

The Three Spheres
Far Above All
The Superheavenlies

A REPLY



Current Delusions

CONCERNING "THE THREE SPHERES," "FAR ABOVE ALL," AND "THE SUPER-HEAVENLIES"

THE UNITY of the spirit is to be kept in the tie of peace (Eph. 4:3). In our endeavor to preserve this unity we have refrained, as far as possible, from publishing articles exposing the errors of others unless the truth had been attacked and we were compelled to stand by it (2 Tim. 4:2). In one case we issued our protest in proof form but did not insert it in the magazine, in the hope that it would lead to a reconsideration and retraction. It is now many years since this was done, but no heed has been paid to our exposition. On the contrary, this teaching is now being spread more than ever. Several have strongly urged us to publish the article so long withheld, as this will serve the interests of peace more than if we hold it back still longer.

What follows is this article in revised form and brought down to date. We commend it to the earnest attention of all who are interested in the correct cutting of the Word of truth. In almost every case when a new truth is discovered, some are carried away by it, and go to such unscriptural extremes that the whole subject is brought into discredit and ridicule. This is the case with a teaching which has for its key words, "The Three Spheres," "The Super-heavenlies," and "Far Above All". We hope by God's grace to show that these are not only unknown to God's holy Word, but contrary to it, and subversive of the grace which is ours in Christ Jesus.

A few facts have been twisted to support ideas which would never have been entertained if *all* the evidence were presented. We earnestly beg our readers not to confuse concordant teaching with a super-dispensationalism which is based on discordant and unscriptural terms.

THE THREE SPHERES

The foundation of this method of dividing the truth is called "the three spheres". The first verse of Genesis, we are told, gives us the key. There is the earth, the heavens and "the sphere of the Creator". As this last sphere is *not* mentioned in Genesis 1:1, but only inferred, it is explained as "a place that is far above the heavens" (Eph. 4:10). Further evidence for the "third sphere" is found in the word rendered "super-heavenlies". The Biblical basis, then, is Genesis 1:1, Ephesians 4:10, and the occurrences of the Greek word *epouranion*, which the Authorized Version renders *heavenly* as a rule, but *celestial* in 1 Corinthians 15:40.

The first question to settle is this: Are there three spheres in the first verse of Genesis? First, what is a "sphere"? As it is not an inspired term we have no means of fixing its force. In fact it is not needed at all in this connection, except to make vague what is otherwise plain and clear. This teaching does not begin with the *two* places mentioned in Genesis 1:1, but with a philosophical universe divided into the earth, the heavens and the place where God is. This puts God outside of the heavens and the earth, and puts the creation outside of God. Is this not diametrically opposed to Scripture? Paul, speaking of this very thing, said, "*in Him* we are living and moving and are" (Acts 17:28). He insisted that God "is existing *not far* from each one of us".

Later on, after it has been used as the foundation, this definition of the "third sphere" is withdrawn, and God is not localized, but the teaching which was based upon it is not withdrawn. If God is not localized, then

there is no necessity for any third sphere in Genesis.

What a hotbed is this for philosophical speculation! Not being in "the sphere of creation", this third sphere is uncreated! Then we are under the necessity of defining an uncreated sphere, for if we have no idea of what it is, how can we locate it "far above all"? Evidently this sphere is not only outside creation but also absent from revelation. God speaks of *two places*, the earth and the heavens. God is not a place or a sphere, and does not need any. We are not called upon to speculate on these points but to *believe the record*. And the record mentions *two*, not three "spheres". Herein we may see the true character of this teaching. It does not call for *faith* in what is *written*, but asks us to follow *inference* based on what is *not written*.

If this teaching had come to us with *two* "spheres", and had given Genesis 1:1 in support of it, we could look with considerable sympathy on the claim, even if the term "spheres" does not seem called for. But to claim three, where the Scriptures plainly reveal only two, suggests to us that the whole teaching is not really based on Scripture, but on philosophical theories quite outside of it and contrary to its plainest revelations. And this will be confirmed as we investigate further the Scriptures from which it seeks evidence for its support.

Moreover, the sacred record definitely limits the number of spheres to two when it speaks of "the all" as divided into the heavens and the earth (Col. 1:16). This is confirmed by other passages, all of which speak of *two* divisions of *the all*, not of more, as Hebrews 1:10:

Thou, Lord, . . . dost found the *earth*,
And the *heavens* are the works of Thy hands.

But it may be objected that this third sphere, not being created, is not the subject of early revelation. Let us turn then to Ephesians, which all acknowledge as the very last and highest we have. There we read that God's

secret will consists in heading up "the all" in Christ, in the heavens as well as on the earth (Eph. 1:10). Here we have the *latest* revelation concerning the last eon. At that time the all—not a part or two thirds—the *all* consists of two places or "spheres". Even if we refuse to accept the testimony of the word *all*, it still remains that Christ will *not* (so far as God has revealed) be Head in an uncreated third sphere, and no one who loves Him should have any desire to enter it without His company.

Further evidence is sought in our loose version of the Hebrew. Psalm 8:1, which the Authorized Version renders, "who hast set thy glory *above* the heavens," which the Revisers have changed to "*upon* the heavens", is used to show that the third sphere is "the glory". But the whole context shows that this glory is visible from the earth and is seen when we consider the *heavens* (verse 3). But the Hebrew does not use the word "glory" here. A concordant rendering would be "Who bestowest Thy *splendor* on the heavens." The mention of any "third sphere" in this psalm would be utterly out of line with its message.

Another passage produced is Psalm 113:4, a study of which will be helpful:

The Lord is high above all nations,
And His glory above the heavens.

The CONCORDANT VERSION, which seeks to reproduce the order of the words, which is essential to Hebrew poetry, renders it as follows:

Exalted over the nations is Jehovah:
Over the heavens is His glory.

The same word *ol*, *on*, occurs here, though the English idiom demands *over*. This is a fine example of Hebrew parallelism. "Jehovah" is balanced by "His glory", and "nations" by "heavens". The parallel is marred if we take "heavens" literally, as though the word "earth" were in the first line. From this it is evident

that it is used in a figurative sense, of the organized inhabitants of the heavens, corresponding to the nations of the earth. A ruler can be "over" a nation without being in heaven. God's glory can be "over" the heavens without being outside and above it.

Here we have a figure of speech which is worthy of further investigation. In Matthew 3:5 we read that Jerusalem went out to John the Baptist. That was impossible. The *city*, the *place*, did not go, but the *inhabitants*. This is the figure we call *association* (usually called *metonymy*), because it uses a term *associated with* that which is intended, as, Jerusalem, for its inhabitants. Heavens is often spoken of in this way. In the Unveiling (12:12) we read, "make merry, O heavens". "Let the heaven and earth praise Him" (Psa. 69:34[35]). "Give ear, O ye heavens" (Deut. 32:1). This is the force of heavens in Psalm 113:4. Moreover, the exaltation is not physical, so as to place the nations in one sphere and the Lord *over* them in another. The word *over* may be used in a figurative sense, hence *is never proof of another "sphere"*.

