



The Sharon Star

Headship

By P.A. Siemens

When we speak about headship, we are speaking about a theocracy. We are also talking about the kingdom of God, because the kingdom is a theocracy and not a democracy. Theocracy is God ruling, democracy is weak because it is the rule of man.

Isaiah 3:12 is the opposite of headship, or theocracy; it says, "As for my people, children are their oppressors, and women rule over them. 0 my people, they which lead thee cause thee to err, and destroy the way of thy paths." In other words, they destroy God's ways. Is this not the trend of our day, especially since the hippie movement (the drug movement), children have become our oppressors, and since the 'women's lib movement', women are having more authority in many areas, and it is affecting the church.

I Corinthians 11:3 says, "But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God." Authority from God to the youngest child, but different levels of authority; God our Father is head of all, Christ is the head of the Church, apostolic ministries set by Christ head of universal church, local elders set by ministries head of local churches, traveling deacons helpmeets to apostolic ministries, local church deacons helpmeets to local church elders, - same relationship as husband and wife, same submission. When I was a traveling deacon, I honoured the Brethren as my head, it gave

me great peace, also authority when needed, because I was speaking for the Brethren.

Universal Church made up of local churches and members of the body of Christ scattered throughout the earth, are the responsibility of apostolic ministries; local churches made up of families are the responsibility of elders and deacons. The father is the head of the home, the wife is his helpmeet (elder and deaconess). When husband is at work or away from home, the wife takes the responsibility of headship. Headship really means the ruler, whether it be the home, local church, or universal church. When father and mother go out for the evening and have mature children, they can designate authority to one of the children, and any disobedience to the one responsible, is disobeying father and mother and God, and will be accountable. God recognizes every level of authority; this is headship, and submission is what will bring the kingdom.

Before the Move of the Spirit, if children disobeyed unbelieving parents and went to church, they were wonderful Christians; if wives of unbelieving husbands went to church, they were wonderful Christians. But, in the early part of the Move, the Brethren taught headship and submission, and if parents did not want you to go to church, you stay at home, and if an unbelieving husband wanted you to stay home, in submission to your husband you would stay home, and the Brethren said, by submitting

God would make up to you everything, so that you would not be behind in any truth, and that by submitting, you could win your husband. Submission is powerful and will bring peace into our lives. I knew of a sister whose husband wanted her to come to the bar with him; she went, and he did not expect her to take a drink. It only happened once as far as I can remember. After that he came to church a number of times.

Exodus 18: 25-27 talks about different levels of headship, and that headship means, to be rulers. Verse 15 "And Moses chose able men out of all Israel, and made them heads over the people, (is this not what Christ has done?) rulers of thousands, rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens." Notice the heads were rulers. Verse 26 "And they judged the people at all seasons: the hard cases they brought unto Moses, but every small matter they judged themselves." Is this not the way the Church functions? The parents bring the hard things to the elders, the elders bring the hard things to the ministries, the ministries bring the hard things to the Lord in prayer for wisdom. So you can see there is great authority in submission.

We'll go back to I Corinthians, I Cor. 11:4-9. Verse 4 "Every man praying or prophesying, having his head covered, dishonoureth his head (Christ). Verse 5 "But every woman that prayeth or prophesieth with her head uncovered dishonoureth her head: (Doesn't it speak for itself? If a man has to remove his hat

to honour his head, then it is saying here that a woman must put on a hat to honour her head) ... for that is even all one as if she were shaven." Verse 6 "For if the woman be not covered, let her also be shorn: but if it be a shame for a woman to be shorn or shaven, let her be covered."

In 1945 during the war, I was in Holland. We fought from Good Friday evening to Easter Sunday Morning to take this city in Holland. So my gunner and I toured the city. That evening, the Dutch people found a Dutch woman collaborator, took her to a public place, in front of a crowd of people and shaved her hair off her head, the greatest embarrassment for any woman.

