

A Kingdom Not of This World

Chapter One

The Mystery of Christ in You

When the apostle Paul taught the first Christians that Christ lives within us all he revealed to them a mystery which God had kept hidden from man since the beginning of time, a divine truth which no person could have discovered within the boundaries and constraints of the logical/reasoning mind.

¹Even the mystery which has been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints: To whom God would make known what *is* the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is *Christ in you*, the hope of glory.

I believe that Paul's teaching concerning the Christ within us is the very heart of his message and the core of the gospel which he proclaimed to the Gentiles. It represents ²the hidden wisdom which God ordained to the glory of man before creation. I also believe that the way of life which Paul referred to as being ³*in* Christ was the cornerstone of his own spiritual experience and that when he taught the early Christians that ⁴we live and move and have our being in Him he was revealing to them a profound truth which had been revealed to him in the depths of that experience. The reason I believe this is because in my own spiritual journey I have come to the profound, yet simple, realization that I am in Him and He is in me. He lives within us all. He is the life in which all things exist and were He not in all things everything that is would utterly cease to be. Nothing could *be* except in Christ. Consequently, when I consider that Paul is the same apostle who once wrote ⁵“.....not I, but Christ lives in me” the only conclusion that I can come to is that the Christ within him is the very core of the gospel that he preached and the cornerstone of his own spirituality.

In and through the Christ within me I have experienced a mental and spiritual transformation which is beyond anything I could have ever imagined possible. In the deepest sense of the word I have come to know the true meaning and blessings of a *state of grace* which, when I compare it with the former state of sin, convinces me that it is quite likely the Christian church's best kept secret. Such a transformation is reminiscent of the words which Paul wrote to the Corinthians, ““Therefore if any man be *in* Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.” It is critical to appreciate, however, that a call to the life *in* Christ is addressed to the whole of a person, being *in* Christ in mind, heart, body, and soul, that is. The reason

1 Colossians 1:27

2 1 Corinthians 2:7-8

3 Romans 8:1 There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

4 Acts 17:28

5 Galatians 2:20

6 2 Corinthians 5:17

that it is so important to appreciate this is because, based on my own experience, to speak of one's mind being *in* Christ, for example, is to refer to a transcendent state in which the natural mind functions in a conscious unity with the indwelling Christ. As a result of this unity the former becomes unmistakably secondary to the latter so that, in actuality, the rational powers of the intellect no longer serve as the primary source of one's knowledge, truth, and understanding.

Let me say this as clearly as I possibly can. To me it seems as though, and I don't mean this literally, I simply awoke one morning a few years ago in a higher mind, a mind in which I have found that knowledge, or to be more specific, knowledge of the hidden nature of things, comes from within me in a very direct, distinct, and immediate way. This could be compared, for example, to the conventional step by step method of acquiring knowledge through a logical and rational thought process, arriving at conclusions based on premises, that is. In addition, rather than perceiving fragments of truth, or pieces of knowledge, in this higher mind I see the truth of things in a very broad, expansive, and holistic way. It also seems to me as though I have always known what I know since I have no recollection whatever of engaging in a learning process which has culminated in it or, for that matter, being privy to anything resembling a personal revelatory experience.

The reason I am making this point is because a few years ago *in* Christ, as Paul would say, I came to a knowledge of the two deepest and most profound mysteries of the gospel which is not only conceptually thrilling and extraordinary in and of itself, it is utterly new and unlike anything that has ever been taught in the history of the Christian church. The mysteries I am referring to are the ¹*mystery of the kingdom of God*, which Jesus taught is within us, and the ²*mystery of Christ*, who Paul taught lives within us. However, as unequivocally new as this knowledge is, it is deeply rooted in the bible and what the church believes about the nature of God. In contemporary thinking, though, these two mysteries would more likely be looked upon as two distinct aspects of the one great enigma, the greatest enigma, in fact, in the history of man,

.....the nature of consciousness/being within us.