This case illustrates one great canon of interpretation which is constantly being violated by most of us. *Figures do not prove facts*. If a man should be chosen dictator *over the earth*, that would not prove that he is not on earth but above it, in a separate sphere, in heaven. Neither does the figurative expression "over the heavens is His glory" prove that His glory is not in heaven.

The following examples are given us of the "three spheres", so we may know what is meant:

1. The earth.—"The meek shall inherit the earth."
2. The heavens.—"The inheritance reserved in heaven."
3. The super-heavenlies.—The Church of the One Body.

No references are given. There is no question as to the first "sphere". The second may be found in Peter (1 Pt. 1:4, "kept") and in Colossians (Col. 1:5, "the expectation which is reserved for you in the heavens," C.V.).

According to this, the Colossians were not in "the Church of the One Body" for *their* expectation was in the "second sphere"! The phrase "church of the one body" does not occur in the Scriptures. The expression "one body", however, is found in an epistle addressed to the *church* at Corinth, who are told, "For in one spirit we all are baptized into *one body* . . ." (1 Cor. 12:13). Yet *this* "church of the one body" (since it existed before Acts 28) belongs to the "second sphere"!

FAR ABOVE ALL

Let us now examine the passage which is supposed to settle the existence of the third sphere (Eph. 4:10). There we read:

Greek	<i>huperanō</i>	<i>pantōn</i>	<i>tōn</i>	<i>ouranōn</i>
Sublinear	OVER-UP	OF-ALL	OF-THE	heavens
Revised C. V.	up over	all (<i>that is</i>)	of the	heavens
Present C. V.	up over	all	the	heavens
A. V.	far above	all		heavens

The Greek word *huperanō* (OVER-UP) denotes *that part* of a thing which is up over the rest *of* it, when followed by the genitive case. Note that it does not read in the Greek as in the usual English translations "all the heavens" but "all *of* the heavens". In English the distinction between "all the heavens" and "all *of* the heavens" has been lost because of our idiom "all *of*", which means no more than "all". In order to overcome this defect in our language and preserve the genitive case, it seems best to insert the words "that is", which are understood in the Greek.

As few of us are sufficiently adept in either Greek or English to pass upon such grammatical and idiomatic problems, we will base nothing upon expert evidence, but use the concordant method to show that this phrase "far above" often denotes the highest part *of* a thing, neither *far* above it nor distinct from it. We will give the Authorized Version renderings first.

A. V. renderings of *huperanō*, OVER-UP

- Eph. 1:21 *Far above* all principality, and
 4:10 that ascended up *far above* all heavens,
 Heb. 9: 5 And *over* it the cherubims of glory

In the ark of the covenant (Heb. 9:5), we have the best possible illustration of the force of this word. Surely the cherubim were not "*far above*" the ark. They were actually made of the ends of the propitiatory, or mercy seat, which rested *on* the ark. It is likely that the lower parts of the cherubim were below the "crown" of the ark. All thought of distance and disjunction are excluded. *Huperanō*, in this case, may denote *near* rather than *far*. Moreover, in the Hebrew Scriptures the expression "the ark" was taken to include the mercy seat with its cherubim. It was considered as one. The priests were charged with the care and carriage of "the ark" (Num. 3:31). No provision was made for the mercy seat if this was not included in the ark. It was indeed an essential part of it. It could by no means be considered a separate "sphere". Just like the lid of any box, it was nothing by itself, but was necessary to the completion of the ark itself.

But Ephesians 1:21 makes the matter even clearer, for here we have our Lord Himself and His exaltation, just as in Ephesians 4:10. The theme is the subjection of *all*. With this in view He is seated *up over* every sovereignty and authority and power and dominion and every name that is named. Does this imply that He has no sovereignty or authority or power or dominion or name? Quite the contrary. He is the highest of those who have all these, just as, later, He is not "*far above* all heavens", but *up over* all who are of the heavens. He is not above and distinct from these celestial and earthly dignitaries, in a "sphere" to which they do not belong, but He is their Head and they are subject to Him. To put Him in another "sphere" would rob the passage of all point.

Huperanō in the Septuagint

- Dt. 26:19 to make thee [Israel] high *above* all nations which He hath made
 28: 1 set thee [Israel] on high *above* all nations of the earth.
 Psa. 73: 5 [74 A. V. omits]
 Ezek. 1:25 And *above* the firmament that was over their heads
 8: 2 from the appearance of his loins even downward, fire; and from his loins even *upward* . . .
 10:19 and the glory of the God of Israel was over them *above*.
 11:22 and the glory of the God of Israel was over them *above*
 43:15 from the altar and *upward* shall be four horns.

As the adverb *huperanō*, OVER-UP, appears so seldom in the later Greek Scriptures, we have given all of the occurrences in the Septuagint also. These, though not inspired, will show that, in both its literal and figurative usage with the genitive, it is freely used of the highest part of a thing, that which is above the rest, and not necessarily distinct, in a different "sphere". Thus Israel is to be above *all nations*. How unscriptural to deduce that on that account it will not be one of the nations of the earth! Yet that is just as logical as to reason that Christ is not in heaven because He ascended up over of it. In Ezekiel two passages are especially clear. "From his loins even *upward*" uses this word of the upper part of one body, for this is *up over of* it. The horns of the altar also, are not far above and distinct from it, but its highest part.

After all, it is the little word *far* which has caused all this mischief. Its insertion here is a blot on the Authorized Version translation. So long as it remains, it is impossible for the English reader to get the truth. If He is *far* above, He cannot be *of* the heavens. This inserted word utterly destroys the force of the genitive. The word here used, the compound *huperanō*, OVER-UP, or, as we would say, *up over*, is composed of two words which denote *position*, never distance. Distance is de-

noted, in Greek, by *makros* and *makran*, FAR, never by *huper*, OVER, or *anō*, UP. Some scholars have tried to give this meaning to the compound, but the attempt has been unsuccessful. The word holds its place in our English versions merely because it sounds well. It is a corrupting canker that ought to be removed.

The combination OVER-UP is really the equivalent of our English word *above*. It was once so rendered in the Concordant Version. Then it was removed because the word *over* alone must sometimes be rendered *above* in idiomatic English. So *up* was added. The revised Concordant Version has therefore made all the renderings literal “up over”. In time this will become just as good English as the other renderings, and it has the advantage of being exactly like the Greek.