What Paul is saying here, it is just as wrong to be without a covering, as to be shorn or shaven. The coverings in the Church seem to be getting smaller and smaller, and I've also noticed some that were wearing coverings, are now without. I know you can wear the biggest hat and not be in submission, but not to wear a head covering is not being submissive.

Verses 7 and 8, "For a man indeed ought not to cover his head, forasmuch as he is the image and glory of God; but the woman is the glory of the man. For the man is not of the woman; but the woman of the man (his helpmeet)."

Ephesians 4:15,16 "But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ (head of the Church). From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love."

Ephesians 5:21-32 "Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God. V. 22 Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord (by submitting unto your husband, you are submitting unto the Lord). V. 23 For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church, and he is the saviour of the body (as Christ has and is doing everything for the Church so to bring into full relationship with the Father, so the husband should do everything to bring his wife and family into full relationship with Christ, his head)...". V. 24 "Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing." What a statement! Not just if you feel like it, or you think it is right, even as this sister went to the bar with her own husband.

There is no strife in a home where there is submission; there is no discord in the Church where there is submission. The kingdom would come when the will of the Father is done on earth, as it is in heaven. When we talk about submission, we do not tolerate physical or verbal abuse, and this will not happen if the husband loves his wife, or parents love their children.

Verse 25 "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it: V. 26 That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, V. 27 That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. V. 28 So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. V. 29 For no man ever yet hated his own flesh: but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church: V. 30 For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones." If we could fully comprehend what this verse means, it would transform our lives, to be members of His body, His flesh, and His bones. He is speaking here of the Resurrected Christ, who is seated at the right hand of the Father, not as a spirit, but in His resurrected body.

Verse 31 "For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. V. 32 This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church." It is because of this union that Christ is our head, and hath raised us up together and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus; this in reality is our position in Christ Jesus.

I Peter 3:1-7 "Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; (for they are the head) that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation (behaviour) of the wives; V. 2 While they behold your chaste conversation (behaviour) coupled with fear. V. 3 Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; (there is something far more beautiful). Verse 4 But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit (submissiveness), which is in the sight of God of great price." That spirit and attitude is priceless; it will bring peace to any home. That was the spirit of my mother; she

wouldn't have to say a word, her presence said it all.

Verse 5 of I Peter 3, "For after this manner in the old time the holy women also, who trusted in God, adorned themselves, being in subjection unto their own husbands:...". The beauty of submission, it outdoes any outward appearance; it will manifest the love of God; it will make you beautiful. V. 6 "Even as Sara obeyed Abraham, calling him lord: whose daughters ye are, as long as ye do well, and are not afraid with any amazement. V. 7 Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered."

Our relationship in the home, in the local church, in the universal church is very important, that our prayer life be not hindered. A kingdom divided against itself cannot stand. Our lives are being tested as never before. We are seeing more separations, and divorces, - which would not happen if we followed God's pattern. We have lost elders, deacons, and other members of the Church, because of lack of submission, and husbands giving up their headship. The husband is the head of the home and if children rebel, or the wife rebels, he is still the head, even as Christ is the head of the Church. Look at the patience Christ has with us. He chastens us in order to bring the peaceable fruit of righteousness, but He will always be the head.

Romans 13:1 "Let every soul be subject (in submission) unto the higher powers (authorities). For there is no power (authority) but of God: the powers (authorities) that be are ordained of God. V. 2 Whosoever therefore resisteth the power (authority), resisteth the ordinance of God (any resistance to any authority, is resisting God): and they that resist shall receive to themselves condemnation. V. 3 For rulers (the heads of home and church) are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power (especially when we realize all authority is of God)? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same: V. 4 For he is the minister of God to thee for good. (Every level of authority is of God and every disobedience shall receive a just recompense of reward.) But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid: for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God (referring to any authority or head

ship), a rewarder to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil."

