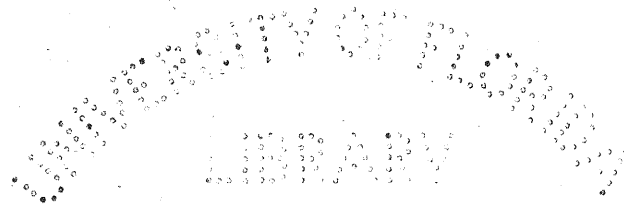


THE KORESHAN UNITY:  
AN ECONOMIC HISTORY OF A COMMUNISTIC EXPERIMENT  
IN FLORIDA

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by  
Richard S. Berrey



A Thesis Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School of  
The University of Florida  
In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the  
Degree of Master of Arts

Very little has been written about the interesting Koreshan Unity located at Estero, near Fort Myers, Florida. In order to obtain the information necessary to write an economic history of this communistic experiment it was necessary to visit the Unity, living as a guest amongst the members, eating at their common table, working at their daily tasks, hunting and fishing with them, enjoying their leisures, participating in their philosophic discussions, and in general acquiring their ideals and their outlook upon life. Without the assistance of the members of the Unity this thesis would have been impracticable. The author is indeed glad to take this opportunity to thank the members of the Unity, particularly Mr. G. W. Hunt and Mr. H. D. Silverfriend, for their cooperation in furnishing material for this thesis and for their kind hospitality.

At this time the writer wishes to thank the members of his graduate committee at the University of Florida, Professor Howard B. Myers, Professor Lucius M. Bristol, and Professor Elmer J. Emig, who kindly supervised the writing of this thesis. The author is especially indebted to Professor Myers, chairman of the committee, for

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R. S. B.

Gainesville, Florida

May 15, 1928

## INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this thesis is to give a brief economic history and analysis of a communistic society in Florida -- the Koreshan Unity. The intention has been to gather the facts, sift them, and arrange them logically into a clear description and exposition. For this aim the writer has concentrated his efforts.

It has been found that a "fact" is an elusive thing, difficult to find, that many desired facts have been impossible to secure, that supposed facts have been twisted, exaggerated or over estimated, that other facts have undergone an inevitable change in being passed from person to person. The author hopes that by comparison, elimination, analysis and deduction, a fairly accurate description has been secured.

The author has attempted to exclude his personal bias or opinions from the following pages, and to make the study as accurate and unbiased as possible. Where personal bias is allowed to creep in, a study loses value as economic history, and becomes merely the individual reactions of its writer.

Since we have today no generally accepted definition or conception of what progress is or how to measure it, and since, furthermore, the author was most cordially



entertained for nearly a month by the Koreshan Unity, he does not feel that this thesis should include a critical analysis of the community. Any critical analysis which could be given would reflect only the personal attitude of the writer in any event, since society as yet has not agreed as to what things constitute progress.

The thesis includes eleven chapters. First is an introductory summary of Koreshanity, given by its founder. This has been included to give the reader some preliminary acquaintance with the community and the people he is to study.

Chapters two and three describe the astronomical and religious beliefs of the community. An understanding of these basic factors is essential, for the community is primarily a religious organization and its religion depends directly upon its astronomical beliefs.

With these basic matters in mind, we can then proceed to survey briefly the history of the community, to give a general description of it, and to discuss its organization, the group characteristics of the Unity.

Chapter eight discusses the various industries of the community and the work of the members, while Chapter nine discusses the attitude the Koreshans hold toward

the reigning social system of today -- capitalism.

Chapter ten contains a brief exposition of Koreshan prophecies concerning the future of the world and of Koreshanity. Belief in these prophecies is a strong factor in holding the community together in the anticipation of their ultimate reward in this earth.

Chapter eleven suggests certain criteria by which the reader may evaluate the community but, in accordance with the belief of the author as previously expressed, does not in itself contain an evaluation, nor does it attempt to evaluate the criteria which are suggested. The only claim made for these criteria is that they are widely accepted in the social thinking of today.

For further study, the reader is referred to the bibliography, which has been divided into three sections, first, books relating to the Koreshan Unity, second, books in which material for further study in evaluation may be found, and third, books which will present briefly the histories of other social experiments in the United States, experiments in some respects like, and in some respects unlike, the Koreshan Unity.

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## CHAPTER I

### A GLANCE AT KORESHANITY

In order that we may have a working basis upon which to begin our study of Koreshanity a short comprehensive glance is given here. What follows in this chapter is similar to a prelude, a necessary introduction. This will serve to introduce a most fascinating interpretation of our very existence, and upon it a solution for perfect coordination of life is founded. Its scope is all-inclusive and its explanation very different from that usually accepted.

First, we should know what Koreshanity is. Koresh, Doctor Cyrus R. Teed, the founder of Koreshan philosophy and science, states briefly in five paragraphs what it is. His definition follows:<sup>1</sup>

"Koreshanity is the new Religio-Science, proceeding from Christianity as its fruit, as Christianity proceeded from Judaism as its fruit. When the Holy Spirit operated in the beginning of the age, its influence was pronounced in the establishment of Communism as the very foundation of the social life of the followers of the Lord. Those who received the Holy Ghost went and sold their possessions and brought the prices of the things that were sold, and

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<sup>1</sup> Koresh: What is Koreshanity (circular)

laid them down at the Apostles' feet: and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need.'

"The early church was communistic. The reason communism did not continue as the result of the progress of the church is because in its declension it went, body and soul, over to paganism, where it is destined to remain until the Lord's manifestation in the production of the Sons of God, and, through the development of this order, the complete manifestation of the Kingdom of Righteousness throughout the earth.

"Koreshanity is developing organic communism in the practical formation of communistic groups, the central group being at the present time in Estero, Florida. The form and function of the physical universe are taken as the pattern for organic societal arrangement. It is for this reason that a knowledge of cosmogony must constitute the foundation for the orderly construction of the social Kingdom.

"Koreshanity is an endorsement and confirmation of both Judaism before its fall, and Christianity, before paganism enforced its declension and prostitution. Koreshanity is the restoration of the authority and practical force of the law of God. 'Elesed are they that do

his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city.' A restoration to Edenic purity is an essential factor to the inheritance of life.

"We are to become immortal here, in the body; this transformation is the reincarnation, the resurrection of the dead; and there are thousands in the flesh today who will pass out without the ordinary corruptible dissolution of the body, for the time is at hand when there shall be no more death. This is to be accomplished through the science of religion."

This tells us briefly what Koreshanity is; now let us proceed to a hurried glance into Koreshanity. In the Flaming Sword, a propagandist publication of the Koreshan Unity, in the issue of July twelfth, 1901, a brief summary of Koreshan Universology is found<sup>1</sup>. This synopsis is not only condensed but also authentic. To reproduce this summary will give us a further foundation for our study and at the same time an insight into the character of the people who profess Koreshanity. This summary is given under fourteen headings, prefaced by a paragraph of introduction.

"Koreshan Universology is a complete system of Science of the great Universe of Life; and it involves the knowledge

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<sup>1</sup> Flaming Sword: July 12, 1901. (A. K. 61)

of the Creator and his creation. The name by which it is designated, in contradiction to perverted Christianity, is Koreshanity; and the new Religion must supplant Christianity, as Christianity supplanted Judaism. Koreshanity has come to fulfil the hope of the world in the liberation of humanity from the curse, in the establishment of the kingdom of God and earth, the introduction of the new Era of Light and Life, of universal harmony and happiness.

"What does Koreshanity teach? We present a brief summary of the System -- a few cardinal points, which will serve to suggest the great scope of the System in its completeness. It is the antithesis of all modern theories, of all schools of thought. It is the climax of all mental progress, the ultimate and absolute truth of Being and Existence; it is the revelation of all mystery, the uncovering of the occult; the true explanation of all phenomena, the scientific interpretation of nature and the Bible.