Corroborative evidence may be found in the usage of the exact antonym, *hupokatō*, UNDER-DOWN. The Authorized Version always ignores the DOWN, and renders it *under*. The Concordant Version seeks to preserve the distinction by using *underneath*. We read of the dust *under-down* your feet (Mark 6:11), the dogs *under-down* the table (Mark 7:28), *beneath* a bed (Luke 8:16), Nathanael *beneath* the fig tree (John 1:50). See also Hebrews 2:8; Unveiling 5:3, 13; 6:9; 12:1. Never is the idea of *distance* brought in. It is never *far* beneath.

No teacher who deliberately continues quoting the phrase “*far* above all” after having been apprized of the fact that there is no warrant for the word *far*, is worthy of our confidence. He is simply seeking to uphold error at the expense of Scripture. Those who are ignorant we do not censure. In some quarters every interpretation of present truth is based upon this mistake. We beg of them to consider the facts and act upon them. Withdraw the literature which flaunts this phrase and retract all the false deductions which have been drawn from it.

The history of Satan is taken as corroborating the

three spheres, because Luke 10:18 speaks of him falling in the past. This, it is said, was when he fell from far above all heavens. But the passage reads, "I beheld Satan as lightning falling out of *heaven*." The seventy-two had returned and reported that the demons were subject to them. This was what brought Satan down. He came to earth. Satan has been down on earth often enough, going to and fro, walking up and down (Job 1:7; 2:2). Was he not in the wilderness to try our Lord (Mat. 4:1-10)? He came as the lightning when the work of the disciples made inroads into his realm, and came from heaven to earth, not from the "super-heavens" to the heavens. He came down more than once while our Lord was on earth.

It is a mistake to suppose that this passage is the only one which seems to suggest that Christ is above the heavens. A similar expression is to be found in Hebrews, where the chief Priest is "made higher than the heavens" (Heb. 7:26, A. V.). The same difficulty in translation has made the English versions ignore the genitive "*of the heavens*". In German we can express it correctly: "zum Höheren der Himmel geworden" (become the Higher of the heavens). As English refuses the comparative in such statements, the nearest would be "become the Highest of the heavens". Few would care to introduce the "third sphere" in Hebrews, yet this passage is just as good "proof" of a "super-heavenly" region as that in Ephesians. In both cases all is based upon a weak spot in the English language, without sufficient knowledge of Greek to avoid this pitfall. It is said that there is no sin in the "third sphere". Why, then, is a *Priest* brought into association with it?

WHERE CHRIST ASCENDED

Our Lord is not on earth. He ascended. If it is true that He has not gone into the heavens, but above them, then this should agree with other passages in the Scrip-

tures. But the contrary is the case. The constant and uniform testimony is that He ascended to the heavens, that He is there, and that He will return thence. The following passages are given to substantiate this statement. As some stress is laid upon exactitude, we will cite from the CONCORDANT VERSION. The Authorized Version does not preserve the plural.

- Mk. 16:19 The Lord . . . was taken up into *heaven* and is seated at the right hand of God.
 Lk. 24:51 and He was carried up into *heaven*
 Acts 1:11 This Jesus Who is being taken up from you into *heaven* shall come in the same manner as you gaze upon Him going into *heaven*.
 3:21 Whom *heaven* must indeed receive until the times of the restoration
 7:56 I am beholding the *heavens* opened up, and the Son of Mankind standing at the right hand of God.
 Rom. 10: 6 Who will be ascending into *heaven*?—that is, to be leading Christ down.
 Eph. 6: 9 their Master as well as yours is in the *heavens*,
 Col. 4: 1 you also have a Master in the *heavens*.
 1 Th. 1:10 to be waiting for His Son out of the *heavens*
 4:16 the Lord Himself will be descending from *heaven*
 2 Th. 1: 7 the unveiling of the Lord Jesus from *heaven*
 Heb. 4:14 Chief Priest Who has come through the *heavens*
 9:24 Christ entered . . . into *heaven* itself
 12:25 who are turning from Him from the *heavens*
 1 Pt. 3:22 Christ, Who is at God's right hand, being gone into *heaven*

The uniform evidence of God's Word, even in the highest and latest revelation, gives Christ, and God, a place in the heavens. It is quite possible that, were it not revealed before, Ephesians should contain a further revelation. Indeed, the latest revelation does make known that He is *highest* in the heavens. If He had removed to a new, a third sphere, then these epistles would make this clear. They would not repeat that He is in the heavens (Eph. 6: 8; Col. 4: 1), and no one would need to base all on a mistaken inference from one faulty rendering.

THE “SUPER-HEAVENLIES”

But, we are told, there is much more evidence to be

found in the word *epouranion*, ON-heavenly, which it is proposed to render *super-heavenly*, and which is translated *celestial* in the CONCORDANT VERSION. As this is deemed of great importance, and demands much accuracy in its discussion, we will print, not only the Authorized Version renderings, but also a portion of our complete concordance, in which the passages are found grouped according to grammar and all distinctions may be grasped at a glance. We propose to show that it refers to things *on*, not over or above the heavenly bodies, that it is the same "sphere" as the heavens, and that the rendering *super-heavenlies* entangles us in a maze.

epouranion, ON-heavenly, in Authorized Version

- John 3:12 if I tell you of *heavenly* things?
 1 Co. 15:40 [There are] also *celestial* bodies
 40 but the glory of the *celestial* [is] one,
 48 as [is] the *heavenly*, such [are] they also that are
heavenly.
 49 the image of the *heavenly*.
 Eph. 1: 3 in *heavenly* [places] in Christ:
 20 at his own right hand in the *heavenly* [places],
 2: 6 in *heavenly* [places] in Christ Jesus:
 3:10 powers in *heavenly* [places]
 6:12 wickedness in *high* [places].
 Phil. 2:10 of [things] in *heaven*, and [things] in earth,
 2 Ti. 4:18 unto his *heavenly* kingdom:
 Heb. 3: 1 partakers of the *heavenly* calling,
 6: 4 tasted of the *heavenly* gift,
 8: 5 serve unto the example and shadow of *heavenly*
 [things],
 9:23 but the *heavenly* [things] themselves
 11:16 a better [country], that is, an *heavenly*:
 12:22 the *heavenly* Jerusalem

Note carefully that this term is not restricted to the prison epistles. There are as many occurrences in Hebrews alone as in Ephesians and Philippians. The argument as to grammar will be taken up in due time. But a change in the grammatical form certainly does not change *super-heavenly* to *sub-heavenly*! What sense can there be to the occurrences in Hebrews, if the reference is to the "third sphere", far above the heavens?