In my own experience, though, it was the knowledge that came first and only after that did I discover, much to my amazement, that the apostles, including Paul, were similarly aware of this very same knowledge. However, following the example of ³Jesus who revealed divine truths only to them, rather than stating this knowledge outright in anything that they authored, they very subtly and ingeniously wrote it into everything that they authored. How do I know this? Because when I read the New Testament I can see what Christ revealed to them as plain as day. Indeed, I would go so far as to say that it is the unspoken premise of all that they wrote and, more than that, it is the unspoken premise of the whole of the bible from the first words in Genesis to the last words in the Book of Revelation.

1 Luke 17:21

2 Colossians 1:27

3 Matthew 13:35

The most obvious question is, of course, How is such a thing possible? If there is a hidden wisdom concealed within the bible that is so basic to its message why has it never surfaced until now? After all, for two thousand years untold numbers of highly intelligent scholars, some of whom represent the most brilliant minds in the history of the church, have devoted themselves to the study of the bible and Christian theology. How could it have so completely eluded them all? The answer to this question is much simpler than you may imagine. Firstly, the church has so radically marginalized and downplayed Paul's teaching concerning the Christ within us that the experience which I have described as the *mind in Christ* is hardly one to which Christian theologians and bible scholars throughout the centuries would have been privy. Secondly and more importantly, this sacred knowledge is so subtly interwoven into the very fabric of the New Testament that it could not possibly be discovered or logically deduced based on what is written. Why? In the final analysis, I would have to say that the reason is rooted in the faculty of reason. In other words, the human intellect, in and of itself, is the very veil which conceals it. Hence, as long as your intellect is the primary tool through which you seek to understand and interpret the bible, the treasure of wisdom which is buried within it will always elude you.

Before we continue on and begin to explore the mysteries of the *kingdom* within you, let me first clarify what I meant when I said above that what we will be exploring is 'utterly new.' If you have ever traveled to another part of the world, somewhere that you have never been before, no matter how new and different that place may be to you there will, nevertheless, be a certain aspect of familiarity to it. Why? Because, wherever you go, though they may be different, people are still people. Houses and homes, cars, planes, and trains may be different, but they are still houses and homes, cars, planes, and trains. Similarly, when speaking of basic Christian beliefs concerning, for example, the soul, immortality and eternal life, heaven and hell, salvation and, of course, Paul's teaching that the body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, although various denominations all over the world may differ somewhat on these subjects, they share much more in common than any differences that may seem to divide them. Consequently, no matter what part of the world you may be in, if you are sharing your faith with another Christian, whatever denomination he or she may belong to, there will inevitably be an aspect of familiarity in the basic beliefs that you both share.

However, when it comes to these very subjects, - the nature of the soul, immortality and eternal life, heaven and hell, and the nature of the divine within the human - what you are about to read concerning them represents completely new and unfamiliar territory. The words and the phrases, of course, are the same. Nevertheless, what I will be proposing they truly mean has no roots anywhere in the history of Christian theology or the teachings of the church. In other words, once we begin to explore the deeper meaning of these subjects, there will be very little familiar ground on which to stand. As Jesus Himself said in the Gospel of Thomas, "I will give you what no eye has seen, what no ear has heard, what no hand has touched, what has not arisen in the human heart."

What is the difference? The difference is the ¹ontology. It is the ontology that is utterly new and, regarding it, believe me when I say that once we begin to explore it you will find yourself needing to engage in a radical conceptual shift, a dramatic shift in thinking concerning your own innermost nature. As you read the following, then, it will be critical to do so with an open mind, being receptive to new knowledge and a new understanding concerning your own nature, the nature of consciousness and being in you, that is. Of course, it is equally important to question everything that you read and ponder it with a critical eye, but to do so with the Spirit of Truth reigning unrestrained in your mind, heart, and spirit.

With these thoughts in mind the following is an attempt on my part to put into words the true nature of the Christ within us in relation to the nature and destiny of the human soul, an understanding which, as I said above, is deeply rooted in the Word of God and what the Christian church believes concerning the nature of God. What can we learn about this subject which could actually be new from the bible and what we already believe about the nature of God?