Verse 5 of Romans 13, "Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath (judgment), but also for conscience sake." I thank God that He has given us eyes to see the order of the home, the church, and the Kingdom. Just think

what a calamity it would be, if there was no authority in the world. The authorities we have in the world today are very weak, because of the weakness of man, but when God's theocracy shall rule, which is God ruling in and on earth, what a glorious day it will be, - complete submission to our head in love, from

children to parents, wives to husbands, husbands to elders, elders to ministries, ministries to Christ, and Christ to God.

I Corinthians 15:28, "And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all."

Desire

By A. Hinchliff

To desire means to have a deep longing for, or to wish for. Desire can be for the carnal fleshly things of this life, for material things or the things of the Spiritual realm.

In Luke 22:15 Jesus said to his disciples, "With desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer: for I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God." He wanted the fellowship of that Passover meal with the twelve that He had walked with and taught throughout the years of His ministry.

At the end of the meal He took the loaf of bread and broke it and divided it among them saying, "this is my body which is given for you." He then blessed the cup saying that it was the new covenant in His blood which was shed for them. By eating of the one loaf and drinking of one cup they were establishing the unity that He desired among them. His instruction was that they should drink all of it, probably conveying a typical meaning concerning the cross that they would bear in the days ahead.

Jesus spoke of the desire of many who had gone before as He ministered to the crowd who followed Him to the seashore ...Matthew 13:16 "But blessed are your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear. For verily I say unto you, That many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them." What a privilege those followers had and what a privilege we have today. There was a hunger in the hearts of those prophets and righteous men that at the time could not be satisfied but which is being satisfied today in us by the moving of the Spirit of God. Our eyes are seeing and our ears

are hearing the marvellous things of the kingdom of God.

In Hosea 6:6 God speaks to Israel, "For I desired mercy, and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings." They were so intent on keeping the letter of the law that they paid no attention to the spirit of it. These words were the longing in the heart of God for His people. This scripture tells us what is in the heart of God and what He desires to see in His people. Psalms 145:8 "the LORD is gracious, and full of compassion; slow to anger, and of great mercy. The LORD is good to all: and his tender mercies are over all his works."

The book of proverbs describes how desire can be improperly directed. Proverbs 21:10 "The soul of the wicked desireth evil: his neighbour findeth no favour in his eyes." Jesus taught us what our desires and relationship to our heavenly Father and our neighbour should be. Matthew 22:37 "Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets."

Proverbs 13:14 describes a very common malady in our day. "The soul of the sluggard desireth, and hath nothing: but the soul of the diligent shall be made fat." (A sluggard is a lazy person.) Diligence and hard work will pay off. There may be hardships and set backs but God's promise will eventually come to pass. Paul deals with the sluggard in his letter to the Thessalonians. II Thessalonians 3: 10 "For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat. For we hear that there are some which walk

among you disorderly, working not at all, but are busybodies. Now them that are such we command and exhort by our Lord Jesus Christ, that with quietness they work, and eat their own bread." Proverbs 22:29 "Seest thou a man diligent in his business? he shall stand before kings; he shall not stand before mean men."

The flesh has many desires, all of which must be overcome if we are to enter the Kingdom of God. Galatians 5:24 "And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts." The glorious thing is that we can have the victory through Christ. Ephesians 2:1 "and you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. But God, who is rich in mercy, for this great love where with he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)"

Don't forget, we are going to have a battle. Jesus gave this warning to Simon Peter after He had told him and His other disciples of His appointment of them to His kingdom and the place in which they would serve in that kingdom. Luke 22:31 "And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren." Thank God for His faithfulness to us.

We can help ourselves a great deal. We read in Proverbs 23:1 "When thou sittest to eat with a ruler, consider diligently what is before thee: And put a knife to thy throat, if thou be a man given to appetite. Be not desirous of his dainties: for they are deceitful meat." Daniel and the three other Hebrews who were taken captive to Babylon purposed in their hearts that they would not defile themselves with the dainties from the king's table. Daniel 1:8 "But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's meat, nor with the wine which he drank: therefore he requested of the prince of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself."