- ON-SEE-UPed, celestial, *epouranion*
p (plural indefinite) *epourania*
 1 Co. 15:40 there are bodies *celestial* and bodies *terrestrial*,
m (masculine singular) *epouranios*
 1 Co. 15:48 who are *soulish*, and what the *Celestial*,
m p (masculine plural) *epouranioi*
 1 Co. 15:48 such also are those who are *celestials*
 or— (genitive singular) *epouraniou*
 1 Co. 15:49 wearing the image also of the *Celestial*
 Heb. 3: 1 partners of a *celestial* calling
 6: 4 besides tasting the *celestial* gratuity,
 11:16 craving a better, that is, a *celestial* [country]
p (genitive plural) *epouraniōn*
 1 Co. 15:40 a different glory, indeed, of the *celestial*,
 Phil. 2:10 every knee should be bowing, *celestial* and *terrestrial*
 Heb. 8: 5 shadow of the divine service of the *celestials*
 to— (dative singular) *epouraniō*
 Heb. 12:22 city of the living God, the *celestial* Jerusalem,
p (dative plural) *epouraniōis*
 Eph. 1: 3 every spiritual blessing among the *celestials*,
 1:20as seating Him at His right hand among the *celestials*
 2: 6 seats us together among the *celestials*,
 3:10 sovereignties and authorities among the *celestials*
 6:12 spiritual forces of wickedness among the *celestials*
a (accusative singular) *epouranion*
 2 Ti. 4:18 will be saving me for His *celestial* kingdom
a p (accusative plural) *epourania*
 John 3:12 if I should be telling you of the *celestial*?
 Heb. 9:23 the *celestial* things themselves by better sacrifices

The Greek prefix *epi* denotes ON (not OVER), as ON-WRITE, *inscribe*, ON-PLACING, *imposition*, ON-FALL, *fall on*, etc., as could be proven by many more examples. The prefix *huper* is used for OVER, as *superabound*, *super-exceed*, *superior*, etc. But there is one example which will be especially helpful to us in this study. Just as the word *heaven* has the prefix and ending *epi—ios*, meaning ON—ly (*ep—ouran—ios*, ON—heaven—ly), so the word *earth* also has *epi—ge—ios*, ON—LAND—ly. These are exact parallels in construction and usage. Thus we have:

gē is *earth*

ouranos is *heaven*

ouranios is *heavenly*

epi—geios is *terrestrial*

ep—ouranios is *celestial*

The question arises, is *epigeios super-earthly* or *terrestrial*? Does it refer to things *on* the earth or *above* it? This must be its meaning if *epouranios* means *super-heavenly*. Here are the renderings, as in the Authorized Version. It is not necessary to bring in concordant renderings to show that it means literally that which is *on* the earth, and not that *above* it. We will do as our Lord did with Nicodemus, first give the terrestrial things, which are easy to understand, in order to help us grasp the celestial things, which may be more difficult.

epigeios, ON-LAND, terrestrial, in Authorized Version

John 3:12 if I have told you *earthly* things,
 1 Co. 15:40 and bodies *terrestrial*:
 40 the glory of the *terrestrial* [is] another,
 2 Co. 5: 1 if our *earthly* house of [this]
 Phil. 2:10 [things] *in earth*,
 3:19 who mind *earthly* [things]
 Jas. 3:15 but [is] *earthly*, sensual, devilish

It should not be necessary to prove that every occurrence of this word means literally *on earth*, *terrestrial*, as the Authorized Version has it on two occasions. The rendering *in earth* (Phil. 2:10) is contradicted by the context. Nowhere is there even the possibility of making it *super-earthly*. Translate Philippians 3:19 "who mind *super-earthly* things" and you say the very reverse of the truth, for God wishes us to be disposed to things *not on* the earth. Have we a *super-earthly* house now (2 Cor. 5:1)? Are *super-earthly* things low enough to company with *soulish* and *demoniacal* (James 3:15)? All the evidence favors the literal meaning *on-earth*, which, in English, is *terrestrial*, never, at any time, *super-earthly*.

Terrestrial supplies us with a notable example of the value of antonyms in the study of words. It is a remarkable instance of their subconscious power to correct and regulate the vagaries of free-rendering translations. The Authorized Version scholars were compelled to do good work when the words *terrestrial* and *celestial* came close together. All that the Concordant Version has done is to

give their best rendering at all times. In its compilation *all* of the synonyms in the divine vocabulary were constantly regulating and governing the English vocabulary. For instance, in John 3:12 our Lord uses the same terms employed by Paul in Corinthians. Why did the translators not make the English the same? There is the same contrast. *Terrestrial* is certainly far superior to "in earth", as they render Philippians 2:10.

Now we desire our readers to carefully read *all* of the passages in which *terrestrial* and *celestial* are used together, in order to determine whether there are two or three "spheres", whether *celestial* is *super-heavenly*, far above the heavens, or *on* the heavens. First we have John 3:12:

If I tell you of the *terrestrial* and you are not believing, how shall you be believing if I should be telling you of the *celestial*?

Our Lord certainly had not been telling Nicodemus of *super-earthly* things. He had confined His remarks to that which has its place *on* the earth, not *above* or *over* or *far above* it in any sense. Note also that He speaks of *only two* "spheres". Some one may object and say that, at that time the "super-heavenly" sphere was not made known, so our Lord could not mention it. But that is just what He did if "*super-heavenly*" is a sphere above the heavens. Then our Lord deliberately omitted the "second sphere", the heavens. He used the very word He should not have used if the "third sphere" idea is true. He could not have even mentioned this "third sphere" to Nicodemus if it was "a mystery hid in God". Yet He definitely intimated that He would tell *them* of "*super-heavenly*" things!

The fifteenth of first Corinthians definitely settles the fact that there are only *two* "spheres", the *terrestrial* and the *celestial* (1 Cor. 15:40):

And there are bodies *celestial* and bodies *terrestrial*, but there is a different glory, indeed, of the *celestial*, and a different of the *terrestrial*, . . .

There is no intimation of any intermediate heavenly "sphere", in contrast to "super-heavenly". *There is no body* for such a sphere. This is most significant in *this epistle*. According to this division of the word of truth, Corinthians is concerned with the lower, *heavenly* sphere. Now, in speaking of the resurrection, those who are to be in this second sphere are provided with bodies for the third! How are my dear brethren, who claim the "super-heavenlies" for themselves, going to keep me out if I am given a "super-heavenly" body?

