Light became devoted to preaching "the gospel" of this inner kingdom because they were driven by the Light of that monarchy! Or in other words, they were driven by a vision of Light, an experience of Love, and a consciousness of Spirit. And as you know, it is quite natural to speak about that which you love. So speak they did! In fact, their newly acquired Light-consciousness inspired and motivated them to such a degree that they devoted their entire lives to its proclamation.

When "preaching the kingdom" to the people, the first and most important thing our three sons of Light proclaim is the glory and power of the holy Father. "I speak," explains Jesus, "of what I have seen with my Father..." We ought to understand that the Spirit Jesus experienced within Himself was not of His own making. Rather, the source of His Power, Love, and Light was the eternal Father within Him. Realizing this fact, Jesus continually reminds us that the Father is "greater" than His begotten son! "I go to the Father," He insists, "for the Father is greater than I."

This previous statement does not deny that the Spirit/Light of the Father was in the man Jesus. What it does imply, however, is this: The true source of spiritual Power is the Light of the Father in Jesus

and/or in any other son of Light. Says Jesus:

My teaching is not mine, but His who sent me...  
He who believes in me, believes not in me but in  
Him [God] who sent me.

The Father speaks through His resplendent sons just as light shines through a bright lamp. Oh yes, lamps – or historical beings – can "light up the world" around them by pointing to, and by walking on, the paths of Light within their own hearts. They can do this because the spiritual Current, or the Light/Spirit of God, is freely flowing through their own individual lamp. But remember that one shining lamp cannot turn on another unlit lamp. In the final analysis, only the Power Source of all life can directly light up a human lamp, and it does so "within" the "secret" heart of man. At the human level, this unique spiritual Power Source is none other than "the Father," or the foundational Ground of all beings, "who sends," and who thus turns on, the Light in man.

And so, the Ground of being, or the Father, is indeed "within" every son of Light. In fact, since the Light of the Father and His sons "are one," the Light is the universal and essential "I" of every son's existence. But other men cannot become illumined by "believing in" a son as a bright historical entity. Indeed, other men cannot light their own lamp by admiring or even worshipping other bright lamps of the past. Rather, each man must "believe" in, or become experientially "united" to, "Him" [the Father, the Source of the Light, the Ground of all beings, the Power Generator "within" all "men of Light"] who turns on the Light for all His sons in this world. If a man does this, then he will learn to "walk" in the Light for himself. And he will also "realize," as Jesus says, "that it is you who are the sons of the living father."

The Teacher of Righteousness and the Psalmist also recognize their spiritual dependency on the mighty and Most High God. "What can I say," writes the former, "unless Thou open my mouth? Truly, nothing is strong like Thy strength." Truly, indeed, is the power of the Most High God. In fact, as the Essene Teacher concludes, "in Thy [God's] might [is the source of] all power." Or as the Psalmist also acknowledges, "Great is our Lord, and abundant in power."<sup>7</sup>

As the ultimate spiritual Source of power, God supports his sons of Light, as any good Father would do, with His powerful "right



hand." To illustrate this point, let us consider what the Teacher of Righteousness says about the enormous power of God's "Right Hand." He writes:

Truly, nothing is strong like Thy strength. For  
**Thou has upheld Thy servant with Thy strong  
Right Hand..**

But the Teacher of Righteousness was not the only son of Light who feels the power of God's mighty right hand. The Psalmist also proclaims the "high" and "strong right hand" of God:

**Thy right hand upholds me...Thou hast a  
mighty arm; strong is Thy hand, high Thy right  
hand.<sup>8</sup>**

The Psalmist mentions that God's "strong right hand" was a "high" right hand. He does so because God's right hand, as well as His kingdom, is located on the "holy mountain," or "high mount," of Light-consciousness.

The Father also transfigured Jesus' spirit with His Light on that same symbolic "high mountain" of vision. "From now on," therefore, **"the Son of man shall be seated at the right hand of the power of God."** As you can see, all three of our visionary sons of Light had their fingers on the pulse of the Most High's powerful "right hand." When feeling the throb of their holy Father's heartbeat, they intuitively knew that the strength of His right hand was always "greater" than their own power and might. They also knew that God's "high right hand" would always support their "high vision" of Light. For who else but the "Most High" can "uphold" man's lofty vision of Light?

The sons of Light often express their reverence for the power, beauty, love, and truth of God in acts of adoration, praise, oblation, etc. Explains Maslow:

People during and after peak-experiences characteristically feel lucky, fortunate, graced.. A common consequence is a feeling of gratitude, in religious persons, to their God...It is interesting in the present context that this can go over into worship, giving

thanks, adoring, giving praise, oblation and other reactions...<sup>9</sup>

In regards to an "adoring" spirit, Jesus truly valued His experience of the holy Father's Light. In fact, His experience of the "alighting" dove of God, or the mountain-top transfiguration in which His spirit was "clothed...in [God's] light," was probably the most sacred experience of His life. And because this experience of God's heavenly Light was so sacred, He taught all mankind to verbally "hallow" the Lord's name.

## SECTION IV

### HALLOWED BE THY NAME

Jesus:	Teacher of Righteousness:
1. Our Father who art in heaven, <b>Hallowed be thy name.</b> (Matthew 6:9)	1. And into my mouth Thou has put songs...that I should sing Thy favors. <b>I will bless Thy Name always.</b> (236)

"Our Father," Jesus prays, "who art in heaven, **Hallowed be Thy name.**" A hallowed name is a blessed name because it points to the sacred and spiritual Foundation of all life! The name of God is also a revered name because it directs our attention to the holiness and love of the eternal Father. So why shouldn't we all pray to our Father who is known by man in the "heaven" of Light-consciousness? And why shouldn't we hallow His name forever? Those sons of Light who were inspired by the Light of the Father did so everyday.

Like Jesus, our other two sons of Light express their adoration, praise, and oblation by blessing the name of God. The Psalmist, for example, "worships the Lord" in the "holy array" of Light-consciousness. As a consequence of this sacred event, he exclaims: "**I will glorify Thy name forever.**"<sup>10</sup> So deep is the Psalmist's joy that he exalts God's name above all and says it will endure "forever."

The Teacher of Righteousness also experiences the joy and love of the eternal Father's "everlasting Light." He, therefore, utters "a reply of the tongue to recount Thy righteousness." "And into my mouth," he continues, "Thou has put songs...that I should sing Thy

favours." Obviously, God's Light has overwhelmed the Teacher of Righteousness! In fact, the "everlasting Light" of the Father has inspired him so much that he tells us, "I will bless Thy Name always."

## SECTION V<sup>11</sup>

### FULFIL THE LAW

Jesus:

1. Think not that I have come to abolish the [Jewish] law and the prophets; I have ~~come~~ not to abolish them but to fulfil them. (Matthew 5:17)

Teacher of Righteousness:

1. **And Thou has created me for Thy sake to fulfil the [Jewish] Law**, and to teach by mouth the men of Thy council in the midst of the sons of men. (218-19)

The sons of Light always live their lives in accordance with the Father's commandments. They do so because their vision of God's Light instills in their heart a deep and abiding sense of His moral imperatives. As a result, they dedicate their lives to fulfilling, or to bringing into human reality, those universal spiritual laws of the Father that have brightened the hearts of all the sons of Light. "Think not," says Jesus, "that I have come to abolish the [Jewish] law and the prophets; I have come not to abolish them but to fulfil them."

To fulfil the law, a man must first spiritually encounter the full meaning of God's Light within the depths of his heart. For only the Light of the Father truly motivates men to fulfil the Father's commandments on earth. So like Jesus, the Teacher of Righteousness is "created" by God as a "son of Light" to "fulfil the Law." Notice that when these two sons of Light speak of the law, they both use the exact same verb: fulfil. "And Thou," writes the Essene Teacher, "has created me for Thy sake to fulfil the [Jewish] Law, and to teach by mouth the men of Thy council in the midst of the sons of men."

Let us now examine some of these teachings "by mouth" so we too can more fully understand how these two sons of Light "fulfil" God's law. Here at the outset, our examination will go right to the heart of the matter. We will begin by studying the heart and soul of love.

## SECTION VI

## THE HEART OF LOVE

Jesus:	Teacher of Righteousness:
1. <b>Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.</b> (Matthew 5:8)	1. <b>They that are pure of heart...Thou wilt strengthen Thy precepts in them to make [them]...the men of Thy vision.</b> (243) <sup>12</sup>
2. <b>You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.</b> (Matthew 22:37)	2. The rule of the Essene Community: to seek God with all their heart and all their soul. (73) <b>And I have loved Thee [God] generously and with all my heart and soul.</b> (245)
3. <b>You shall love your neighbor as yourself.</b> (Matthew 22:39)	3. Truly, they [men] shall be careful to act... <b>to love each man his brother as himself.</b> (132)

After a person has a peak-experience, he becomes a less selfish and more loving individual. Moreover, his life's emphasis shifts from making money and/or owning possessions to possessing truth, mercy, justice, righteousness and love. Writes Maslow:

The peak-experiencer becomes more loving and more accepting, and so he becomes more spontaneous and honest and innocent... Because he becomes more unmotivated, that is to say, closer to non-striving, non-needing, non-wishing, he asks less for himself in such moments. He is less selfish. We must remember that the gods have been considered generally to have no needs or wants, no deficiencies, no lacks, and to be gratified in all things. In this sense, the unmotivated human being becomes more god-like.<sup>13</sup>

Most of the time, the peak-experiencer thinks not of himself but of

his fellow human beings. Or as Maslow says, while the peak-experiencer lives in the world, he is an "unmotivated...[and 'less selfish'] human being." If you were to express this idea in more symbolic terms, you could say that the peak-experiencer becomes more "god-like." This concept means that the peaker becomes more concerned with the god-like realities of love, compassion, peace and mercy. In short, his ultimate concern is the "pure heart" that is potentially within all mankind.

"Blessed are the **pure in heart**," says Jesus, "for they shall see God." The Teacher of Righteousness also writes about the "pure of heart." "They that are **pure of heart**," he insists, "Thou wilt strengthen Thy precepts in them to make them the men of Thy vision." As you can see, for Jesus, the "pure in heart...shall see God." Likewise, the Essene Teacher tells us that the "pure of heart" shall become "men of Thy vision." In either case, the "men of Thy vision," or the "sons of Light," are precisely those individuals throughout history who, with pure hearts, behold their living God. Or as the Psalmist reminds us: "Truly God is good to the upright, to those who are **pure in heart**...With the pure Thou dost show Thyself pure."<sup>14</sup>

In summary, the "men of Thy vision," or the sons of Light, are those pure hearts who "see God." These men of Light-consciousness love to tell other men about what they have seen within "the vision" of their own pure hearts. And what they see they express as commandments of God. In this fashion, the sons of Light seek to "fulfil" the laws of God by proclaiming them to all mankind as well as by living them within their own lives. Therefore, they speak not only of loving the eternal Father, but also of manifesting His holy Will to one's "brother" or "neighbor."

And doesn't this kind of conduct make sense? Anyone who has seen God is certainly going to say that the first and most important commandment of all is to love Him with all your heart and soul. "You shall **love the Lord your God**," Jesus declares, "**with all your heart and with all your soul**." The Essene Teacher also knew this commandment of God. As the leader of the Essenes, he knew that the first law of his community was that every member must "seek God with all their heart and all their souls." With this law in mind, he proclaims his love for God with the following words: "And I **have loved Thee** generously and **with all my heart and soul**."

Since a son of Light's spiritual "kingdom" is essentially a kingdom of love, his "whole heart and soul" becomes more loving to

the men around him. As a result of this heartfelt love for all mankind, our two sons of Light proclaim a second commandment of the Father. "You shall love your neighbor," commands Jesus, "as yourself." The Teacher of Righteousness parallels Jesus' thoughts when he says: "Truly, they [men] shall be careful to act...to love each man his brother as himself." Truly, indeed, if the kingdom of the Father's Light is to come on earth, all men must love each other with all their heart and soul.

## SECTION VII

### RIGHTEOUSNESS AND MERCY

Jesus:	Teacher of Righteousness:
1. <b>Blessed are</b> those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied. (Matthew 5:6)	1. <b>And blessed be all those who serve Him in righteousness</b> and know Him by faith! (188) I know that <b>truth is in Thy mouth and righteousness in Thy hand.</b> (237)
2. <b>Blessed are</b> the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy. (Matthew 5:7)	2. <b>And thy mercy is obtained by all the sons of Thy loving-kindness.</b> (237) For Thou art merciful...and compassionate towards all the sons of righteousness. (248)

Those who love the eternal Father with all their heart and soul also serve Him with spirits of righteousness. "**Blessed** are those who hunger and thirst for **righteousness**," says Jesus, "for these shall be satisfied." Remember when Jesus said: those who seek "will find." So too will those "who hunger and thirst..be satisfied." For you see, whichever poetic expression you choose, the holy and spiritual food of God's righteousness will ultimately satisfy any man who seeks it, or hungers for it, in his own heart.

The word: "righteousness" can imply many things. The name: "the Teacher of Righteousness," for example, implies that the man owning it had a deep-seated interest in the subject of righteousness. In truth, so deep was his interest that we can discover his words on this subject in many passages scattered throughout *The Dead Sea*

*Scrolls.* To illustrate, consider why the Essene Teacher says that "righteousness" is in "Thy [God's] hand." He explains by saying that God's mighty "right hand" will feed righteousness, which is one of the "fruits of holiness," to those who "open their mouth" to His Will. Needless to say, we must all open our mouths, as well as our hearts, to God's will, and thus "serve Him" in righteousness. If we do, then we, as the Teacher of Righteousness concludes, will be "blessed" by the loving and spiritual Father of all mankind: "**Blessed** be all those who serve Him in **righteousness** and know Him by faith."

As "blessed" and "righteous" sons of Light, Jesus and the Teacher of Righteousness, like the peak-experiencers, follow what Maslow terms "the laws of what people have called the 'higher life.'"<sup>15</sup> These laws, as Maslow continues to point out, include "truth, honesty, rightness, and justice."<sup>16</sup> Imbued by their vision of Light, the sons of Light dearly loved to taste this food of the Spirit. The Psalmist, of course, was no exception to this rule. Like our other two sons of Light, he too sat at God's table and ate the visionary "bread of angels." And he too knew that the righteous are the "blessed" among mankind. "**Blessed** are they who observe justice," he writes, "who do **righteousness** at all times."<sup>17</sup>

Mercy, like righteousness, is part of love. To obtain mercy, we must be able to give it in our daily lives. "Blessed are the merciful," Jesus says, "for they shall **obtain mercy**." Notice that the Teacher of Righteousness also uses the word "obtain" when speaking of mercy. "And Thy **mercy is obtained** by all the sons of Thy loving-kindness." The meaning contained within these analogous statements reflect the ethical notion that if we give mercy, we will also receive or "obtain" it in return. In essence, therefore, only those individuals who truly live the meaning of this moral message will experience the pure sweetness of its blossom within their hearts.

## SECTION VIII

### THE PEACEMAKERS

Jesus:

1. Blessed are **the peacemakers**, for they shall be called sons of God. (Matthew 5:9)

Teacher of Righteousness:

1. Eternal grace unto all **the peacemakers**. (242) **And I was...a man of peace** for all who see true things. (206)

In the visionary heights of Light-consciousness, the battlegrounds, dichotomies, and conflicts of life melt away like ice under the bright and warm Light of God. While the sons of Light, or "the men of Thy vision," experience the spiritual glow of this Light, they become more capable of transcending all the warring factions within as well as outside of themselves. If we phrase this idea in modern psychological jargon, we could say, along with Abraham Maslow, that the peaker "tends to move toward fusion, integration, and unity and away from splitting, conflicts, and oppositions."<sup>18</sup>

With Maslow's comments in mind, you can easily see why the sons of Light, or the sons of the living Father, find peace within themselves and strive to develop peace in the entire world. What else would you expect from a spiritual "son of the living Father"? Jesus, as one son of Light, tells us: "Blessed are the **peacemakers**, for they shall be called sons of God." And while the Teacher of Righteousness writes that he "was a man of peace," he also knew of the "peacemakers." "Eternal grace," he announces, "unto all the **peacemakers**." Whichever phrase you prefer, the "eternal grace" or "blessing" of God is undeniably upon all the "peacemakers," the "sons of God," and/or the sons of Light.

## SECTION IX

### THE POOR

Jesus:

1. Blessed are **the poor** in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. (Matthew 5:3) Blessed are **you poor**, for yours is the kingdom of God. (Luke 6:20)

2. The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because **He has anointed me to preach good news to the poor**. (Luke 4:18)

3. **Sell all that you have and distribute to the poor**, and you will have treasure in heaven. (Luke 18:22)

Teacher of Righteousness:

1. Now those who heed Him [God] are **the poor** of the flock. (138) Truly, Thy mighty Hand is with **the Poor!** (189)

2. And my light has shone out in Thy glory. **For Thou hast made the light shine out of the darkness for the poor...** (232)

3. Josephus: It is a law that **those who enter the sect [i.e., "the Poor"] shall surrender their property to the order**. (28)



## THE POOR (continued)

4. Its [i.e., the world's] gold and its silver are misleading. (*Dialogue of the Savior*: #70) Businessmen and merchants will not enter the places of my father. (*Gospel of Thomas*: #64)<sup>19</sup> Again I tell you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a **rich man** to enter the kingdom of God. (Matthew 19:24) Whoever finds the world and becomes **rich**, let him renounce the world. (*Gospel of Thomas*: #110)<sup>20</sup>

4. DO NOT EXCHANGE YOUR HOLY SPIRIT FOR ANY RICHES, BECAUSE NO PRICE IS WORTH YOUR SOUL... 4Q416, 418 (p. 253)) And the soul of Thy servant has loathed **riches and gain**, and has found no delight in pride of pleasure. (235) He [i.e., man] shall do the will of God in every enterprise of his hands...and beyond the will of God he shall desire nothing. (96) The ungodly lean on abundance of pleasure, on abundance of corn, and new wine and oil, and because of their possessions and fortune they are proud. (235) And I know that no **riches** equal Thy truth. (247) And Thy power is without price. (234)

Both Jesus and the Teacher of Righteousness considered "the poor." Jesus, for instance, tells us that **God anointed Him "to preach good news to the poor."** The "good news" to which he refers is the news about the "kingdom of light," or the kingdom of heavenly Light. As we now know, this inner kingdom is the same as the "light within a man of light," or the "place" which "is necessary for us to seek." In much the same fashion, the Teacher of Righteousness informs us that **God "hast made [my] light shine out of the darkness for the poor."** The Essene Teacher's inner Light thus illuminates "the poor" as Jesus' preaching about the kingdom of Light enlightens "the poor."

But why were these two sons of Light so interested in "the poor"? To answer this question, we must first understand the precise meaning of the phrase: "the poor." According to the Teacher of Righteousness, those people "who heed" the commandments of God "are the poor of the flock." "Truly," he writes, "Thy [God's] mighty Hand is with the Poor!" Ironically, the poor are those spiritually-rich individuals who not only "seek God with all their heart and all their soul," but who also strive to "fulfil" the laws of God while they live on earth. They

measure their wealth, therefore, in how much "righteousness," "mercy," "peace," and "love" is in their "pure heart."

There is, however, another side to this story about "the poor." According to Dupont-Sommer, "the poor" were "the members of the [Essene] sect."<sup>21</sup> This, of course, means that when a man or woman belonged to this Jewish sect, they participated in the group known as: "the poor." This terminology, however, does not suggest that "the poor" were, as a whole, financially bankrupt. On the contrary, the phrase: "the poor" implies an individually-lived philosophy of life which not only emphasized Spirit-building endeavors but also de-emphasized money-making enterprises. In keeping with the wisdom of this particular philosophy of life, each member of the sect was taught "that no riches equal Thy [God's] truth...and Thy [God's] power is without price." And in response to these teachings, they "surrendered their property to the order" and sought the real treasure of God's "Light," "truth," and "power." Hence, each member of the sect was "the poor" *in spirit* because their individual hearts or spirits did not long for, or seek to possess, material wealth.

The membership of "the poor," which consisted of some four to five thousand strong, was spread throughout the country. In every location, the Essene community appointed a "quaestor of the order." This man took care of all the clothing, the finances, and other necessities of visiting members. He also managed the financial concerns of each member within his assigned area. For this reason, none of the Essenes carried their own personal money while traveling from town to town or while living in a particular town. They never needed it because the group as a whole always looked out after the individual's physical and financial needs.

The Teacher of Righteousness, of course, was the leader of this communal, God-oriented community. As the Priest/Messiah of the sect, he insisted that a man "shall do the will of God in every enterprise of his hands...and beyond the will of God he shall desire nothing." The emphasis here is obviously on God's will instead of man's. Men discover this divine "will of God" when they "seek" -- with a "pure heart" -- the "everlasting Light" of God. In their discovery, they learn that the "will of God" can become their will. And if it does, then God's resplendent commandments shine forth through them, and they become the "men of Thy vision," or the sons of Light.

Nevertheless, the Essene Teacher knew there were some men in

the world who lack the vision of, and the commitment to, the "everlasting light." In his words, their hearts too often "EXCHANGE [their] HOLY SPIRIT FOR RICHES." Hence, they do not know "the will of God." The "ungodly," as he continue to explain, "lean on abundance of corn, and new wine and oil." "They are proud," he adds, and have too much "pride of pleasure."

Quite obviously, the spiritually blind man, or the "ungodly" man, fails to see that he is overemphasizing the "abundance" of his materialistic possessions. This type of "leaning on abundance" throws a man's center of vision off balance. It does so because a man's ultimate concern, or his ultimate emphasis in life, is in truth, the "god" of his vision. Obviously, if a man "leans on the abundance" of materialistic concerns, his vision will concentrate only on his "possessions" instead of on the Father's Light within his own "secret" heart.

We conclude that man's obsession with making money, and/or owning an "abundance" of possessions, too often derails his interests in the wrong direction. In short, it leads a man away from a Spirit-oriented consciousness. Seeing this potential dark pit of "abundance," the Teacher of Righteousness exclaims: "The soul of Thy servant [i.e., himself] has loathed riches and gain!" This quotation may be a bit of an overstatement, but it points to the following truth: Dedicating one's entire life to making money, or to possessing things, is actually a form of devotion to a pseudo-deity of materialistic desires. In the end, such a false dedication can be destructive to the human spirit.

You might also consider the Essene Teacher's statement concerning "riches and gain" rather melodramatic in nature. Keep in mind, however, that he was a member of the Essene sect: "the poor." Being communal in nature, this Jewish sect took care of all his materialistic needs. All this hard-ball talk about the evils of materialism is thus softened a bit when we consider the sheltered communal environment in which he lived. For you see, the collective financial strength of the group known as "the poor" took care of all its members' physical as well as the monetary needs.

We ought to understand, therefore, that the Teacher of Righteousness was not condemning money *per se*. He knew that the Essene sect would not have survived without the combined financial resources of each member. He was stating, however, that men should not make the activity of making money, or the endeavors of owning

the "abundance" of possessions, their ultimate concern in life. Rather, men should "seek" the Light of the Father and make the Light their ultimate concern!

Interestingly enough, these spiritually-oriented values are quite common among those individuals who have had peak-experiences. The perception that "money is not everything," writes Abraham Maslow, "can be rediscovered again and again in peak-moments."<sup>22</sup> And speaking of money and peak moments in life, consider Shakespeare's Juliet. Romeo, of course, describes her as a "bright angel," a "winged messenger of heaven," and a "holy shrine." In short, for Romeo's adoring heart, she "is the [spiritual] sun" who "doth teach the torches to burn bright,"<sup>23</sup> and to whom, as a devout "pilgrim," he travels to worship. As a bright and holy "messenger" of heavenly Love and Light, she exclaims to him: "They are but beggars that can count their worth."<sup>24</sup> Compared to those who know the spiritual Love that "doth teach the torches to burn bright," and who thus can see the "light [of the human heart] through [which] yonder window breaks,"<sup>25</sup> those who love "riches and gain," and who thus can only "count their worth," are but the "beggars" in life. By the same token, only the "poor" *in spirit*, or those sons of Light whose hearts replace the love of "riches and gain" with the love of Light, are the truly wealthy ones of the human race.