I would like to begin to address this question with the help of the following visualization exercise.

Imagine that you are standing in a large empty field holding a tiny apple seed in the palm of your hand. You plant the seed in the ground at your feet and immediately a tree, overflowing with fruit, sprouts up right before your eyes. You pick an apple from the tree and proceed to eat it. However, instead of discarding the core, you look into it and discover a small handful of seeds, an *orchard within an apple*, so to speak, which you plant in a row directly in front of the tree from which they came. As you look on, a row of trees overflowing with fruit sprouts up, just as in the case of the first tree. So one at a time you take an apple from each tree and a seed from each apple and then you plant all of the seeds in a second row directly in front of the first. Once again as you look on, another row of trees overflowing with fruit sprouts up before your eyes. You then repeat this same planting, growing, and fruit-bearing cycle over and over and over again until finally, instead of standing in an empty field, you are now standing before an immense apple orchard.

For the purposes of this exercise the orchard which you have just created in your mind's eye represents the whole of the human race from the beginning to the end of time. This suggests that you and I as individual and distinct persons, as well as humankind as a whole, are represented in the fruit that is produced on the branches of each and all of the trees. With this imagery in mind I would like to propose a model of the nature of the Christ within us which is based, metaphorically speaking, of course, on the following principles of being:

1. In their original state all of the trees in this orchard were one in essence and being in the life

¹ In philosophy ontology is the science of the nature of being as it is in itself and, therefore, is the study of concepts of the nature of reality.

that was dormant in the first seed that you planted: a *corporate and timeless mode of being* in which the many are one and the one will become many. Hence, the orchard and every tree in it is the existent state, or the physical embodiment, of a life that was once dormant within a single seed.

2. When each seed that you planted germinated in the soil the *corporate essence* that would awaken within it would *beget* one of its kind: the essence of an individual and particular tree.

3. In the context of the inner nature of an apple tree, a corporate nature is like a *mystical orchard* which is fully present within every cell and molecule in it. It is life itself within a life and were it not present in each and every tree the entire orchard would wither and die and utterly cease to exist. This life is transmitted from one generation to the next, in every generation, in the seeds that are produced in the biology of reproduction. Hence, the life which was dormant within the first seed you planted, in actuality, is the very same life that was dormant within every seed that you planted from the first to the last, making it the *alpha and omega*, or the beginning and the end, of life in the orchard before you.

4. Rather than being fundamentally individual, a *corporate essence* is a species of being: a mode of being in which a species as a whole is fully present within each of its kind. As such, it is actually more like a realm of being than a mode of being. Nevertheless, the fundamental reality in this *corporate realm* is one, not many, a plurality of one, to be more specific.

5. The concept of a corporate nature is much more than simply a mental construct or the product of an overactive imagination. The reality, in fact, is that a mode of being in which a species is present within the innermost nature of each of its members is the ontological root and source of the social instinct in the animal kingdom. It is the unseen inner nature which draws a fish to a school of fish, for example, or a bird to a flock of birds. In the biblical tradition, it is the ontological distinction which differentiates the nature of a serpent from the nature of a lamb. It is the inner reality which causes the former to live a solitary existence and the latter to live within a social structure.

Whenever I ponder this extraordinary ontology, a model of the nature of being which is deeply mystical and needs to be pondered and studied over and over again, there are two thoughts which frequently come to mind. Firstly, although it is a far cry from conventional thinking on this subject, it unquestionably reflects the words of the apostle Paul:

¹we are all one in Christ,
²we are the body of Christ,
³Christ lives within us.

Secondly, based on this ontology it is apparent that the nature of life in the orchard before you is not at all what it seems to be. It is certainly not reflected in what presents itself to the senses which appears to be nothing more than a plurality of individual and fundamentally physical trees. Instead, it is reflected in the

1 Galatians 3:28

2 1 Corinthians 12:27

3 Colossians 1:27

orchard as a whole. Hence, the ontological model which we are exploring represents a *transcendent order of being* and, as a result, the task of comprehending it will be somewhat challenging. Think about it for a moment.