If further evidence is wanted to prove that there are only two "spheres", let us turn to those epistles which are supposed to be the exponents of "super-heavenly" truth. We quote a few passages:

... the secret of His will (in accord with His delight, which He purposed in Him) to have an administration of the complement of the eras, to head up the *universe* in the Christ—in the *heavens* as well as on the *earth* . . . (Eph. 1:9, 10, C. V.).
 . . . through Him to reconcile the *universe* to Him (making peace through the blood of His cross), through Him, whether on *earth* or in the *heavens* (Col. 1:20, C.V.).

These passages bring before us the universe. If any object to this term, let them take it literally, *the all*. If it will give them any pleasure, let them make it "all things"! The point is that God says *all*. This universe is amplified as consisting of *two spheres*, the earth and the heavens. It is evident, therefore, that, in the highest epistles which we have there is no such "third sphere" as is suggested by "super-heavenlies". Ephesians 3:15 confirms this fact. "The kindreds in the heavens and on earth" would be meaningless if the Ephesians were destined to another place altogether.

In Ephesians 1:10, the headship of Christ is set forth. It is God's purpose to head up "the all" in the Christ—in the heavens as well as on the earth. Surely there is some mistake here! Is Christ not Head in the super-heavenlies? In Ephesians 1:20, He is at God's right hand "in the super-heavenlies" (among the celes-

tials) up over every sovereignty and authority and dominion.

Furthermore, we wish to appeal to these ranking epistles, to show that the destiny of those spoken of is *heaven*, the "second sphere" which is really the *same* as the "*super-heavenlies*", the "third sphere":

For our citizenship belongs to *the heavens*, out of which we are awaiting a Saviour also, . . . (Phil. 3:20).

. . . because of the expectation which is reserved for you in *the heavens*, which you hear before in the true expression of the evangel, . . . (Col. 1:5).

Masters, be tendering that which is just and equitable to your slaves, being aware that *you* also have a Master in *heaven*. (Col. 4:1).

Can language be plainer than this? The citizenship of the Philippian saints was not *above* the heavens, but belonged to them. The Colossians had their reservations *in the heavens*. Can it be possible that Paul had forgotten their higher destination? They had a Master *in heaven*. Why should they be connected with Him there if they are destined to a different "sphere"?

Moreover, the preparatory epistles, Romans, Corinthians, and Galatians, which are supposed to present a lower, heavenly calling, do not contain a single passage to prove it! The nearest they come to it is a reference to our house which is *from heaven* (2 Cor. 5:2). Yet they, and not the epistles of the mystery, bring before us the celestial ("super-heavenly") body! In the resurrection the Corinthians will be equipped for the "*super-heavenlies*", while the Philippians and Colossians will be degraded to the heavens! Such is the contradictory outcome of this mistranslation.

But, it is objected, you do not take into account the difference in grammatical form. In Ephesians alone we find the dative plural, "*in the super-heavenlies*". We have purposely ignored this distinction because it is absolutely groundless. The *meaning* of the word, the *location* which it defines, does not depend on the varia-

tions of grammar. We ourselves, two decades ago, pointed out the fact that the dative was used in Ephesians and the genitive, as a rule, in Hebrews. We deduced that the word *locates* in Ephesians, while it *characterizes* in Hebrews. Such is the power of the dative and the genitive. The transfer from one case to the other brings no change in meaning.

It ought to be unnecessary to elaborate on this. Yet, since this has been used as an argument, we will make a few suggestions. The dative can usually be indicated in English by *in* or *to*, the genitive by *of* or *from*. What is the difference between “*to* the Lord” and “*from* the Lord”? Is one Lord higher than the other? Must He be a different Lord? What is the difference between “*to* heaven” and “*from* heaven”? It is the same heaven, but the direction of the action is different. So the Ephesians are going *to* heaven. The Hebrews get their blessings *from* heaven and enjoy them on earth.

But a glance at the concordance given above will show that the dative is used in Hebrews also. The city which they were approaching (Heb. 12:22) is the *epouraniō* (dative singular) Jerusalem. It is the celestial city which, at present, is that better and permanent property which they have *in the heavens* (Heb. 10:34). The only difference between this word and that used in Ephesians is the grammatical *number*. Shall we say that the same word, in the same case, but one a plural and the other a singular, denotes entirely different “spheres” in God’s great program?

On the other hand, Philippians 2:10 is *epouraniōn*, the genitive. Does that limit it to a sphere *below* the “super-heavenlies”? Shall we infer that those in that high place will not acknowledge the lordship of Christ?

He ascends up over all that is of the heavens *that He should complete the universe*, the very same phrase that is used elsewhere and amplified to include the heavens and the earth. This whole teaching is really based on

this lame spot in our language. We can speak of Christ as "far above" all men, and no one objects because it is tacitly understood that He himself is excepted, for He cannot be above Himself. English has no means of making this distinction. In "far above all" this is aggravated by the unwarranted addition of the word *far*.

We wish to assure everyone that the method employed to get "*super-heavenlies*" is *not* concordant or according to the vocabulary method. It can only lead to discord if we take a few occurrences of an expression, compare them with a mistranslated text and deduce that they have an entirely different meaning from other grammatical forms of the same word. This might be called the discordant method. A few seem unable to distinguish the canvass of *all* occurrences, and the comparison with the *whole* vocabulary, from this fragmentary and self-contradictory work. The concordant method is suffering from this confusion of opposites. It is a different matter to use a special term for an idiomatic *usage*, as *universe* for *the all*, when used absolutely, for then the meaning is not altered at all.

The use of the word *on-heavenly* in Hebrews should show how absolutely untenable the rendering *super-heavenly* is. To make this plain we quote the passages in this epistle from the Authorized Version, only changing the word *heavenly* to *super-heavenly*. Here those things which this teaching emphatically places in the "second sphere" the Scriptures put in the "third", if this translation is correct. Then the calling and the country of the Hebrews was "far above all", and the new Jerusalem also belongs to this region.

- Heb. 3: 1 partakers of the *super-heavenly* calling
- 6: 4 tasted of the *super-heavenly* gift
- 8: 5 Who serve unto the example and shadow of *super-heavenly* things
- 9: 23 but of the *super-heavenly* things themselves
- 11: 16 a better country, that is, a *super-heavenly*:
- 12: 22 the *super-heavenly* Jerusalem

“SUPER-HEAVENLY AND SUPER-HEAVENLIES”

An effort is made to make the singular distinct in meaning from the plural, as if in one case only one heaven were in view and in the plural several. But this is utterly contrary to the most elementary rules of language. The word *celestial* (*epouranion*) is an adjective, though often used as a noun, just as in English. When it modifies a singular noun it is singular, and when a plural noun it is plural. Thus, when applied to Christ, the Celestial [Man], in contrast with Adam, the soulish [man], it is singular (1 Cor. 15: 48, 49). So also God's *kingdom* (2 Tim. 4: 18), the *celestial calling* (Heb. 3: 1), and *gift* (Heb. 6: 4), the *country* (Heb. 11: 16) and *Jerusalem* (Heb. 12: 22) are all singular nouns, hence must take an adjective in the same number.