Jesus was another son of Light who spoke about "the poor." "Blessed are the poor," He says, "for yours is the kingdom of heaven." While reading this familiar quotation, the question obviously arises: What did Jesus mean by "the poor"? Clearly, the answer to this question is open to interpretation. Therefore, when attempting to interpret His words, let us consider the following facts. Jesus, like the Teacher of Righteousness, made numerous statements which point to three general rules of living: First, Jesus thought that we should "distribute" our wealth and private property to "the poor"; second, He insisted that we should "renounce the world" of "silver," "gold," and other riches; third, He maintained that we must "seek" God's high and heavenly kingdom of Light above all other concerns. Since these three rules of personal conduct might illuminate our understanding of what Jesus meant by "the poor," let us look more closely at each of them.

To the best of our knowledge, Jesus was a man who never owned any private property. Could it be that His disinterest in personal assets was related to His being a member of the Jewish communal sect: "the

poor"? Remember that He told men to "sell all that you have and distribute to the poor." If we interpret these words literally, then as we "distribute" everything we own, or "all that you have," to the financially "poor," the poor would get rich and the rich would become poor. This exercise of transferring wealth would accomplish nothing. On the other hand, if Jesus meant that men should distribute their financial wealth to the Essene sect: "the poor," then that action, as we have discussed, would free them from the "misleading" activities of earning more "gold and silver." As a result, they would have more time to "pray," to "seek," and ultimately to "find" the inner "treasure," or the "kingdom of heaven/kingdom of light," within their own "secret" heart.

The latter interpretation of "the poor" is in keeping with what Jesus said about accumulating material wealth. His concerns were obviously not in that direction. In fact, He, like the Teacher of Righteousness, had harsh words when considering man's activities in the financial marketplace. He said that the world's "gold and its silver are misleading." He also told us that "businessmen and merchants will not enter the places of my father." When interpreting these words, you may again recall what Jesus' disciples said in *The Gospel of Thomas*: "Show us the place where you are, since it is necessary for us to seek it." The "place/s" in which He lives is, of course, the "light," or the "kingdom of heaven/kingdom of light," that is "within a man of light." However, Jesus, like the Teacher of Righteousness, knew that those who make having an abundance of "gold and silver" their ultimate concern will find it very difficult to discover this more spiritual "place" of Light. And when you stop and think about it, He was correct! Those men who are dazzled by the shallow glitter of "buying and selling" things in the outer market place of commerce too often lose sight of the inner, spiritual, and "secret" place of Light.

Considering these previous thoughts, it is easy to understand why Jesus thought that "it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God." Only "the poor," or only those who humbly devote their lives to finding the eternal treasure of God's Light, are the "righteous," "merciful" and loving "peacemakers" who walk in the bright "place" where Jesus is. Every man on earth can walk in this "place." But we can do so only when we learn to walk on the Light that is "within a man of light." Therefore, we must "renounce the world" of "getting and spending" and of becoming "rich." In short, we must become "the poor" *in*

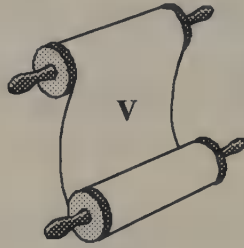
*spirit*. For then, and only then, will our hearts "seek" and ultimately "find" the rich "treasure" of the kingdom of God's Light. "Blessed are the poor in spirit," as Jesus concludes, "for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

It is an understatement to say that the similarities of thought and expression between Jesus and the Teacher of Righteousness are extraordinary. They both, for example, "preach to the poor" and thus make "the light shine out of darkness for the poor." Moreover, they not only tell men to surrender all their belongings to "the poor," but their individual life-styles reflect this particular sect's social values. In addition, both of these sons of Light renounce the pseudo-god of materialism and insist that mankind must "seek" the true Light of the holy Father.

Since all the evidence here presented is circumstantial, the reader must make the final decision whether Jesus was actually a member of "the poor." However, what is not circumstantial is this: Jesus and the Teacher of Righteousness truly loved the Light and were, therefore, sons of the Light. Their message concerning Light-consciousness is as true today as it was thousands of years ago. The heart of this message is simply stated: Man's spirit becomes rich only when it seeks and ultimately finds the glorious treasure of the Father's Light. The Father has given this message to all His sons of Light. And they, in turn, have announced it to all mankind!

## REFERENCES (Chapter IV)

1. Abraham Maslow, p. 63.
2. Psalmic references containing covenant symbolism: 89:3 & 28-29, 103:17-18, 119:10.
3. Wilhelm Schneemelcher, pp. 227-228 & 231.
4. Psalms: 118:27, 71:22, 150:3.
5. Abraham Maslow, p. 63.
6. Abraham Maslow, pp. 79-80.
7. Psalms: 147:5.
8. Psalms: 63:8, 89:13.
9. Abraham Maslow, pp. 67-68.
10. Psalms: 86:12, 72:19,
11. In Sections V through IX, we will concentrate our attention only on Jesus and the Teacher of Righteousness. We will limit the field of comparison to these two sons of Light so as to highlight their remarkably similar use of ideas and symbolic language. We will, of course, continue to quote from the Psalmist. But for the remainder of this chapter, Jesus and the Teacher of Righteousness will take center stage.
12. Note that the newly released "Beatitude" fragment says: **"BLESSED IS HE WHO WALKS WITH A PURE HEART AND WHO DOESN'T SLANDER WITH HIS TONGUE."** 4Q525 (p. 175)
13. Abraham Maslow, p. 67.
14. Psalms 73:1, 18:26.
15. Abraham Maslow, p. 67.
16. Abraham Maslow, pp. 92-93.
17. Psalms 106:3.
18. Abraham Maslow, p. 66.
19. *NHL*, pp. 253, 134.
20. *NHL*, p. 138.
21. A Dupont-Sommer, *The Essene Writings From Qumran*, p. 186.
22. Abraham Maslow, p. 79.
23. Irving Ribner, G.L. Kittredge, eds., pp. 974-978.
24. Irving Ribner, G.L. Kittredge, eds., p. 985.
25. Irving Ribner, G.L. Kittredge, eds., pp. 974, 977.



# FIRE AND LIGHT

## SECTION I

### THE FURNACE OF FIRE

Jesus:

1. The Son of man will send his angels and they will gather out of his kingdom all causes of sin and all evildoers and throw them into **the furnace of fire**; there men will weep and gnash their teeth. Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of the Father. (Matthew 13:41-43)

Teacher of Righteousness:

1. And Thou has made him enter into **the crucible** like gold into **the works of fire**...to be purified seven times. (215) And it shall be a well-spring of light as an eternal fountain. In its brilliant flames all the sons of darkness shall be consumed, and it shall be a **fire to consume** all guilty men unto destruction. (219)

In the physical universe, there are literally trillions of light-emitting stars scattered throughout the infinitude of intergalactic space. Our sun is but one star among billions in the Milky Way Galaxy. And the Milky Way Galaxy is just one galaxy among trillions in the universe. Like all the other stars located in our galaxy, the sun is an extremely large thermonuclear furnace of fire. All life, of course, depends upon light, and light comes from fire. So without our star-ball of fire in the sky, there would neither be light nor life on earth.

In Light-consciousness, man encounters certain spiritual realities that parallel the physical structures of light and fire in the universe.



As light comes from our sun's fire-ball, so too does the Light of God spring forth out of "the crucible " of spiritual fire. To illustrate this point, the Psalmist says that as "God shines forth" into the heart of man, a "devouring fire" comes "before Him." The Psalmist also says that God "will consume" those who "hate" Him and "will make them as a blazing oven" when He "appears" in "light" and "truth."<sup>1</sup> In a parallel fashion, Jesus insists that "the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of the Father." But they will do so only when the angels of God throw all the "causes of sin" into "the furnace of fire." And interestingly enough, the Teacher of Righteousness also considers the fire and the Light of God. He writes, for instance, that God makes man "enter into the crucible...of fire...to be purified." Upon doing so, all the "sons of darkness...shall be consumed" in God's "brilliant flames" as they drink from His "well-spring of light."

What does a "**devouring fire/blazing oven**" (Psalmist), a "**furnace of fire**" (Jesus), and/or a "**crucible...of fire**" (Teacher of Righteousness), have to do with "God shining forth" into man's heart, with the "righteous" shining "like the sun in the kingdom of God," or with man drinking from the Father's "well-spring of light"? We can discover the most comprehensive answer to this question in the writings of St. John of the Cross. He maintains that a true religious experience always begins with a purification of those negative elements, or those psychic "sins," within man's heart that are contrary to the nature of God's Light. This means that if God's Light is to enter the human spirit, man must first die to the sins of his heart.

Obviously, this psychic death process, or this purifying dimension of the religious experience, is painful to endure. Quite naturally, therefore, the sons of Light symbolically describe it as a fire which burns within their souls. Or as St. John of the Cross explains, the experience of God's fire must precede the vision of His Light:

The light which is here imparted to the soul is truly a most sublime Divine light, which transcends every natural light... This purgative or loving knowledge of Divine light acts [at first] upon the soul which is being purified and prepared for perfect union with God in the same way as fire acts upon a piece of wood that is being transformed into fire...And because the soul, according to the saying of the Wise man, is purified in this furnace like gold

in the crucible (Wisdom: 6), it is so keenly aware in its substance of its being wholly consumed in this fire that, realizing its extreme poverty, it almost expires. Here God greatly humbles the soul, in order that afterwards He may exalt it all the more... And in the same way we must understand the nature of this Divine fire of contemplation, which, before it transforms the soul and unites it to itself, purges it of all the elements which are contrary to this Divine fire. It drives out the soul's ugliness... And thus the youth of the soul is restored, and it is clothed with the new man (St. Paul)... This, however, is nothing but the illumination of the understanding with supernatural light, so that the human understanding becomes Divine through its union with God.<sup>2</sup>

The initial stage of psychic illumination begins as a painful yet purifying experience. Our three sons of Light symbolically compare this psychic ordeal to a "fire" that destroys the "ugliness" of man's spirit. In particular, the Psalmist's "devouring fire/blazing oven," Jesus' "furnace of fire," and the Teacher of Righteousness' "crucible of fire," represent a painful spiritual experience that purifies man's soul. In this blazing inferno within the heart of man, God, as St. John of the Cross says, "greatly humbles the soul so that afterwards He may exalt it all the more." In this fashion, God's "furnace of fire" prepares human consciousness for its "heavenly union with the Father" and His Light by burning away all the psychic "sins" within man.

The poetic language of fire and Light thus describes a spiritual transformation process within human consciousness. If we interpret the words in this way, then the symbols of fire and Light neither refer to a literal place in which red-hot flames scorch the body/soul of man nor a peaceful location in which all the concerns of man are eliminated. For fire and Light neither describe a hellish holocaust for the sinful nor a heavenly Shangri-la for the virtuous. Rather, the words point to a human experience that the sons of Light have within the depths and heights of their own evolving spiritual consciousness.

Consider how Isaiah poetically exemplifies his evolving spiritual consciousness of fire:

For wickedness burns like a fire, it [the spiritual fire within man] consumes briars and thorns; it kindles the thickets of the forest and they roll upward in a column of smoke. Through the wrath of the Lord of hosts the land is burned and the people are like fuel for the fire.<sup>3</sup>

Isaiah says that human "wickedness burns like a fire." The reason it does is because God's spiritual flame "consumes" the "briars and thorns," or the "wickedness," within man. These thorny psychic elements within the afflicted human soul thus become "fuel for the fire" of God. And Isaiah tells us that God burns them "into a column of smoke" much like "when a sick man wastes away":

The light of Israel will become a fire, and his Holy One a flame; and it will burn and devour his thorns and briars in one day... And it will be as when a sick man wastes away.<sup>4</sup>

In this passage, Isaiah tells us that the "sick man wastes away" in the fire of God. However, Isaiah quickly points out that while God's fire destroys the "sickness," His flames do not kill the man. Rather, the Father paradoxically heals the afflicted by their affliction.

Isaiah continues to clarify the paradox of fire and redemption with the following words:

Fear not, for I [God] have redeemed you... when you walk through fire you shall not be burned, and the flame shall not consume you. For I am the Lord your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior.<sup>5</sup>

God as "Savior" may make man's heart "walk through" His spiritual "fire," but man "shall not be burned" in this holy and spiritual flame of salvation. Instead, the Lord your God, "your Savior," as Isaiah concludes, will -- in truth -- "redeem you... when you walk through fire."

As we can now perceive, Isaiah's symbolic words describing the consciousness of fire represent how God purifies or redeems the human spirit. The seed of God's holy Light truly does grow and blossom within the garden of man's heart. But before it does, God's

spiritual flames must first consume that garden's "briers and thorns." Once consumed, man's heart becomes like fertile ground in which the beautiful kernel that God plants will flower forever into an everlasting Divine Light. Writes Isaiah:

Arise, shine; for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you... Then you shall see and be radiant, your heart shall thrill and rejoice... The sun shall be no more your light by day, nor for brightness shall the moon give light to you by night; but the Lord will be your everlasting light, and your days of mourning shall be ended. Your people shall all be righteous; they shall possess the land forever, the shoot of my [God's] planting, the work of my hands, that I might be glorified.<sup>6</sup>

May we all "see and be radiant" with, and "thrill and rejoice" to, the Light that God plants within the human soul. If we do, then at that time of personal illumination, we, like all the sons of Light, "shall be righteous" and "shall possess" the holy and spiritual "shoot of [God's] planting." Furthermore, then God will truly be our "everlasting light," and "the glory of the Lord" will rise in our hearts forever.

When symbolically representing the human soul's journey from spiritual fire to divine Light, Job uses different images to express the same symbolic meaning. He tells us, for example, that for man to "see the light of life," God "brings back his soul from the Pit." In this "vision" of the Pit, or in the hellish depths of human consciousness, God's "fire not blown upon" flares up and "devour[s]" the "wicked man." Writes Job:

In a dream, in a vision of the night when deep sleep falls upon men, while they slumber upon their beds, then he [God] opens the ears of men and terrifies them with warnings... God will send his fierce anger into him ["the wicked man"]...[and] a fire not blown upon will devour him... Behold, God does all these things twice, three times, with a man, to bring back his soul from the Pit, that he may see the light of life.<sup>7</sup>

Symbolically speaking, the psychic garden in which God consumes Isaiah's "briers and thorns" is the same as Job's "Pit" of hell. In this tormenting "Pit" of human pain and anguish, God sends forth "a fire not blown upon" that ignites the spiritual infirmities within man's heart. Once ignited, God's flame incinerates -- or "devour[s]" -- these dark and negative human characteristics in much the same fashion as fire burns black coal. But here is the important point! God hides a redeeming purpose deep in the Pit of His spiritual fire. As Job tells us, God "does all these things twice, three times with a man to bring his soul from the Pit." Or in other words, God purifies man with the pain of the Pit so the human heart can eventually rise to the saving "vision" of the "light of life."

Jesus also talks about the "light of life." "He who follows me," He says, "will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."<sup>8</sup> In *The Gospel of Thomas*, Jesus further explains how men should "follow" Him into "the light of life." He states, for example, that to be "near" Him, we must also be "near the fire":

The kingdom of the father is like a man who had good seed. His enemy came by night and sowed weeds among the good seeds...For on the day of the harvest [of the kingdom] the weeds will be plainly visible, and they will be pulled and burned... I have cast fire upon the world, and see, I am guarding it until it blazes... He who is near me is near the fire, and he who is far from me is far from the kingdom... Therefore, I say, if he [man] is destroyed he will be filled with light.<sup>9</sup>

In these passages, we again discover the universal and symbolic language of fire and Light. The words point to the soul-purification of fire and man's subsequent vision of Light. Jesus tells us that if man is to ever "harvest" this "kingdom of light" that is "within a man of light," the Father must first "burn" or "destroy" those "weeds" that kill His divine seed. Like Isaiah's "briers and thorns," Jesus' "weeds" within the garden of the human spirit are thus destined for the purifying fires of the Father. Jesus, of course, is "guarding" this holy fire of God because He understands that when God's fiery blaze consumes the "weeds" or "sins" of the human heart, the kingdom's divine seed will grow and flower like a lily in the sun. Then the

beauty of the Divine Light will bloom in all human hearts. Obviously, therefore, He does not want God's fire to be extinguished in the hearts of men. On the contrary, He wants it to burn as a spiritual "blaze" within every man!

Speaking of God's Light, Jesus says: "If man is destroyed he will be filled with light." God's holy fire truly does "burn" or "destroy" the "weeds" within the soul of man. Paradoxically, however, God first "destroys" the "weeds" within the garden of man's heart so later on He may bless man and "fill" him with a bountiful harvest of Light. Destruction thus leads to fulfillment because fire gives off Light.

Those who are most fulfilled with the abundant harvest of Light are, quite obviously, the sons of Light! "They are the ones," writes the author of *The Gospel of Truth*, "who appear in truth, since they exist in true and eternal life and speak of the light which is perfect and filled with the seed of the Father... The Father is within them and they are in the Father..."<sup>10</sup> Certainly, the sons of Light are "the ones" who "speak" of nurturing the Father's seed of Light within the human heart. And why shouldn't they speak of the Father's Light? The Father, as they say, is within them and they are in the Father.

The poet, Dante, like the previously mentioned men of Light, uses Light-symbolism to express his ideas about the archetypal psychic illumination of Light-consciousness. In particular, he too writes about fire and Light. Consider, for example, how Dante describes his "dream" of an eagle. This symbolic bird snatches him up into the "fiery sphere."

In a dream methought I saw an eagle poised in  
the sky... He descended and snatched me up far as  
the fiery sphere. There it seemed that he and I did  
burn, and the visionary flame so scorched that needs  
was my slumber broken.<sup>11</sup>

In Dante's "dream," the eagle "snatches" him "up" to "burn" in "the visionary flame" of soul-purification. In this psychic process, his "slumbering" spirit will be "broken" as his heart rises to the Light.

In another passage, Dante tells us more about how God breaks human spirits. In particular, he says that it was God who awakened his "dark and slumbering spirit." And the "visionary flames" found in the Lord's "fiery sphere" were of sufficient heat to accomplish this task. But Dante also reminds us that this fire is totally spiritual in

nature. For even though God truly does incinerate all those human characteristics that are "void of all light," and which belong to "the kingdom of the [spiritually] dead," He will never ignite one hair on man's head:

Of a surety believe, that if within the womb of  
the flames thou dost abide full a thousand years, they  
could not make thee bald of one hair... Why God  
chose to redeem us in this way can be seen only by  
those who have matured in the flames of love.<sup>12</sup>

Undoubtedly, the spiritual "flames" of God's love "matured" Dante's spirit. In fact, as he explains in the next passage, the heat of the flames made his heart "rise" to the visionary heights of the Light "up yonder." In this Light, his heart was "born again" out of the "womb of the flames." He compares this spiritual arrival to the springtime renewal of the green foliage in plants:

I have become born again, like young plants re-  
newed by their foliage. I am pure and ready to rise  
to the stars... A light there is up yonder which  
maketh the Creator visible unto the creature, who  
only in beholding him hath its own peace... So there  
shown around me a living light [a light intellectual  
full-charged with love] leaving me swathed in such  
a web of its glow that naught appeared to me.<sup>13</sup>

Like resurrected springtime plants, Dante's spirit now rises to the stars "up yonder" where the Light "maketh the Creator visible unto the creature." Obviously, Dante's spirit is no longer "slumbering" in "the kingdom of the dead." Rather, it is fully awake to the inner "light intellectual full-charged with love."

The "light" of "the Creator" is thus delivered to Dante's heart out of "the womb of flames." And you may find it interesting to note that Dante, like our other three sons of Light, insists that this Light "up yonder" is, ironically, much like an "inward fountain." It showers man's heart with "the ample shower of the Holy Spirit." He presents these thoughts by stating that Beatrice, or the spiritual "Lady" who "leads" him "to God,"<sup>14</sup> suddenly appears and directs his attention inward:

Then turned me to Beatrice, and she made eager indication to me that I should pour the water forth from my inward fountain... the ample shower of the Holy Spirit.<sup>15</sup>

Dante obviously knows the "eternal fount" which supplies the heavenly and visionary water of Light, or "the shower of the Holy Spirit," that cleanses his heart. He now connects this spiritual and "inward fountain" to God's will by asking and answering his own question:

O light, O glory of human kind, what water is this that here pours forth from one source?... The water which thou seest wells not from a spring that is fed by moisture which cold condenses, like a river that gains and loses volume, but issues from a fountain, constant and sure, which regains by God's will.<sup>16</sup>

The "inward" fountain of Light issues forth a constant and steady stream that is eternally under the control of God's holy Will. This dependable stream of Light cleanses our suffering spirits because it offers us the healing and "living water" that conquers our restless hearts.

With these thoughts in mind, we can now say that all men must experience the new birth of Light as it arises out of the "womb of flames" within their inward hearts. In turn, their spirits shall be cleansed in the "constant and sure," and eternal "waters of peace" that flow from the human and "inward fountain" of Light. "What thou sawest," writes Dante, "was in order that thou have no excuse from opening thy heart to the waters of peace, which are poured from the eternal fount."<sup>17</sup> May we all "open our hearts," our minds, and our spirits, as Dante insists we must, to the spiritual and "ample shower of the Holy Spirit" that flows from God's everlasting fountain of life and Light.

Let us now consider how other sons of Light have "opened their hearts" to the everlasting waters which flow from the inward fountain of Light. As we do, we will discover that fishermen, water, fire, and Light have a lot of common symbolic value.



## SECTION II

## FISHERMEN, FIRE, AND LIGHT

Jesus:

1. Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net which was thrown into the sea and gathered fish of every kind; when it was full men drew it ashore and sat down and sorted the good into vessels but threw away the bad. So it will be at the close of the age. The angels will come out and separate the evil from the righteous, and throw them into the furnace of fire; there men will weep and gnash their teeth. (Matthew 13:47-50)

2. He [Jesus] will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire. (Matthew 3:11) I came to cast a fire upon the earth; and would that it were already kindled! I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how I am constrained until it is accomplished! (Luke 12:49-50)

Teacher of Righteousness:

1. Thou has set me in a place of exile among many fishermen that stretch a net upon the face of the waters... And the bonds of Death tightened leaving no escape, and the torrents of Belial [hell] overflowed all the high banks like a fire consuming all their shores... (214, 210)

2. Then God will cleanse by His Truth all the works of every man...and purify him of all wicked deeds by the Spirit of holiness; and He [God] will cast the Spirit of Truth to gush forth upon him [man] like lustral water. (81)

Jesus, the Teacher of Righteousness, and the Psalmist use the symbols of fishermen's nets, seas of water, and fire to express how God's Holy Spirit not only consumes evil in the inner psychic world of man but also "brings to an end the dominion of darkness." Jesus, for instance, makes a comparison between the heavenly "kingdom" of Light "within a man of light" and fishing in "the sea." He states that as the fishermen's nets gather in the fish, the men of the sea separate the "bad" fish from the "good" ones.

Jesus continues His parable by telling us that in the "kingdom" of Light, the angels of God will do the same with men's hearts. In particular, these messengers of the Lord will "throw" the "evil" men, or all those who possess qualities of the heart that are contrary to the

Light, into "the furnace of fire." These angels do so because God's fire must incinerate all the "evil" or undesirable characteristics within the spiritually-evolving heart of man. And although the heat of its blaze will cause much "gnashing of teeth," the fire will, in the end, give off Light to man's maturing heart. Therefore, even if man falls into "the furnace of fire," there still is much hope. For "then the righteous," as Jesus so poetically continues, "will shine like the sun [as He did in His mountain top transfiguration] in the kingdom of the Father."