Based on the evidence of the senses and the dictates of reason, all living things appear to be nothing more than individual and distinct things. In other words, at the level of sensory experience it would seem that a living thing, by virtue of its nature, is separated in essence and being from all other living things. This, in fact, has been the fundamental assumption concerning the nature of the human soul throughout the history of Christian theology. On the other hand, the underlying premise of the above ontology is that....

Within the unseen domain of essence and being all of the trees in
this orchard are one in the life in which each exists.

This is the most basic and fundamental principle of a corporate nature and, yet, it is a highly abstract concept which the logical/reasoning mind may never fully grasp. Having acknowledged the extent of this challenge, then, we can now move on and begin to explore how the concept of a corporate nature applies to the nature of the human soul.

Based on the above ontology, I propose that the human soul, in its most fundamental nature, is a corporate consciousness in which man, the whole of the human race from the beginning to the end of time, is one in being, or *one being*, in Christ: a mode of being in which the many are one and the one will become many. In this corporate consciousness the fundamental reality is one, which suggests that consciousness and being in you is an essential union of two radically different natures, the human and the divine. On the one hand, your soul is the source of all that is universally human within you while, on the other hand, since it exists *in* Christ, it is also the portal, so to speak, to the divine nature within you. In the context of human nature, though, in the simplest possible terms, it is *man in you*, which should not be confused with the external manifestation of this nature, which is *man in the world*.

What I ultimately want to propose, though, is this:

In the same sense that the Son was begotten of the Father, man was *begotten* of the Son, conceived in the divine Mind, that is, before creation and what modern science refers to as the Big Bang. Hence, not only is a corporate nature the original nature and pre-existent state of man, it would be entirely appropriate to say that man is inherent in the Christ in you in the same sense that the three persons of the Trinity are inherent in the one God. The difference, of course, is that man is human in nature, while God is divine in nature.

The obvious question is, though, how do we reconcile the notion that man was begotten in the mind of Christ before creation with the biblical teaching in Genesis that man was created in the image of God and, therefore, is a created being? In response to this question I would say that one simply needs to distinguish between *man in you* and *man in the world*. For example, I would say that man in the world around you, a species

of life which exists in a created order, was unquestionably created and, therefore, shares a physical nature which is common to all of God's creation. However, I would also say that Paul's words ¹in Him we live and move and have our being" reflect a very insightful description of what the author of Genesis referred to as ²the *breath of life*. Given this imagery, then, it would be appropriate to say that in and through the breath of life which God breathed into his nostrils Christ became incarnate in Adam who, according to biblical tradition, was the first human person and the progenitor of humankind. However, since we are one in essence and being in the Christ who dwells within us all, what this implies is that we were all one in Adam. Which is what I was alluding to when I proposed that *all of the trees in the orchard before you are one in the life in which each exists*. This, of course, sheds a whole new light on the statement that Paul made in his letter to the Corinthians:

“³For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.”

The same is true of the words in Genesis,

⁴This is the book of the generations of Adam. In the day that God created man, in the likeness of God made he him; Male and female created he them; and blessed them, and called their name Adam, in the *day* when they were created.

This brings us to an important question, If the root nature of the human soul is a consciousness which is intrinsically corporate, from whence arises the uniqueness and individuality of the human person? The answer to this question is actually quite simple:

man in you begets the *son of man* in you,

a virgin birth, so to speak, which takes place within the unseen and unseeable domain of being. In other words, in the same sense that the Son was begotten of the Father and the soul of man was begotten of the Son, inherent in the nature of the soul is the power to beget the essence of one's individual self which, in more contemporary terms, would be referred to as one's *ego* or one's *conscious self*. This begetting principle which is intrinsic to the nature of being originates in the Father, in Absolute and Eternal Being, that is, and culminates in the son of man resulting in the emergence of Divine Being from the eternal realm of pure Spirit into the manifest world of matter, time, and space. More to the point, though, this begetting principle is the vehicle through which the One who dwells within the many, the One in whom the many are one, becomes many. To be even more specific, it is how God begets the children of God, doing so in and through the sons and daughters of man.