"Cosmogony. - The universe is a cell, a hollow globe, the physical body of which is the earth; the sun is at the center. We live on the inside of the cell; and the sun, moon, planets and stars are all within the globe. The universe is eternal, a great battery, and perpetually renews itself through inherent functions, by virtue of

which it involves and evolves itself.

"Alchemy.- The Science of Alchemy is the Philosopher's Stone, the Key to the mystery of life. Chemistry is false; alchemy is true! Matter and energy are interconvertible and interdependent; they are correlates; matter is destructible; the result of its transmutation to energy; alchemy is the key to the analysis of the universe.

"Messianic Law.- The coming of the Messiah is as inevitable as the reproduction of the seed. The divine Seed was sown nineteen hundred years ago; the first-fruit is another Messianic personality. The Messiah is now in the world, declaring the scientific Gospel [during life of Koresh].

"Reincarnation is the central law of life -- the law of the resurrection.- Reincarnation and resurrection are identical. Resurrection is reached through a succession of re-embodiments. One generation passes into another; the millions of humanity march down the stream of time together.

"The Spiritual World.- Heaven and hell are in humanity, and constitute the spiritual world; the spiritual domain is mental, and is in the natural humanity, - not in the sky.

"Human Destiny.- Origin and destiny are one and the same. The origin of man is God, and God is man's destiny.



God is the highest product of the universe, the apex of humanity. Absorption into Nirvana is entrance into eternal life -- in the interior spheres of humanity, not in the sky or atmosphere.

"Immortality in the Flesh.- Koreshanity declares and defines the laws of immortality, and its attainment in the natural world. The first step is recognition of the Messiah and the application of his truth. Koresh was the first in modern times to announce the possibility of overcoming death in the natural world, in the flesh.

"Celibacy.- The saving of human life consists in the conservation and appropriation of life in humanity. To become immortal, one must cease to propagate life on the plane of mortality. The standard of Koreshan purity is the virgin life of Jesus the Messiah. The Central Order of the Koreshan Unity is celibate and communistic. Celibacy obtains in the central nucleus, never in the world at large [only members of the Ecclesia are by law celibate].

"Psychology.- Koreshanity points to the basis of all psychic phenomena -- the human brain. It explains the phenomena of spiritism, mental healing, et cetera, and teaches the science of the revelation of mind and matter.

"The Bible.- The Bible is the best written expression of the divine Mind; it is written in the language of universal symbolism, and must be scientifically interpreted. Koreshanity demonstrates the truth and scientific accuracy of the Scriptures, and proves its astronomy, alchemy, theology, ethnology, et cetera. There is no conflict between the Bible and genuine Science, the Bible and the natural universe must agree in their expression of the divine Mind.

"Communism.- Koreshanity advocates communism, not only of the goods of life, but of life itself. It has not only the scientific theory of communism, but is practically communistic in the relations and affairs of its own people. In this it corresponds to the primitive Christian church, where all things were held in common. The bond of the true communism is the true religion, and the central personality of the divine communism is the Messiah.

"Koreshan Socialism.- Our Social System is patterned after the form of the natural cosmos; that form is the natural expression of the laws of order. We demonstrate the fallacy of competism<sup>1</sup>; advocate the destruction of the money-power; the control of the products

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<sup>1</sup> Competism is used by Koresh to mean competition.

of industry by the government, and the equitable distribution of the goods of life. Koreshanity will abolish wage slavery, and make it impossible for men to accumulate wealth and impoverish the people.

\*Church and State.— The true form of government is the divine Imperialism, the unity of church and state; such will be the Kingdom of God in earth. The Koreshan Government is the unity of the empire and the republic, involving the principles of all present forms of government, which are but fragments of the perfect system which existed in ancient times — in the Golden Age of the past. The government of the universe is imperialistic and humanity will constitute a unit only when every class is emplaced at rest and liberty as are the strata, stars and spheres of the physical cosmos."

This, in brief, is Koreshanity. The following chapters will elucidate, delving deeper into its philosophy, religion, and economic system.

## CHAPTER II

### CELLULAR COSMOGONY

The world at large believes in the Copernican system of astronomy, that we live upon the outer surface of a globe 25,000 miles in circumference and 8,000 miles in diameter, which revolves upon its axis once in twenty-four hours, and whirls in its orbit around the sun at the tremendous speed of nineteen miles per second. Not so with the Koreshans. Not only do they claim to disprove the Copernican theory but also to establish the fact that we are actually living upon the inner surface of the globe, and that the earth is stationary, the sun revolving on its axis at a fixed point within the earth. But this is only one of the many startling and revolutionary beliefs entertained by these people.

The founder of the Koreshan System, Doctor Cyrus R. Teed, reasoned by analogy that all life -- whether in the mineral, vegetable, animal or human kingdoms -- originates in cellular conditions, and therefore the universe in its entirety, conforming to this natural law, must be cellular (a hollow sphere) in form, with the people inhabiting or living in it. Naturally he recognized that there are many minds to whom analogical reasoning makes no appeal, so he organized a geodetic staff to demonstrate

by physical survey and other tests whether the earth's surface is actually convex as ordinarily believed, or concave as he contended.

The premise of the Koreshan System may be stated briefly as follows:<sup>1</sup> A straight line extended at right angles from a perpendicular post (plumbline), over land or water surface, will meet the water or surface of the earth at a distance proportionate to the height of the perpendicular. It is argued that this proves conclusively that the earth's surface curves upward and not down, as generally believed.<sup>2</sup>

Doctor Cyrus R. Teed, known as Koresh, comments: "However strange it may seem to you, the demonstrated fact that the surface upon which we live is concave, constitutes the fundamental premise of a new System of Science, involving the solution of all problems of life and creation. Knowledge is power; and the knowledge of the universe at once puts into the hand of the Discoverer, the supreme power over the world of mind and matter. It is the key to all realms of thought -- the Philosopher's Stone. It discloses the laws of Organic Unity, and

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<sup>1</sup> Koresh: Cellular Cosmogony (circular)

<sup>2</sup> For refutation of this premise see Young's General Astronomy.

is the unerring guide in the formation of a true System of Social Economy."<sup>1</sup>

The geodetic survey alluded to was conducted on the gulf beach at Naples, Florida, in the winter of 1896-97. Naples is located twenty-two miles south of Estero. This location for the survey was selected by the geodetic staff for the reason that here there were no obstructions to interfere with the running of the line, and the shore is free from depressions in the surface of the earth. Here on the shores of the Gulf of Mexico stretches for miles a glassy shell beach, formed by a long projected peninsula which ends only when it reaches Gordon Pass.

For the purpose of performing this survey, a surprisingly simple instrument, termed a rectilineator, had been devised, consisting of several double-T squares made of seasoned mahogany, twelve feet long, with four-foot cross arms which were tipped with brass facings and held exactly square by long diagonal tension rods. The double-T squares were mounted horizontally on upright standards, pinned firmly to the ground, and the sections were adjusted to the desired positions with thumbscrews.

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<sup>1</sup> Koresh: General Information Concerning Koreshan Unity (circular)

After subjecting the apparatus to crucial preliminary tests as to its accuracy, a start was made on the gulf beach, the first section or double-T square being carefully leveled by use of the plumbline with its axis above the water level. Thereafter no plumbline, level or other instrument was employed; each subsequent section was adjusted to the one before it until the brass facings on the cross-arms exactly met and the sections were then bolted together. The rear section was then carried ahead and adjusted to the foremost section of the rectilineator, and thus the survey advanced, section by section, the median line of the double-T squares being projected as a straight line by the simple mechanical adjustment of right angles. Each section of the rectilineator was reversed (end for end) at every adjustment to neutralize any possible inaccuracies, and all measurements were taken from water level, which conforms to whatever may be the form of the earth's surface. At the end of the first mile the survey line was 8.02 inches nearer the water than at the start, showing the water surface to have curved upward that amount in this distance, and at the distance of four miles the line ran into the water. These readings, taken as a basis of mathematical

calculations, will be found to very nearly conform to the relations of a chord and radii over an arc of 25,000 miles circumference and a diameter of 8,000 miles.