In the light of the preceding interpretation of fire, Light, and water, we can easily see why Jesus speaks of the need of fire baptism:

I came to cast a fire upon the earth; and would that it were already kindled! I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how I am constrained until it is accomplished.

Obviously, Jesus was no arsonist! Rather, His concern was with the spiritual purification of man's heart. With this important topic in mind, He thus "casts" a baptism of fire "upon [all] the earth." He performs this symbolic act because He understands that a baptism "with the Holy Spirit and with fire" cleanses the human heart of all those elements that are contrary to the Light.

In the preceding sense of the word, baptism is not a simple ceremony in which a priest or a minister sprinkles water on a baby's forehead. Obviously, a baby's consciousness is not mature enough to receive the Spiritual Powers contained within the type of experience we have been describing. Moreover, the fire which Jesus associates with baptism is not located in some literal place called hell. Rather, the fire is within man's heart. Hence, if we combine fire and water, we discover that fire-baptism is neither a ceremony to practice nor a place to inhabit. Instead, fire-baptism is a symbol that points to a religious experience within the spiritually maturing heart of man! Or in the beautifully poetic words of Jesus, it is a profound spiritual/psychological experience in which the "angels" of God purify the human heart in "the furnace of fire" so that man can eventually see "the light of life."

From a slightly different perspective, the Teacher of Righteousness centers the reader's attention directly on his personal

experience of fire-baptism. In his account, he, like Jesus, talks about fishermen's "nets," "fire," and "the light of life." He tells us, for example, that God set him in a "place of exile among many fishermen that stretch a net upon the face of the waters." As a man, he becomes trapped in these "bonds of death," and his experience is much like entering an all consuming "fire" of "Belial" or hell.

The Essene Teacher then proclaims a redemptive conversion for himself and for all those who have suffered in "the crucible" of God's fire. This conversion occurs when the Lord's "Holy Spirit" consumes "all the guilty men" in "the crucible" and in the "works of fire." Or as the Teacher of Righteousness states:

And Thou has made him [man] enter into the crucible like gold into the works of fire...to be purified... God will cleanse by His Truth all the works of every man...and purify him of all wicked deeds by the Spirit of Holiness. And He [God] will cause by the Spirit of Truth to gush forth upon him [man] like lustral water.

Truly, God's Holy Spirit "cleanses" man's heart in the "crucible like gold into the works of fire." As such, the Father's "works of fire" are necessary because they "purify" man "of all wicked deeds." However, in this purifying experience of fire baptism, the "Spirit of Truth" not only "gush[es] forth upon him like lustral water," but man is also "cleansed of all sins" as he "beholds the light of life."

The Psalmist was another son of Light who sought to "walk before God in the light of life."<sup>18</sup> And he too used the symbols of nets, water, and fire to represent his ideas concerning this Light. In particular, he tells us that God's promises are always pure because they are "purified" like "silver refined in a furnace."<sup>19</sup> Likewise, man's spirit must also be as pure as God's holy assurances. God "tests us," therefore, and "tries us as silver is tried."<sup>20</sup> He does so by trapping men, like fish, "into the net" that is upon the sea. While trapped in this net, God forces his human fish to go "through fire and through water." In this way, the Lord purifies human consciousness in "fire" while He simultaneously "cleanses" man's heart (i.e., baptizes him) in "water."

The Psalmist tells us more about his symbolism of fire-baptism. God, he writes, has "laid the [Light] beams of Thy chambers upon the

waters." For sure, God lays His Light "upon the waters" of the human heart because the Lord *is* spiritual Light. And while God's Light is upon these waters, so too is His voice. "The voice of the Lord," writes the Psalmist, "is upon the waters." Next, the Psalmist says that "the voice of the Lord flashes forth flames of fire." Now, as you can see, God's Light, His voice, and His fire are all upon these very special waters within man's heart.

God's Light, Word, and fire must be "upon" the waters of man's heart because Light-consciousness is like hearing God's voice within one's soul. And when heard, this holy utterance flashes forth "flames of fire" that consume all those negative elements within man that are contrary to the Light. In this way, God's fire purifies man's soul. And like "ministers," it also heals the "troubles" of his spirit. "They [men] cried to the Lord," writes the Psalmist, "in their trouble, and He delivered them from their distress. He sent forth His Word, and healed them." Truly, God's flaming Word and His "devouring fire" always "heal" man's sick heart.

## SECTION III

### MEN AND TREES

Jesus:

1. And he [Jesus] took the blind man by the hand and led him out of the village... He asked him, "Do you see anything?" And he looked up and said, "**I see men, but they look like trees, walking.**" (Mark 8:23-24) **Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves. You will know them by their fruits. Are grapes gathered from thorns, or figs from thistles? So, every sound tree bears good fruit, but the bad tree bears evil fruit...Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.** (Matthew 7: 15-19)

Teacher of Righteousness:

1. **Trees of life** [i.e., "the ~~sons~~ of **Grace and Light**"] are hidden among all the **trees by the waters** [i.e., "the prophets of falsehood"] in a mysterious realm... They ["the trees of life"] shall direct their root to the stream and its stock shall freely approach the living waters...And they ["trees by the waters"] shall direct no root to the stream... And the **trees by the waters shall sink like lead into the mighty waters and shall be prey to fire** and be dried up... For they have seen without recognizing, and considered without believing in the fountain of life... **But the fruitful planting shall prosper...and shall bear fruit forever.** (226-228)

All three of our sons of Light compared men to fruit-bearing trees. They knew that trees, good fruits, and man's vision of God's Light, have a lot in common. The Teacher of Righteousness, for example, understood that when the sons of Light, or the good "trees of life," "direct their root to the everlasting fountain" of Light, they will "bear fruit forever." Obviously, he realized that those who "root" themselves in the "LIVING WATER/living waters" of God's "fountain of light" will bear the "blessed" and eternal fruits of love, mercy, peace and righteousness.

As we have discussed, the Teacher of Righteousness was one who sought to root himself in God's bright fountain. As a result, he often tasted the "living water" of God's "light everlasting" in a shining "inner vision."<sup>21</sup> In this spiritual yet very human illumination, God filled him with the understanding that all men must drink of the eternal "floodtide of loving kindness." In short, all men must have a "mystic insight" into "Thy Holy Spirit." This "vision" is totally spontaneous because it "wells up within" man like a gushing fountain of "living water." Henceforth, all men must "seek" to root themselves eternally in this "fountain of strength" and in "the splendor of [His] glory."

The Psalmist also recognized that men, like trees, must root themselves in God.<sup>22</sup> He says that "the righteous flourish like the palm tree" because "they are planted in the house of the Lord." Moreover, since these men are "planted" in God's house, they will bear the ageless fruits of God's Light. "They still bring forth fruit in old age," he writes, "[because] they are ever full of sap and green to show that the Lord is upright." Clearly, those wise and righteous men who root themselves in God's "house" -- or in His "fountain" -- are always "full" of the eternal "sap" (Psalmist), and/or the "living water" (Teacher of Righteousness), of God. Quite naturally, therefore, they eternally "bear" the shining, spiritual "fruits" of His bright everlasting Light.

As Jesus led the "blind man" out of the village, He asked him if he saw anything. The blind man's reply was: "I see men, but they look like trees walking." Symbolically speaking, Jesus understood that men are like trees. That is, they either bear good or bad fruit. In keeping with this symbolic connection, Jesus segregates men into two groups of trees: namely, those who bear "good fruit" and those who bear "evil fruit." Unquestionably, the "false prophets" bear "evil fruit" because they are "bad trees." And, of course, these "evil fruit" bearing

trees live a life that is contrary to the wisdom and the spirit of Light-consciousness.

But what do we do with these "evil fruit" bearing trees? You do the same with them as you do with "bad" fish. You throw them into the "fire." For you see, these types of "bad trees" (men) also need a baptismal cleansing by the Holy Spirit. They must, therefore, be "cut down," as Jesus says, "and thrown into the fire." In this way, God burns or consumes all their "causes of sin" and purifies their "evil" spirit.

Symbols of trees and fire also exist in the writings of the Teacher of Righteousness. He tells us, for example, that there are bad trees, or what he calls the "trees by the waters." Since these types of trees do not "root" themselves in the heavenly "stream" of "living water," or in the holy "fountain of Light," they fail to bear good fruit. These unfruitful trees (men) thus "sink like lead into the mighty waters" of the Holy Spirit "and shall be prey to fire and be dried up." And they do so because they have "considered without believing in the fountain of life" and Light. As such, their fate and their vision is rooted in confusion and darkness. The Father must consume them in a spirit-cleansing fire-baptism! How else can He purify all the "causes of sin" in their dark hearts? And so, God, for the Essene Teacher, incinerates all the "trees by the waters" in the same manner as He did Jesus' "bad trees."

Within all of these parallel symbolic expressions of trees and fire is a seed of information which can help us grow into mature human beings. An enlightened man of Light prefers to be like a tree that roots itself in the pure "fountain of light" (Teacher of Righteousness), or in the "house of the Lord" (Psalmist), or in the heavenly "kingdom" of the Father (Jesus). And most certainly, only these types of trees (men) will bear the "good fruits" of God's peace, mercy, righteousness and love.

All the other trees must be "thrown into the fire" and purified of "all causes of sin." In this baptism of "Spirit" and "fire," men will, of course, "weep and gnash their teeth." But as we have seen, God heals the afflicted by their affliction. Hence, man's suffering has direction. Eventually, as Jesus tells us, "every sound tree [will] bear good fruit," and the "righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of the Father."

SECTION IV<sup>23</sup>

## BEING BORN ANEW

Jesus:

1. Truly, truly, I say to you, **unless one is born anew, he cannot see the kingdom of God.** Nicodemus said to him, How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born? Jesus answered, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God... You must be born anew." (John 3:3-7) Blessed are the womb which has not conceived and the breasts which have not given milk. (*The Gospel of Thomas*: #79)<sup>24</sup>

2. When a woman is in travail she has sorrow, because her hour has come; but when she is delivered of the child, she no longer remembers **the anguish**, for joy that a child is born into the world. (John 16:21)

3. And I will pray the Father, and he will give you **another Counsellor**, to be with you for ever... (John 14:16) **All things have been delivered to me by my father.** (Matthew 11:27) The Spirit of the Lord is upon me...He [God] has sent me to **proclaim deliverance** to the captives. (Luke 4:18)

Teacher of Righteousness:

1. And I was confused like the Woman about to bring forth at the time of her first child-bearing. (208) Come too the grievous throes, **the racking birth-pains come upon all that bear in the womb the seeds of the new life...**<sup>25</sup> Thou shouldst convert him that is born of woman and cause him to enter the Covenant with Thee, and that he should stand before Thee always in the everlasting place where shines the eternal light of the dawn without any darkness. (253)

2. For she shall give birth to a man-child in the billows of Death... **Every womb suffers pain and terrible anguish at the time of child-bearing...** (208)

3. And in the bonds of Hell, there shall spring from the crucible of the Pregnant one a **Marvelous Counsellor** with his might and he shall deliver every man from the billows. (208) **For Thou [God] didst deliver me** from the congregation of vanity and from the assembly of violence and didst cause me to enter the council of holiness... For Thou has made the light shine out of the darkness... and Thou wilt succor me unto **eternal deliverance.** (218, 232-233)

God's fire consumes the "briers and thorns" of a diseased soul. In this psychologically painful yet spiritually maturing process, God cleanses man's heart and prepares it for the "vision" of the "light of life." Anguish thus turns into joy because fire gives off Light. The Teacher of Righteousness understood these facts and symbolically represented them with the following words:

And in the bonds of Hell, there shall spring from the crucible of the Pregnant one a Marvelous Counsellor with his might and he shall deliver every man from the billows [of darkness and spiritual death].

In this passage, the Essene Teacher tells us that a "Marvelous Counsellor," or the Holy Spirit of God, springs out of the hell-like "crucible" of fire-baptism in much the same way as a child comes forth from the womb of a "pregnant" woman. In a brilliant use of poetic symbolism, he thus links the fiery baptismal process in which the Holy Spirit, or "Marvelous Counsellor," of God is born in man to a painful labor of love. In particular, he explains that while a woman is in labor, she becomes confused and suffers the excruciating pain of childbirth. "And I was confused," he continues, "like the Woman about to bring forth at the time of her first child-bearing." Needless to say, "every woman," as he continues to point out, "suffers pain and terrible anguish at the time of child-bearing." But this pain, as we all know, is but a harbinger of joy because the mother's ecstatic moment of delivery is at hand.

As it is with child bearing, so it is with the spiritual birth of Light in man. "The racking birth-pains [of fire-baptism]," explains the Essene Teacher, "come upon all that bear in the womb the seeds of the new life." When reading this sentence, we must understand that "the womb" here mentioned is the heart of man, and the "birth-pains" within this heart/womb are those painful experiences of fire-baptism that prepare man for the birth of Light. The Teacher of Righteousness, therefore, is not attempting to center our attention on the birth of human babies. Rather, a woman's womb, according to him, is a symbol that points to the birthplace of the Father's Light, the Holy Spirit, or the "Marvelous Counsellor" in man's heart.

Man's "secret" heart thus contains, as the Essene Teacher says, "the seeds" of a "new life" in Light-consciousness. But God's fire must first consume the weeds, or "wicked deeds," surrounding those



holy "seeds" in a fire-baptism. Then the "new life" of Light will be born in the consciousness of man as the "seeds" of Light grow and ultimately bloom in wondrous beauty.

Before examining any more of these symbols of birth and Light, let us momentarily consider what some of the authors in *The Nag Hammadi Library* had to say on this subject. In *The Discourse on the Eighth and Ninth*, we discover, for example, some illuminating passages that are pregnant with symbolic meaning. Its author describes various levels of spiritual attainment. The final stage characterizes the initiate as having a "vision" of the "perfect, the invisible God to whom one speaks in silence." In this vision, man experiences God, or "the Father...whose Word comes as a birth of light."<sup>26</sup> Symbolically speaking, the experience of Light-consciousness, or the experience of hearing "the Word" of God, is like the birth of eternal Light in man. In the birth process, the Father delivers His radiant offspring -- i.e., the Light -- to man out of the fertile womb of human consciousness. With ecstatic joy and love, a son of Light is thus born!

In *The Testimony of Truth*, the author expands the symbolism of spiritual conception and birth. He tells us, for instance, that when men come to "know themselves" and the "life-giving Word" of God, each of their individual spirits will be "begotten from a virginal state or conceived by the Word."<sup>27</sup> The conception of God's Word in man, and the subsequent delivery of His Light to the human heart, must be virginal! How else can we come to know ourselves and the Spirit of God within each of us? Understandably, therefore, such a visionary experience has nothing to do with a man's sperm or a woman's egg. Rather, the Father *spiritually* conceives His Word in the womb of human consciousness. This consciousness, like a virgin's womb, then becomes pregnant with pure Light. At the proper time, the Father delivers His Light to man's entire spiritual being. We call this holy and radiant delivery to man's "secret" heart the birth of Light-consciousness. In this sense of the word, being born into Light-consciousness is like an experience in which the spirit/heart of man is "born again." This "born again" human consciousness is "filled with wisdom," and mankind is, according to the author of *The Testimony of Truth* "saved... [because] we have been born again by the Word"<sup>28</sup> of God.

What we are discussing here is a rather different kind of conception and delivery process than that which occurs in a woman's

womb. As the Teacher of Righteousness writes, it is a birth process in which God "didst deliver me from the congregation of vanity and from the assembly of violence and didst cause me to enter the council of holiness." As you can see, when the eternal Father is in the delivery room of man's secret heart, He delivers man's spirit from "vanity," "violence," hate, anger, etc., and brings him instead into His own "council of holiness." This special council convenes its meetings only "in the everlasting place," as the Essene Teacher writes, "where shines the eternal light of the dawn without any darkness." And, as we know, this "everlasting place" is in the glowing heart of man.

All these preceding symbolic truths imply the following: God delivers His "eternal light" only out of the pure and virginal womb of human consciousness. For only there, in the depths and heights of human perception and vision, can God deliver man into the radiant "place" of Light-consciousness. As such, Light-consciousness is an experience of "eternal deliverance" in which God "converts him that is born of woman and causes him to enter the [everlasting] Covenant with Thee." In short, it is an experience in which we enter "the new life," and God makes "the light shine out of darkness."

Jesus, as a son of Light, also speaks about the need of entering a new life. In particular, He talks of being born anew:

Blessed are those who have heard the Word of the Father and have truly kept it. For there will be days when you will say, "Blessed are the womb which has not conceived and the breasts which have not given milk..." Unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God... Unless one is born anew, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

We should never consider the "womb which has not conceived" to be a woman's bodily womb. For this "womb" has nothing to do with human conception and human reproduction. It does, however, have a lot to do with birth of God's Spirit/Light in man.

When considering this spiritual birth process, Jesus tells us that all men are first "born of water." Needless to say, every human being enters the physical world via the watery womb of his/her own pregnant mother. However, if we are to "enter" into that "place" of Light in which Jesus lives and in which, as He says, "the righteous

will shine like the sun in the kingdom of the Father," then our human hearts must have a second birth, be "born anew," and thus be "born of the Spirit."<sup>29</sup> Such a miraculous birth of both "water and the Spirit" occurs only when the Father's Light is born in the spiritually "blessed" womb of human consciousness.

Jesus tells us more about this *spiritual* birth process when He symbolically connects it to "a woman in travail":

When a woman is in travail she has sorrow, because her hour has come; but when she is delivered of the child, she no longer remembers the anguish, for joy that a child is born into the world...

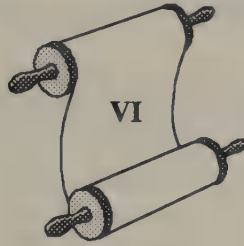
Man's "second birth" into Light-consciousness is much like a "woman in travail." Even though there is extreme "anguish" in the spiritual labor and "travail" of the delivery process, once the Light/Spirit "is delivered" to man by his eternal Father, he/she no longer "remembers the anguish." Indeed, we forget the distress of our second birth because joy is begotten from anguish in the same manner as Light springs forth from fire or as a child is born from a woman.

And so, as in the human conception and delivery of a newborn child, so too does the virginal "womb" within man's heart, or "the womb which has not conceived," give birth to what Jesus calls a holy "Counselor to be with us forever." This Counselor, like the Essene Teacher's "Marvelous Counsellor," is born in a man/woman at the time of his/her "second [i.e., Spiritual] birth." In short, It comes to all those "sons of Light" who have "become known" by their eternal Father, and who have thus been "born of the Spirit."

Jesus' primary mission was to "proclaim" God's "deliverance" and man's second birth. "God has sent me," He insists, "to proclaim deliverance to the captives." Truly, we are all "captives" of darkness until we are "born anew" -- as sons of Light -- into God's radiant and eternal "kingdom" of Light-consciousness. At that particularly bright time of human consciousness, God, as the Teacher of Righteousness says, "wilt succor" us "unto eternal deliverance."

## REFERENCES (Chapter V)

1. Psalmic references containing fire and "blazing oven" symbolism: 50:2-3, 21:8-9.
2. Kurt F. Reinhardt, *The Dark Night of the Soul*, pp. 196, 198, 192, 199, & 204.
3. Isaiah 9:18-19.
4. Isaiah 10:17-18.
5. Isaiah 43:1-3.
6. Isaiah 60:1&5, 19-21.
7. Job 33:15, 20:23-26, 33:29-30.
8. John 8:12.
9. *NHL*, pp. 132, 127, 135, 133.
10. *NHL*, p. 51.
11. Dante Alighieri, *The Divine Comedy* (New York: The Modern Library, 1932), p. 243.
12. Dante Alighieri, p. 352. James Collins, p. 105.
13. James Collins, p. 91. Dante Alighieri, pp. 588 & 586.
14. Dante Alighieri, p. 515.
15. Dante Alighieri, p. 551.
16. Dante Alighieri, pp. 394 & 360.
17. Dante Alighieri, p. 280.
18. Psalms 56:13.
19. Psalms 12:6.
20. Psalmic references containing net, fire, and water symbolism: 66:10-12, 104:1-4, 29:3 & 7, 107:19-20.
21. See chapter I: page 1, for the full quotation from which the following excerpts have been taken.
22. Psalmic references containing tree and fruit symbolism: 1:3, 92:12-15.
23. NOTE: Like Jesus, the Psalmist speaks of "a woman in travail" (Psalms 48:6). In this section, however, we will limit our comparison to only Jesus and the Teacher of Righteousness.
24. *NHL*, p. 135.
25. Theodor H. Gaster, p. 136.
26. *NHL*, p. 324.
27. *NHL*, pp. 451-452.
28. *NHL*, pp. 452-454.
29. John 3:8.



## THE CROSS OF LIGHT

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AND THE MOST HIGH GOD FOR ALL ETERNITY SHALL SHINE DOWN AS A LIGHT UPON YOU AND MAKE KNOWN TO YOU HIS GREAT NAME... THE LORD WILL VISIT THE PIOUS...HE SHALL RELEASE THE PRISONERS, MAKE THE BLIND SEE, AND RAISE UP THOSE BENT IN THE DUST...HE SHALL HEAL THE WOUNDED AND RESURRECT THE DEAD...<sup>1</sup>

### *The Dead Sea Scrolls*

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If you asked ten people from around the world whether Jesus' words are in any historical gospel other than Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, most of them would probably answer: No. Until the discovery of *The Nag Hammadi Library*, that answer was essentially correct. Now, however, we know there were more Christian gospels written in the very beginnings of the religion than we originally thought.

What a shock to the Christian world! Our ideas about how Christianity came into being are no longer true. Indeed, we have painted, writes Elaine Pagels, a historically inaccurate picture of the early Christian Church:

Christians of every persuasion look back to the primitive church to find a simpler, purer form of Christian faith. In the apostles' time, all members of

the Christian community shared their money and property; all believed the same teaching and worshipped together; all revered the authority of the apostles...But the discoveries at Nag Hammadi have upset this picture. If we admit that some of these fifty-two texts represent early forms of Christian teaching, we may have to recognize that early Christianity is far more diverse than nearly anyone expected before the Nag Hammadi discoveries... Numerous gospels circulated among various Christian groups, ranging from those of the New Testament, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, to such writings as the *Gospel of Thomas*, the *Gospel of Philip*, and the *Gospel of Truth*, as well as many other secret teachings, myths, and poems attributed to Jesus or his disciples...Those who identified themselves as Christians entertained many -- and radically differing -- religious beliefs and practices.<sup>2</sup>

It should not come as any big surprise that contradictory interpretations of Jesus' original words and deeds did exist in the early Christian communities. In any society, men's individual perceptions of truth greatly determine how they communicate among themselves. Individual educational experiences, personal maturity levels, prior cultural conditioning patterns, insight, specific mental and emotional conditioning processes, religious indoctrination, and many other factors, all determine how we human beings perceive what truth is. Truth, therefore, whether it was originally spoken by Jesus, or given to man by some other means, is not a static reality "out there." Instead, what we call religious or theological truth is always subject to human interpretation, to human values, and to human insight.

The religious truths discussed within the early Christian community were no exception to this rule. Just like our modern world of multi-sectarian Christianity, early Christian communities also differed in their theological interpretations of the original meaning of Jesus' words. And as you might expect, these various and often contradictory interpretations of His words led to philosophical disputes and to the formation of theologically-distinct sects among the early Christians. For you see, like all self-determining human beings, the early

Christians did not always agree about what they were to preach and how they were to celebrate their own individual religious perceptions of truth. They thus lived their individual lives in an environment in which there was essentially no uniformity in beliefs and/or institutions.