On the other hand, when more than one is in view, the adjective must be plural. Our Lord spoke to Nicodemus about several terrestrial *things*, and referred, (not to several *heavens*) but to celestial *themes*. Paul, speaking of terrestrial *bodies* (not several *earths*) uses the plural (1 Cor. 15: 40). Both the singular and the plural are used in one verse by Paul in such a way that any distinction in spheres is absolutely excluded. Those who insist that the singular is one and the plural another should consider carefully the following: “What the Celestial [the Lord out of *heaven*, singular], such also are those who are *celestials* [we, plural].” Here the plural is said to be the same as the singular. This is confirmed by the next verse, “We [plural] should be wearing the image also of the Celestial [singular].”

In Ephesians it always refers to the beings in the heavens, *among the celestials*, hence must be plural.

In Philippians we have many knees in view, those of the terrestrials (people, not earths), those of the celestials (beings, not heavens) as well as those of the subterranean. (This latter “sphere” does not seem to have been recognized in “the three spheres”, though it has

some right to separate classification). In Hebrews we have the divine service of the celestials (plural) not because this was above the heavens, but because many beings were engaged in it.

Another passage which clearly shows that celestial things are in the heavens, and not above, is found in Hebrews 9:23: "It is necessary, then, for the examples, indeed, of what is in the *heavens* to be cleansed by these, yet the *celestial* things *themselves* by better sacrifices than these." The word *themselves* clearly indicates that the celestial things are in the heavens. The plural does not indicate a number of heavens, but things in them.

This grammatical confusion, which applies the plural of an adjective to itself, not to that which it modifies, is characteristic. In this teaching the accuracies of the original are so distorted, unwittingly, no doubt, that one loses all confidence in the competency of those who teach or accept such ideas. The laws of language seem to be a sealed book to them.

Another remarkable statement shows how loosely and blindly this argument has been conducted. We quote:

We rejoice that God in His grace has not given us a place in the "heavenly city" that *comes down from God out of heaven . . .*

But the word "heavenly" (*ouranios*) is never applied to this city, though it is mis-called "the heavenly Jerusalem" in our versions. It is precisely the *same word*, and the *same case* as in Ephesians. Only the number differs. The celestial Jerusalem *must* be *one* of the on-heavenly "things" of Ephesians, until it descends. If Ephesians speaks of a "super-heavenly" sphere, then the new Jerusalem must be "super-heavenly" also.

A FATAL ADMISSION

In order to meet the contradictions which arise when a third sphere is invented outside creation and the heavens, it is admitted that the term heaven in Scripture is

used of all above the earth. This makes the third sphere a part of "heaven" and is fatal to the whole teaching. It all becomes a mass of words without meaning. All that is needed is to drop the meaningless and non-scriptural "far above" and "super" and "third sphere", which, not being of faith, are sin, and return to the Scriptural teaching that "all" is composed of *two* divisions, earth and heaven, which is acknowledged by this admission. But *no!* Every effort is made to cover up the facts by giving "heaven" a double meaning. At will it means one thing and then it actually includes that which is far above its plural!

HEAVEN AND HEAVENS

Much is made of the singular and plural forms of the word *heaven*. As the "third sphere" is above the heavens (plural), there should be no need of this. But there are passages in which *far above all* is in heaven. Therefore we must make definitions of heaven which include as well as exclude this sphere. This is done on this wise. Heaven (singular) is used in a "specific" sense sometimes, to denote "the realm of the birds, clouds, and stars". At other times it is used in a "generic" sense of "all the spheres above the earth". Hence "far above all" is in heaven (singular). Hence "heaven" includes *two* spheres. But heavens (plural) is only *one!* We need hardly say that the distinction between "specific" and "generic" is not a part of inspiration and is invented only to cover over plain contradictions.

The lack of clear thinking in this effort to evade the plain teaching of God's Word is evident from the fact that a sphere which is *above* the heavens, and therefore is not heaven, is now made a heaven. The term "generic" is unfortunate, for *a generic term does not include anything outside the genus*. The singular *man* may include all men, but not monkeys. The Greek term means human, and includes women and children, but as a "gen-

eric" term it does not include celestial beings. So the word heaven, if it were indeed "generic" could include the heavens, but never that which is above them.

The position that the heavens (plural) are not for us but are the sphere of the new Jerusalem, Abraham's better country, the heavenly calling, etc., is utterly untenable. Our Master is in the *heavens* (Eph. 6:9). Our citizenship belongs to the *heavens* (Phil. 3:20). Our expectation is reserved in the *heavens* (Col. 1:5).

THE GLORY

It will be seen that the "third sphere" suffers from lack of a scriptural name. "Sphere" is non-scriptural, "far above all" and "super-heavenlies" unscriptural and unwieldy. So now there is a tendency to call it the "glory". This, like the other terms, will not fit at all into the "dispensational" scheme which it is supposed to establish. *Peter* writes to those who are called to the glory (1 Pet. 5:10; 2 Pet. 1:3). It should not be necessary for us to show that the "glory" will return to the *earth* after the return of our Lord, and who will question its presence in heaven? How then can it be used to distinguish these from another "sphere"? No passage in God's Word proves it because none mentions the "third sphere", which has no place in creation or revelation.

THE ACTS PERIOD

Let us be more exact in our references to "Acts 28". It does *not* close with the repudiation of Israel. For two whole years Paul remained in his own hired house teaching "that which concerns our Lord Jesus Christ". There is every reason to believe that *Paul's prison epistles* were written in this period, *before the close of Acts 28*. Certainly he would not withhold such a great revelation once Israel, the only hindrance, is out of the way. The Prison Epistles, as well as the Preparatory Epistles, were written *within the era of the book of Acts*.

This whole mass of confusion can be traced to a single mistake in "dividing" the word of truth. God has divided the period of the book of Acts by chronicling *kingdom* truth in Acts, and "*church*" truth in Paul's epistles, written concerning the same time and largely of the same people. Now we are asked to force all that Paul wrote back into Acts and the kingdom and "divide" between those which were written during Acts from those which were written *after* it. The whole basis is wrong, for *Paul wrote the prison epistles during the period covered by the book of Acts, not after it.* The line drawn is an imaginary one, which has no existence.

The relation existing between Paul's preparatory and his prison epistles is fully explained in Ephesians and in various parts of all of the epistles. Why discard all of this clear evidence in order to build up a theory which is in constant conflict with the facts?