We must heed the instruction of the apostle Paul. Galatians 5:25 "If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another." Quoting the same scripture from the Living Bible.

"If we are living now by the Holy Spirit's power let us follow the Holy Spirit's leading in every part of our lives. Then we won't need to look for honours and popularity, which lead to jealousy and hard feelings." Romans 12:21 "Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good."

There were those in Paul's day, of whom he warns Timothy, who did a lot of talking yet didn't understand what they were talking about. I Timothy 1:5 "Now the end (goal) of the commandment is charity (love) out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned: From which some having swerved have turned aside unto vain

jangling; Desiring to be teachers of the law: understanding neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm." Sad to say, there are many of the same today of which the church needs to be careful.

The Holy Spirit divides the gifts of the Spirit for the benefit of all the members of the body of Christ and in fact for the population of the whole earth. For the purpose of accomplishing God's purpose we are instructed in I Corinthians 14:1 "Follow after charity (love), and desire spiritual gifts, but rather that ye may prophesy." If the person operating the gift does so to demonstrate their spirituality it will be as a tinkling symbol or sounding brass. We must seek and desire spiritual gifts in order to minister edification to the church and to the world.

In Paul's instruction concerning elders we read this. I Timothy 3:1 "This is a true saying, If a man desire the office of a bishop (overseer or elder), he desireth a good work." If a man's desire for eldership is a carnal desire where his ambition is to be a lord over the church it is wrong. A man's desire should grow out of a spiritual father's concern for the people of God. I Peter 5:2 "Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock."

God desires truth and wisdom in His people. Psalms 51:5 "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother, conceive me. Behold, thou desirest truth, in the inward parts: and in the hidden part thou shall make me to know wisdom. Purge me with hyssop,

and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow."

Isaiah wrote of the longing of his heart. It was something that stayed with him day and night. Isaiah 26:9 "With my soul have I desired thee in the night; yea, with my spirit within me will I seek thee early: for when thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness." Proverbs 21:20 "There is treasure to be desired and oil in the dwelling of the wise; but a foolish man spendeth it up." We think of the oil as the anointing of the Lord who in His graciousness has poured out His Holy Spirit upon us.

II Corinthians 5:1 "For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon, with our house which is from heaven: If so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked." We must make sure that we have enough in the heavenly realm to clothe ourselves. It would be a shame if when the Lord attempts to clothe us with that heavenly house we don't have enough material to cover ourselves. I am sure that Paul added this last verse as a caution to us. The wonderful thing is that we have this hope of putting on that eternal house...

Psalms 37:3 "Trust in the LORD, and do good; so shall thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shall be fed. Delight thyself also in the LORD; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart. Commit thy way unto the LORD; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass."

Retirement

With our sincere love and thanks to our brethren: A. Erwin Livingston and Peter W. Berg, for their many, many years of sincere, anointed and faithful ministry to the church, the body of Christ.

We, as your brethren, wish to express our appreciation to you for the many times we have been privileged to travel together with you to many places and countries in our heavenly Father's vineyard. Sometimes through difficult times when we prayed and wept together. But there were more wonder

ful, blessed times when we rejoiced together greatly as we witnessed the wonderful, blessed outpouring and moving of God's Holy Spirit upon the church.

So now, from all of us brethren and the whole church, we pray God's continued blessing upon, with the best possible health and contentment during your retirement years. May you continue to bloom and bear much fruit as you continue abiding in the vine, growing in the garden where God has planted you.

Thank you again brethren with our sincere love and prayers from all the ministering brethren and the whole church. We remain united in one Spirit with you. God Bless You. We remain your brethren in Christ.

Don't You Trust Me?