Since the recent discovery of *The Nag Hammadi Library*, we are just beginning to understand how dissimilar these interpretations really were among the early Christian communities. The *Gospel of Thomas*, for example, as well as the *Gospel of Philip*, the *Gospel of Truth*, and *The Apocalypse of Peter*, have given modern man a totally new perspective of the religious situation during the life and death of Jesus. Such a new Christian viewpoint offers us an exciting chance to build an even more genuine understanding of Jesus, His Spirit, and His words of wisdom.

When considering how twentieth century men should interpret the various canonical and non-canonical Christian gospels now available, Macquarrie and Weiss offer some good advice:

Every narrative [about Jesus] that has been preserved, every saying that has survived, is evidence of one particular interest of the group whose need it satisfied. In far greater measure must we learn to read the gospels not only for what they tell us about Jesus, but also for what we can learn from them about the life and faith of the earliest Christians. Thus our documents do not show us Jesus himself, but the image of Jesus as colored by the ideas and interests of those who had come to believe in him.<sup>3</sup>

The Nag Hammadi codices confirm that in the early years of Christianity, religious devotees did indeed "color" their "image" of Jesus in various ways. For the sake of simplicity, we can say there were basically two theological colorations, or camps of interpretation, in the beginning stages of Christianity. In the one camp were those individuals who interpreted the words, deeds, and life of Jesus, as symbolic representations of an underlying religious experience. They insisted that the message of Jesus was the message of personal transformation, spiritual illumination, and Light-consciousness. The center of their attention, therefore, was on the spiritual maturation of man's living consciousness. In short, their ultimate concern was the

living human spirit and its relation to the eternal Spirit that is within all life.

In the other camp were those people who interpreted the words and the life of Jesus from within a literal-minded framework called orthodox Christian eschatology. Briefly defined, eschatology is the proclamation and study of final matters such as death and/or the afterlife. To understand this theological terminology, we must realize there were some first, second, and third century Christians who participated actively in an organized church life. Within this organization, the members developed a unique eschatological interpretation of the words, the life, and particularly, the passion and death of Jesus.

According to their interpretation and expectations, Jesus had to be the anticipated Old Testament Redeemer of mankind. But more notably for them, Jesus' literal passion and His literal death on the cross became the principal manifestation of this anticipated act of universal redemption. Concerning this redemptive power of "passion," Bishop Irenaeus explains that his Lord's sacrificial blood had to flow before human salvation could ever occur. Writes Irenaeus:

Our Lord suffered that He might lead those who had strayed from the Father back to Him and the knowledge of Him... For if He did not suffer, there is no thanks to Him, since there was no Passion... Therefore, by His own blood the Lord redeemed.<sup>4</sup>

As Irenaeus explains, there would be "no thanks to Him" if Jesus had not "suffered" with a sacrifice of "His own blood." For only through the sacrifice of His blood, that is, by His "passion," does Jesus truly "redeem" mankind from sin and death.

From an orthodox eschatological point of view, all the events of Jesus' life thus lead to His historical crucifixion and resurrection. Furthermore, only those who "believe" in this historical "blood sacrifice" of literal passion, death, and resurrection on a cross will come to know human salvation. Or as Irenaeus concludes:

And *our Lord by His passion conferred on those who believe in him* "the power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy," that is, the prince of apostasy. *And our Lord by His passion abolished death, did away with error, put an*



end to corruption, and destroyed ignorance...<sup>5</sup>

Irenaeus suggests that only those who "believe" in Jesus' literal "passion" will find the "power" to "tread" on "the enemy" of "ignorance," "error," and/or human sin. Likewise, only the "believers" who "tread" in this fashion will, in the next life, "abolish death," "put an end to corruption," and thus walk through the spiritual door that leads to God's heavenly Kingdom.

We should understand, however, that man cannot walk through this heavenly door while he is alive here on earth. Human salvation is not something that occurs within the consciousness of earth-bound man. Rather, human salvation is an eschatological event or a phenomenon that happens only at the time of man's death and his subsequent resurrection to the afterlife.

Whether you realize it or not, twentieth century orthodox Christianity is still preaching first century, witness-based eschatology! To illustrate this point, we again turn to what Irenaeus had to say on the subject. His famous five volume collection, *Adversus Haereses* ("Against Heresies"), "develops," as Kurt Rudolf explains, "a Christian doctrine... which became the starting point for the subsequent orthodox [Christian] theology in general."<sup>6</sup> Writes Irenaeus:

The Church [i.e., eschatologically based orthodox Christianity], although scattered over the whole world even to its extremities, received from the Apostles, and their disciples the faith in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, the seas and all that is in them, and in one Christ Jesus, Son of God, who became incarnate for our salvation, and in the Holy Ghost, who by the prophets proclaimed the dispensations, the advents, the virgin birth, the passion and resurrection from the dead, the bodily ascension of the well-beloved Christ Jesus our Lord in heaven...everything in heaven and in earth and under the earth should bow the knee to Christ Jesus our Lord, and God, our Savior and our King, according to the will of the invisible Father, and that every tongue should confess to Him...<sup>7</sup>

Does this statement of faith sound familiar? It certainly should

because the Church Fathers of the Nicene Council (325 A.D.) used it as a foundation upon which they constructed the well-known Nicene Creed of orthodox Christianity.

But now let us consider a more detailed analysis of Irenaeus' original statement of faith. He writes: "Every tongue should confess to Him." With this statement, Irenaeus implies that we should confess, as he further explains, to "the passion and resurrection from the dead, the bodily ascension of the well-beloved Christ Jesus our Lord in heaven...who became incarnate for our salvation." These words are the heart and soul of not only first century eschatological Christianity, but also twentieth century orthodox Christianity. And they affirm that those who are interested in receiving eternal salvation in the next life must still "witness to," or "confess to," the central creed of "the passion and resurrection" of Him "who became incarnate for our salvation."

We conclude that first as well as twentieth century Christian eschatologists believe that witnessing to a past historical event is *the* cardinal requirement for human salvation. In short, the leaders of the orthodox Church have always required that Christians confess their "belief in" the spiritual power of the historical Cross. And they have done so because they assume that this single act of belief-witness, in and of itself, is the key that unlocks the door to human salvation in the next life.

The orthodox Christian world has thus become a society of either "believers" or "non-believers." This twentieth century theological structure of thought is based, of course, on the early Church Fathers' statements concerning the segregation of those who can expect salvation in the future life and those who cannot. Bishop Irenaeus, for example, writes:

There must be a judgment for the **salvation of believers**, and for the **condemnation of those who believe not**... The advent of the Son is, therefore, judicial, and discriminates between the **believers** and the **non-believers**... The death of their Lord to those who crucified Him, and did not **believe** in His coming is damnation, but is the salvation of those who **believe** on him... They are clearly acting against their own salvation who do not **believe** in the...God who through Jesus Christ leads Abraham into the

kingdom of heaven...<sup>8</sup>

What we have here is a "judicial" God, or a "discriminating" deity, who demands "belief" in the power of His one historical Son: Jesus Christ. Moreover, this God, according to Irenaeus, rewards "the salvation of believers" by guaranteeing them the eschatological "kingdom of heaven." On the other hand, His "condemnation" radically denies this kingdom to "those who believe not." Hence, any "non-believer" who listens to the beat of another drummer is "clearly acting against his own salvation."

As you might expect, we can discover statements concerning not only the necessity of witnessing via belief in the passion, death and resurrection of Jesus on the cross, but also God's final judgment of that belief, in various forms of twentieth century eschatological Christianity. Take, for example, the Apostles' Creed:

I **believe** in God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth: And in Jesus Christ His only Son, our Lord...who was crucified, dead, and buried; He ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God, the Father Almighty; from thence **He shall come to judge** the quick and the dead.<sup>9</sup>

Or consider one modern Roman Catholic prayer which reads as follows:

I **believe** in one God, I **believe** that God rewards the good and punishes the wicked... I **believe** that He [Jesus Christ] is my Lord and my Savior, the Redeemer of the human race, that **He died on the Cross for the salvation of all men**...I sincerely hope to be saved. Help me to do all that is necessary for my salvation.<sup>10</sup>

Obviously, the future of the orthodox Christian soul depends primarily on this abbreviated formula: belief, judgment, and salvation. On the other side of the coin, there is, of course, unbelief, judgment, and punishment! In either case, the act of believing, or the lack thereof, is the pivotal point which determines man's salvation in the next world.

For the orthodox Christian, salvation thus consists of recognizing the spiritual power of only one special event that happened outside of man's contemporary consciousness in a separate space and time. In such a system of salvation, faith is essentially belief in the extraordinary power of that past historical event. However, we should not confuse this type of faith with any immediate contact of man's consciousness with this Spirituality. Such a contact is impossible, according to the eschatologists, because the Son of God now lives with His Father in a separate place called "heaven." And unfortunately, the location of this paradise is far away from normal earthly existence.

With such a system of thought, eschatological Christians have created an insuperable gap between man on earth and God in heaven. In so doing, they implicitly deny any direct experience of the heavenly Father here on earth. They also reject any vision of the "uncreated Light" through which we see the Eternal now. How can there be any vision of God here on earth? God is in another world separate from man. Hence, we believe in this heaven-abiding deity, but we do not directly experience Him here on earth. Faith, therefore, is a system of beliefs, a collection of true propositions, a group of specific dogmas and/or special sacraments, all of which "witness" to the Son of God who died and was resurrected to heaven almost two thousand years ago. Without a doubt, such a collection of eschatological beliefs guarantees our individual salvation and contact with God in the next life. But in this life, the Father remains forever aloof!

But guess what: back in the first century, the eschatologists were not the only Christian show in town! Oh yes, I know that for almost two thousand years, the orthodox Church has made us all "believe" there was only one performance. But the days of manipulated belief, of believing in what "you know ain't necessarily so," are gone! We now know there was another movie playing at that particular historical time frame. And interestingly enough, it presented an entirely different picture of the words, deeds, and actions of Jesus Christ. Sadly, certain repressions of intellectual freedom forced the burial of this film (papyrus) for over sixteen hundred years. Fear not, however, it was buried but not destroyed! Recently, we found one of the last remaining copies on earth and are going to start showing this new movie right now. Its name is *The Nag Hammadi Library*. So let us begin: Lights, Camera, Action!

Speaking of Light, illumination is precisely what this new movie

is all about! In fact, the main actors called themselves "the sons of Light." Others throughout history have labeled them with many different names: "heretics," "gnostics," "gnostic Christians," or "beasts of the forest," to mention just a few. We should not use these terms to pigeonhole the "sons of Light" into rigidly defined categories. For the various pejorative connotations associated with these classifications too often confuse rather than illuminate the interested public. But most important of all, the sons of Light living in the first, second, and third centuries never used these types of labels to describe themselves. According to their own Christian vision of truth, they were merely presenting an alternative interpretation of Jesus' original words.

Their theological opponents, of course, had a very different view on this matter. Bishop Irenaeus, for instance, thought that these first and second century "heretics" were the theological enemy, or a "beast" to be "destroyed." Unfortunately, however, when comparing them to "beasts," the orthodox Bishop was guilty of *ad hominem* polemics. Such tactics become evident when one man attacks the personal character of his opponent instead of the intellectual point at hand. We can discover this type of reckless and verbal rape of other men's honor and integrity in several passages of Irenaeus' *Adversus Haereses*:

Since, then, we find among them fraud, seduction and magical appearance for the delusions of men...Truly this shows that they are far remote from the divine substance (they claim)...but are wholly replete with every sort of fraud, rebellious and false inspiration, demoniacal operation and idolatrous apparition.<sup>11</sup>

If you listen to Irenaeus, you might begin to think that his theological opponents were early cousins to Charles Manson or Adolf Hitler. As witnessed by the previous quotation, he presented these early first and second century Christians -- at best -- as complete moral and spiritual "frauds." They "seduced" people with delusions of "idolatry" and all sorts of "false inspiration" and "demoniacal operations." "Indeed," as he continues, "they [the 'heretics'] have been sent forward by Satan to bring a slur upon the divine nature of the Church."<sup>12</sup> Clearly, Irenaeus believed that when you do not like the message, you

condemn the messenger. However, these unfortunate *ad hominem* tactics of character assassination did nothing but distort the truth.

Until the recent discovery at Nag Hammadi, Egypt, the only picture we had of the so-called "heretics" was from their orthodox adversaries, namely, the early Church Fathers. To say the least, this portrait, as witnessed by our previous discussion of Bishop Irenaeus, was more than a little discolored because those responsible for painting it too often used human prejudice as their background color scheme. In fact, as Kurt Rudolf has suggested, the early Church Fathers continually presented a "distorted reflection" of the truth by refuting any "heretical" statements of faith which they thought were "detrimental to the building up of a strongly organized church, relatively uniform in its leadership."<sup>13</sup> In this way, they sought to eliminate all ideas, values, and personal faiths which argued against their rigid structure of ecclesiastical theology, hierarchy, and control.

Many twentieth century religious scholars no longer accept the Church Fathers' rather one-sided portrayal of history and the "heretics." In particular, these scholars now maintain that what the early Church Fathers branded as heresy was not necessarily a digression from the earliest form of Christianity.<sup>14</sup> In fact, the heretics, or those Christians who maintained a son of Light's point of view, were probably representative of the majority of Christians during the first few centuries. Writes Walter Bauer:

Perhaps -- I repeat, perhaps -- certain manifestations of Christian life that the authors of the church renounce as "heresies" originally had not been such at all, but, at least here and there, were the only form of the new religion -- that is, for those regions they were simply "Christianity." The possibility also exists that their adherents constituted the majority, and that they looked down...on the orthodox who for them were the false believers.<sup>15</sup>

Most members of the academic religious community recognize Bauer's reconstruction of the first two Christian centuries as an excellent historical analysis. In his analysis, Bauer suggests that the orthodox Church Fathers' characterization of themselves as the majority view in early Christianity is totally inaccurate. For as the historical records indicate, they were the ones who stood isolated and

subordinate in the early years of Christianity, and the so-called "heretics" were the majority representatives of the Christian religion. Hence, although the early Church leaders attempted to bias our perspective of religious history, they succeeded in proving that they were only a vocal minority in Rome, Corinth, Antioch, etc.

If the preceding picture of Christian history is true, then the question arises as to when and why the orthodox Church's theological position came into power. We can answer this question concerning the changing of the Christian theological guard by studying the events surrounding one military battle in the year 312 A.D. In that year, the Roman Empire's iron-fist dictator: Constantine, who ordered the death of his father-in-law, three brothers-in-law, his eldest son and his wife, and countless numbers of other human beings, won a very important military battle of the Milvian Bridge. He was persuaded by some unknown source that the victory in battle was caused by the Christian God. Impressed by the military power of this Christian deity, he quickly converted to Orthodox Christianity.

Let us concede then that Constantine's religious conversion, as Henry Chadwick has pointed out, "should not be interpreted as an inward experience of grace...Rather, it was a military matter."<sup>16</sup> Many historians have noted that the effects of this military conversion to Christianity were no small matter. Henry Chadwick, for example, tells us that "the conversion of Constantine marks a turning-point in the history of the [orthodox] Church and of Europe."<sup>17</sup> The words: "turning point," might be a slight understatement when one considers what happened after Constantine's conversion. Almost overnight, the orthodox Catholic Christian Church, along with all its particular dogmatic interpretations of Jesus' words, became the official religion of the entire Roman Empire. Moreover, with this official State stamp of approval, the Church enjoyed many new benefits, most of which were connected to money and power.

Constantine's financial benefactions to the Church were on a very large scale. With the State's money, he financed the building of numerous new churches throughout the Empire. At Rome, for example, the places of worship included the basilica of the Vatican where the adjoining palace, later the residence of the Pope, seems to have been at the Pope's disposal as early as 314. He also assigned a fixed proportion of provincial revenues to the Church's charity, granted the Church an immediate tax exempt status, and legalized the Church's right to succeed property. In short, Constantine turned on

the gold spigot and money began flowing into the coffers of the orthodox Catholic Church.

The leaders of the orthodox Church also got "turned on" to the power of Constantine's iron-fist rule of society. As some historians have reported, his dictatorial values of control and manipulation of the entire Roman State seemed to filter down into the Church Fathers' attitudes towards anyone who disagreed with their orthodox religious values and their theological interpretations of Jesus' words. Writes Elaine Pagels:

The Nag Hammadi texts, and others like them, which circulated at the beginning of the Christian era, were denounced as heresy by orthodox Christians... This campaign against heresy involved an involuntary admission of its persuasive power, yet the bishops prevailed. By the time of the Emperor Constantine's conversion, when [orthodox] Christianity became an officially approved religion in the fourth century, Christian bishops, previously victimized by police, now commanded them. Possession of books denounced as heretical were made a criminal offense. Copies of such books were burned and destroyed.<sup>18</sup>

As a result of Constantine's "military conversion" to Christianity, the orthodox bishops now "commanded" the entire police state of the Roman empire. With this military power at hand, any religious interpretation that they thought was true became the immediate law of the land. And all those individuals who possessed books or gospels deemed "heretical" were denounced and accused of criminal offenses, and their books were immediately burned. Freedom of thought and expression was thus annihilated in the flames of the Church's iron-fist "campaign against heresy."

As Pagels has suggested, the Church's long-lived "campaign against heresy" was influential in forcing the burial of the Nag Hammadi collection of Christian and non-Christian gospels.<sup>19</sup> And sadly enough, this fourth century ecclesiastical suppression of "the other side of the story" was a huge success! While lasting over sixteen hundred years, it almost destroyed the views of those first, second, and third century Christians who did not think of themselves



as "heretics," and who were, in fact, the majority representatives of the Christian religion.

Fortunately for the modern world, the orthodox Church's attempt to mute the chorus of "heretics" was not entirely successful. Thanks to the 1945 Nag Hammadi discovery, we now can hear what songs the so-called "heretics" were singing for themselves. For the first time in many a moon, we moderns can decipher -- in an atmosphere of objectivity and freedom -- whether these early Light-Christians had anything to offer except "fraud," "false inspiration," and "demoniacal operations." And so, in the unbiased light of freedom, let us now turn our attention to those early Christians who offered, as Pagels writes, "traditions about Jesus that are secret, [and] hidden from 'the many' who constitute what, in the second century, came to be called the 'catholic church.'"<sup>20</sup>

In contrast to the orthodox eschatologists, the Nag Hammadi sons of Light sang out a very different interpretation of Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection. To understand this interpretation, we must first perceive, as the *Acts of John* has stated, "that the Lord had performed everything as a symbol and a dispensation for the conversion and salvation of man."<sup>21</sup> If this is true, then, as the sons of Light insist, we should never interpret Jesus' words concerning death and resurrection literally. On the contrary, we should see them as "symbols" that point to "a dispensation" or a divine ordering of the affairs of *this* world.

Having accepted the previous notion, the Nag Hammadi sons of Light say that the word: "resurrection" does not refer to a literal event that occurred at the time of one man's physical death two thousand years ago. Instead, the word: "resurrection" symbolically represents an inner experience which must happen within the consciousness of every man in *this* world. The author of the *Gospel of Philip* clarifies this point:

Those who say they will die first, and then rise are in error. If they do not first receive the resurrection while they live, when they die they will receive nothing...While we are in this world, it is fitting for us to acquire the resurrection.<sup>22</sup>

The men who say that we must "die first, and then rise" are, of course, the orthodox Christian eschatologists. They "are in error"

because they fail to understand that man must "acquire" the "resurrection" within his own spirit while he is "in *this* world." The word: "resurrection" does not, therefore, describe a literal event of the past or the future. Rather, it symbolizes a spiritual experience that we can all have in the present.

If the resurrection is an experience that must happen "while we live," then the "Kingdom of Heaven" is, in truth, a hidden yet attainable "Sanctuary" here on earth. Says Jesus:

His disciples asked Jesus: "When will begin the repose of the dead?"...He answered: "The Sanctuary you expect is **here**, although you cannot recognize it..." His disciples said to him: "When will the kingdom come?" Jesus said: "It will never come by waiting for it. It will not be a matter of saying 'here it is' or 'there it is.' Rather, the kingdom of the father is spread out upon the earth, and men do not see it."<sup>23</sup>

Many people, as Jesus declares, do not "recognize" that "the Sanctuary" which they "wait" for in the future "is here" in the living world of today. Moreover, this "Sanctuary," or "kingdom of the father," will "never come," as He warns, if we "wait for it" to appear in some other world other than this one. Hence, we should neither search for God's Kingdom in the dead world of yesterday nor in some imagined world of tomorrow. Instead, we should seek the Kingdom that is "spread out upon the earth." For God's Kingdom ("the kingdom of light") is, in truth, a matter of vision -- i.e., we must "see it" -- as we live in and relate to the world around us.

"And God called to him [Moses] out of the bush. And God said: Moses, Moses, **here am I!**"<sup>24</sup> The words of the Lord tell us that "here" in the bush of the present life, or "here" in the "Sanctuary/Kingdom...spread out upon the earth," or "here" in the "Light" of a truly alive human consciousness, is where man discovers his living God. If this is true, then whoever explores human consciousness has the potential of discovering divine Reality everywhere. Man can symbolize this consciousness of Spirit as seeing a "burning bush," as climbing a "high mountain," or even as being cleansed in a flowing stream of "living water." But all of these symbolic representations point to a single fact: God's "Sanctuary" is not in another world

separate from man. Instead, His "Sanctuary," or the "kingdom of the father," or the "kingdom of light," is "here," as Jesus insists, in the living and unlimited reservoirs of man's heart.

When considering man in relation to God, we conclude that God is the spiritual Foundation of not only man but also of the entire physical cosmos. He is in everything as the Ground of being, and everything is in Him. If man is to know God, he must learn to penetrate the Spirituality of all creation, including the spiritual heart and soul of himself. If he does, then he will learn to embrace the living Mystery. Having accepted these principles, the sons of Light sought not to worship one historical divine being who lived and died in the past. Rather, they looked within themselves and to their present world for the Ground of all being, or the Living One, who can never die. "And Jesus said," according to the *Gospel of Thomas*, "'Take heed of the living one [i.e., the living father] while you are alive, lest you die and seek to see him and be unable to do so.'"<sup>25</sup>

Continuing with our discussion on the subject of resurrection, the author of *The Testimony of Truth* suggests that there is a difference between intellectually "believing" in what he calls the "carnal resurrection," and experiencing "Christ spiritually":

Do not expect, therefore, the carnal resurrection, which is destruction... They [members of the orthodox community] do not know the power of God, nor do they understand the interpretation of the scriptures... They do not understand Christ spiritually when they say "we believe in Christ."<sup>26</sup>

The Nag Hammadi sons of Light could not accept the eschatological interpretation that faith is a belief in a literal, "carnal," or physical resurrection of a historical divine being. In particular, these men of Light could neither assume the validity of what the orthodox Christians called: Jesus Christ's "rising in the flesh," nor confirm the assumption that if we "believe" in this historical event, "our bodies...will [also] rise in due time."<sup>27</sup>

They did assume, however, that faith is an uplifting spiritual experience in which the universal Spirit/Light of God rises in men's hearts. Paul Tillich helps us to understand the distinction between a faith of belief and a faith of experience with the following words:

There is no faith (but only belief) without the Spirit's grasping the personal center of him who is in the state of faith, and this is a mystical experience, an experience of the presence of the infinite in the finite... Every experience of the Divine is mystical because it transcends the cleavage between subject and object... This is the meaning of faith as the state of being grasped by that which concerns us ultimately and not as a set of beliefs, even if the object of belief is a divine being.<sup>28</sup>

Imagine, if you will, that faith is the act of believing in something or in some being. That intellectual act of faith implies that you are detached from the "object" in which you are believing. This is true even if the "object" is a divine being who lived many years ago. Tillich, as well as the Nag Hammadi sons of Light, cannot accept such a definition of faith because it presupposes there is an unbridgeable historical gap between man and God. It also assumes there is some sort of spiritual power associated with the rational act of believing in the Divinity of one man to the exclusion of all others.