It is very true that *Peter*, in Acts, knows nothing of the "church of the one body". But it is equally true that Paul, not *in* Acts, but at that time, and in reference to the saints mentioned therein, *did* know of "the church of the one body". That is precisely what he calls the Corinthians. And that is precisely what the church in Ephesus and Philippi was *at that time*, before the twenty-eighth chapter, before the revelation of the mystery.

The proclamation of Peter, in Acts 3:19-21, did *not* "hold good" indefinitely, until Acts 28, in the sense that God was not doing anything else or preparing for another administration. It was rejected, *and the entire career of Paul was predicated on Israel's failure, not on their repentance.* If everything was still of Israel in first Corinthians, why did Paul get a special revelation of the Lord's dinner? Why not get it from the twelve apostles? How could he reveal what was *secret on this very subject?* Why speak of "till He come" in one chapter (meaning the hope of Israel) and

then reveal a secret in another chapter which was certainly not for Israel?

THE HOPE OF ISRAEL

I cannot sufficiently express my amazement that anyone should insist that the Thessalonians were waiting for "the hope of Israel". Paul is *separated* and sent to the *nations*, and at his *furthest distance* from Jerusalem he writes a letter to gentiles who had turned from idols, revealing the presence of Christ *in the air*, altogether different from anything heretofore revealed. We are asked to believe that this was "the hope of Israel"! If so, why take so much pains to keep it from Israel? Why not make it known through the twelve, in the land, and to the Israelites who were vitally interested? *When Christ comes to Israel the dead are not raised. This occurs many days later.*

"THE PAROUSIA COMING"

There is no such thing in the Scriptures as a "parousia coming". *Parousia* means *presence*. Every coming involves a presence. There is no other kind. In this *same* epistle (1 Cor.) the apostle tell the *secret* of the resurrection (1 Cor. 15: 25-57). The *parousia* was well known, not secret. The "last trump" is *not* the seventh trumpet of the Unveiling. This is followed by an *immediate* resurrection. The seventh trumpet is sounded seventy-five days before the millennial saints are raised. The Thessalonians are *not* left on earth during the great tribulation. They were *not* appointed to wrath. The whole point of the epistles is opposed to such an idea.

THE "MANIFESTATION"

The attempt to limit our hope to the *manifestation* of Christ (Col. 3: 3, 4 and Titus 2: 13) is most unfortunate. When is Christ "manifested"? When *earth* shall see Him. When He shall come in glory. It is a

part of our blessed expectation to be made manifest *with* Him in that day. But that is not our immediate expectation. We have a prior expectation (Eph. 1:12). We shall go to Him long before we are manifested with Him and come back later to share in the glories of His advent.

DISPENSATION AND ADMINISTRATION

The word "dispensation" has been ruined by misuse. An accurate student will use it only as the equivalent of the Greek *diakonia*, what is served, or dispensed. The phrase "the *fellowship* of the mystery" (Eph. 3:9) is all wrong, yet "the *dispensation* of the mystery" is not much better. In Ephesians 3:7 Paul calls himself a *dispenser* of the evangel, but he uses a different word, *oikonomia*, *stewardship*, *economy*, *administration*, when he speaks of the mystery. It is the "secret administration". In these matters let us hold fast the form of sound words. A dispensation is a dispensing, not a period of time.

THE MYSTERY AND THE GOSPEL

"The mystery" is not "the gospel". Paul does not say that it is a new evangel, different from that which he had been preaching. He does say that we receive it through the evangel of which he was the dispenser. In other words, the Ephesians and all others who had accepted Paul's evangel were the ones to whom the secret was sent, and who received it. Paul's previous evangel of justification and conciliation is the channel through which the secret should be dispensed today. Ephesians does not present a different evangel.

DISTINCT MYSTERIES

"Christ in you, the hope of glory" is certainly not the mystery of Ephesians three. The "you" refers to the *nations*, not the saints. *Christ among the nations* is a succinct statement of one aspect of the mystery of the gospel, the conciliation. This corresponds with Romans

16:25-27, which is not, as some suppose, a postscript, added after the mystery was revealed. Why mix up all the mysteries and manufacture difficulties? The mystery of the gospel is expounded in Romans and Corinthians, not in Ephesians and Colossians. The latter *refer* to it, as in this verse.

Let us not be ignorant of another "mystery", concerning the length of *time* during which gentiles will be allowed to be branches in the olive tree. It is "until the fulness of the gentiles be come in. And so shall all Israel be saved. . . ." (Rom. 11:25, 26). If the olive tree was cut down when "the mystery" was revealed, was Israel saved? Did the fulness of the nations enter? It is more true today than ever that we should not boast against the branches. This in no wise touches the truth of the mystery. The nations have not yet been cut out, though they are fast losing their title by unbelief. This concerns *the nations*, as such, not the "church".

ABRAHAM WAS NO JEW

The idea that Abraham was a "Jew" is most misleading. Let us never connect his name with this term. Let us resist every attempt to connect his pre-circumcision experiences with Judaism. The distinction may seem trivial, but it leads to momentous consequences. The mere fact that Abraham's name is mentioned in Romans is taken by some to prove it a "Jewish" epistle. If they will *read* Romans they will find that Abraham is brought in for the purpose of showing that blessing to the nations is not through physical circumcision, far less through Judaism.

THE LORD'S DINNER

The word "ordinances", in Colossians 2:20, has no reference whatever to religious rites. It should be *decrees*. It is the very word used of the decrees issued by James and sent to the gentile ecclesias.

As to the Lord's dinner we read, "The Lord's Supper must not be lifted out of its context. It belongs to a dispensation of miracle." Such irrational reasoning will lead to chaos. We may as well say, "We must not lift the name Paul out of its context. He belonged to a dispensation of miracle. Indeed, he was the greatest miracle worker of all. He performed greater miracles than Peter. Let us take Peter rather than Paul." Some will say that the cases are not parallel. No, they are not. We have no plain statement that Paul should continue until the Lord comes. But, on the same opening on which we are distinctly told that the miracles would *cease*, the inspired penman said that the Lord's supper *would not*, until Christ comes. Can the context change the word *no* to *yes*? If so, *this* is the "dispensation" of miracles!