Numerous other experiments were conducted, such as restoring ships to full view with the telescope after they had passed out of sight to the unaided vision and were supposed to have disappeared around the convex curve of the water's surface. A large white target was also viewed on the Naples Bay at a distance of three miles with the object glass of the telescope placed at the surface of the water. According to calculations of mathematicians and astronomers, the earth curves eight inches in the first mile, and in subsequent miles by eight times the square of the distance. Hence if the earth were convex, that target at three miles would have been six feet around the curve, and below any possibility of observation.

Having thus established to his own satisfaction the concavity of the earth and its direction of curvature, Koresh continued to reason that the sun is a central transforming point for interchange of substances of the material physical universe. Further, the astral center has a light and dark side, a phenomenon which gives rise



to all the variations of lightness and darkness to which the universe is subjected. This astral center, with its concomitant solar system, revolves upon its axis; the earth being relatively and comparatively stationary. Such a cosmogonical construction, reasons Koresh, is in harmony with all forms of creation, and has the advantage of being in agreement with the laws of development as everywhere observed, wherever the order of growth comes within the scope of observation and reason. In this system we have the great cell or egg of development, the progress of growth corresponding to the general law of incubation.

This opens a new field of phenomena which like the above is entirely revolutionary. Beneath the earth's surface are seven metallic strata deposited according to their relative specific gravity. Upon this is based the principle of levity in contrast to gravity, for everything has its distance from the astral center at which point it has no weight. The sun or astral center is continually throwing out a force, which force prevents everything from rushing to it as a magnetic attractor. When this force and the specific gravity of the substance exactly counteract each other, then that substance has found its static position in the cellular universe.

These strata comprise the basis of the galvano-magnetic battery, or the negative compound element of a cell of which the central sun is the positive element. All the energies of the physical universe are the product of the interchange of a spiritual solution between the sun and the physical universe.

The planetary system is the reflection of the metallic planes, each stratum reflecting its own planet in the heavens. Between the astral center and the surface of the earth there are three bands of atmosphere, varying in density and content. These bands are, first, oxygen, next, hydrogen, and then the beyond atmosphere -- the sea of aboron, so termed by Koresh. The metallic base comprising the circumference of the earth, made up of layers or plates of metallic substance, constitutes the firmament. Each layer or plane is a reflecting surface from which stellar groups are focalized in the heavens. The outer rim of the sphere is approximately one hundred miles from the inner rim, and is composed of the heavier metals -- such as platinum, gold, et cetera.

The limits of the universe are measurable and determinable, reasons Koresh, and in it everything that exists is contained. How different from the ordinary concept that the heavens are infinite and that nothing

is explainable! "Upon the principle of cellular construction," says Koresh, "all things become definable and explainable."

"Chemistry is a false science, a blind attempt in explanation of the universe. There is nothing which does not change continually -- even the stones and dirt upon which we tread are undergoing interchange. Alchemy is the true science," concludes Koresh. "For atoms are not eternal but constantly being changed into spirit, in which form they ascend to the astral center for rejuvenation and transformation. returning later to evolving matter."<sup>1</sup> Interesting is the light in which Koreshanity holds chemistry and the chemist. "Yet the chemist talks about the way atoms are combined, and draws figures and constructs models to prove it. And he doesn't do this for his amusement, but because he is helped by it. He talks in the language of chemistry, as the mathematician talks in the language of mathematics. Some day he will, no doubt, understand the language better. Probably the language will be changed, and that which he now uses will seem like prattle of an infant."<sup>2</sup>

In the study of the relation of matter and spirit, Koreshan Universology recognizes the law of transmutation;

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<sup>1</sup> Koresh: Cellular Cosmogony

<sup>2</sup> Prof. Ira Remsey McClure: Flaming Sword, February, 1901.

matter is destructible and is the product of the materialization of its co-ordinate essential or spiritual counterpart. The astral center or sun is continually radiating spiritual essences which metamorphose, becoming matter. In a similar manner, matter by becoming spirit ascends to the astral center, thus perpetuating the relation of center and circumference. By this interchange there is a development which progresses from mineral to vegetable to animal to human and finally to God Center.

Reasoning by correspondential analogy, Koreshanity establishes a center for a like change of human substance, and by such changes humanity attains to perfection.<sup>1</sup> If there is a center for the physical world there is a center for humanity, which center is God. This organization is termed anthropostic. The previous discussion, relative to the astral center and matter, is termed the alchemico-organic cosmos or order. These two processes may be combined in one phrase, organo-vital cosmos.

By this process of evolution, better referred to as involution, men finally may attain perfection in the form of one of the sons of God. The spirit of a deceased person is reincarnated in a new born person, whose spirit has

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<sup>1</sup> Interview with G. W. Hunt, President of Unity.

gained experiences through its life period in its earlier carnal body. The carnal, material body returns to the mineral kingdom and by growth again climbs the scale of involution -- being used by the vegetable kingdom, which in turn is consumed by the animal, which in its turn is consumed by the God, or Spiritual, kingdom. It is a process of appropriation of the better qualities, which are passed along till finally only the best are concentrated in a few persons ordained to be perfect embodiments.

The number of those who are to finally attain perfection is limited to 144,000 men and a like number of women, from whom will be formed 144,000 biune perfect creatures, the sons of God. At the ordained time, automatically, the spirit of one man and the spirit of one woman shall conjugate in fusion, resulting in a neuter being -- Christ, according to the Koreshans, being such a personage. No matter where each part of that being may be at the appointed moment, it will seek its other half with electronic speed, for now they are gods -- God's spirit has been distributed among his sons. This limited number is a result of the numerical amplification of the one son of God.

The cycle of involution is estimated at approximately 24,000 years, in which time perfection by the

process of metamorphosis and interchange has finally been concentrated into the elect. This cycle is divided into twelve dispensations, each dispensation gathering as waves to a crest, throwing forth a perfected example by which the following epoch may evolve and involve. These examples are called seed-men (Messiahs), and to them a certain amount of truth is entrusted; their infolding spirit enlightens the age. Only that amount of truth is disclosed which can be comprehended by the evolved and involved epoch; giving succeeding seed-men a larger and more perfected knowledge and spirit. Koresh, the founder of the Koreshan Unity, is the last of the seed-men before the ultimate appearance of the perfected sons of God. Adam, Enoch, Noah, Moses, Elijah, and Jesus were all such beings for their respective epochs.

By a foreshortening principle of epochs, the Koreshans conclude that this last period is somewhat shorter than two thousand years in length. The exact length is incomputable, however, except to Koresh, who considered it best not to divulge this knowledge. Perhaps a thousand years, perhaps more or less, and the anthropostic universe will be developed to perfection. At that time the sons of God will be the rulers and priests of the earth, constituting the seven orders which the universe will then bring

## CHAPTER III

### RELIGION

The Bible is accepted by Koreshans as the best written expression of the Word of God, but not until this dispensation had man developed sufficiently for God to make his truths fully known. In each epoch God has instructed the seed-man or Messiah only to that degree to which comprehension has involved to humanity. Finally, the cycle of development has reached sufficient perfection that God has made all things cognizable. To Koresh, the Messiah of this final dispensation and founder of Koreshan Unity, was given all knowledge of the universe, the interpretation of the Scriptures, and the power of instruction.