One day a friend and I were driving to an appointment. The road we had to travel is notorious for being slippery when wet. It was wet and it was slippery. I have always been a nervous driver, and a very nervous passenger. Soon my friend realized I was frightened. She jokingly asked, "Don't you trust my driving?" Her words cut to the quick. Hadn't I heard those words somewhere else, just recently. In that moment I remembered the many times I had gone to the Lord worrying about a situation, and worrying, and worrying. And never letting go of that worry, until it had undermined my trust in the Lord, demanding He do something, my way, right now!

I had seen my child trying to get into a certain line of studies. That child had worked so hard I just felt the Lord couldn't refuse her request. I banged on the gates of heaven with my demands, day in and day out. Surely the Lord would hear my request and see to she got into that school. Then I heard that still small voice say,

"Don't you think I know what is best for her." And I was quiet, finally with the knowledge He had heard, and He did know the end from the beginning where my child was concerned. I left her in His care. She has recently convocated with a degree, in a line of work that will uplift and bless many in days to come. God knew.

My husband and I were traveling to visit his family. I received the itinerary some time before we left. We were to change airlines in a large city. I was concerned because we had only minutes to change from one airline to another; The airport is large, with three terminals. How would we ever find the airline in an unfamiliar place in such a short time? Every time I passed the desk where the tickets lay, I asked the Lord for help. The morning finally came for us to leave. As we approached the ticket counter the clerk asked if we minded taking an early flight, seeing they had over booked.

Would you mind going "first class;?"

I couldn't believe the Lord had supplied such an easy solution, in such a "first class" manner. We had lots of time to find the next airline. God knew how to give us more time!

One winter many years ago we were short on cash. I was on my way to town. Number one on my list was a pair of mitts for my boy. Mitts in the wintertime in our country are a necessity. But I knew what I had in my pocket, and I thought I knew what was in the bank account. There was not enough to buy mitts. Again I heard that comforting voice, "I will provide more than enough." When I got to town, I first went for the mail. In the mail was our bank statement, with the interest on our account for the last year. I had more than enough to buy my boy mitts. God knew my need. God provides.

Little by little I am learning that God knows what is best for me and my family. God knows what we need. And God provides. Can I trust Him? Yes, I can.

- A Mother in the Church

The Threshing Floor

By E. Hardi Kubassek

In the primarily agricultural based economy of the Israelites the threshing floor was a very important focal point of the community. Many months of labour such as plowing, planting, watering, were all invested so that there would be a harvest of grain to feed the population. The grain was cut, tied into bundles and carried to the threshing floor. The payback for the year's effort would now be known, by quantity and quality. The majority of the material carried to the floor was not the seed itself but the straw and chaff which was once green and nurtured the grains in the head.

At this point the grain plant is completely dried and of a golden hue. Cradled inside the delicate chaff is the sought after kernels. Each grain was hard and dry yet very much alive for if it would be planted it had the ability to grow into another whole plant just like the one on which it grew. This grain also had life-giving ability within itself as food for those who ate it.

The threshing floor was a busy place for many activities, in fact it became a community centre. We will focus on what happened to those many bundles of golden grain as they were processed. There were numerous methods throughout history that the reapers used to accomplish the threshing. Included in what are called threshing tools was the sickle, a sharp instrument used to cut the plants off just above the ground. Flails of various types were long sticks or sticks connected by a flexible joint with which the bundles were literally beaten to cause the chaff to release the individual kernels. Yet another method used was to have oxen tread back and forth over the bundle until the desired separation was accomplished.

Once the straw, chaff and the grains were well beaten then the straw was lifted off and put aside, possibly to be used as animal fodder but never for human consumption. What was now left on the floor was quite messy to look at,

a mixture of grain, chaff, and broken bits of straw. What was being processed here was food for human consumption and seed for next years crop. The threshing continued though it required other tools and means to complete the work. Using a hand held fan was a common tool which when waved back and forth created a wind which caused the lighter materials such as dust and chaff to become airborne and drift off with the breeze. This separation was also accomplished by filling baskets with the mixture and slowly pouring it back onto the floor from some height. This is called winnowing. In this method the energy of the passing breeze was utilized. The heavier grain fell straight down while the lighter undesirable portion was carried away with the wind. It would appear that the chaff and dust were actually burned being considered useless and a nuisance.