THE COVENANTS

Paul received a fresh revelation concerning the Lord's dinner direct from the Lord *after* his separation. We should not turn back to Matthew's account. A most astonishing and sweeping statement is the following: "There is no covenant mentioned in Scripture which pertains to the One Body." Then we are not under the covenant of the rainbow! The "one body", as we have seen, is especially expounded in Corinthians. Ephesians 2:12 distinctly states that the members of the "one body" of the mystery, in the era when Corinthians was written, were "guests of the promise *covenants*". This word "covenants" definitely *links* Corinthians and Ephesians, instead of putting an impassable barrier between them. *Those to whom Ephesians was written had been guests of a covenant.*

THE TEMPLE AND THE BODY

Let us not confuse the two figures of the body and the temple, in Ephesians. God dwells in *all* of His saints, not merely in the "church of the one body". The *Cir-*

cumcision are a "spiritual house" (1 Pet. 2:5). In Ephesians the figure of the temple is introduced in relation to our participation with all saints, in order to show our *connection with them*, not our difference from them. There is the "entire building" into which we *also* are being built together. Surely God is not going to shut Himself up in this new church, and refuse to dwell in His other saints!

THE SPIRITUAL UNITIES

We may easily test our understanding of Ephesian truth by the opening verses of the fourth chapter. Almost all of those who misunderstand the mystery come into direct conflict with the exhortation which immediately follows the revelation of the secret, and teach the very reverse. Has this transcendent grace *humbled* us in relation to our fellow saints, or has it made us proud of our superior knowledge, so that we consider ourselves in a special class, the recipient of exclusive blessings in Christ? If it is the latter, the secret has never found entrance in our hearts or heads, though we may have made it the special subject of our ministry for a lifetime. If we pride ourselves on a place in Christ attained by knowledge, we lack the knowledge itself and have never grasped the grace which comes to the most unworthy in this administration of unlimited favor.

A more specific test is this: Does our knowledge lead to the acknowledgment of the unity of the spirit? Almost all who *reason* from a mysterious mystery, teach that there are at least two bodies today, with a special faith for each, and that each has an exclusive expectation. The most characteristic mark of the truth for today is that the saints are *one*. The strange thing is that some of us who make much of the mystery, are more determined to divide the saints into two classes than those who make no pretense of understanding it. This alone should show us that there is something radically wrong. Ask such

what the mystery is, and they invariably give a confused or false answer. They have reasoned from a mysterious premise instead of believing God's revelation concerning the secret.

For example, in a publication which is devoted to the study of the mystery, we read, "Our readers should realize before we begin that the church of God and the one body of I. Cor. 12. 13 are still the outward testimony of the truth, quite independently of The Mystery, therefore we cannot ignore this church . . ." Before beginning the study of Ephesians, according to this, we must, "with unbiased minds, apart from every system set up by man", deny the unity which is its most precious fruit, and which is more strongly emphasized than any other fact in the whole epistle! Let us repudiate every false exposition of "The Mystery" which leads to the denial that there is *ONE* body (Eph. 4:4). Any exposition which lays down the denial of this as a condition for understanding Ephesians is self-condemned. *There is only ONE body!*

Another test is the *one* expectation. Many false explanations of the "mystery" insist on a special resurrection for the few who have attained to this knowledge. Some actually claim that they do not die, others that they rise from the dead three days after their death. Many seek to make the "out-resurrection" the special expectation of those who receive the "mystery". Perhaps it was to such that Paul referred (for even in his day some swerved from the truth) saying that the resurrection has already occurred (2 Tim. 2:18). Even then the faith of some was subverted. The test is simple. If we really grasp the secret *there can be only ONE expectation.*

The third test is similar. There is only *one* faith. Some say that believers who do not know the "mystery" are not affected by it. At any rate they, not having received the mystery, have no share in it, so have a faith

distinct from those who accept it. The word "faith" here is used figuratively for *what* is believed. There is only one body of doctrine to believe today *as a result of the revelation of the secret*. Yet a false understanding of the "mystery" insists on the exact opposite! This single scripture should be sufficient to utterly demolish all the reasonings about the "mystery" which divide the saints: *There is only ONE faith* (Eph. 4:5)!

THE TRUTH FOR TODAY

The secret which characterizes this administration does not consist in isolating us from all creation in an uncreated "sphere", but in changing us from terrestrial to celestial beings, with our citizenship *in the heavens* (Phil. 3:20), our allotment *among the celestials*. Just as Israel is to be *over* the earth, yet not in heaven, so we are to be *over* the heavens, yet not in a "sphere" outside of it.

I once thought that this teaching was so self-contradictory and lacking in scriptural support that no one with an intelligent grasp of God's revelation would be deceived by it. But I find that honest, sincere searchers are dazzled by it, and imagine that they have found a great light. It is fascinating to feel that you have discovered a new "sphere" in God's plans, and are so far in advance of others in the knowledge of His truth.

I sincerely sympathize with all who have been attracted by it. I considered it seriously myself when it first came to my notice. But I had a great advantage over others, with my own concordance of the original, and many years of practise in investigating the meaning of words. I do not like to warn against other teachings. I would rather leave that to others. But now I have no choice. The blight of this philosophy is seriously hindering the truth. It is rejecting the sound words of Holy Writ and substituting unsound expressions for them. It is bringing in untold confusion. The laws of language are distorted beyond recognition in order to cover over

the plainest contradictions. And few seem able to see how sadly it lacks the one thing which it claims in its support—the superhuman accuracy of divine revelation.

We conclude with a confession of our failure in regard to this matter. We supposed that no one who uses a concordance would be misled and that those who were disseminating this teaching would soon find out their own error. Besides, we do not wish to even seem contentious. But now that “the three spheres” is receiving wide publicity, and is being put before those who do not use a concordance, and is given as the result of correctly partitioning the word of truth, faithfulness to our Lord demands that we place the facts before His saints. All we ask is that they be tested by the original, not by any system of teaching or corrupt version.

I beg my readers not to be offended at anything I have said. I wish to help, not to hurt. But I entreat them to examine these things for themselves. I am sorry that so few have the facilities for doing so. I have tried to provide the most important facts in this article. I have refrained from publishing this warning for many a long year, hoping that it would not be needed. I crave your sympathy in my unpleasant task. Bear with me if I have not done it as lovingly or as faithfully as I should. I can only pray that He, Whose glories are at stake, may use my effort, in spite of its faults, to save His dear saints from this delusive deception.

God’s Word plainly teaches that the all (or the universe) comprises the heavens and the earth, that our blessings are among the celestials, and that Christ will be the Head of both. It knows nothing at all of any “third sphere” “far above all” in the “super-heavens”.

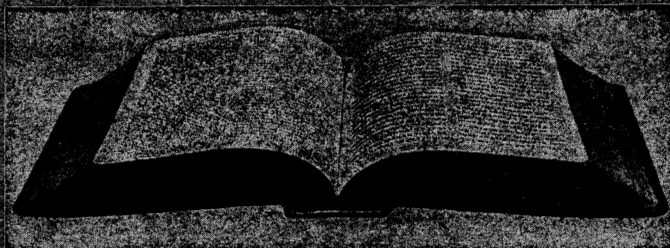
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