There is, however, another definition of faith. In this meaning of the word, faith is neither an exercise of memory nor an intellectual leap back to a "once-upon-a-time" story of a deity dying thousands of years ago! Instead, faith is that human experience in which the heart of man discovers the spiritual "kingdom" that is "spread out upon the earth" and "within us" all. In less poetic terms, it is that human experience of being personally grasped by the living Spiritual Presence which is within the here and now of all life. Such a "mystical experience" implies a direct union of man's spirit with that living Spiritual Reality which transcends everything, and yet is within all objects and beings.

In truth, the center for each man's faith should not be the *Divine then* but rather the *Eternal now*. When experiencing the Eternal now, man comes to know the resurrection of the eternal and "Living One" in his living heart. Indeed, he begins to make love with the Divine Light in the here and now world of today! In such a loving experience, man is personally "grasped by that Spirit/Light which concerns us ultimately." He is also grasped by the resurrection of human consciousness, and the depth of his being is transformed into a state of faith or into the Eternal now of Light-consciousness.

The time has arrived for all of us to take off our old literal-thinking garments so we can be "clothed in the perfect Light" of true faith! In this radiant world of genuine faith, our hearts rise into a new dimension of spiritual consciousness. "Now it is fitting," writes the author of *The Exegesis of the Soul*, "that the soul regenerate herself." In particular, the living soul of man, he continues, must receive "the divine nature from the Father... This is the resurrection that is from the [spiritually] dead... This is the way of ascent to the Father."<sup>29</sup> As you can see, the true resurrection "to the Father" is an in-depth, spiritual, and living consciousness of what truly is in today's universe, and not what was in yesterday's world. In short, it is a transition into the radiant and living world of Light-consciousness!

In reference to Light and resurrection, the author of *The Treatise on the Resurrection* tells us more about the nature of symbolic language:

It ["the resurrection"] is the revelation of what is, and the transformation of things, and a transition into newness... the light flows down upon the darkness, swallowing it up... These are the symbols and the images of the resurrection... Why not consider yourself as risen and already brought to this?<sup>30</sup>

In many respects, all religious words concerning Light and resurrection are "symbols and images" of a "transition into newness." As symbols, they represent a death to an old state of consciousness and a rising into a new one. Indeed, the Light truly does rise within man. When it does, its transfiguring resplendence "swallows up" and thus destroys human darkness.

The *Gospel of Philip* uses one set of "symbols and images" to say that if man is to know the resurrection, he must put on the garments of Light while he lives: "Those who are clothed in the perfect light... will receive the resurrection while they live."<sup>31</sup> In addition to the *Gospel of Philip*, you can find a similar set of "symbols and images" when Jesus' spirit climbed the "high mountain" tops of Light-consciousness and "his garments became white as light." In this experience, God's eternal Light/Word comes, as Jesus insists, like a "flash of lightning" to a man's Spirit-inspired consciousness: "A true Word," He explains in *The Dialogue of the Savior*, "is coming forth from the Father in silence with a flash of lightning... You will clothe

yourselves in light... When you see the Eternal Existent, that is the great vision."<sup>32</sup> The key word in Jesus' statement is: "you." And if you read His statement correctly, you will understand that "you" too, like Him, must "clothe yourselves in light," and receive the visionary resurrection into the "high mountain" peaks of Light-consciousness.

To further clarify our theological discussion of resurrection, let us consider the basic difference between how orthodox Christians and the sons of Light relate to Christ. The former believe that Christ was a historical divine being who lived and then died on a wooden cross almost two thousand years ago. The latter, however, assert that the true essence of Christ has nothing to do with historical beings who live and die. The author of *The Apocryphon of John* helps us to understand this important distinction:

He [Christ] is immeasurable light which is pure, holy and immaculate.... He is not someone among other beings, rather He is superior. Not that he is simply superior, but his essence does not partake in the aeons nor in time... It is He [Christ] who puts his desire in his water-light which is the spring of the pure light-water which surrounds Him.<sup>33</sup>

When a man immerses his heart in the baptismal stream of "pure light-water," he experiences the "alighting" dove or Holy Spirit of God. This inner experience is like a heart-cleansing vision of God's "immeasurable light which is pure, holy, and immaculate." While understanding this symbolism, the sons of Light say that Christ is not a person or one divine being who lived and died thousands of years ago. Or as the author of *The Apocryphon of John* states, Christ is not "someone among other beings" who lived in a particular historical period. On the contrary, the word: "Christ" is a symbol that points to the saving and Messiah-like nature of God's "immeasurable light" in any son of Light.

Jesus also rejects the notion that the "I am," or the essential Light of His being, is a historical being who lives and dies. For example, He tells us there is an eternal dimension to the "I am" of His being. "Truly, truly," He insists, "I say to you, before Abraham was, I am... I am the light of the world."<sup>34</sup> Abraham was the first of the great postdiluvian patriarchs. He was also the father of Isaac and founder of the ancient Hebrew nation. Knowing this, Jesus says that the "I

am" of His being, which is the living and eternal Light of God within Him, "was" even "before Abraham."

And Jesus, of course, was correct! Genesis 1:1-4 states that "in the beginning," and before the "two great lights" (i.e., the sun and moon) were created (Genesis 1:16), God first created the spiritual Light of the world:

And God said: "Let there be light"; and there was light. And God saw that the light was good.

Obviously, if "the [spiritual] light" that God created was "in the beginning," then this bright Spiritual Presence in the world must be "before Abraham was." It follows, therefore, that the essential and living "I am" of Jesus, or the Light within any son of Light, must also be "before Abraham was" because this Light was the very same "good" Light that God created for all men on the first "day" and "in the beginning" of all time.

And so, the Christ/Light, as *The Apocryphon of John* states, is not something that "partakes in the aeons [space] nor in time." For the Christ/Light is not a historical being. Instead, the Light of our living Father is Christ, and the Christ is Light. Moreover, this Christ/Light proceeds from the spiritual Ground that is within all space and time and beings. Jesus, of course, was one unique historical being who died on a wooden cross centuries ago. But the Christ/Light, which was within Him, is that spiritual treasure which all human beings -- including those before and after Abraham -- can discover in a "vision." Writes Mary in the *Gospel of Mary*:

I saw the Lord in a vision, and I said to Him, "Lord, I saw you today in a vision." He answered and said to me... "For where the mind is, there is the treasure... For the Son of Man is within you."<sup>35</sup>

The spiritual "treasure," as Jesus calls it, is in "the [human] mind," or in the "vision," as Mary describes, of the eternal "Son of Man"/Christ/Light that is "within you." Hence, if spiritual treasure seekers are to know the "Son of Man," they must search for Him within their own consciousness. If they do, then they will "have a mind of the Father" within themselves and be united to the Christ/Light forever.<sup>36</sup> "You do His (that is, the Father's) will," Jesus

says in *The Apocryphon of James*, "I [Jesus] say that He [the Father] will love you, and make you equal with me."<sup>37</sup>

Here in summary, we should realize that God spiritually transforms those individuals who are "filled with radiant Light." "This person," writes Philip, "is no longer a Christian [in the "belief-oriented" orthodox eschatological sense] but a Christ."<sup>38</sup> Sounds bold, doesn't it? Such a conviction certainly goes way beyond the normal limits of conventional thought. But bold we must be! For Light-consciousness breaks through the prison walls of limited thinking that enslave those people who do not know the Spirit.

What a beautiful and inspiring idea: to be a Christ or a son of God! "There is no other way," exclaims the author of *The Gospel of Philip*, "for a person to acquire this quality except by putting on the perfect light [i.e., 'His (Jesus') garments became white as light'], and he too becoming perfect light."<sup>39</sup> If this is true, then our hearts must all "become" what we essentially are: namely, "perfect light." "This quality," as Philip calls it, is a dimension of "vision" available to all mankind. It is the vision of the eternal Christ/Light within man. The only way to "acquire" this vision is to put on the same radiant "garments" that Jesus wore when His heart rose to mountain-top peaks of Light-consciousness.

Those men and women who do put on the garments that are "white as light" discover the universal nature of Christ/Light-consciousness -- i.e., "the Father will love you, and make you equal with me." They also learn to avoid what Macquarrie and Niebuhr have termed the "exclusive pride" of orthodox Christianity:

Finally, we should notice that although Niebuhr writes as a Christian theologian, he does not make an exclusive claim for the Christian revelation. We must, he tells us, guard against the assumption that only those who know [Jesus] Christ in the actual historical revelation are enabled to enter into the new life of grace which Christianity offers. A hidden Christ operates in history. And there is always the possibility that those who do not know the historical revelation may achieve a more genuine repentance and humility than those who do. If this is not kept in mind, the Christian faith easily becomes a new vehicle of pride.<sup>40</sup>



Human beings cannot leap back in time and space to a historical event of once upon a time ago. Nevertheless, we can leap directly into the living stream of Light within our own heart. In the light of this awareness, Macquarrie and Niebuhr suggest that revelation of "the hidden Christ," or the universal Light/Logos, is not dependent on the historical Jesus. Rather, the "living water" of the "hidden Christ" eternally flows throughout all human history, before and after the year 30 A.D. And it even flowed "before Abraham was." The Christ/Light, therefore, has potentially redeeming characteristics for not only those who know about the historical Jesus of Nazareth, but also for those who do not.

Since God's kingdom of Light is not private property, no single individual can possess it to the exclusion of all others. Neither can any one sect, denomination, or for that matter, religion in the world, claim the Light as their own. If men of little vision claim exclusive ownership of God's Light, Jesus, who speaks to Peter, in the *Apocalypse of Peter*, describes their fate:

Some who do not understand the mystery [of Light-consciousness] speak of things which they do not understand, but they will boast that the mystery of the truth is theirs alone. And in haughtiness **they shall grasp at pride...**<sup>41</sup>

The narrow and literal-minded sectarian believers, who "boast that the mystery of the truth is theirs alone," imprison the Light within the high and impenetrable walls of their own "haughtiness," false "pride," and closed minds which "do not understand" the mystery of the "hidden Christ." In the final analysis, those believers who attempt to trap the Light in this fashion become themselves confined to a spiritually dark room in which they "grasp at pride."

The author of *The Gospel of Philip* recognized that the Christ/Light might be a difficult subject to understand. He attempted to clarify it by defining what he called the "man in the world" and the man in "eternal realm." He writes:

The man in the world: he sees the sun without being a sun, and he sees the heaven [stars] and earth and all other things, but he is not these things... In the eternal realm, the form of union is different,

although we refer to them by the same names... You saw something of that place, and you became those things. You saw the spirit, you became spirit, You saw Christ, you became Christ, You saw the father, you shall become father. So in this place [man in the world] you see everything and do not see yourself, but in that place [eternal realm] you do see yourself, and what you see you shall become.<sup>42</sup>

In the world of things and beings, "the man in the world" does not become what he sees. A man looks at a tree, but he does not become the tree. Likewise, we moderns look at the historical Jesus but we do not become Jesus. However, in the eternal realm of Christ/Light consciousness, we come to "see ourselves" in the Light of God. When we do this, what we see we become. Or as Philip put it, "You saw Christ, you became Christ." In this way, all the sons of Light who see Christ become united to Him in the "eternal realm" of Light-consciousness. Or as Jesus says, in the resurrection of the "new man," all are "united" to the "I am" of His being by the "Blessed One's" universal and infinite Light.

Keep in mind, however, that we should never understand the symbols describing the "man in the world" and the "eternal realm" as two different and separate worlds. Rather, we should understand them as two distinct ways that man can perceive his one world. As a "man in the world," the orthodox Christian sees the historical being of Jesus Christ, including His literal passion and His literal resurrection on the wooden cross, as an object of his faith. He also sees Jesus Christ as a separate being -- a unique divine being -- in which to believe. On the other hand, a son of Light, whose being abides in the "eternal realm," does not have an object of faith. He does not, therefore, intellectually believe in any historical divine being. Rather, he, like Philip says, experientially becomes the Christ, the son of God, because he actually "possesses the resurrection, the light, the cross and the Holy Spirit"<sup>43</sup> within himself.

But in addition to seeing Christ differently, we should understand that the "man in the world" and those who live in the "eternal realm" also see a different cross. To illustrate this point, consider these two mutually exclusive perspectives. The man in the world concentrates his attention on a historical wooden cross that existed almost two thousand years ago. As a result, he likes to believe in real

wood and in what Irenaeus once called the "rising" of real "flesh."<sup>44</sup> In short, he believes in a literal resurrection of one historical divine being. On the other hand, the man in the eternal realm, or a son of Light, "possesses the resurrection" by experiencing in his heart what Jesus calls the "Cross of Light."<sup>45</sup>

"This ['Cross of Light']," says Jesus in the *Acts of John*, "is not that wooden Cross which you shall see when you go down from here; nor am I the man who is on the [wooden] Cross."<sup>46</sup> When interpreting this passage, understand that the "I" of which Jesus speaks, is not, as he says, "the man who is on the [wooden] Cross." Obviously, Jesus is not concerned with "bones and nerves and veins" hanging on a wooden cross. Instead, he directs our attention to the "I" of His being, or to the Light of the Father, in Him. And He tells us that this "I" has nothing to do with "that wooden Cross."

But the question now arises: If the terms: crucifixion and resurrection, have nothing to do with "that wooden Cross," with what kind of cross are they associated? Jesus answers this question by first telling us that the Christ, the Son, the Father, the Spirit, etc., are not historical beings or objects of faith in which we should believe or not believe. Rather, these words are all symbols which He used to communicate the "secret" meaning of God's Cross of Light in man. Says Jesus:

This Cross of Light is sometimes called Logos by me for your sakes, sometimes mind... sometimes Christ, sometimes a door... sometimes a seed, sometimes resurrection, sometimes Son, sometimes Father, sometimes Spirit... sometimes truth, sometimes faith, sometimes grace; and so it is called for men's sake.<sup>47</sup>

For our sake, and for the sake of communication, Jesus used many poetic "symbols and images" when describing Light-consciousness. Sometimes He called it the "Cross of Light," the "Logos/Word," or the "resurrection." At other times He described the new consciousness as the "Christ," the "Son," the "Father," or the "Kingdom" within. For Him, each of these symbols poetically represented a different dimension of Light-consciousness.

Concerning the specific symbol: the "Cross of Light," Jesus continues His explanation of its secret meaning:

But what it [the Cross of Light] truly is, as known in itself, and spoken to us, is this: it is the distinction of all things, and the strong uplifting of what is firmly fixed out of what is unstable, and the harmony of wisdom, being wisdom in harmony... This Cross then is that which has united all things by the Word.<sup>48</sup>

In this important passage, Jesus tells us, for our "sake," that the "Cross of Light" is really "known in itself" as the "harmony of wisdom." As such, it can be compared to a "strong uplifting," or to a resurrection-type human experience, in which man's heart rises into the "firmly fixed" Word, or into the eternal Logos/Light of the everlasting God.

If Jesus' definition of "the Cross of Light" is true – and it most certainly must be -- then man should stop looking back to one historical wooden cross for spiritual meaning. Instead, he must begin searching today's world for the Cross of Light within himself. Only there will man discover that God crucifies his unenlightened spirit. And only there will he learn that God also resurrects the "new man" into the living and "eternal realm" of Light-consciousness or "the harmony of wisdom."

Jesus tells us more about the distinction between the wooden cross and the Cross of Light. He says:

The multitude around the [wooden] Cross, that is not one [i.e., that have not been resurrected by the universal one Light/Logos] form is the inferior nature... But when human nature is taken up [i.e., when man experiences the resurrection of Christ consciousness, or "the harmony of wisdom" on "the Cross of Light"]... then he who now hears me [i.e., he who listens to the Word/Logos/Christ/] shall be united with this race [i.e., "sons of Light"] and shall no longer be what he now is... if you hear me, you also as hearer, shall be as I am... The first then that you must know is the Logos.<sup>49</sup>

Jesus distinguishes between two "natures," or two different dimensions of human consciousness. First, there is the "inferior nature."

This dimension of consciousness lacks the spiritual perception of the universal Light/Logos. Those individuals with this "inferior nature" are the people "who do not have the life giving Word in their heart."<sup>50</sup> They are, therefore, part of "the multitude around the [wooden] cross" who do not understand the spiritual experience of resurrection associated with the Cross of Light.

There is, however, a new "race" of men who are "no longer" what they once were. These men, or "sons of Light," recognize that mankind will never understand the true meaning of resurrection, as Jesus further explains, "unless to you as Logos I had been sent by the Father."<sup>51</sup> Certainly, unless a man "hears" the eternal "Logos" or "Word of God" for himself, his heart will never rise into the eternal realm of Light-consciousness. Or to switch the symbolic expression, if a man does not personally "see" the "Light" of God, or the "I am" of any son of Light, he will never climb the Most High's "high mountain" and put on the "garments that are white as light."

We conclude that "the multitude" of men whose "inferior nature" believes in wooden crosses cannot be "united with this race" of men, or "sons of Light," who have been "taken up" into Light-consciousness. For the irrefutable fact is: Belief in another man's resurrection into Light-consciousness does not alter the consciousness of the believer. But what does change a man's spiritual heart is "when human nature is taken up" to the Light. Then, as Jesus explains, man "shall no longer be what he now is." In an instant, which is like an eternity, man's spirit will be transformed and "united" to the "race" of the sons of Light. Then human consciousness rises to the Light and the true resurrection of man occurs. At that particular moment of illumination, human nature, as Jesus continues to say, "shall be as I [Christ] am." With this thought in mind, He concludes: "The first then that you must know is the Logos" or the Light/Word of God in man.

In *The Second Treatise of the Great Seth*, Jesus warns us about being "ignorant" of the "ineffable mystery" of Light-consciousness:

For they [the "archons" or "those who are ignorant...and who think they are advancing the name of Christ"] did not know the Knowledge of the Greatness [i.e., Light-consciousness] that is from above [i.e., from the "Most High" God], and from a fountain of truth [e.g., recall Jesus' "the bubbling stream,"

"the living water," or the "spring of water welling up to eternal life"... The archons do not know that it [i.e., Light-consciousness] is an ineffable union [a spiritual experience that is difficult to describe with words] of undefiled truth, as exists among the sons of light [i.e., "we have a mind of the Father in an ineffable union"], of which they [i.e., the "archons"] made an imitation, having proclaimed a doctrine of a dead man.<sup>52</sup>

This quotation is full of complex symbolic meaning. In particular, the "multitude around the [wooden] cross," or those "inferior," "ignorant," and unenlightened "archons" who have never tasted the mystical "living water" of the "fountain of truth" and Light, do not possess "the Knowledge of Greatness" or Light-consciousness. As a result, their dark minds concentrate on "the doctrine of a dead man." This doctrine is none other than the eschatologist's "belief witness" in Jesus' "blood sacrifice" on the wooden cross. The "sons of Light" reject this doctrine because they insist that God's saving grace is neither dependent upon the sacrifice of human blood nor upon believing in the sacrificial power of that blood. And this is true even of the blood at Calvary!

The Psalmist crucified the primitive notion of blood sacrifice hundreds of years before Jesus when he wrote:

For Thou [God] has no delight in sacrifice; were I to give a burnt offering, Thou wouldst not be pleased. The sacrifice acceptable to God is a broken spirit... Behold, Thou desirest truth in the inward being; therefore, teach me wisdom in my secret heart... Create in me a clean heart, O God, and put a new and right spirit within me.<sup>53</sup>

The Psalmist tells us that God does not want "burnt offerings," or the flow of real blood, for a sacrifice! Nor does He want us to believe in these types of *outwardly-manifested* sacrifices. Instead, God looks to the human heart and "desirest truth in the *inward* being" of man. And within this "inward being," man's self-oriented spirit must first sacrificially die into God. Or as the Psalmist writes: Man must experience a "broken spirit." Then the Lord will resurrect "the

wisdom" of a "new and right spirit" within man's "secret heart."

Those "archons" who do not understand what God "desirest" often proclaim the primitive notion that the flow of real blood pleases God and thus, in and of itself, contains saving power for their own souls. More specifically, they state, as we have previously discussed, that the act of "believing in" God as well as in the historical sacrifice of His Son's blood at Calvary guarantees an eschatological salvation for the human soul. The eschatological believers thus make the *future* salvation of man's soul dependent upon the *past* events of blood flowing at Calvary.

But Jesus in the *Apocalypse of Peter* interprets a "vision" of Peter and tells him that men of this type -- i.e., the "bishops," the "deacons," and "the men of the propagation of falsehood"<sup>54</sup> -- are like the "blind ones...who do not understand the mystery"<sup>55</sup> of the *present* moment. "The *living* Jesus," who is "the intellectual Spirit filled with radiant light," continues to warn Peter about these "blind" Church leaders. He insists, for instance, that since they make "his fleshy part" the focal point of human salvation, they "do not know what they are saying."<sup>56</sup> Oh yes, like the sons of Light, these "blind ones" speak about death, resurrection, and salvation. Hence, they use the language of the sons of Light. But they counterfeit this language because they do not comprehend its symbolic and mystical significance.

Consider, for example, that the literal-thinking believers and/or "archons" fail to understand that God first crucifies man's living consciousness into a "broken spirit" and then resurrects that consciousness into His eternal Light! Or in other words, they are "blind" to the fact that, as Jesus says in *The Gospel of Thomas*: "If he [man] is destroyed he will be filled with light." And so, even though they talk about death and resurrection, they do not, in fact, perceive that the physical events at Calvary symbolically represent what must occur on the "inward" and eternal "Cross of Light" within themselves. As such, they fail to recognize the necessity of experiencing *their own* psychic "death," or enduring the "sacrifice" of *their own* "broken" human spirit, in the here and now world of today. And in the end, they do not see the value of *their own* heart's living "resurrection" into the eternal "wisdom" of Light-consciousness.

These visionless "bishops" and "deacons" thus "create," as Jesus symbolically states, "an imitation remnant in the name of a dead man...in order that the light which exists may not be believed by the

always wear an "imitation remnant." For He knew that instead of wearing the "garments that are white as light," they choose to "cleave to the name of a dead man [i.e., 'cleave' to Jesus' 'fleshy parts,' or His stony vessel'] thinking they will become pure."<sup>58</sup> Unfortunately, however, "thinking" does not make it so. Likewise, wearing "imitation remnants," and thus "cleaving" to a false "belief" in the sacrificial power of one historical "dead man" on "a wooden cross," does not enlighten and/or purify the human soul. Only "being [personally and experientially] clothed in the perfect [and eternal] Light" accomplishes that act of salvation within the resurrected and radiant heart of man.

And so, witnessing to, or believing in, the literal and historical death and resurrection of "this one into whose hands and feet they drive the nails"<sup>59</sup> is a poor "substitute," as the "living Jesus" concludes, for experiencing "the intellectual Spirit filled with radiant light." Indeed, we must all "know them ['the mysteries' of God] through," what Jesus calls: "revelation,"<sup>60</sup> or Light-consciousness. In such a revelatory consciousness of God's mysteries, we first enter into the ecstatic yet very human and religious experience of dying into His Light. We then can be "filled with," and/or resurrected by, the Most High's everlasting and "great ineffable light."