When is this potential to beget a new life actualized? It is actualized in the biology of reproduction which takes place within a mother's body. However, the begetting of a human life is preceded by an ontological phenomenon in which *as two cells become one two souls become one* through the power of the Holy Spirit who

1 Acts 17:28

2 Genesis 2:7

3 Genesis 2:7

4 Genesis 5:1-2

dwells within us all. Indeed, it is in and through this essential union that human life is conceived. As the author of Genesis wrote,

¹Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife:
and they shall be one flesh.

Jesus Himself repeated this same profound truth to the Pharisees when He said, ²“and the two will become one flesh. So they are no longer two, but one flesh.” Just as the apostle Paul wrote, “You know that the person who unites himself with a prostitute becomes one body with her, don't you? For it is said, "The two will become one flesh.”³In his letter to the Ephesians he also referred to this truth as a great mystery.

However, not only is this a deeply profound truth in and of itself, the implications which follow from it are enormous and far reaching to say the least. For example, the notion that the souls of two parents are one in the innermost being of every new life that they conceive tells us that the human soul is essentially a trinity of persons – mother, father, and child. What this brings to mind, needless to say, is the Christian belief that God is a trinity of Persons and that man was created in the image of God. Similarly, the notion that the soul is a *plurality of persons who are one in being* is reflected in the Christian belief that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are a *trinity of Persons who are one in being*. Even the begetting principle of being which I have proposed is inherent in the nature of the human soul is fundamental to the nature of God. What I am suggesting here is that, as radically new and different as this concept of the nature of being may seem, it is not entirely new at all and clearly stands on very solid ground. In fact, not only is it evident in both the old and the new testaments, it is equally evident in the following words of Jesus which are recorded in the gospel of Thomas,

⁴“When you make the two into one, and when you make the inner like the outer and the outer like the inner, and the upper like the lower, and when you make male and female into a single one, so that the male will not be male nor the female be female, when you make eyes in place of an eye, a hand in place of a hand, a foot in place of a foot, an image in place of an image, then you will enter the kingdom.”

These words suggest to me that the author of this gospel was not only aware of the model of the nature of the soul which we have been exploring, it would appear to be the underlying premise of what he has written here. In fact, I would say that what is unspoken in this saying, what is implied in it, that is, is precisely what I have said about two souls becoming one in the biology of reproduction. As if that is not enough, however, Jesus introduced a very enlightening and meaningful thought on this subject when He implied that the human soul is neither male nor female. Why? Because a corporate nature, a nature in which man as a species is one in being

1 Genesis 2:24

2 Mark 10:8

3 1 Corinthians 6:16

4 Saying number 22 in the Gospel of Thomas

would be neither male nor female by definition but, rather, would be the transcendence of all that is male and female in the human person.

This brings us to one of the deepest and most profound truths of human life and existence, one which is based on the realization that as two cells become one in the biology of human reproduction two souls become one in an essential union which bears fruit in the conception of a new life. You see, since this same ontological union has been and always will be repeated in every generation, as extraordinary as this may seem, one can only conclude from it that the human soul is not only a corporate consciousness, it is also multi-generational. To be even more specific, your soul has been evolving along a specific line of descent stretching all the way back to the dawn of human history and will continue to do so until the end of time. Hence, to say that your soul is constituted by *a plurality of persons who are one in being* ultimately means that all of the generations which have preceded you and all of the generations which will proceed from you live in you. In your deepest nature, therefore, your soul is essentially a cosmic and immortal being whose immortality is rooted in conception and new life, not death and the grave.