Many are the spiritual lessons and metaphors in connection with what took place on the threshing floor. You may

already realize that which happened to the grain has been happening in your life. Numerous prophets spoke by the Spirit and related their message to this commonly understood procedure. The numerous references by Jesus and others in the New Testament to grain also helps us to relate this threshing process to the Kingdom of God and our preparation and place in it.

Fan in His Hand

"I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing fan is in His hand, and He will thoroughly purge His threshing floor, and gather His wheat into the barn; but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire." Matt. 3:11 & 12.

This scripture very powerfully portrays the purpose of Christ appearing among us. First of all we are to understand the authority with which He comes. He is not a man coming on His own appointment to promote a religious philosophy. Jesus is commissioned by The Almighty Father, and is endued with His power to clean up the sin of all who inhabit the earth while gathering the purified grain into God's storehouse. The tools of His appointment are in His hand and the Holy Spirit within Him will ignite the flammable and undesirable chaff and dust. The work which He has set out to accomplish reaches far beyond what most Christians have understood or believe.

We have often compared ourselves with others and concluded that we are holier and therefore have achieved what is acceptable with God. In the above verse there is the all-inclusive word "thoroughly". The purifying isn't complete until every impurity is dealt with and cleanliness meets His standard. The term "it is good enough" is foreign in God's vocabulary, and when we think or speak about spirituals let us avoid using it. Absolutes are very hard for finite human minds to relate to, it takes the illumination of the Holy Spirit for us to understand anything that relates to God.

Thank God for Job

As individuals we who are willing to go on with God, will time and time again, sometimes seemingly continually find ourselves on the threshing floor. The many elements which press us down to the ground have often confused us into thinking that the Lord has forgotten about

us while Satan is beating on us. There isn't a better example that I know of than that of Job who in God's eyes was the most righteous person living on the earth at the time. Satan appeared in the presence of God one day, and God asked Satan if he had considered His servant Job. Satan knew Job very well for he had tried hard to tempt him without success. Satan actually complained that God had put a hedge around Job to protect him. Satan thought that Job only loved God because of His protection and the many financial blessings he enjoyed as part of his relationship.

In a short overview, God allowed Satan to strip Job of all his family with the exception of His wife. Satan was not allowed to touch Job's life and God saw Job and His wife as one flesh. All of the wealth and children were destroyed in a matter of hours, but Job stayed true to his faith in God. Satan was not satisfied to let Job alone but had the audacity to suggest that if God would touch Job's skin he would in fact curse God. Job's wife was completely overwhelmed by grief and the terrible loss and told Job that he should curse God and die, as a relief from his agonizing state and putrefying skin sores.

This sort of threshing also threw Job off from his normal thinking and attitude toward the God He knew and loved. He in fact complained that this should not have been the lot of one who did many good deeds in caring for the poor and widows. Finally in his conversation with friends who thought they had the answers to his problems. Job began questioning God. The end of Job was very blessed for he repented of his questioning of God's ways and decisions concerning his life. Job also obeyed God in praying for and forgiving his friends. The Lord gave other children to Job and his wife, and the wealth of Job was doubled. The full value of this terrific threshing will not be told until ages to come. Job was a good man, but God saw an opportunity to make him a holy man, tried in the fire, yet true to the faith. The riches of Job's experience have helped untold millions through their darkest hour. Many stand in the presence of God and His holy angels today because they have been inspired by Job's perseverance.