As long as the "bishops," "deacons," and/or "archons" mistake the symbolic expressions of Light-consciousness for literal and historical events, they will continue to degrade the living, "strong uplifting," and resurrection-like experience of the "Cross of Light" into a lifeless "doctrine of a dead man" on a "wooden cross." By the same token, as long as the "dry canals"<sup>61</sup> fail to drink the "living water" that springs from the "fountain of truth" (Jesus), and/or the "fountain of light" (Essene Teacher), they will, as Jesus says in *The Apocryphon of James*, forever "make the kingdom of heaven [and Light] a desert within you."<sup>62</sup> But the "dry canals" of "this sort," as the living Jesus continues to declare in the *Apocalypse of Peter*, "will be cast into outer darkness, away from the sons of light."<sup>63</sup> What else can be done with those who insist on wearing "imitation remnants," who fail to "see" the Light-filled "kingdom of the father [that] is spread out upon the earth," and who thus confuse the multitudes or "little ones" about the real experience of God's living Light?

Martin Buber, the eminent Jewish theologian and poet, once had the following to say about "meeting" God:



If you hallow this life, you meet the living God.<sup>64</sup>

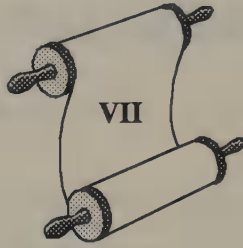
"Hallowing this life" is precisely what the sons of Light want each of us to do. We begin to hallow life by understanding that the eternal and living "kingdom" of God is not some "thing" or "place" to believe in or to look for in the next life. Neither is God's son a historical being. Rather, the "kingdom" of God is the hallowed dimension of Light within all life. And the symbol: "Son of God" represents the archetypal human experience of this holy Light. We can, therefore, enter into sonship with the Father as well as know a dimension of His eternal kingdom right now! Unfortunately, however, many of us are not aware of this possibility. Martin Buber, of course, was one man who knew that all men can "meet the living God." "Every man," he writes, "can say Thou and is then I. Every man can say Father and is then Son!"<sup>65</sup>

While reading all the "symbols and images" of Light-consciousness, we must understand that the real Power is not in the various words but within man himself. All words only point to "the flawless Word" which "comes as a birth of light."<sup>66</sup> Moreover, every flower, river, or mountain on earth potentially echoes this Word's message to those who are listening. Even the falling dew on the blades of grass whispers It to our ears, and the winds of time chant It aloud. The vaulted skies declare Its beauty while It sweeps through all matter within the universe. Indeed, what Jesus called the "kingdom" of God is "here" on earth! And what He called the Christ is the Light of His being in your heart. Are you listening to God's Word? "Trust in me," insists Jesus in *The Apocryphon of James*, "my brethren; understand what the great light is...Hearken to the Word."<sup>67</sup>

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# LIGHT AND DEATH

## SECTION I

### BLOOD, SWEAT, AND TEARS

Jesus:

1. Behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. (Matthew 26:45)

2. He who ate my bread has lifted his heel against me. (John 13:18)

3. And being in agony he prayed more earnestly; (Luke 22:44) And at the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice: My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? (Mark 15:34)

Psalmist:

1. Deliver me from those who work evil, and save me from bloodthirsty men. For, lo, they lie in wait for my life; fierce men band themselves against me. (59:2-3)

2. Even my bosom friend in whom I trusted, who ate of my bread, has lifted his heel against me. (41:9)

3. The snares of death encompassed me; the pangs of Sheol laid hold on me; I suffered distress and anguish. (116:3) My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me? (22:1)

Teacher of Righteousness:

1. Violent men have sought my soul because I leaned on Thy Covenant...and it is on Thy behalf that they have threatened my life... (206)

2. And who ate my bread lifted the heel against me. (216)

3. And to my distress they added still more. They shut me up in the darkness and I ate the bread of groaning and my tears was in tears without end. (217)

Historical events were the foundation upon which the sons of Light built their symbolic structures of poetic thought and expression. In fact, these men of vision constantly looked for symbolic meaning in not only the events of their daily lives but also in those circumstances surrounding the time of their physical demise. As a result, they often linked the subjects of life and death together by symbolically correlating the reality of death to certain dimensions of human consciousness which they experienced while they were alive.

When interpreting the symbols of life and death, we must first understand that men of myopic spiritual vision lived in the midst of our three sons of Light. Individuals who had never walked out of the shadows of their own spiritual blindness surrounded not only Jesus, but also the Teacher of Righteousness and the Psalmist. And as you might expect, these spiritually blind "sons of darkness" rejected the new vision of truth and the call for rebirth and/or renewal proclaimed by our three sons of Light. As a result, these men of little vision sometimes violently clashed with our three sons of Light because they found it easier to curse the Light than walk out of their own darkness.

The sons of darkness quite naturally persecute the sons of Light. These men of little vision do so almost instinctively because they fail to understand the spiritual realities of which the sons of Light speak. Unavoidably, therefore, those men who live in the Light are destined to suffer abuse, oppression, and sometimes even physical death from those who inhabit darkness. They cannot avoid these unhappy circumstances because their message conflicts with the status quo of those "interpreters of deceit and falsehood" who bear "fruits that are poisoned and bitter."

After continually tasting the poisoned fruits of "the assembly of the wicked," the Psalmist, Jesus, and the Essene Teacher expressed their pain and suffering in words. And these words finally evolved into a language of misery and death that was common to all three of them. "The snares of death," writes the Psalmist, "encompass me." And "bloodthirsty men," he continues to lament, "lie in wait for my life." Obviously, the Psalmist's life is in serious jeopardy. Even his **"bosom friend in whom he trusted and who ate of [his] bread"** betrays him and **"lifts his heel against"** him. He has no friends to save him. He sees no escape from his "distress and **anguish**." In short, a world of hostility and rejection depresses his spirits deeper and deeper into the darkness of death and despair. Finally, his heart screams out with a voice crying in a wilderness of pain: "Deliver me

from those who work evil, and save me from bloodthirsty men... **My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?"**

Hundreds of years later, Jesus was also "betrayed into the hands of sinners" and bloodthirsty men. And like the Psalmist, He too spoke of rejection, betrayal and the lifting of one's "heel" against Him. "**He who ate my bread,**" He says, "**has lifted his heel against me.**" And when Jesus was crucified by these men, He too cried out in "agony" with the Psalmist's exact same words: "**My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?"**

But Jesus and the Psalmist were not the only ones who spoke about bloodthirsty men. The Essene Teacher also complained that "violent men...have threatened my life." And he too spoke about abuse, rejection and betrayal: "**And who ate my bread lifted the heel against me.**" Obviously, the Essene Teacher knew the stings of violence that were inflicted upon him by his fellow man. Sadly, therefore, he "ate the bread of groaning," and his tears were "**tears without end.**" Unfortunately, however, his torrent of tears became a stream of blood because the stinging "threats" on his life contained real poison. And so, he, like Jesus, walked in the paths of Light. But because he did, he also suffered an untimely death at the hands of "violent men."

## SECTION II

### A DEADLY WOUND

Jesus:	Psalmist:
<p>1. And when they had crucified Him, <b>they divided his garments among them by casting lots.</b> (Matthew 27:35)</p>	<p>1. <b>They divide my garments among them, and for my raiment they cast lots.</b> (22:18)</p>
<p>2. And they clothed him in a purple cloak, and plaiting a <b>crown of thorns</b> they put it on Him. (Mark 15:17)</p>	<p>2. <b>They ["those who hate me"] surrounded me like bees, they blazed like a fire of thorns.</b> (118: [7] &amp; 12)</p>
<p>3. <b>But one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear,</b> and at once there came out blood and water. (John 19:34)</p>	<p>3. <b>As with a deadly wound in my body, my adversaries taunt me...</b> (42:10) <b>Deliver my soul from the sword...</b> (22:20)</p>

## A DEADLY WOUND (continued)

4. My soul became afflicted for the sons of men because they are blind in their hearts and do not have sight. (*Gospel of Thomas*: #28)<sup>2</sup> I thirst...So they put ■ sponge full of the vinegar on hyssop and held it to his mouth. (John 19:28-29)

4. Insults have broken my heart, so that I am in despair...and for my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink. (69:20-21)

5. Unless I [i.e., Thomas] see in his [i.e., Jesus'] hands the print of nails, and place my finger in the mark of the nails... (John 20:25)

5. A company of evildoers encircle me; they have pierced my hands and feet. (22:16)

## Teacher of Righteousness:

1. And all the foundations of my fabric [i.e., "the holy Fabric" (102) or "the garment of honor in everlasting light" (80)] cracked...because of the calamities of their sin. (222)

2. They opened a treacherous tongue like serpents' venom which causes thorns to grow... (217)

3. The valiant have pitched their camps against me; they have encircled me with all their weapons of war and have shot out incurable arrows. (206) And it became an incurable pain and ■ malignant wound in Thy servant's members, so that the spirit staggered and strength was consumed and he could not stand. (217)

4. And they, interpreters of falsehood and seers of deceit, devised plans of Belial against me...And they stopped the thirsty from drinking the liquor of Knowledge, and when they were thirsty they made them drink vinegar. (211)

All three of our sons of Light symbolically correlated the depths of their own spiritual suffering with: (1) "divided" and/or "cracked" garments, (2) thorns, (3) swords, and (4) vinegar. They used this common pool of symbols to describe the spiritual pain inflicted upon them by the sons of darkness. In this way, they hoped to portray how

all "the calamities" caused by the "sons of darkness" pierced through the fabric of their inner being and stabbed at their hearts.

The previous statements do not deny the possibility that one or more of the four symbols mentioned above might also have represented actual historical facts. But since all three of our sons of Light used the same collection of symbols, it is certainly conceivable that their primary intent was to describe commonly shared inner experiences.

In the *Acts of John*, Jesus reinforces the idea that His symbolic language of death points more towards inner experiences than literal facts. While physically dying, or "discarding the manhood" on the wooden cross, He says that we should interpret His symbolic expressions concerning death and crucifixion as a spiritual "torment" of the Logos or Word of God:

You hear that I suffered, yet I suffered not; and that I suffered not, yet I did suffer; and that I was pierced, yet I was not wounded; that I was hanged, yet I was not hanged; that blood flowed from me, yet it did not flow; and, in a word, that what they say of me, I did not endure. But what they do not say, those things I did suffer. Now what these are, I secretly show you; for I know that you will understand. You must know me, then, as the torment of the Logos, the piercing of the Logos, the blood of the Logos, the wounding of the Logos, the fastening of the Logos, the death of the Logos. And so I speak, discarding the manhood. The first then that you must know is the Logos, then you shall know the Lord.<sup>3</sup>

In this passage, Jesus tells us that "what they [sons of darkness] say of me, I did not endure." Undoubtedly, Jesus suffered excruciating physical pain when He was crucified at Calvary. That deplorable fact is indisputable. But the physical pain of that event was neither the center of His concern nor the cause of His most intense suffering. Rather, His real concern and acute misery were related to a spiritual crucifixion that most men have not understood. "What they do not say," Jesus explains, "those things I did suffer."

We can learn more about "those things" that Jesus really suffered by understanding His relation to the Light of God. As a son of Light, Jesus was a carrier of the Light. He loved the Light, and the Light of



the Father was His ultimate concern. Moreover, since He saw the Light as a potentially redemptive, spiritual Reality within every man, He proclaimed His vision of Light to the men of His day. Unfortunately, however, all too many of these men were sons of darkness. And being in darkness, they neither understood nor accepted His message. At times, they even became violent and sought to destroy Him as well as His message by any means possible.

In view of Jesus' intense love of the Light, we can easily appreciate why His fellow man's rejection of His visionary message was the real cause of His anguish. "And my soul became afflicted for the sons of men," says Jesus in *The Gospel of Thomas*, "because they are blind in their hearts and do not have sight."<sup>4</sup> Certainly, many of Jesus' contemporaries did not have the "sight," or the inner vision, of the Father's Light. If we switch from visual to auditive symbolic language, we can say that neither did they hear the Word of God nor experience His Logos. Unfortunately, therefore, these spiritually blind, deaf, and unenlightened men daily "afflicted" the "I am" of Jesus' being by ignoring the Light/Word/Logos of God within themselves as well as within Him. Their betrayal of the Light/Word/Logos that Jesus so loved was thus the real "torment" of His life. And being spiritual in nature, this torment of rejection was far more painful for Him to undergo than His own physical crucifixion.

Concerning rejection and torment, Jesus continues to explain that we should interpret the meaning of His crucifixion ("You must know me") in symbolic terms. In particular, He says we must know Him as the "torment of the Logos, the piercing of the Logos...the fastening of the Logos, the death of the Logos." With these words, Jesus implies that man's rejection of God's Light/Word is like a "torment of the Logos." Or more figuratively speaking, man's denial of the vision of Light is like "fastening" the Light/Word/Logos to a cross in the human heart. When this spiritual "piercing" occurs, man crucifies the Light/Word/Logos (i.e., "death of the Logos") within himself. As a result, his heart then dies in its own darkness. This crucifixion into darkness "torments" the Logos as well as all those sons of Light who proclaim the necessity of seeing God's radiant Light and/or hearing His glorious Word.

This spiritual death of man's heart is the real crucifixion that Jesus now "secretly shows" us. The question, however, is whether we have seen the Light and/or have heard the Word/Logos that Jesus "secretly" presents to us. If we, for example, say of the

Light/Word//Logos: It is not true, then we, like blind/deaf men, will live in a world of spiritual darkness and empty silence. Our blind eyes, our deaf ears, as well as our unenlightened hearts, like those of Jesus' contemporaries, will thus "torment" and ultimately crucify the Light/Word/Logos of creation. In this sense, our own darkness is but one more nail that "pierces the Logos," or penetrates the Light, that was in Jesus and in all the sons of Light.

And so the question arises: Who tormented and crucified the Christ? At the spiritual level, the answer, of course, is: any son of darkness who has not personally seen the Light, or heard the Word of God, or experienced the eternal Logos or "I am" of Jesus. And if this is true, then the crucifixion of the Light/Word/Logos did not happen only once upon a time: two thousand years ago. Oh yes, it happened then, but a spiritual crucifixion is also going on now. In fact, the crucifixion of the Light/Word/Logos occurs within the heart and soul of every man on earth! It occurs whenever we as human beings deny the Light of the Father within our own heart. Understandably, therefore, the crucifixion of the Light continues even into the twentieth century. And it will continue as long as men torment the Logos, denounce the Word of God, and thus crucify that radiant spiritual Reality which shines in all the sons of Light. If we fail to understand this important message, then we force all the sons of Light to swallow the bitter vinegar of our own spiritual darkness.

To illustrate precisely how men crucify the Light, let us now consider how our three sons of Light symbolically portrayed death. We will begin our discussion by examining the garment symbol. As we have discussed in chapter II, section II, Jesus' garments were symbolic of His vision of Light. On His mountain-top peak-experience, "his garments became white as light." He also said that when we "see the Eternal" we will "clothe ourselves in light." In a parallel fashion, the Psalmist said that we must "worship the Lord ['who coverest thyself with light as with a garment'] in holy array." And the Teacher of Righteousness said that "all who walk in this Spirit" of vision will wear "a garment of honor in everlasting light."

But what has all this talk of Light and garments to do with death and the sons of Light? To answer this question, we must first state that "the sons of darkness" are blind to the vision of Light. These men of little vision thus live in a world of spiritual shadows because they never "clothe [themselves] in light." And as long as they fail to wear these bright Light-garments of the soul, they will neither

understand the vision of Light nor any of its poetic representations. Hence, these primitive citizens of darkness misinterpret all symbolic expressions concerning spiritual vision and the Light of God. Misinterpretation, of course, leads to hostility. Hostility, in turn, simmers within their dark souls, and it finally boils over into overt aggression against the sons of Light.

The sons of Light symbolically represent their confrontation with human darkness and spiritually barbaric aggression as a painful, death-like experience. The Teacher of Righteousness, for instance, describes this experience as a crack in his beautiful and visionary fabric of Light. "And all the foundations of **my fabric cracked...**," he writes, "because of the calamities of their sins." As you can see, the "violent men" use their "weapons of war" -- i.e., hate, mistrust, cupidity, hostility, etc. -- to puncture "a malignant wound" in his side. When doing so, they split or "crack" his originally whole and radiant fabric of Light. Indeed, the evil "calamities of sin" committed by these sons of darkness pierce the inner spiritual fabric of his being and stab at his heart. Their death-dealing "arrows" of sarcasm, enmity, and resentment thus "consume" his "strength" and make his "spirit stagger" with "incurable pain."

Jesus and the Psalmist also use the fabric/garment symbol to figuratively express their confrontation with human darkness. They say, for example, that their spiritual adversaries ruthlessly stripped them of their revered garments of Light. These men of darkness then gambled for these symbolic garments as if the garments of Light were commodities of commerce. And they did so with the humiliating cruelty of those who think they can buy and sell the Light of God. The Psalmist writes: "**They divide my garments among them, and for my raiment they cast lots.**" Likewise, for Jesus, "**they divided His garments among them by casting lots.**" However, in all this dividing and gambling, their adversaries never once wore these holy and symbolic garments. How could they? They had never "clothed themselves in light."

Speaking of cruelty and pain, Jesus and the Psalmist parallel the Essene Teacher's thoughts concerning wounds and weapons of war. For example, like the "seers of deceit" who shoot "**arrows**" into the Essene Teacher's "**malignant wound**," the "soldiers" of darkness also "pierce" Jesus' side with a "**spear**." In a parallel fashion, the Psalmist tells us that his "adversaries taunt" him "as with a **deadly wound**." As a result, he implores God to "deliver his soul from the **sword**" of

spiritual death. Obviously, all three of our sons of Light suffered greatly! And as a result, each of them lamented how the sons of darkness continually stabbed at their heart of Light.

But the truly sad part of this story is this: The sons of darkness, or those "interpreters of falsehood and seers of deceit," continually inject the "malignant wound" with the venom of their vituperative tongues. The Teacher of Righteousness, for instance, says: "They open a treacherous tongue like serpents' venom which causes **thorns** to grow." Ah yes, the spiritually blind aggression of those in darkness is as painful to the sons of Light as "thorns" pressing against human flesh.

And like the Essene Teacher's "**thorns**" that "grew" in his heart, Jesus and the Psalmist also spoke about the thorny nature of their adversaries' behavior. For instance, the "soldiers" of darkness hated Jesus. And in their hate, they crucified His heart, "pierced the Logos" of His being, and made Him cry out in pain: "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" Such an experience was like having a "**crown of thorns**" surround the flesh of His head as well as the Spirit of His heart.

In a similar fashion, the Psalmist cries out with the exact same words: "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" Obviously, his heartfelt pain was also intense! And why shouldn't it be intense? "Those who hate me," as he complains, "surrounded" him like stinging "bees." And in the end, these bees "blazed like a **fire of thorns**" in his heart.

Spiritual pain and suffering is also like walking in an arid desert and being surrounded by the scorched sands of hypocrisy, malice, dishonesty, aggression, and even death. While being in this lifeless desert, the Teacher of Righteousness quite naturally thirsts for the "living water," or the "liquor of Knowledge," that springs up from the "fountain of light." However, what he receives from his fellow man is a nauseating drink of "**vinegar**."

The Psalmist was also a man who knew the "despair" and the "broken heart" of one who lived with the "insults" and the unkind acts of those who abide in darkness. And he too was thirsty for what he termed the joyful "fountain of life" and Light. But his "foes" offered no Light. Instead, "for my thirst," he writes, "they gave me **vinegar**."

Similarly, Jesus cried out in pain: "I thirst." Jesus, of course, was not asking for a drink of well water. Rather, in the human desert of

spiritual darkness, suffering, and pain, He yearned for what He called the "living water" of compassion, kindness and love that flows freely from the "spring of water welling up to eternal life" within man. But the sons of darkness knew nothing of this eternal and spiritual fountain. And so, they "put a sponge full of the **vinegar** on hyssop and held it to His mouth." Unfortunately, in each of these three cases, the barbaric sons of darkness force the sons of Light to drink the bitter beverage of human suffering.

In conclusion, all three of our sons of Light poetically express their confrontation with human darkness by using an archetypal pool of symbols: namely, cracked fabrics and/or torn garments, deadly weapons of war: arrows/spears/swords, painful thorns, and distasteful vinegar. And as if all of this was not enough, we learn from the Gospel of John that the Roman guards nailed Jesus' hands and feet to a cross. Similarly, the Psalmist deplores the fact that a band of "evildoers... have pierced my hands and feet."

When considering all these universally expressed symbols of pain, death, and destruction, we can never determine with absolute certainty whether some or all of them represented actual historical facts. In the final analysis, maybe such a historical determination is not all that important. What truly is important is Jesus' statement about His own crucifixion. He insists that we should "know" Him, as well as His crucifixion, as:

the torment of the Logos, the piercing of the Logos,  
the blood of the Logos, the wounding of the Logos,  
the fastening of the Logos, and the death of the  
Logos.

If we truly "know" the crucifixion in the way in which Jesus insists we must, then our living hearts will stop crucifying the Light of the eternal Father. However, if we do not understand the "torment of the Logos," then the inner essence of our being -- or the very heart and soul of our inward selves -- will continue to be like one more thorn, or one more sword, or one more nail, that pierces the inner fabric of Light in all the sons of Light. Therefore, to understand the crucifixion in the most authentic way, "the first then that you must know," as Jesus concludes, "is the Logos" or the Light of God in man's heart.

## SECTION III

## THEIR THROAT IS AN OPEN SEPULCHRE

Jesus:

1. Woe to you, scribes and **Pharisees, hypocrites!** for you **are like white-washed tombs**, which outwardly appear beautiful, but within they are full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness. (Matthew 23:27) But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, **hypocrites!** because you shut the kingdom of heaven against men; for you neither enter yourselves, nor allow those who would enter to go in. (Matthew 23:13-14) The pharisees and the scribes have taken **the keys of knowledge** and hidden them. They themselves have not entered nor have they allowed to enter those who wish to. (*Gospel of Thomas* #39)

2. The **images** are manifest to man, but the light in them remains concealed in the image of the light of the father. (*Gospel of Thomas* #83)<sup>5</sup> **Many false prophets will arise and lead many astray.** Matthew 24:11)

Teacher of Righteousness:

1. Those [i.e., the "**Hypocrites**: who seek Thee with ■ double heart..." (212) "who preach lies to men...despise the commandments of God... and depart from the Well of living waters." (139)] **who build the wall** ["builders of the wall" is ■■ Essene code name for the **Pharisees**<sup>6</sup>] **and cover it with whitewash** did not understand all this. (136) A root is in their thoughts bearing fruits that are poisoned and bitter...For they have said of **the vision of knowledge**, It is not true! and the way of Thy heart, That is not it! (212)

2. And they ["Prophets of falsehood"] have sought Thee out among **idols...** (212) **And they ["Prophets of falsehood"] have led Thy people astray.** Prophets of falsehood have flattered them [the people] with their words and interpreters of deceit have caused them to stray. (211)

Psalmist:

1. For there is no truth in their ["**deceitful men...who speak lies**"] mouth, their heart is destruction, **their throat is ■■ open sepulchre**, they flatter with their tongue... They take pleasure in falsehood. They bless with their mouths, but inwardly they curse.

2. All the worshipers of **images** are put to shame and make their boast in **worthless idols...** They served their idols which became ■■ snare to them.<sup>7</sup>

We will now center our attention on how our three sons of Light correlated religious hypocrisy with symbols of pain, destruction, and death. This is an important topic to explore because the religious hypocrites are those sons of darkness who "pierce the Logos," or crucify the Light, in the most severe fashion. In fact, since that which comes out of their mouths is dark and death-like, the throats of these men of darkness are like an "open sepulchre." And as we shall learn, we must all walk out of this "open sepulchre" of hypocrisy while our hearts climb to the Light.

When Jesus spoke about the Light of the Father, He always directed His attention to the heart or the spiritual nucleus of man. While considering the Light, He also pondered the lack thereof -- or the darkness -- in His fellow man's heart. And that which concerned Him most was the darkness of hypocrisy that He observed in the leaders and members of the orthodox religious community of His day. He said of these people:

Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!  
for you are like white-washed tombs, which outwardly appear beautiful, but within they are full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness.