Think about that for a moment. Ponder this thought more deeply than anything you have ever pondered in your entire life for this immeasurably profound truth, and nothing less, is what constitutes the *mystery of the kingdom of God*, the kingdom which Jesus taught His disciples is within you. It is a pearl of wisdom which reaches into and touches the very heart of the gospel message. Yet, it doesn't quite make the final and ultimate point, which is this:

Since within you we are all one in Christ, one corporate consciousness, that is, the real truth is that *Christ is the kingdom of God within you*. He is the One within the many in whom the many are one. He is the Father's house in whom there are many mansions.¹

This is the highest and deepest truth of time and eternity, ²the mystery which God hid from ages and from generations,which is *Christ in you*, the hope of glory. The ultimate truth of your innermost nature, then, is that we are one in the divine Life in which you exist, the divine Consciousness within you ³in which you live and move and have your being. In the kingdom of God within us I am in you, you are in me, and we are one in Christ.

It goes without saying, of course, that this is a supremely abstract thought if ever there was one. As

1 John 14:2

2 Colossians 1:27

3 Acts 17:28

abstract as it may be, however, to see it from a more visual perspective you simply need to return to the orchard you created in your mind's eye, to when you were standing before the first tree that was grown from the first seed that you planted in that empty field. Stand back from this tree, so to speak, so that you can see the whole of it and all of the fruit on its branches. In this tree what you are seeing in your mind's eye is a very vivid and visual image of your deepest nature. Indeed, in Genesis and in the book of Revelation this nature is visually represented in *'the tree of life* which suggests that your soul, which exists in Christ, is like a *tree of life* in you. Hence, to be in Christ and to partake of the *fruit* of the *tree of life* is to be born of the Father in the Son through the power of the Holy Spirit. This is how the sons and daughters of man become the children of God. It is how we become the body of Christ in the world around us.

With that thought in mind, becoming Christ's body in the world, think of the *tree of life* before you as Jacob whom God renamed Israel. Now think of the row of trees which sprouted up before it as the twelve sons of Jacob and the trees which were born of them, in generation after generation, as the twelve tribes of Israel and ² the generations which followed from the twelve tribes of Israel as the nation which, in today's world, we now know as Israel. Do you see the point I am attempting to make here? Do you see the great mystery which is unfolding? What I am saying is that the modern day nation of Israel, in actuality, is the existent state, or the physical embodiment, of the soul who was born Jacob nearly four thousand years ago. Hence, all of the souls which now constitute the nation of Israel were once one in essence and being in the soul of man in Jacob.

In practical terms this is what it means to speak of the *corporate and multi-generational nature of the soul* and to say that it is a *mode of being in which the many are one and the one will become many*. Consequently, there is both a revelatory and a prophetic element in God's renaming Jacob Israel since only God could have known that in time Jacob would become Israel. Needless to say, of course, this sheds a dramatically new light on God's covenant with Abraham, the covenant in which He said to Abraham, ³“I will make of thee a great nation” and later on similarly said, ⁴“I will make nations of thee and kings shall come out of thee.” With thoughts such as these in mind, is it any wonder that Paul's soul could cry out to him, ⁵“O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?”

On a lighter note, this is where we can begin to more fully appreciate the Genesis account of the creation of man which proposes that the whole of the human race has descended from two first parents. Not that that is literally true, of course. But that is not the point. It is the model that counts since what the concept of a corporate and multi-generational soul presents is a very plausible and persuasive explanation of how the state of sin, a

1 Genesis 3:22, Revelation 22:2

2 While I am aware of the Ten Lost Tribes of Israel, for simplicity sake I prefer not to deal with this subject at this time since the point that is emerging is not in any way altered or negated by doing so.

3 Genesis 12:2

4 Genesis 17:6

5 1 Corinthians 15:55

fallen nature, could be transmitted indefinitely from generation to generation. Interestingly enough, it also sheds a startlingly new light on the Christian belief in the resurrection of the dead, a subject that we will be exploring at greater length at another time.