In the forty-fourth and forty-fifth chapters of Isaiah there is recorded the prophetic declaration of the character and name of the Messiah (Koresh) of the new dispensation. This name is Cyrus, or in the original Hebrew, Koresh, which the Koreshans believe to refer to Cyrus Ramond Teed. Isaiah the prophet foretold the coming of Koresh, who would enlighten the world and prepare humanity for the final era, a perfected universe. The last verse of the forty-fourth chapter and the first verse of the forty-fifth chapter of Isaiah, according to the Koreshans, gives us the prophecy concerning Cyrus: "That

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saith of Cyrus, He is my shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure; even saying to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built; and to the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid referring to the new Jerusalem to be built at the present location of the Koreshan Unity . Thus saith the Lord to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have holden, to subdue nations before him; and I will loose the loins of kings, to open before him the two leaved gates; and the gates shall not be shut."

The eleventh and thirteenth verses of the forty-fifth chapter of Isaiah declare a further prophecy. "Thus saith the Lord, the Holy One of Israel, and his Maker, ask me of things to come concerning my sons, and concerning the work of my hands command ye me." "I have raised him up in righteousness, and I will direct all his ways; he shall build my city, and he shall let go my Captives, not for price nor reward, saith the Lord of hosts." The Koreshans again point to this reference as substantiating the present location of the Unity and foretelling the city to be built there.

Again in the eighth verse of the third chapter of Zechariah, the Koreshans point to the prophecy of the coming of Koresh and the final dispensation of perfect sons of God. "Hear now, O Joshua the high priest, thou and thy

*no page 23*



fellows that sit before thee: for they are men wondered at: for behold, I will bring forth my servant The Branch." Koreshans could give innumerable Scriptural references -- too many to be included in this dissertation.

The spirit of reincarnation, which subsisted in Koresh and today is a part of God, can be traced in its carnal embodiments.<sup>1</sup> Doctor Cyrus R. Teed came in the line of genealogy, through the tribes of Joseph, which were carried away into Mesopotamia and lost -- infiltrated by intermarriage with the Medians and Persians into whose royal families the offspring of Joseph were married. Cyrus, ethnologically, was Egyptian in descent, through Egyptian ethnic absorption. Israel was carried away into Mesopotamia, and was lost by infiltration with the Medians, Persians, and Assyrians. Cyrus was a descendant then of Media and Persia, where the Israelites were absorbed.<sup>2</sup>

The Koreshan concept of God is that given in Colossians, chapter one, from the fifteenth through the nineteenth verses: "Who is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of every creature: For by him were

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<sup>1</sup> Communication by Mr. C. L. D. with Koresh: Pamphlet entitled, The Messianic Appearing and Personality

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

all things created that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist; and he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the first-born from the dead; that in all things he might have the pre-eminence. For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell."

Koresh, having thus established his claim to prophetic powers and knowledge of the truth, interprets the Scriptures that men may see the light and attain the perfection predestined. In the ten commandments lie the foundation principles of Koreshan religion and life.<sup>1</sup>

"Thou shalt have none other gods before me." This, interpreted, signifies that those seed-men (Messiahs) coming at the end and beginning of each dispensation contain the spirit of God, above whom man must place no other gods. Consequently the spirit of God was in Adam, Enoch, Noah, Moses, Elijah, Jesus and Koresh. Koresh, appearing last in the cycle of development, has attained a fuller spirit of God nucleus, a nearer example of the ultimate gods -- the 144,000 perfect sons of God.

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<sup>1</sup> Interview with E. D. Silverfriend, vice-president of Unity.

Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the waters beneath the earth." This merely implies that offspring are not to be produced by those who wish to attain perfection, for children are usually worshipped by their parents. The Koreshan Unity is a group of people who aim to reach perfection and therefore live a life of celibacy. In order to reach the higher life sex passions must be overcome by those who would become the sons of God. To other orders of man, who have not attained to the inner ecclesia, it is normal to beget children. In so doing they sin, but this sin is yet to be overcome by them in the interchange of themselves with the God center. The Koreshan Unity is to grow by additions from outer groups who feel they have attained to the requisite growth and development.

In the gospel of Saint John, celibacy is again commanded for the inner ecclesia. "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin, for the seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God."<sup>1</sup> Koresh further interprets; "it is through man's supremacy over his animal nature that he comes into his divine relationship and authority. It is impossible for man to live in the lusts

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<sup>1</sup> Koresh: The Science of the Decalogue

of the flesh and at the same time enter the domain of divine existence. Celibacy is a stepping stone to immortal life.<sup>1</sup>

"Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain: for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain." This does not include the accepted idea that cursing is taking the name of the Lord thy God in vain, but rather refers to those who would set themselves up as prophets without the divinity of God. False prophets and impostors take the name of God in vain.

"Keep the Sabbath day to sanctify it, as the Lord thy God hath commanded thee." Koresh tells us that humanity has seven senses, namely hearing, smelling, tasting, seeing, feeling, orgasm (upon arriving at puberty) and gestation. While the female has the power to conceive and gestate the new form, the impregnation comes from the male. Before the Sabbath day of rest is reached, the propagative forces of both the male and female must be conserved. In the inner ecclesia this seventh sense, analogous to the Sabbath, seeks rest, attaining finally to perfection in the biune being. Thus the day of rest is reached by both man and woman. "What God hath joined together, let no man put asunder." God created the world in six days and rested on the seventh, which was rest from

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<sup>1</sup> Supra.

creation.

"Honour thy father and thy mother, as the Lord thy God hath commanded thee; that thy days may be prolonged, and that it may go well with thee, in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee." God is the parent of us all, being both father and mother, and Him humanity must honor, not the worldly carnal parents who give the soul reincarnation.

"Thou shalt not kill", from the Koreshan standpoint, means first that you shall not deprive your fellow man of his natural life, and secondly, that sensuality of the mind draws down from the spiritual realm of the mind the spirits of the God center, precipitating and murdering them.<sup>1</sup> Hate is a displacement of good, therefore anyone who hates kills good. This second interpretation, the Koreshan addition, is an intangible qualification -- having an evil thought is equivalent to crucifying Jesus. Likewise, evil thoughts crucify Koresh, the prophet of this age.

"Neither shalt thou commit adultery." Not only does the act of adultery or fornication constitute a breaking of this law but also the thought of lust is equivalent to the act of adultery. Those who abide within the ecclesia are overcoming adultery -- to all other orders, which

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<sup>1</sup> Koresh: The Science of the Decalogue.

are yet much less perfect, such passions are natural. However, even to these orders, adultery will be ultimately overcome.

"Neither shalt thou steal." Anything which belongs to a person -- be it of his making, or mind, or otherwise -- if appropriated by another without equal compensation is stolen. The acquiring of profits upon sales is an act of stealing; the amount of gain is the amount purloined. An individual buying an article for one dollar which he sells for a dollar and a half, steals fifty cents.

"Neither shalt thou bear false witness against thy neighbor." Testimony that is untrue, whether it be given consciously or unconsciously, voluntarily or involuntarily, constitutes an act of bearing false witness. The proclamation of a false doctrine to the world is a lie and the bearing of false witness.

"Neither shalt thou desire thy neighbor's wife, neither shalt thou covet thy neighbor's house, his field, or his man-servant, or his maid-servant, his ox, or his ass, or anything that is thy neighbor's". Desiring something which does not belong to a person is coveting and an infringement of the law. The giving of that which is not truth is coveting from the truth.