Personal Threshing

There is a unique process ordained of God for each of us whom He has called. Our specific trials, testings, chastening,

and refinement will bring us to sonship as we co-operate with our Lord. The first thought that comes to many minds is that God has forsaken us, otherwise this would not be happening. "This shouldn't happen to Christians." "God isn't holding up His end of our relationship." There are many other statements we, make as we see our world crashing down around us. Satan is never far away and freely suggests forsaking the Lord or that the Lord has abandoned us. Our own thoughts are our worst enemy. We try to understand what is going on in the spiritual realm with our earthly minds, and we just cannot make sense of it. My prayer is that as you read this article you will be helped to see the purposes of God rather than allowing Satan to defeat you.

The severity of the testings we face are relative to the measure of Spiritual growth we have attained. This should give us great comfort as well as preparation for what we have yet to face. "No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it." 1 Cor. 10:13.

Our Heavenly Father is very protective of us and He will never allow us to be pressed beyond measure. How often we have felt the threshing instrument flaying and have said, "This is more than I can bear." Recently I told the Lord that I was in an emotional hell, feeling that I was being tried beyond what I should have to bear. In a calm and loving voice the Saviour spoke so tenderly, "What you are going through isn't nearly as bad as hell, I know, I was there." In the flash of a moment I was given a sense of the reality of hell; The darkest of darkness filling a void space with shrill screams echoing as it were in bare cold concrete rooms. My emotions were being tried beyond anything that I had ever experienced but my ordeal was pale in comparison to the desolation of hell. My nerves were frayed and weary but nothing to be compared with those whose minds have been totally devastated and are confined to an insane asylum.

There is a lot of suffering of every description among the saints of God. Satan is relentlessly looking for every opportunity to press us down and wear us out. In Daniel 7:25 we read that Satan will try to wear out the saints, but as we read on in verse 27 it becomes plain to

see that "The kingdom and dominion shall be given to the saints of the Most High." In order for us to press on in God 4 against such an onslaught we must clearly understand its purpose. The fire of purification is even more difficult to bear than the pain that one experiences when our body gets burnt. Even when our bodies are attacked by disease this is only the means of Satan to soften up our resolve to live holy and godly. The bombardment of the mind with countless thoughts, fears, doubts and questions is where our greatest tests take place. Satan knows that he is not able to dissuade us when we are in our strength, and as a result will do everything in his power to bring us to a vulnerable weakened position.

Nothing can separate you!

One line which Satan has so often used is to tell people that the Lord doesn't love them any more since they cannot feel His presence. "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written: For your sake we are killed all day long. We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present or things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." Rom 8:35-39

The Church's threshing.

The individuals who make up the body of Christ are also collectively experiencing the separation process. From the very beginning of Church history we find that not all individuals and groups of individuals were associated with the body for the right reasons. Some had evil intentions of infiltrating the church as satanic mercenaries to sabotage the fledgling move of God. "For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ." Phil. 3:18 "I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a different gospel, which is not another; but there are some who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ." Gal. 1: 6&7.

"For certain men have crept in unno

ticed, who long ago were marked out for this condemnation, ungodly men, who

turn the grace of our God into licentiousness and deny the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ." Likewise these dreamers defile the flesh, rejecting authority, and speak evil of dignitaries" Jude 4 & 8. We still find people who operate much like these reprobates of two thousand years ago. "But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them, and bring on them swift destruction. And many will follow their destructive ways, because of whom the way of truth will be blasphemed." 2 Pet. 2: 1 & 2.

There is an ongoing separation taking place within the Church which exposes those who are undermining the work of the Holy Spirit. Any opposing elements will eventually be exposed. Those who repent will be restored and will begin to contribute to the good of the whole body. Those who choose not to lend themselves to the Lord of the harvest will be removed by Him. "Little children, it is the last hour; and as you have heard that the Antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come, by which we know that it is the last hour.

They went out from us, but they were not of us, they would have continued with us; but they went out that they might be made manifest, that none of them were of us." 1 John 2:18 & 19.

(Continued in next issue)