This brings us to an interesting question. Is there any evidence in the gospels that the apostles were aware of what I have been referring to as the corporate nature of the soul? My answer to this question is a resounding ‘Yes!’ and in support of that answer I would invite you to consider the following:

¹A demon named Legion,

²A whore named Babylon,

³A bride named Jerusalem,

⁴A patriarch named Israel,

⁵And a soul named Man,

Note the obvious similarity in the above names, all of which appear to imply that the nature of those named, in some way, reflects a multitude of persons or, in the case of the demon, a legion of demons. The reason I say this is because in biblical times names were frequently chosen to reflect something of the nature or characteristics of the one named. Hence, if you consider the above names in light of that custom, coupled with what I have just proposed about the corporate nature of the soul, an obvious conclusion becomes entirely plausible: the biblical authors who used them used this custom as a literary tool to veil, and thereby preserve, the very same mystery of being that we have just explored in Paul’s thinking. This would then suggest, though at a very subtle level, of course, that what was implied in these names is

the many who were one in the demon named Legion,
the many who were one in the whore named Babylon,
the many who were one in the bride named Jerusalem,
the many who were one in the patriarch named Israel
and the many who were one in the soul named man.

Mark, however, not only implied the inner corporate nature of the demon when he named him Legion, he also depicts him alternately as one demon and a legion of demons, which is precisely what is distinctive about this nature. But instead of stopping there, as if that wasn't enough, he clearly went the extra mile in his portrayal of what took place between Jesus and the demon. For example, when Jesus commanded the demon to come out of the man he begged to be sent, not into a single swine, but into the whole herd of swine. If this sounds familiar to you that is because it reflects precisely what I have suggested the apostle Paul meant when he said that man is

1 Mark 5:9

2 Revelation 17:5

3 Revelation 21:10

4 Genesis 32:28

5 *Adam* is the Hebrew word for *man*.

the body of Christ in the world. In retrospect, then, this implies that Mark and by association, therefore, all of the apostles, were indeed aware of the corporate nature of the soul. But were they also aware of the begetting principle of being that is intrinsic to the nature of the soul?

I would say that this is where the account of the virgin birth comes into play, the Christian doctrine which proclaims that Mary was a virgin when she conceived and gave birth to Jesus. When I consider this doctrine in light of all that we have just said there is not a doubt in my mind that by proposing that the *son of man* was conceived, not by Joseph who was espoused to Mary, but by the power of the Holy Spirit, the gospel writers had a very specific intention in mind. Their intention, that is, was to veil the deeper truth concerning the mystery of being in which *man* in you begets the *son of man* in you. In addition, the very title *son of man*, although it is not technically a name, nevertheless makes use of the custom in which names were intended to reflect an element in the nature of the one named. What we don't want to lose sight of, though, is that these two phrases, *man in you* and the *son of man in you*, are more commonly known in contemporary psychology as one's *subconscious* and one's *conscious self* or *ego*, a notion which puts all that we have been exploring here into a much more relevant and personally meaningful context. However, before we begin to explore that aspect of our subject let me take a few moments to share some thoughts with you on the ground we have covered up to this point.

I began this chapter by proposing that Paul's message concerning the mystery of Christ, the real presence of the Christ within us, represents the very heart and core of the gospel which he proclaimed to the early Christians. Since then, based on all that we have explored thus far, you should now be able to appreciate that this centrality is actually critical. Why? Because the only way that we can know our deepest and true nature, since He *is* our deepest and true nature, is when the natural mind functions in a conscious unity with Him, a higher cognitive state which I have described as the mind *in* Christ. In this manner the One that we *seek* to know rightly becomes the cause and source of all that we come to know. On the other hand, the human intellect on its own, absent this higher consciousness, functions more like a veil which conceals the knowledge we seek than a light which could reveal it.

The difference between the mind when it is *in* Christ compared to when it is functioning solely within its own innate boundaries is like the difference between seeing the world around you by the light of the sun compared to seeing it by the light of the moon. It is like the difference between living in the light and living in darkness. More to the point, what you will see in Christ is the oneness and inseparable unity of heaven and earth, a new heaven and a new earth where there is no death, where life is everlasting, where God is in His temple and you are that temple, where there is no darkness in you because the root and source of all that is in you is light and eternal life. When you are in Christ His kingdom has come and is risen in you. You are a new being, born of divine and eternal being, and old things have passed away so that all things have become new.