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Involved in the summary of the ten commandments, Koresh states, is that principle of love for one's neighbors, which cannot be fulfilled independently of a communistic life, a relationship conformable to the condition of the church in its inception. Here, after the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, the spirit of brotherhood and of unity pervaded the church. Koresh further adds; "the early church was communistic and the principle of celibacy pervaded the souls of as many as were touched with the Holy Spirit. The very character of the Holy Ghost would purify the thought and elevate it above the propensities of the flesh."<sup>1</sup>

Koreshans believe that the trinity of God, biblically called the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, refers to the male, female and final fusion of the two into the biune perfect son of God. Thus the trinity of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are united into one essence, which essence is then distributed among the 144,000 sons of God.

This chapter may well close with a poem by Koresh --  
"Immortality."

"None hath immortality but God,  
"The Oracle proclaims:  
"'Tis promised yet, withal, that  
"Though High Priest -- immortal Son,

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<sup>1</sup> Koresh: The Science of the Decalogue

"Other Sons arise  
"Immortal as the Son himself.  
"Thus the Godhead dwells  
"In conscious entity in every Son  
"Who, through overcoming, attains the goal.  
"Our Prophet now arisen  
"Is Priest and King anew,  
"And with his word baptizes  
"That his commandments we fulfill  
"And thus the right be ours to Tree  
    of Life.  
"Make of us the immortal gates  
"Of entrance to the Eternal City.  
"We'll lift up our heads and  
"Open wide our gates, that  
"Through obedience to law we shall  
"Awake, and in his likeness, that of  
"The Only Begotten, we shall reappear  
"The Order of Melchizedek, of  
"Which the Son of God  
"Is forever the High Priest.  
"Attune the Harps of our confession,  
"That, beholding Him, the Man  
"And yet the God, we see our  
"Destiny in the reincarnation --  
"The Sons of Deity." 1



## CHAPTER IV

### HISTORY

Doctor Cyrus R. Teed, founder of Koreshan Univer-  
sology and better known by the Hebrew equivalent "Koresh",  
was born near Teedville, a small town in Delaware County,  
New York, on October 18, 1839.<sup>1</sup> The earlier years of his  
life were spent on the farm, and also on the Erie Canal  
where he served some years on the towpath. Coming from  
a long line of Baptist ancestry, a number of whom were  
ministers, he early identified himself with that church,  
and was urged by friends and relatives to study for the  
ministry.

He did not, however, take fondly to a theological  
career, but gave it up early for the medical profession.  
Doctor Teed studied at first with his uncle, Doctor S. F.  
Teed, in Utica, New York, and later attended the New York  
Eclectic College.

At the outbreak of the Civil War Doctor Teed en-  
listed, and served during the war as staff officer under  
Colonel Gurney and General Woodford. At the close of the  
war he returned to college, from which he graduated in  
1868. He practised subsequently in various towns and  
cities in his home state, notable among which were Utica,

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<sup>1</sup> Interview with Miss Emma Bubbett

Syracuse, and New York City.

In the fall of 1886, Doctor Teed, who was then residing in New York City, was chosen as delegate to a Mental Science Convention at Chicago, and was unanimously elected as president of that assembly. In December of the same year, he issued his first magazine, entitled the "Guiding Star". This was devoted mainly to an exposition of the science of mental healing.

In the winter of 1869-70, becoming somewhat skeptical of accepted scientific theories and religious creeds, Doctor Teed entered upon a lengthy period of chemical and other scientific research and experiment. The result of his investigations was the discovery of the Cellular Cosmogony and the religious and sociological system which is based thereon. Following his disclosure of these discoveries, his friends circulated the report that he had gone insane. The Baptist preacher and the members of his home church began a systematic persecution that ruined his practice of medicine.

During this period of research, a peculiar incident happened, according to Koresh, at which time he was illuminated by God with the truth and the realization that he was the Messiah or seed-man of this dispensation. Doctor

Teed describes what took place:<sup>1</sup> "I realized myself gently yielding to the impulse of reclining upon the vibratory sea of this, my newly-found delight. My every thought but one had departed from the contemplation of earthly and material things. I had a lingering, vague remembrance of natural consciousness and despair. In the impulses of that last remnant of material thought, I put forth, as I supposed, my material arm and hand to experience some familiar touch -- but there was no response. I felt for my body, but no tangible sensation answered to the touch of what I still supposed to be my physical hand. I started in alarm, for I felt that I had departed from all material things, perhaps forever. Has my thirst for knowledge consumed my body was my question? Then my thought of speech revived, and I reached forth my voice in one transcendental strain of a new song of pathetic sweetness. I looked again; I was there. I listened for an echo, and the dulcet murmurings brought forth to me, in most melodious accents, the answer: Fear not, my Son, thou satisfactory offspring of my profoundest yearnings: I have nurtured thee through countless embodiments."

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<sup>1</sup> Koresh: Illumination of Koresh (pamphlet).

Doctor Teed then moved to Binghamton, New York, but persecution followed him there. About this time Doctor Teed visited the Rappite Society at Economy, Pennsylvania. This was followed shortly by the gathering of a number of friends, including his sister, Mrs. Emma Norton, which resulted in the establishment of a communistic home in Moravia, New York, based on the practices of the early Christian church. Celibacy, chastity and communism were required of all those joining the home.

In 1838, Doctor Teed founded in Chicago, at 2 College Place, the "College of Life." The purpose of this organization was to teach people what life is and how to live it, and thus to prepare them for profitable membership in the Koreshan Unity Society, later to be formed. At first there were only seven members, but within one month's time this number was swelled to fifty. With this increase it became necessary to seek new quarters, and at the corner of Cottage Grove Avenue and College Place a communistic home was established.<sup>1</sup>

One of the early graduates, Mrs. Mary Singer, be- took herself to California, where she formed and taught a class, gave lectures, and represented herself as the originator of the doctrines taught. Doctor Teed visited

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<sup>1</sup> Interview with Mrs. Boomer

in San Francisco in 1890, at which time he persuaded her followers that he was the ordained of God and the leader of Koreshanity. Mrs. Singer, confronted by the presence of Doctor Teed, confessed her impersonation and urged her followers to join the true leader in Chicago. Most of them did so, and as a result the Koreshan Unity, having displaced the College of Life, had its membership increased to one hundred fifty in 1893.<sup>1</sup>

Various publications and propagandist materials were being published from Chicago by this time. Earliest among these was the Flaming Sword, which has been published continuously since 1889. The Plowshare and Pruning Hook, a more radical and direct attack on capitalism, lasted but four years, succumbing in January, 1895.

Let us insert at this point a description of the founder of the Koreshan Unity as given by one of his early followers, who today is vice-president of the existing society. This description was written in 1898. "In the personality of Doctor Cyrus R. Teed is expressed a man of distinguished appearance; his eyes are a bright and lustrous medium shade of brown, his hair is worn combed back and always neatly trimmed. He is about five

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<sup>1</sup> Interview with Mr. Henry Silverfriend

feet six inches in height, and weighs 165 pounds, he is always clean shaven, has an aquiline nose and a chin that is very broad, projecting much as did Napoleon the First's. His perceptive are very prominent, making his forehead appear to recede; his back head is only medium compared to other men of his size, wearing a seven hat. His neck is not very large, measuring fifteen inches, but higher than Napoleon's. His shoulders are not broad, but he has a large deep chest. In 1870 he weighed only 125 pounds and wore a dark brown beard. Up to 1891 he had never shaved. He had very little hair on his cheeks but he had a luxuriant growth in his mustache and goatee. In 1891 he shaved his face smoothly and has kept it so since. It has made a great improvement in his appearance. He always wears spectacles. In his walk and gestures, he is rather graceful and has a very deep resonant sympathetic voice which is more electrical at times than others. His modulation at times is very good, but at other times he does not appear to realize the amount of energy he puts into his voice. He very often speaks as forcibly in a parlor lecture to a few persons as though he were in a large auditorium lecturing to 10,000 people.<sup>1</sup>

While on a return trip from Pittsburg to Chicago Doctor Teed formed the acquaintance of a fellow traveler,

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<sup>1</sup> Written by Mr. Henry Silverfriend in 1898.

who, after listening to Doctor Teed, suggested that Florida would be an ideal place for establishing such a community away from the persecutions of commercialism. This fellow traveler told of a development on Pine Island, an island below Punta Rassa, Florida, that he thought would furnish an ideal location, and which in all probability could be bought reasonably. Upon the arrival of Doctor Teed in Chicago, he immediately formed a party of three, consisting of himself, Mrs. Ordway, and Mrs. Boomer, to go to Florida and investigate the tract and situation.