Although you can find religious hypocrites in every culture and religion of the world, you are most likely to find them participating in some form of public religious activity. This is true because hypocrites love to playact on the public altar of life. But as we have discussed in chapter II, section VI, this playacting is only a performance. Therefore, while the hypocrites may appear to be very religious people, in reality, their hearts resemble one of the darkest places on earth: namely, a "tomb." Or more precisely, the religious hypocrites, according to Jesus, are like "white-washed tombs" because they pretend to have certain spiritual characteristics that they do not actually possess.

In their world of make-believe, the religious hypocrites perform all those "outwardly" symbolic actions associated with a religious devotee. They "pray in the synagogue and at the street corners," as Jesus explains, "that they may be seen by men." In this fashion, they dramatize their faith by piously performing various ceremonial rituals or by offering intellectual lip-service to God. But in reality, all these outward actions are hypocritical if they are performed by those blind

and double-hearted men who do not see the inner Light of the Father. Hence, even though the hypocrites feel obligated to playact their religion, their hearts are as devoid of Light as "white-washed tombs."

The Teacher of Righteousness also speaks of the whitewashing actions of a dark and hypocritical heart. But instead of comparing the religious hypocrites to a whitewashed tomb, he says they -- the Pharisees -- are the ones "who build the wall [between themselves and God] and cover it with whitewash." Obviously, both the Essene Teacher and Jesus believe that religious hypocrites and "whitewash" have a lot in common.

This common factor is, of course, a spiritually dark heart. For whether the religious hypocrites whitewash a "tomb" (Jesus) or a "wall" (Teacher of Righteousness) that separates themselves from God, their hearts are still devoid of Light. Knowing this, the Teacher of Righteousness, like Jesus, condemns those hypocritical Pharisees who "preach lies to men... despise the commandments of God... and depart from the Well of living waters." He thus reserves his harshest words for those who fail to drink the "living water" from God's "Fountain of Light," and who, nevertheless, love to appear religious by whitewashing their lives in relation to God with a false and "a double heart."

Like our other two sons of Light, the Psalmist writes about the difference between the outward performance of religion and the inner Spiritual Reality of the human heart. He knew, for instance, of those religious hypocrites who "bless with their mouth, but inwardly they curse." These types of hypocrites "flatter with their tongue," as the Psalmist continues, but in reality, "there is no truth in their mouth." And so, like Jesus, the Psalmist tells us that the hypocrites are like tombs. Or more precisely, "their throat," as he writes, "is an open sepulchre" of darkness, death, and hypocrisy!

Our three sons of Light obviously did not think very highly of the religious hypocrites. In fact, all three of them rigorously condemned their inability to distinguish between the "images" and "the light." "The images," as Jesus explains in the *Gospel of Thomas*, "are manifest to man, but the light in them remains concealed in the image of the light of the father." Certainly, all the outward objectifications or "images" of Light-consciousness are an important symbolic part of a man's religious life. Verbal prayers, ceremonial rituals, religious sacraments, liturgical formalities, repetitive confessions of dogmatic beliefs, and many other activities of community worship, are all valid



and necessary institutional conventions. However, these images are not the same as the inner vision of Light! Rather, they point to the Light but are not the Light itself.

The problem occurs when man considers the images as the supreme element in his religion. Then the human mind identifies the sacred object -- be it a book, a belief, a special sacrament, a piece of land, a divine being, etc. -- as ultimate in and of itself. With such an identification, the sacramental object's character as the bearer of the Light disappears. As a result, man no longer directs his attention towards the Light but towards the various objectifications which represent the Light. Sadly then, man considers that which is outside his heart more important than that which is inside it.

The religious hypocrites are those sons of darkness who most often confuse image with Light. They mistake the outward, symbolic, and public performance of religion for the inward, real, and private journey into the kingdom of Light! In so doing, the Light of the eternal Father becomes "concealed" for them, as Jesus says, "in the image of the light of the father." The Light thus becomes hidden from their hearts because these men of little vision cannot see It shining through their dogmas, their beliefs, their sacraments, their rituals, their mythical and symbolic language, their religious ceremonies, or in a word: their "images." And most assuredly, neither can they see the one Light shining through the various images of other men's religion.

Since an image-based religion is essentially devoid of Light, it is, in fact, not a true religion. Jesus understood this point when He said that those who confuse image and Light only superficially "appear" as "beautiful" members of a devout spiritual community. In reality, however, their hearts, as He warns, are as dark as "whitewashed tombs" and are "full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness." Naturally, therefore, those who piously yet hypocritically concentrate only on the shadowy "images," or the outward performance of religion, never "enter themselves," as Jesus continues to explain, into the radiant "kingdom of heaven" and Light.

The image-minded individual thus fails to enter the inner "kingdom" of Light because he does not know how a "solitary" man of vision "finds" the Light. Says Jesus:

His disciples said to Him, "When will the kingdom come?" Jesus said, "It will not come by waiting

for it. It will not be a matter of saying 'here it is' or 'there it is.' Rather, the kingdom of the father is spread out upon the earth, and *men do not see it...* Blessed are the solitary and elect, for you will find the kingdom."<sup>8</sup>

The "kingdom of heaven" will "not come" to those who "wait" for it to occur in the next life. If you cannot "see" its radiant splendor "spread out upon the earth," why should you expect the Father to switch it on suddenly when you die? Nor is the "kingdom of heaven," or the "kingdom of the Father," a place that we can say: "here" or "there" it is. For the kingdom of Father's Light is not an image, place, thing, person, or being of any kind. Rather, this kingdom is the spiritual Ground and radiant Light of all beings and images.

When traversing this spiritual monarchy, we must realize that no one religious organization can insist that its specific church, temple, synagogue, mosque, or cathedral is the only holy place on earth. Nor can any one religious institution insist that its particular doctrines, dogmas, ceremonies, sacraments, or rituals are the only road maps man can use on his journey to the Light. For all organized systems of religious doctrines, dogmas, ceremonies, sacraments, rituals, etc., are but the outward and particular images of the Father's one universal Light.

When a man truly understands this difference between image and Light, he begins discovering his *true* religion. And he does so by spiritually walking into his "secret" and "solitary" heart where the kingdom of Light shines. While strolling in and "seeing" this bright and inner realm, he realizes that the whole world and/or universe is the sanctuary of God. And he also understands that everything and every being in this sacred sanctuary is a potential image that points to the Light of the Most High God.

The Teacher of Righteousness also writes about the double-hearted religious hypocrites. He first complains that these prophets of falsehood "have said of the vision of knowledge, it is not true." From his point of view, such a denial of Light-consciousness is their fatal mistake. But then he continues to say:

And they ["the hypocrites" and "prophets of falsehood"] have sought Thee out among idols...and they have led Thy people astray.

Compare the Essene Teacher's words to these words of Jesus:

Many false prophets will arise and lead many astray.

For Jesus, the religious hypocrites are the "**false prophets**" who "**lead many** [of the people] **astray**." For the Teacher of Righteousness, the religious hypocrites are the "**prophets of falsehood**" who "**have led Thy people astray**."

In these remarkably similar statements that contain the same noun, verb, and basic idea, our two sons of Light insist that the religious leaders of their day -- i.e., the "prophets of falsehood" or the "false prophets" -- lead the masses of men "astray." These false prophets deceive other men because they make the various "images" of organized religion their ultimate concern instead of the vision of Light itself. As a result, they not only "hide" what Jesus calls the "**keys of knowledge**," but they also unequivocally "deny," as the Essene Teacher says, that the "**vision of knowledge**" even exists.

Such are the practices of those religious leaders, or those hypocritical "prophets of falsehood," who "believe" in God but who do not experientially taste His spiritually sweet waters from "the fountain of Thy goodness." And since their hearts are arid and lifeless, their thoughts are like fruits that are poisoned and dangerous to eat. "A root is in their thoughts," explains the Teacher of Righteousness, "bearing fruits that are poisoned and bitter."

Certainly, the ideas and words of the "prophets of falsehood" are the "poisoned and bitter fruits" of an arid and dark heart that does not "drink" the "living water" of Light. And so, while the hypocritical leaders of religion "flatter" the people with their *talk* of God, their "words" of "deceit" declare that the "*vision of knowledge*" and of His Light does not exist. What could be more hypocritical? The answer, of course, is: nothing!

In all this denial of Light and affirmation of image, the orthodox religious leaders misinterpret Jesus' and the Essene Teacher's implied statements of faith: We should never equate the Light with any external image. If we do confuse Light and image, then we worship a false "image" or a worthless "idol."

Bear in mind that it does not matter whether we make the Light into the image of a golden calf, an image of an exclusive belief, an image of a particular ceremony or sacrament, an image of a special

ritual, an image of a specific liturgical practice, an image of a unique place called heaven, an image of a wooden cross, or an image of one historical son of Light. An image is an image, and the imageless Light is the Light of the Father.

In truth, therefore, anyone who worships "images" but denies the vision of Light practices idolatry. Idolatry, however, does not go unnoticed! "All the worshipers of images," insists the Psalmist, "are put to shame and boast in worthless idols." Most certainly, the religious activities of the "worshipers of images" are shameful because they are based on the shadows of life instead of the Light of life. As such, those who "boast" that their images are the only true religion "serve their idols" in spiritual darkness. And in the end, their practice of idolatry "becomes a snare to them" because their dark and empty hearts are enslaved to "destruction."

In summary, the religious hypocrites are those spiritually blind individuals who confuse image and Light. And by doing so, they, as Jesus says, "neither enter" into the inner kingdom of Light, nor do they "allow those who would enter to go in." How can they enter the kingdom of the living Father? Their "white-washed" hearts simply cannot fathom the depth, power, beauty, and meaning of this eternal, imageless, and spiritual realm within the human soul. They do not see Light; therefore, their hearts are as dark as "white-washed tombs" (Jesus), their throats are like an "open sepulchre" (Psalmist), and the "words of deceit" (Teacher of Righteousness), that they so routinely preach, are like the "poisoned and bitter fruits" of an arid and lifeless heart.

Man, however, does not have to be eternally imprisoned within the tomb of his own dark and hypocritical heart. Fortunately, there is an escape route. And ironically, our three sons of Light symbolize this path of escape from darkness and into Light by again using the word: "death."

However, death, in this instance, represents true life! Or more specifically, death symbolizes a very special experience of spiritual rebirth available for all the living. In this sense of the word, death represents the spiritual experience of first dying to an unenlightened, hypocritical, and tomb-like self and then rising to a new life of Light-consciousness. "Therefore I say," explains Jesus, "if he [man] is destroyed he will be filled with light." Let us now, therefore, look more closely at the destruction of darkness as well as the resurrection of Light in man.

SECTION IV<sup>9</sup>

## EARTHQUAKES AND THE BIRTH OF LIGHT

Jesus:

1. Take heed of the Living One [God] while you are alive, lest you die and seek him and be unable to do so... **That which you have will save you if you bring it forth from yourselves. That which you do not have with you will kill you if you do not have it within you.** (*Gospel of Thomas*: #59, 70)<sup>10</sup>

2. Therefore I [Jesus] say, **if he [man] is destroyed he will be filled with light...** (*Gospel of Thomas* #61)<sup>11</sup>

3. ...And there will be famines and earthquakes in various places: all this is but the beginning of the birth-pangs...But he who endures to the end will be saved. (Matthew 24:8,13)

Teacher of Righteousness:

1. **And life belongs to the men of Thy Covenant, but death to all them that have departed from it.** (232)

2. God has set an end for the existence of Perversity; and at the time of the Visitation He will destroy it forever. **Then Truth [i.e., Light] shall arise in the world forever.** (81) Truly, Thy mighty Hand is with the Poor...to strike down darkness and to raise up light, to wipe out all the sons of darkness whereas joy shall be the lot of the sons of light. (189)

3. **Amidst devastation and ruin trembling seized me together with pains like the terror of her who gives birth, and my heart shuddered within me...** And Thou didst deliver me from the congregation of vanity and from the assembly of violence and didst cause me to enter the council of holiness. And I knew there was hope for them that are converted from rebellion... (217-18)

As witnessed throughout this chapter, the sons of Light frequently use symbols that express multiple meanings. For example, the symbol: death, represents spiritual darkness, hypocrisy, human despair, and a lack of vision and Light. In all these unhappy characteristics of human life, death represents man's alienation or estrangement from God. Death also symbolizes the spiritual "torment" and suffering that our three sons of Light encountered while they lived in a world inhabited by sons of darkness.

In section II of this chapter, we discussed that all three of our sons of Light endured tremendous pain and suffering. And history tells us that two of them were mercilessly killed by the sons of darkness. However, like many events in their lives, the circumstances surrounding their physical death point to the more profound and spiritual phenomenon that must occur within every man's living heart. Ironically, therefore, the word: "death" does not always suggest gloom and doom. Quite to the contrary, it sometimes points to a joyful rebirth experience in which the living can participate. In such a spiritually transforming experience, God delivers His Light to man by destroying the darkness He finds in the human heart.

This symbolic correlation of the outer physical world with the inner psychic or spiritual dimensions of human consciousness is not unusual to observe in the history of literature and poetic expression. As Joseph Campbell has pointed out in many of his books and lectures,<sup>12</sup> the archetypal and symbolic association of man's physical death with anguish, affliction, suffering, and ultimately, with spiritual rebirth and resurrection, is a recurring motif that we can trace back to the Greeks and even before them.

In chapter IV, section I, the Teacher of Righteousness talked about the transformation of man's consciousness. He also spoke about how this transformation is connected to the "renewal" of the "Covenant" that is "founded on the vision of Glory." With these words, the Essene Teacher reminds us that God renews His Covenant, or enters into a new and "everlasting" agreement with man, when man has "the vision of Glory" and Light. A Covenant with God, therefore, represents man's entrance into the "higher life" of everlasting "vision" and eternal Light. It is like a timeless and spiritual contract that binds man's mortal being to the immortal Ground of all being. Those men who sign an "everlasting" Covenant with God realize that He has eternalized the "I am" of their being with His Light. In such an eternalizing experience, the Ground of all being enters man's

consciousness. Then the "I am" of man becomes united to the eternal Thou of God.

Since some men have no awareness of the Eternal dimension of life here on earth, they never sign an everlasting Covenant with God. How can they sign such a Covenant when their own dark hearts daily eclipse the eternal Light of God? There are, however, penalties to pay when man's heart remains in darkness. In particular, the Teacher of Righteousness says that the "sons of darkness," or those who "depart" from God's everlasting "Covenant," are bonded to a covenant of destruction and death. On the other hand, "the men of Thy Covenant," or the "sons of Light," reap the rewards of "life." "And life belongs to the men of Thy Covenant," he summarizes, "but death to all them that have departed from it."

The consciousness of "life" is the human yet eternal consciousness of God's "everlasting Covenant" of "glory" and Light. Conversely, the consciousness of "death" is the human consciousness that is not yet aware of how bright and eternal a man's living spirit can be on earth. Speaking more figuratively, the consciousness of death is like a "sleep of death" in which man's inner eye has not yet awakened to the dawn of God's eternal Light. "O Lord, my God," exclaims the Psalmist, "lighten my eyes lest I sleep the sleep of death."<sup>13</sup> Those sons of darkness who "sleep the sleep of death" never see the blessed beams of God's rising sun within themselves. They thus never awaken to the morning of His eternal Light.

In the *Gospel of Thomas*, Jesus says: "Take heed of the *Living One* [i.e., "the *living father*'] while you are alive." The emphasis in this statement is obviously on man's personal discovery of the living God in the present moment of life. This discovery of the Eternal now will occur only for those men who are "alive" enough to experience the Living One's timeless Presence within themselves. In another section of the *Gospel of Thomas*, Jesus develops this point:

That which you have will save you if you bring it forth from yourselves. That which you do not have with you will kill you if you do not have it within you.

For Jesus, the Light of "the Living One" will "save" man from spiritual darkness and the death of his heart only if he "brings it forth" from "within" himself. However, if man "does not have" the

eternal Light "with" him and "within" him, then the darkness "will kill" his spirit. As such, he will be like a sleep-walking zombie who never awakens to, or takes "heed" of, the dawn of God's eternal Light that is "within a man of light."

We conclude that the "vision" of Light is a consciousness of "eternal life," or an awareness of the Eternal now, only for those who are "alive" enough to "bring forth" the ageless "Living One" into their hearts. By contrast, if "you do not have" vision and Light, then your spirit consumes the poison of its own darkness, and your life becomes a living death. Therefore, darkness is "the sleep of death" and Light is dawn of eternal life in man.

Concerning the interrelated subjects of death, Light, and rebirth, Jesus says:

Therefore I say, if he [man] is **destroyed** he will be filled with light...

For Jesus, God "destroys" the darkness of alienation, hatred, despair, hypocrisy, estrangement, and all the other perverse characteristics of an unenlightened human heart. But when God "destroys" these dark characteristics of man's heart, He simultaneously "fills" man's consciousness with His Light and Truth. Destruction, therefore, leads to rebirth as darkness "is destroyed" by Light.

With regards to the spiritual destruction of darkness and the subsequent rebirth of Light in man, the Teacher of Righteousness parallels Jesus' thoughts by writing that God "destroys" the "perversity" of man's unenlightened spirit:

God has set an end for the existence of Perversity; and at the time of the Visitation He will **destroy** it forever. Then Truth shall arise in the world forever.

Notice that when God "visits" the human heart, He "destroys" the "existence of perversity" in man. But also observe that as God "destroys" human "perversity," His Truth also "arises in the world forever." This means, of course, that while God "destroys" the darkness of the human heart, He does not destroy the man. Rather, He resurrects His "everlasting" Truth and Light in mankind.



The Psalmist also understands that God must destroy the darkness in man's heart. He writes:

For Thy sake we are slain all the day long, and  
accounted as sheep for the slaughter.<sup>14</sup>

To save man, God must obliterate human darkness. For His sake, and for the sake of man, God thus "slaughters," "destroys," or "slays" all those negative elements in the human heart that are contrary to His Truth and Light.

Jesus and the Teacher of Righteousness symbolize the process of being "slain" or "destroyed" by God's Truth and Light as an "earthquake" of the heart. Obviously, the obliteration of a dark heart shakes a man at the deepest levels of human consciousness. Symbolically speaking, it creates a human heartquake. However, since Jesus knew that God heals the afflicted by their affliction, He compared the earthquake-like destruction in man's heart to "the beginning" of a birth process:

**And there will be famines and earthquakes in  
various places: all this is but the beginning of the  
birth-pangs...And he who endures to the end will be  
saved.**

In this symbolically complex passage, Jesus tells us there will be "famines" in which men's hearts fast from the Light. But in their spiritually-starved, dark hearts, these men will begin to experience the earthquake-like, spirit-shaking terror associated with the destruction of darkness. And interestingly enough, "all this" inner turmoil is, in truth, but the spiritual "birth pangs" in which God delivers His eternal "Counselor" (chapter V, section IV) to man's heart. With this symbolic language, Jesus thus implies that if we can "endure" the heartquake of being shaken and "destroyed" by God's Truth, the Lord will also deliver our hearts into human salvation. Or as He says elsewhere, man "will be saved" from the darkness of death if he "is destroyed" and "filled with [eternal] Light."

The Teacher of Righteousness also knew the terror and destruction of the spiritual birth process. He writes:

**Amidst devastation and ruin trembling seized me together with pains [i.e., birth pains] like the terror of her who gives birth, and my heart shuddered within me.**

In a heartquake of "terror," the Essene Teacher's spirit "trembled" and "shuddered" within him. But this "devastation" of his heart was not the end of his life. On the contrary, it was like the beginning of a new spiritual life. Or more precisely, the "terror" and "trembling" associated with his heartquake were all like the "pains" of a woman about ready to "give birth."

Keep in mind, however, that his particular delivery, like that of Jesus, did not occur as a birth of another human being. Rather, as we discussed in chapter V, section IV, the eternal Father "delivered" "a Marvelous Counselor" -- or His luminous Spirit/Light -- to the Essene Teacher's heart.

In this spiritual birth process, the Teacher of Righteousness learned that God will someday "deliver every man from the billows of death," violence, and destruction. Or as the Teacher so poetically describes:

For she shall give birth to a man-child in the billows of Death, and in the bonds of hell there shall spring from the crucible of the Pregnant one a Marvelous Counsellor with his might, and he shall deliver every man from the billows [of death]. (208)

The Teacher of Righteousness here explains that the eternal Father delivers us from the "billows of Death" by bringing forth His "Marvelous Counsellor," or everlasting Light, into man's heart. In this fashion, God will "deliver every man" from spiritual darkness, the "sleep of death," and the lack of Eternal vision, by Lighting up the human heart.

We can be assured, therefore, that someday every man's heart will conquer "death" because the eternal and "heavenly light" of the everlasting God truly does rise into human consciousness. This will occur, however, only when all men realize that, as the Teacher of Righteousness insists, God truly "has set up a "heavenly light" for mankind.

## SECTION V

## THE HEAVENLY LIGHT

Jesus:

1. CRUCIFIXION:

And they [the soldiers] led him out to crucify him. (Mark 15:20)

2. And Jesus cried with a loud voice and yielded up his spirit. And behold, the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom; and the earth shook, and the rocks were split. (Matthew 27:50-51)

3. Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the sepulchre. And behold, there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled back the stone and sat upon it. His appearance was like lightning and his raiment white as snow. And for fear of him the guards trembled and became like dead men. But the angel said to the woman, "Do not be afraid; for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. He is not here; for he has risen, as he said." (Matthew 28:1-6)

Teacher of Righteousness:

1. SHEDDING OF BLOOD:

Violent men have sought my soul... the soul of the poor one whom they planned to remove by shedding his blood because of Thy service. (206-207)

2. And the bonds of Death tightened [around the Essene Teacher] leaving no escape... And the earth cries out because of the calamity fallen on the world and all its recesses howl... For God bel-lows with His mighty roaring...and the heavenly host let its voice be heard. And the eternal foundations stagger and shake... (210)

3. The Wicked Priest who laid hands on the Teacher of Righteousness, to put him to death. [But God...] and He [God] wakened him [i.e., the TOR] because of the Spirit which He [God] sent to him. (272) Thy light and Thou has set up a heavenly light, Thy light unceasingly, For with Thee is the light. (251) Thou has cleansed the perverse spirit from great sin that he [Essene Teacher] might watch with the army of the Saints and enter into communion with the congregation of the Sons of Heaven. (209)

## THE HEAVENLY LIGHT (continued)

4. Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus directed them. (Matthew 28:16) Follow me. (John 21:19) **He who follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.** (John 8:12) **Walk while you have the light...** While you have the light, believe in the light, that you may become **sons of light.** (John 12:35-36)

4. Thou hast made me rise to **everlasting heights...** (209) And as for the Visitation of **all who walk in this Spirit, it consists of** healing and abundance of bliss, with length of days and fruitfulness, and all blessings without end, and **eternal joy in perpetual life, and the glorious crown and garments of honor in everlasting light.** (80) They ["the **sons of light**"] walk in the ways of light. (78)

We will now consider how all the archetypal symbols of death, earthquakes, birth, and rising to the eternal Light are related to the historical facts surrounding the murder of Jesus and the Teacher of Righteousness. However, before we do this, let us pause for a moment and carefully read what happened when these two sons of Light were killed. When examining Matthew's historical account of Jesus' crucifixion, we learn, for example, that Jesus "yielded up His spirit." At this very instant "the earth shook" with a great earthquake. Matthew then tells us that "an angel of the Lord," whose "appearance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow" appeared to Mary and said: "He [Jesus] has risen." The next thing we learn is that the eleven disciples were walking "to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them." Finally, Jesus tells them on the mountain "to observe all that I have commanded you."