The problem with statements such as these, however, as grand as they may seem, is that anyone can

make them. Anyone can claim to have transcended the limitations of the rational mind and to function in a higher mind or at a higher level of consciousness. Yet, I didn't simply make that claim and leave it at that as if nothing more needed to be said. Instead, to demonstrate to you that my mind and spirit has indeed been transformed and renewed in Christ, I presented a model of our deepest and innermost nature which could not possibly have been the product of a purely logical and rational thought process but, in truth, could only have come from God. Moreover, this ontological model reflects precisely what Paul taught the first Christians: ¹we are all one in Christ, ²we are the body of Christ and ³Christ lives within us.

Ponder these words for a moment in light of the first three principles of being that I shared with you concerning the nature of life in the orchard you created in you mind's eye.

1. In their original state all of the trees in this orchard were one in essence and being in the life that was dormant in the first seed that you planted: a *corporate and timeless mode of being* in which the many are one and the one will become many. Hence, the orchard and every tree in it is the existent state, or the physical embodiment, of a life that was once dormant within a single seed.
2. When each seed that you planted germinated in the soil the *corporate essence* that would awaken within it would *beget* one of its kind: the essence of an individual and particular tree.
3. In the context of the inner nature of an apple tree, a corporate nature is like a *mystical orchard* which is fully present within every cell and molecule in it. It is life itself within a life and were it not present in each and every tree the entire orchard would wither and die and utterly cease to exist. This life is transmitted from one generation to the next, in every generation, in the seeds that are produced in the biology of reproduction. Hence, the life which was dormant within the first seed you planted, in actuality, is the very same life that was dormant within every seed that you planted from the first to the last, making it the *alpha and omega*, or the beginning and the end, of life in the orchard before you.

Can you see how such an ontology not only fits what Paul wrote about the Christ within us like a hand in a glove, one could reasonably conclude that is actually the underlying and unspoken premise of the whole of the bible from the book of Genesis to the book of Revelation. For example, it most certainly provides an ontological basis for the principle theme of the bible, which is the fall and redemption of man, for God's covenant with

1 Galatians 3:28

2 1 Corinthians 12:27

3 Colossians 1:27

Abraham, for the mystery of the Kingdom of God within you, for Christ's own words, ¹“I am the alpha and the omega,the one who is, who was, and who is to come,” and it unquestionably sheds a decidedly startling and new light on the nature and immortality of the soul as well as the Christian expectation of the resurrection of the dead.

When I put all of these thoughts together and simply sit back to ponder them, it becomes blatantly obvious to me that we are not simply talking about a new *interpretation* of the gospel or a different *perspective* on it. Instead, what we are talking about is a dramatically new perception of the gospel as whole, a whole new take on the central message which Jesus proclaimed during His ministry: the message of the kingdom of God. However, as peculiar as this may seem to anyone whose background is Christian theology, this new perception has emerged from a radically new paradigm of the nature of consciousness and being in us all. What is the source of all of this new thinking on such an old subject? My answer to this question, quite simply, is.....

Not I, but Christ in me!

You see, the truth, in fact, is that I am the least likely candidate to be writing on a subject such as this. I never finished high school. I work in a gas station. And I was a homeless alcoholic living on the streets when the Lord first tapped me on my shoulder. He reached into my deepest hell, restored my soul, and renewed my mind. Why? For no other reason than I had lost my way, as utterly simplistic as that may seem. He showed me the way home, to my true origin and roots. Indeed, what He revealed to me is that He is Himself the origin and root of my being. He is the eternal light from which we have come. He is the divinity in us which is the source of our humanity, the divine life in which we live and move and have our being. He is the kingdom of God within us, the Father's house in whom there are many mansions, and His purpose in us is to complete the work He began in the poverty of a manger in Bethlehem, on the cross of Calvary, and on the first Easter Sunday morning. This is the work that He would complete in you. May His kingdom come in you. May you rise to a new hope, to the resurrection and a new life, to a new being *in* Christ. This is my prayer for you and all of God's children, for we are all brothers and sisters in Christ.

1 Revelation 1:8