Setting out from Chicago, the party arrived in Punta Gorda, Florida, in the spring of 1893. Punta Gorda was at that time the southern terminal of the railroad, which made it necessary for them to proceed by boat to Punta Rassa. It was found that the price asked for the island was \$150,000, far in excess of what the Unity could afford. Doctor Teed gave up this project and lectured to the people at Punta Rassa.<sup>1</sup> After a short stay, the party returned to Chicago.

Doctor Teed later received an earnest letter from one Gustav Dahmkoebler, who was located on the present site of the town of Estero, Florida, pleading that Doctor

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<sup>1</sup> Interview with Mrs. Boomer.

Teed accept his property as a site for the society. Through the services of a real estate dealer, something was learned of the place, and Doctor Teed and party returned to Florida in December, 1893.

The real estate broker failed to meet them in Punta Gorda as had been arranged, but Gustav Dahnkoehler did, and implored the party to proceed at once to the location that God had selected and was keeping for them. He had previously refrained from selling the property, which he felt was ordained for God's New Jerusalem.

Doctor Teed and party of three women proceeded with Dahnkoehler in his sail boat to the mouth of the Estero River, where it was necessary to procure a small row boat to navigate up to Estero. They did not leave the mouth of the river until dark, and it was after ten o'clock when they arrived at the appointed destination. It was found that Dahnkoehler lived in a cabin of one room and had no facilities for accommodating his friends. This was December, 1893; the nights were cold and the cabin contained no fire place. The women were forced to sleep on improvised beds of canvas sails, while Doctor Teed and Dahnkoehler retired to the loft.

Next morning after an inspection of the land Doctor Teed gathered his associates about the fire, where he



offered up a sincere prayer to God for this gift. He revealed that this spot exactly met with computations of longitude and latitude for the "vitellus" <sup>1</sup> of the universe. Here was to be built the city of God, from which would radiate all future civilization.

In the short space of two months, the location was made ready for the removal of a larger portion of the Unity from Chicago. All the hardships of pioneer life were encountered, but faith in Koresh urged the new colony on until it was firmly established. By 1903, the members and all equipment, including the printing plant, had been removed from Chicago to Estero, the present location of the Unity.

The Unity reached its greatest numerical strength at this time, with over two hundred members. Today, believers in Koreshanity are distributed throughout the United States and Canada, with representatives in Alberta, Illinois, Texas, Pennsylvania, California, Utah, and Maryland. Koreshanity is estimated to have several thousands of followers. <sup>2</sup>

Doctor Teed and his teachings were not favorably received by the neighboring towns, and as a result of

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<sup>1</sup> Vitellus is a word used by Koresh to denote the life center of the world.

<sup>2</sup> Estimated by G. W. Hunt, President of Unity.

an injury received in a mob attack in Fort Myers, Florida, sixteen miles north of Estero, he died December 22, 1908. Death came slowly, delaying two years before finally dealing out its last meter. During this entire time Doctor Teed suffered violent pains, but he declared that this was predestined, for he was the sacrifice for the world. Two months <sup>1</sup> before the end, he was removed to Estero Island, where he found some relief in the salt baths, but the strain of his removal proved too great. In his agony he often cried, "O Jerusalem, take me!" His prayer was peacefully answered December 22, 1908. His body lay in state three days and was then placed in a concrete tomb on Estero Island.

Dissension followed immediately as to who was the appointed leader to succeed Koresh as head of the Unity. Victoria Gratia, Mrs. A. G. Ordway, the representative of those perfect mothers who would give birth to the sons of God, led the first faction. This sought to establish itself in Seffner, Florida, but soon dissolved, the members dispersing about the state. Victoria Gratia married Doctor C. A. Graves, of Saint Petersburg, Florida, and she resided in that city until her death in 1923.

In 1910, this faction was followed by another, this

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<sup>1</sup> Interview with Doctor Gustav Faber. Doctor Faber is not now a member, having withdrawn in 1909.

*Thompson*

time under I. P. Gay, W. R. Wallace, and Flora Akers. They moved to Fort Myers, where they organized a new community of communism with about fifteen members, and today operate the largest laundry in that city. This group is incorporated under the name of "The Order of Theocracy", with non-profit bearing stock. All profits are put back into the business, and in the event that the Order of Theocracy succumbs the property reverts to the state.

With the above defections came single withdrawals and deaths. The community has declined in number since 1910 and today has only about sixty members, who practice the original form of communism. All property is owned by the members as a whole. No one owns anything personally; even the children belong to the Unity. Those things, however, which one uses personally are not subject to anyone else's use. All is preparation for what the Kreshans believe to be inevitable, A DIVINE COMMUNISM of world wide scope.

CHAPTER V  
15  
GENERAL DESCRIPTION  
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The Koreshan Unity is located at Estero, Florida, sixteen miles south of Fort Myers, at the intersection of the Estero River and the Tamiami Trail. Here along the banks of a winding river, in the flat lands of Lee County, is located a community practicing the communism they believe to be divinely authorized by God. There is nothing about the place which would lead the casual observer to suspect that here an unusual mode of life is being practiced. He is perhaps impressed by the quaintness of his surroundings, by its quietude and the carefree attitude of its people; he is caught up in the atmosphere, and, as though by some magic charm, relaxes.

His first warning that this is not merely another rural community is the inscription above the general store and the nearby post office, The Koreshan Unity, Incorporated. Almost automatically he stops at the store to inquire what it is all about. Two pleasant people greet him as he enters; "what can we do for you?" He stands enchanted in the silence of his surroundings, contemplating, unaware that he has been addressed. He sees about him well filled shelves of general merchandise in a modern concrete building -- but yet so different; it all

lacks that high strung pressure of commercial competition.

Finally he regains himself and speaks; "what place is this?" The president of the corporation, Brother George Hunt, informs him that he is in the store of the Koreshan Unity. "I am not too busy now to show you about, if you wish?" "Koresh is the Hebrew name for Cyrus -- Doctor Cyrus R. Teed, the originator and founder of this society. It was he, who, through his divine power from God, selected this location for our Unity. It is the "Vitellus"<sup>1</sup> of the universe, from which at some future time all civilization will radiate. Civilizations of the past have all arisen in temperate climates like ours, but this social culture is to be the final and last. Doctor Teed told us that this location was chosen through divine computation and is the vital center of the universe. It is half way between South American and North American markets; it is between European, African, and Oriental markets, a focal point for concentration of all commerce. A canal will be cut across Florida, which will pass through the state near Estero. The sons of God will radiate their spirit to the world from this point."

The guide leads him through the back door, where he

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<sup>1</sup> See footnote page 40.

finds himself in a park, a royal poinciana tree above his head and a garden about him. He proceeds, finding a virtual Eden -- flowers, fruits, trees, foliage, grass, flowing wells, a river. "Our walks", explains the president, "are sand and shell, for as yet the Unity is in a pioneer stage. We lack many modern facilities but we have most of the comforts of life."

"To your right is the Estero River, which at one time furnished our best medium of communication with the rest of the world, but with the coming of the railroads and highways it has long since lost its usefulness. Its channel has nearly been filled by the tide water sands and is today navigable only by small boats. This terraced park was planned by Koresh, and during his life was diligently cultivated, but we do not have sufficient help for it now."