Historically speaking, the *Dead Sea Scrolls*' description of the Essene Teacher's death parallels in certain ways the Biblical story of Jesus' crucifixion. For example, after the death of the Teacher of Righteousness, he "wakened" because God "sent" His Spirit "to him." The *Scrolls* present the details of this account in the following way. We first learn that the "wicked priest" "put him [the Teacher of Righteousness] to death." We then discover that as the "bonds of Death tightened leaving no escape," the "earth cried out," God "bellowed with His mighty roaring," and "the eternal foundations

staggered and shook" like a mighty earthquake. Finally, in a broken fragment destroyed partially by the ravages of time, we unearth the shocking news that God "wakened him because of the Spirit which he sent to him."

We should note one common denominator in these two analogous accounts of death. In both Matthew's description of Jesus' crucifixion and the *Dead Sea Scrolls'* narrative of the Essene Teacher's slaying, there is either a "rising" (Jesus), or an "awakening" (Teacher of Righteousness), of both of these two dead sons of Light. The obvious question arises as to what meaning these two comparable historical descriptions might contain for the modern world. To help us understand this meaning, let us consider what Abraham Maslow once said about peak-experiences. He writes that a peak-experience is very much like dying and finding a heaven here on earth and within one's heart:

Peak-experiences can be so wonderful that they can parallel the experience of dying, that is of an eager and happy dying... I have likened the peak-experience in a metaphor to a visit to a personally defined heaven from which the person then returns to earth. This is like giving a naturalistic meaning to the concept of heaven. Of course, it is quite different from the conception of heaven as a place somewhere into which one physically steps after life on this earth is over. The conception of heaven that emerges from the peak-experiences is one which exists all the time, all around us, always available to step into for a little while at least.<sup>15</sup>

As we discussed in chapter VI, the orthodox, literal-minded eschatologists insist that heaven is a place to which the disembodied soul of a Christian believer may go after his physical death. In this sense of the word, heaven neither describes a reality of the present moment nor a potential of human consciousness here on earth. Instead, heaven points to an eschatological place or a promised future state of affairs.

The sons of Light, on the other hand, say that the symbol: "heaven" represents a living spiritual experience "that parallels the experience of dying." They also say that this heavenly, death-like experience is potentially available for any living human being who

can "bring it forth from themselves." For these reasons, they conclude that heaven is an experience, or more precisely, a dimension of human consciousness, "which exists all the time, all around us, always available to step into for a little while at least."

But now let us consider the connection between history and symbol, or between the reality of two men dying and the heavenly resurrection of human consciousness into Light. To begin, we must understand that when men "step into" the heavenly experience of Light-consciousness "for a little while at least," they discover that God is like a "heavenly light" to which their living spirit can awaken and/or arise at any time. As the Teacher of Righteousness writes:

Thou [God] has set up a heavenly light, Thy  
light unceasingly. For with Thee is the light.

In this important passage, the Essene Teacher implies that heaven is not a place located "up there" or "out there." Instead, heaven is Light! Or more definitively, God has "set up" a "heavenly light" for man to see within himself.

The Teacher of Righteousness tells us more about this inner, "unceasing," "everlasting," and/or "heavenly light":

For Thou [God] art an everlasting light unto  
me... Thou has made me rise to everlasting heights...  
and enter into communion with the congregation of  
the Sons of Heaven.

In chapter II, section VII, the Essene Teacher said that the sons of Light "walk in the ways of light." Concerning man's stepping into Light, he said that God "hast established" his feet "on an infinite plain" and "made [him] rise to everlasting heights." As we discussed earlier, the Teacher of Righteousness expressed these symbols so as to connect the elevated mountain peaks of vision, in which God "illuminated his face...and like a true dawn at daybreak appeared unto [him]," with the "high" and "the everlasting Light" of God.

With these poetic descriptions of the "everlasting light" in mind, the Teacher of Righteousness also implicitly connects man's climb to the peaks of God's "everlasting Light" with man's resurrection into God's "heavenly light." Or as he states in other passages, God "wilt adorn the men of Thy vision with Thy brightness" of "everlasting

Light," but He will do so only for those men who can "rise" out of their own darkness, alienation, hypocrisy, suffering, and spiritual death and "walk in the ways" of the "heavenly Light." Hence, God "cleanses the perverse spirit from great sin" with His "everlasting light" so the human heart can "enter into communion with the congregation of the Sons of Heaven."

In essence, the Teacher of Righteousness is saying that for the sons of Light, or for the "Sons of Heaven," the "everlasting Light" and the "heavenly Light" are the one Light of God that illuminates the holy kingdom of their hearts. He uses two symbolic descriptions of this one Light to explain that this one Light is two dimensional. That is, when God fills man's heart with Light, it is like seeing an eternal, ageless, or "everlasting Light." It is also like experiencing a healing, blissful or "heavenly Light." In either case, the Light of God is without end and fills man's heart with the "fruits" of heavenly bliss. The Essene Teacher thus concludes that the eternal vision of God's Light comes only to those sons of Light "who walk in this Spirit" and know the Light's "healing," "abundance of bliss," "fruitfulness," and "blessings without end."

The Teacher of Righteousness carefully selected the previously-mentioned symbolic words to suggest the interrelatedness of two other dimensions of Light-consciousness. More specifically, he wanted to demonstrate the symbolic connection between his death-rebirth experience of climbing to the visionary mountain peaks of Light-consciousness and his physical death/resurrection experience of "awakening" and "arising" to God's "heavenly Light." With this in mind, the Teacher of Righteousness symbolically portrays his physical death as something much more than the mere end of life itself. He tells us, for example, that since God eternalized his consciousness with Light, there is from his eternalized perspective no finality of life at all. In short, from his Light-consciousness point of view, there is no death! And so, even though the sons of darkness killed the physical being of the Teacher of Righteousness, their attempt to destroy the radiant "I am" of his eternalized being was an exercise in futility. They did not understand that the living God had already "visited" the Teacher of Righteousness, "destroyed" the "existence of Perversity" in him, and thus made his spirit "rise to *everlasting heights*" and walk in the eternal Spirit of "*joy in perpetual life...and everlasting Light.*"

The Teacher of Righteousness thus suggests that physical death cannot, in truth, alter the eternal "awakening" of consciousness that he experienced while he lived on earth. This "awakening" occurred when God first "destroyed" the spiritually unenlightened heart of the Essene Teacher in a "staggering" and "shaking" earthquake of pain and suffering. But so too did God "awaken" a new and eternalized living heart within him. In this way, God's everlasting Truth and Light "arose in the world" of his heart "*forever*," and he "walked in this Spirit" of "all blessings without end."

By "awakening" the Essene Teacher in this fashion, God caused him to "enter into communion with the congregation of the Sons of Heaven" while he lived on earth. And in the process, He made his human and living consciousness "forever" a part of "the heavenly Light." Physical death cannot change this eternal consciousness of Light in anyway whatsoever! For physical death has no power over the consciousness of "the eternal joy in perpetual life, and the glorious crown and garments of honor in everlasting light."

We conclude that for the Teacher of Righteousness, the living God shines His eternal Light into human consciousness. When this occurs, man's being rises into a dimension of Light that lasts "forever." And since this is true, it really does not matter whether we say that God's Light radiates on the living mountain peaks of vision or whether we write that His Brightness illuminates man in a resurrection experience of the Eternal now. Whichever symbolic representation we select, the consciousness of God's Light eternalizes the hearts of all those who "walk in this Spirit."

In the light of this previous discussion, let us now look more closely at Matthew's account of Jesus' crucifixion. Matthew first tells us that as Jesus "yielded up His spirit," the "earth shook" with a tremendous earthquake. He then writes that an "angel of the Lord," whose "appearance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow," appeared to Mary and said: "He [Jesus] has risen." In this symbolic representation of man's climb to what Jesus called the "light within a man of light," Matthew uses the historical events of Jesus' physical death to portray the archetypal pattern of spiritual death, destruction and rebirth within human consciousness. Or in other words, he uses historical events to portray the wisdom of Jesus' words: "Therefore, I say, if he [man] is destroyed [by God] he will be filled with [God's] light."



More specifically, Matthew parallels the Essene Teacher's archetypal symbolism of the "destruction of Perversity" and the "shaking" earthquakes of the heart when he says that as Jesus "yielded up His spirit," the "earth shook." In this fashion, Matthew symbolically represents the spiritual pain, suffering and inner turmoil of Jesus' journey towards His Father's Light. When interpreting these New Testament passages, we should be aware that Matthew's "Bible" was the Old Testament. And interestingly enough, his account of Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection to His Father's Light closely parallels the same archetypal thought patterns in the Psalms.

Consider, for example, what the Psalmist writes about God's destruction of man's darkness, the symbolic terror of earthquakes, and man's upward journey to the Most High's Light:

Thou [God] has made the land to quake, Thou has rent it open...Thou hast made thy people suffer hard things...that Thy beloved may be delivered... For Thou hast delivered my soul from death, yea, my feet from falling, that I may walk before God in the light of life... He [God] delivered me from my strong enemy and from those who hated me... He delivered me because He delighted in me...Yea, Thou dost light my lamp, the Lord my God lightens my darkness.<sup>16</sup>

As witnessed in this group of quotations, the Psalmist states that God "delivers" him, the "beloved" "son" of the "Most High," from the jaws of "darkness" and "death" as well as from his "strong enemy" and from "those who hated me." This delivery occurs, of course, in a heartquake of turmoil and terror. In this way, God delivers His radiant Light out of the womb of pain and human "suffering." Or if you prefer more figurative language, God "has made the land to quake," and man's heart to shake, so His "beloved" son of Light may "walk" before Him "in the light of life." We can be assured, therefore, that God "delights" in the spiritually evolving soul of the Psalmist by "lighting" the "lamp" of his heart. Indeed, God "lightens" the Psalmist's "darkness" with His "light of life."

And so, from an Old Testament perspective, the heartquake of turmoil and terror leads to rebirth just as darkness and death are destroyed by Light. In this type of archetypal symbolism, God always roars into human consciousness. As He does, man experiences a

heartquake of pain and "suffering." But in this painful terror and the shaking of the human heart, God also "delivers" those who "walk before Him" up to "the Light." In truth, therefore, the Most High delivers His "beloved" son from the "strong enemy" who "hate" as well as from the darkness and death of an unenlightened heart.

With all this Old Testament archetypal symbolism in mind, it follows that Matthew would continue his symbolic story concerning crucifixion and resurrection by saying that again "there was a great earthquake for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven." Since this particular angel's "appearance was like lightning and his raiment white as snow," it is symbolic of Light-consciousness. We can expect, therefore, that this "angel of the Lord" is wearing the same symbolic garments that Jesus' heart put on when His spirit and "his face shone like the sun, and his garments became white as light" on the "high mountain" peaks of Light-consciousness.

In reference to hearts of Light, shining angels, and bright garments that are as white as light and snow, Matthew develops the following symbolic point. It stands to reason that if the "angel of the Lord" represents man's climb or resurrection into Light-consciousness, then this angel must also be the one who tells mankind -- via Mary -- that Jesus "has risen" into Light-consciousness. And again, it is very interesting to note that when the "angels" of the "Most High" appear in the Psalms, they also become involved in rising men's spirit "up." Or more precisely, when the "angels" of God do come down from the "habitation" of the "Most High," they "bear up" those men who seek His "refuge." Writes the Psalmist:

Because you have made the Lord your refuge,  
the Most High your habitation, no evil shall befall  
you, no scourge come near your tent. For *He will*  
*give his angels charge of you* to guard you in all  
your ways. *On their hands they will bear you up.*<sup>17</sup>

As the Psalmist suggests, the "angels of the Lord" are the symbolic spirits of Light who take "charge" of man's heart and "bear" it "up" to "the holy hill" of the "Most High" God. Upon this high mountain of vision, the Psalmist says that man must "worship" the Lord "who coverest thyself with light as with a garment." And he must do so "in [the] holy array" of garments that are white as light. It is quite obvious that Matthew understood this Old Testament symbolism

concerning elevated mountains, high vision, shining garments, and angelic spirits of Light. Therefore, his use of the "lightning" angel who "has a raiment [that is] white as snow" implicitly refers us back to Jesus' heart-transfiguring, mountain climb to the peaks of Light-consciousness. In this high ascent, you may recall that Jesus' heart also wore the "garments that become white as light." Hence, like the Essene Teacher's poetic symbolism, Matthew's use of symbolic garments of Light intimates an ingenious poetic connection between Jesus' spirit-transfiguring, "high mountain" climb into Light-consciousness and His rising (i.e., "he has risen"), or His bearing up, or His resurrection into God's heavenly kingdom of Light.

There is, however, more symbolic significance connected to this luminous "angel of the Lord." Matthew says, for example, that this radiant angel made the "**guards**," or those sons of darkness who crucified Jesus, become "**like dead men**." As we have discussed, those men who have not been "destroyed" by God will never be "filled with [His] Light." In a word, they "sleep" the "sleep of death" in a world of darkness and living death. Naturally, therefore, these guards "fear" the symbolic representation of Light-consciousness, (i.e., the "angel of the Lord"). In fact, they dread the angel's message of destruction, resurrection, and Light because they are those spiritually "dead men" whose hearts are not alive to the resurrection into God's Light.

As "dead men," the sons of darkness are doomed, of course, to walk amidst and "guard" the death-like "sepulchres" of their own dark hearts. And speaking of sepulchres, Matthew continues to develop his symbolic story by connecting this final segment to other earlier sections of his gospel. In particular, he says that the angel of Light-consciousness "rolls back the stone" which "secured" the sepulchre in which Jesus was buried. When interpreting this important passage, keep in mind what the Psalmist said about the "bloodthirsty" sons of darkness and sepulchres:

For there is no truth in their mouth; their heart is  
destruction, their throat is an open sepulchre.

Symbolically speaking, if the hearts of the "bloodthirsty" crucifiers of Jesus are "destructive," and their mouths are like an "open sepulchre," Matthew knows that it is again in keeping with good symbolism to have the "risen" Christ, or the son of Light who walks in the ways of

Light, walk out of this dark grave of death, hypocrisy, hatred, alienation, and estrangement from God. Why would any son of Light want to be entombed in such a death-like and hostile human environment? Instinctively, therefore, Jesus must rise up and walk out of this "open sepulchre" of spiritual darkness and living-death. Indeed, in His climb to His Father's Light, Jesus's heart "has risen" out of the dark, "destructive," and tomb-like consciousness of all the sons of darkness. And, of course, the "I am" of His being now walks in "the light of life."

With all this symbolic talk of sepulchres, Matthew is thus reminding us that the angel of Light-consciousness truly does "roll back the stone" that seals human consciousness in the unenlightened sepulchres of life. In so doing, he implies that man's resurrection into Light-consciousness is like walking out of, or rising up from, the tomb-like hearts of those hypocritical "blind guides" and "blind fools" who, as Jesus says, "shut the kingdom of heaven" and Light against other men. In fact, since the religious "**hypocrites**," "**false prophets**," "guards," and other sons of darkness not only sleep the sleep of death but also, as Jesus continues, "outwardly appear beautiful, but within **they are like dead men's** bones and all uncleanness,"<sup>18</sup> any "risen" son of Light must ascend out of "the white-washed tomb" and/or the "open sepulchre" within these "dead men's" dark hearts.

Now let us continue with Matthew's symbolic portrayal of Jesus' upward journey to the heavenly heights of Light-consciousness. After Jesus walks out of the open sepulchre of spiritual darkness, hypocrisy, and the consciousness of a living-death, the angel of God assures us that Jesus has "risen" to the Light of the Father. Matthew then says that the "eleven disciples" meet the "risen" Christ. Or in other words, the hearts that "seek" and "follow" now "find" the resurrected "I am" who is one with the Light of the Most High. Matthew describes this meeting with the following words:

And behold, Jesus met them and said, "Hail!"  
And they came up and took hold of his feet and  
worshiped him.<sup>19</sup>

Why, you ask, do the eleven disciples take "hold of his feet"? The answer, of course, is that the feet of any son of Light "walk in the ways of the Light." Knowing this, Matthew, being the ingenious poet that he is, has the "eleven" disciples "take hold of His feet" so they

can learn to walk -- in His Light-directing footsteps -- "to the mountain to which Jesus directed them." Obviously, any disciple who "follows" a son of Light must "walk" to the "high mountain" of Light-consciousness. For only on the "high mountain" of vision will God clothe their hearts in Light. And only there will they thus "have the light of life."

While the disciples of Light-consciousness are walking to the "high mountain" of vision and Light, they must, as Jesus said on that mountain, "observe all that I have commanded you."<sup>20</sup> And so too must we consider what He commanded:

I put into your mind to come up to this mountain so that you may hear what a disciple should learn from his teacher and a man from God. And when He had said this He showed me [John] a Cross of Light.

Only those who walk to the "high mountain" of vision will "learn" about the Light from their God. This Light appears to man like a "Cross of Light" as he "comes up to this mountain" of Light-consciousness. And as Jesus has said:

This Cross of Light is sometimes called Logos by me for your sakes, sometimes mind...sometimes a door...sometimes resurrection, sometimes Son, sometimes Father, sometimes Spirit...and so it is called for men's sake... But what it truly is, as known in itself, and spoken to us, is this: it is the distinction of all things, and the strong uplifting of what is firmly fixed out of what is unstable, and the harmony of wisdom, being wisdom in harmony.

As Jesus discusses, the Cross of Light that is seen on the mountain of vision is like a "strong uplifting," or like a resurrection-type, human experience in which man's heart rises into the "firmly fixed" Light/Word/Logos of God. In this book, we have "sometimes" called this spiritually uplifting experience "a door," or "sonship" with "the Father," or "Spirit," or "mind," or Light-consciousness. But whichever symbol you prefer, being personally "destroyed" and

resurrected upon the Cross of Light is an experience that is essentially "known in itself" as the "harmony of wisdom."

The "harmony of wisdom" comes only to spiritual mountain climbers! For only on the mountain-high Cross of Light does God crucify man's unenlightened and dead spirit. And only on the mountain-high Cross of Light does God resurrect the "new man," the "Christ," the "Son," or the "I am" of Jesus and any other son of Light, into the living and "eternal realm" of Light-consciousness. Obviously, therefore, only those men whose hearts "walk" to the "high mountain" of vision and see the Cross of Light will "learn" more about "what a disciple should learn from his teacher and a man from God."

Jesus Christ, the "risen" son of Light, guides our spiritual feet and hearts along the paths of Light by saying:

He who follows me will not walk in darkness,  
but will have the light... Walk while you have the  
light...that you may become sons of light.

Certainly, we must all "walk" to the "high mountain" of vision so we "may become sons of light." Or as the Teacher of Righteousness says, we must all walk in "the ways of light" so that God can "establish" our "feet on an infinite plain" of "everlasting" and "heavenly light." If we do, then we will understand that God "awakens" man's heart, and/or declares through His angel, that all the sons of Light have risen. For God truly does eternalize human consciousness with His everlasting and "heavenly light." Once awakened, man's spirit not only rises out of the dark tomb of hypocrisy, despair, hopelessness, hostility, alienation, and estrangement, but, in fact, finds "eternal joy in perpetual life" and forever "walks in the ways of Light."

Those who walk in Light also perceive that Light-consciousness is like a uniquely bright, high and heavenly, death-defying human consciousness. They say that it places man's living heart forever in the palm of God's "high," "powerful," and everlasting "Right Hand." They also insist that God's Covenant of Light forever binds man's living heart into the resurrection of eternal life. This resurrection of human consciousness happens in life as it does at the end of human life. It happens anytime, and most specifically, when man's consciousness rises into the timeless beauty of God's "everlasting" and "heavenly light."

Throughout this book, various "sons of light" have poetically represented their consciousness of the "light of life." For example, they have spoken of the "fountain of light," the "heavenly light," the "garment of honor in everlasting light," the "kingdom of light," the "house of light," the "cross of light," etc. In reference to His consciousness of the "light of life," Jesus once said:

Take my yoke upon you and learn from me; for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your soul. For my yoke is easy, and *my burden is light*.<sup>21</sup>

The yoke of Jesus is that spiritual Light which connects man's living heart to his eternal Creator. And since this yoke of spiritual Light has no physical mass, it is, as Jesus' play on words suggests, a "burden" that is "light" in weight and therefore "easy" to carry around. May we all "learn" that we too must "take" this "light yoke" (i.e., "they dwell before God under the light yoke")<sup>22</sup> upon us so that we may be connected to God. Then, in our heart's connection, we -- as sons of Light -- will forever see the Light that is "within a man of Light" and "find rest" for our souls.

In one of the newly released Scroll fragments, we learn that "THE ERA OF LIGHT IS COMING..." 4Q462 (p. 269) This "era of Light" has dawned, as we have discussed, within the consciousness of all the previously mentioned sons of Light. Indeed, as another Scroll fragment reminds us, "ALL THE SONS OF LIGHT ARE DESTINED FOR LIGHT AND ETERNAL JOY AND REJOICING." 4Q543, 545-8 (p. 156)

The important implication of these statements is that *every* man's ultimate destiny is essentially Light. For all men's evolving consciousness contains an eternal seed that will someday grow and ultimately blossom -- like a lily in the sunlight -- with the everlasting Light of the eternal Father. Henceforth, we can all be assured that, as still another Scroll fragment pledges, "THE DARK PLACES [within man's consciousness] WILL BE MADE LIGHT... AND ETERNAL BEING [WILL] BE THE LOT OF THE SEEKERS OF TRUTH." 4Q416-418 (p. 250)

Seek, therefore, the Truth of the Light of God within your heart. For if you do, then you too "will be made Light" and will be yoked to your eternal Father. And you too will "rejoice" and know the "eternal joy" of being an "Eternal Being." Then, on the wings of Truth, and with a heart full of Love and Light, you -- as a truly living

human son of Light -- will ascend to the "everlasting heights" of the Most High and Holy God.



## REFERENCES (Chapter VII)

1. The birth of Light-consciousness in man is, ironically, like an experience of death. To better understand all the symbolic meanings of Light and death, we will now examine what Jesus, the Teacher of Righteousness, and the Psalmist had to say on these subjects. In the next two sections, we have rearranged the order of quotations to compare the Psalmist with Jesus. Such a side by side comparison will more clearly illustrate their strikingly similar statements. It will also reveal that the Biblical authors skillfully wove these parallel expressions, like common symbolic threads, into the entire fabric of the Old and New Testament.
2. *NHL*, p. 130.
3. Wilhelm Schneemelcher, p. 234.
4. *NHL*, p. 130.
5. *NHL*, p. 135.
6. For a more in-depth discussion of the "builders of the wall" and the Pharisees, see: Hershel Shanks, ed., *Understanding the Dead Sea Scrolls* (New York: Random House, 1992), pp. 219-223.
7. Psalms: 1. 5:9, 62:4; 2. 97:7, 106:36.
8. *NHL*, pp. 138, 132. (Italics added for emphasis)
9. In sections IV and V, we will continue to quote from the Psalmist, but we will directly compare only Jesus and the Teacher of Righteousness. We limit our concern to these latter two sons of Light so the reader can more genuinely appreciate the circumstances surrounding their physical death as well as the analogous symbolic language used to describe these circumstances.
10. *NHL*, pp. 132, 134.
11. *NHL*, p. 133.
12. For more information on this subject, see: Joseph Campbell, *Transformation of Myth Through Time* (Tape) Vol. I, 1989, Mythology Ltd., Public Media Video 800-262-8600.
13. Psalms 13:3.
14. Psalms 44:22.
15. Maslow, pp. 65-66.
16. Psalms 60:2-5, 56:13, 18:17,19,28.
17. Psalms 91:9-12. (Italics added for emphasis)
18. Matthew 23:27. (Bold added for emphasis)
19. Matthew 28:9.
20. Matthew 28:20.
21. Matthew 11:29-30. (Italics added for emphasis)
22. *NHL*, p. 452.



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