Passing down the sandy trail, he comes to a large wooden frame building of three stories. This contains on the first floor a large dining hall, above which are dormitories for some of the members. He is yet hardly conscious of the fact that this is an old structure, not recently painted, a product of early days of the colony when Doctor Teed was still on earth. The guide takes him into the dining hall. His eyes fall upon a picture at

the head of the room. "That, sir," explains the president, "is a picture of Koresh, Doctor Cyrus R. Teed, the Messiah and founder of our society. Before he died, he sat at that table under his picture and ate from some of these same dishes in this dining hall -- that was more than nineteen years ago. We have never been able to finish the inside of most of our buildings, and besides they are only temporary structures until the new Jerusalem is built."

"From here we go to the oldest building on the grounds -- just across that ravine which acts as a drain for a flowing well up in that cluster of bamboo trees." Following along through a jungle of trees and foliage over a small hanging bridge, he arrives at the oldest house on the grounds, a log cabin with a thatched roof. "In this vicinity, the cabin of Dahnkoehler, the original owner of these grounds, was located, but it has long since been removed. This building is very old, more than thirty-five years."

Retracing his steps, the visitor is shown the bakery, which like other things is a product of long ago. "The rocks for building that oven were all gotten in this vicinity. Not only do we bake bread for our

own use but also for sale in nearby towns."

Coming from among overhanging trees and vines, undergrown with crotons and fancy leaved caladiums, the guide points out a row of old frame houses which serve, as do others, as temporary quarters for members. Just ahead is an old tennis court, built of oyster shells from the gulf and covered with concrete, where even today at leisure times the younger members find entertainment.

Proceeding, he begins to wonder how large these grounds are. The guide gives the information by pointing out boundaries and explaining that in this particular location, the Koreshan Unity owns over 1,000 acres. The president states, "had we not been set back by hurricanes and storms, and especially by that of 1926, the Unity would now have been able to present a more prosperous appearance. The late storm destroyed many trees and much of our park, in addition to blowing off roofs and damaging the buildings."

Passing down the road, his guide brings him to the laundry, the machine shop, and a small power plant. "These, like other buildings, are frame structures, but different in that they are covered with galvanized sheet iron. With the exception of the general store, the



power plant is the only building with modern equipment owned by the Koreshan Unity. Everything else is a result of a more active period while Koresh was living and injecting his spirit into the people. The machinery of the laundry and the machine shop were brought to Estero from Chicago in 1903."

Turning back towards the Tamiami Trail, the visitor passes a large frame dormitory, utilized by women only, beyond which, and fronting on the trail, is an Assembly Hall and Art Museum. Upon entering, he is again confronted by the picture of Koresh. "To your left", begins the guide, "is a large globe which demonstrates the Cellular Cosmogony of the universe, according to the Koreshan System." Eagerly these principles are explained and pointed out upon the hollow globe. "This Hall serves as an auditorium for religious services and social affairs, as well as a place for studying Koreshanity."

Crossing the road, he passes through a palmetto thatched circular building used at times for Koreshan fairs and the exhibition of products. Lingered but a few moments to chat with a pleasant old lady, he follows his guide toward the river, to a large two story building, which houses the printing plant. "Here are

published the American Eagle, a weekly paper, the Flaming Sword, a monthly magazine, and other Koreshan literature." Entering by the side door, his guide conducts him through the press room, and then upstairs to the editor's and composers' room. He sees just one large space containing a desk, filing shelves, tables, railed offices; and a large intertype machine.

Leaving the printing house, he is shown the boat ways and saw mill, which are located directly on the banks of the river. The guide tells him that though these are old buildings of the colony constructed in 1900, and today appear rather dilapidated, they are still in use, serving the Unity and the immediate vicinity.

The president of the Unity continues, "However, these are only temporary quarters, to be displaced by the greatest, largest, and most splendid city of history, a New Jerusalem, in which the sons of God will reside. Koresh described this future city, with all its marvelous splendor, to the Unity before his death. A description of this city may be found in the Flaming Sword."

The visitor, curious, goes back to the printing house to read the article. He finds that Koresh describes the New Jerusalem as follows:<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Flaming Sword, October, 1893

"It will contain ten million people, white and black, and will become the greatest city in the world. The site for the construction of the temple is one thousand six hundred feet in diameter, surrounded by a circular sea 300 feet wide, the water being supplied from the Estero bay and Estero river.

"The plan for the temple architecture is a central dome and rotunda 300 feet high and 150 feet in diameter. Extending from the rotunda and surrounding it will be a hexagonal structure, from each side of which is a colonnade projecting 150 feet, there being six of these from the six sides of the central structure. These are of complex architectural design. At the end of these six structures will be six magnificent buildings of six distinct kinds of architecture, yet of so congruous a relationship as to give to the entire temple the appearance of general harmony of design and construction. Outside of and around the Crystal sea is a building called the Arcadium. This is not only outside of the temple area, but also outside of the Crystal sea. This enormous edifice will be composed of seven distinct kinds of architecture, encircling seven-eighths of the Crystal sea, one-eighth of the circle being open toward the east.

"In front of the Arcadium and surrounding it is the Arcade Court. Outside of this court is a circle of eight parks in the form of parabolas adjusted to an octagon street. The parks extend from each section of the octagon toward the Arcade Court. The streets of the city will be laid out 400 feet in breadth, with two lines of parks and three divisions of street in the broad avenues. These parks will embrace fruit and nut trees and ornamental growth. The main streets east and west, north and south, are Meridian Way North, Meridian Way South, Parallel Way East, and Parallel Way West. The name of the octagon street is Triomphe Octagonia. It is about two miles from side to side of this octagon area. It is the design never to construct buildings along the sides of the public avenues. All structures will be arranged in courts at a distance from the streets, and all buildings will be arranged to face outward and inward toward the parks of the city. As the competitive system will be abolished, there will be no necessity for the kind of traffic which now reduces all our cities to diabolic infernos.

"When the New Jerusalem proper assumes such proportions of magnitude and progress in its development as to become permanent in its architectural creation, the underground or basement will be an excavation walled in to

complete a system of intercommunication for cables, wires, and perpetually moving platforms for the transportation of the debris and offal, which will be deodorized with earth and chemicals and conveyed to a spot forty or more miles from the city, where it will be reduced to fertilizer and returned to the soil. There will be no dumping of the public waste into the rivers, bays, and gulfs. The waters will never be allowed to be rendered impure by such a barbarian method of disposing of accumulated filth. When the streets are once laid, there will be no necessity for tearing them up to excavate for any purpose, as the channels and avenues for every possible underground use will have been previously arranged for. There will be no telegraphic or telephonic wires overhead to mar the beauty of the city, and to interfere with any kind of traffic. The various kinds of traffic, travel, and transportation will be arranged on planes of different elevations, so as to provide against the commotion, disorder, inconvenience, and danger that now characterize all large cities. The wealth by which these purposes are to be accomplished is the economic adjustment of the uses of industry, as industry alone is the basis of the accumulation of products called wealth."

Such is to be the future of the Koreshan Unity.  
It will all come about as a result of a DIVINE COMMU-  
NISM.

## CHAPTER VI

### ORGANIZATION

The Koreshan Unity found it necessary, since it must compete with society under existing laws and could not be a self-sufficing group apart from the world, to conform to existing conditions temporarily by incorporating in 1903. Before incorporation, upon the slightest pretense, each individual could be haled into court, as the property was owned in common by all members. Since the Unity was regarded in law as an unincorporated association, the act of each member was binding upon the group. Also, in case of necessity, immediate action was impossible, because of internal laws requiring a majority vote. An organization was needed which would relieve the individual members of annoyance with business matters with the outside world, yet would in no way affect internal relations concerning common property or the communistic scheme.

It early became apparent to Koresh that it would be necessary to improvise some form of organization for the protection of the Unity and its property, and while in Chicago Doctor Teed sought the services of a prominent lawyer for a solution of the problem. He was advised that incorporation would seemingly alleviate the present troubles of the colony, making its existence far safer and its troubles much less.

Koresh was further advised that the type of incorporation drawn up by the Standard Oil Company of New Jersey had thus far proved successful and was held by the legal profession to be the best yet perfected. The lawyer suggested this form as a possible outline upon which to incorporate the Koreshan Unity. In addition to the fact that the Standard Oil Company was incorporated in the State of New Jersey, it was advised that New Jersey had laws of incorporation which would be advantageous. New Jersey at that time offered lenient laws of incorporation and privileges of operation. The Koreshan Unity was thus incorporated in the State of New Jersey, in the same form as that of the Standard Oil Company, on the twenty-third of September, 1903.

The Unity was incorporated with a capital stock of \$1,000. It had one hundred shares of stock, of which E. Bubbett held forty-five, H. Silverfriend forty-five, and Cyrus R. Teed ten. This was soon changed, however, to a capital stock of \$200,000, with two hundred eighty-nine shares of stock, the majority being held by Cyrus R. Teed.<sup>1</sup> The central office for the Koreshan Unity was placed at 417-19 Market Street, Camden, New Jersey.

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<sup>1</sup> Interview with Henry D. Silverfriend, vice-president of Unity.



The corporation papers include under the section of business, every business that is possible with the exception of banking, which the New Jersey laws would not permit the Unity to include. Some two pages are used in naming the businesses in which the Koreshan Unity Corporation may be involved if it so desires, including dockage, coaling, mining, smelting, milling, offices, buildings, construction, real and personal property, publishing, sale of mineral waters, etc. The charter finally concludes with "anything that the board of trustees deem necessary or convenient for the purpose of the Unity." It further states that the term of a director shall be for one year and that he is to be elected by a majority vote.<sup>1</sup>

This form of incorporation makes dividends payable to stock holders, but inasmuch as there have never been any profits above those used immediately by the Unity, there have never been any dividends. This fact also makes unnecessary the payment of income tax, for there never has been anything upon which to pay a tax, and it often happens that the Unity must pay deficits from gifts and the sale of land. Should there ever prove to be a gain too great to be put back into the Unity immediately, the colony

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<sup>1</sup> "Koreshan Unity Incorporated". Charter may be procured by applying to the Secretary of the State of New Jersey.

would have to be incorporated again, this time as a non profit-bearing corporation. This fault has long been recognized by the directors, but thus far they have not been confronted by the problem, and choose to save expense by continuing under the original form.<sup>1</sup>

The board of directors consists of eleven members, one of which resides by law in Camden, New Jersey. The board is elected each year, but, due to the proxies that its members have secured, they continue to sit on the board with nothing more than a semblance of an election. The officers of the Koreshan Unity are elected by the directors, and have always been selected from among the board members. Those officers elected immediately after the death of Koresh have continued to serve in the same capacity since that time, though due to death of original members, a few new directors have been elected. The officers are as follows: George W. Hunt, president; Henry D. Silverfriend, vice-president; Evelyn Bubbett, treasurer; ~~Emma~~ Silverfriend, assistant treasurer; and William F. McCready, secretary.

After the dissension of 1909 and 1910, the board of directors felt that they should gain absolute control over the property of the Koreshan Unity by having all members

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<sup>1</sup> Interview with Henry D. Silverfriend, vice-president of Unity.

sign an Article of Agreement to that effect. This Article of Agreement was made legal and binding and concentrated all powers, regardless of their nature, in the board. The article reads as follows:

"The Ecclesia or Home of the Koreshan Unity is an association of absolute common interest in all things tolerated in the order of the Ecclesia.

"My signature at the bottom of this article indicates my agreement to fulfil the obligations taken upon myself in this relationship. I agree to turn over to the Trusteeship and treasury of the Koreshan Unity, all property held in my own right before entering the Ecclesia, and all property that may in any way fall to me personally; this shall include all pensions, annuities, and other incomes, from whatsoever source, and all sources of allowances. I voluntarily enter the Order, and as voluntarily commit all I have and am to the interests and promotion of the cause of Koreshanity. My performance of use shall be the property of the Commonwealth, to be directed and utilized by the order according to the appointed methods of the system. I do hereby agree to obey, in all things, the properly delgated authorities of the Order, performing cheerfully the uses assigned me. I do hereby further agree to leave the Order at the decision of its authorities,

when in their judgment I have violated its rules and am regarded as no more a worthy member of its association. It shall be optional with the Order to allow me little or much or nothing, as the Trusteeship shall judge. If I voluntarily withdraw myself from the association and cease to be a member, I will leave the matter of any gift to me from the Association, entirely at its discretion, holding no claims against it.

"In view of the above voluntary statement, the Ecclesia of the Koreshan Unity, through its Board of Directors, agrees to deal justly, according to the spirit and letter of the communism of Koreshanity,- not too hasty in judging of the short-comings of its members, slow to condemn, always cognizant of the fact that the spirit is often willing when the flesh is weak,- and will use just and liberal discretion in any gift or contribution it may make to a departing member." <sup>1</sup> This agreement is signed by the President of the Board of Directors of the Koreshan Unity in behalf of the Ecclesia, and by the member, renouncing his rights to private property. Thus there is no recourse, once the Board of Directors has made a ruling; not even the law may interfere with the internal working of the Board.

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<sup>1</sup> Copied from the article of Agreement in possession of the Unity.

Various committees are organized within the board to supervise the Unity; among such committees the most prominent are those on membership, expulsion, work, and finance. All dealings with the outside world are carried on solely through the community officers. Into the treasury are paid all funds which have accrued to the Unity through the sale of its products to the outside world. The individual member needs no money, for his needs are provided for by a committee performing this function. The abuse of money is the root of evil in commercialism, say the Koreshans, and has no place among the members, though the Unity must deal with money and the outside world. This will, however, all be done away when Koreshan Communism finally prevails.

A person deciding to leave the Unity is treated with due consideration. The Board of Trustees, in whose power all things pertaining to the Unity are centered, freely gives to him those personal effects which he has had for his immediate use and which will not, after their withdrawal, affect any other member. The attitude of the person leaving and his relations to the colony determine how much he may take with him.

In reality, the president, George W. Hunt, is the executive officer of the Koreshan Unity. Under his supervision, the various officers and committees carry on their

duties. It is expected that by his counsel assignments of work will be arranged, funds expended, equipment used, and all things done which do not require the signature of the Board of Directors. Should a member wish the use of a car, he is expected first to receive the permission of the president as manager of transportation.

At that time when those predestined to be sons of God have reached perfection, incorporation will have no place in the organization of the Ecclesia as now operative, nor in the world at large. These divine creatures, products of involved perfection, will be the priests and rulers of men. Theirs will not be a tyrannical rule, but a rule based on love and divine nature. It is they who will be the officers of men, living in a system of divine communism. Under this order, all will have plenty, not only of material goods but of life's happiness, for there will then be no worries, no cold commercial competition. Life will be a joy, each working for the good of all, receiving from the common fund of goods that which he desires, and he will desire only that which is coordinate with the good of society. Peace and love shall live among men in a world made by God -- A DIVINE COMMUNISM.

## CHAPTER VII

### GROUP CHARACTERISTICS

Many of the members of the Koreshan Unity came to it in their youthful days and have continued in its fold since the infancy of the Unity. Out of a membership of sixty, fully two-thirds are approaching three-score and ten years. But with increasing age, their faith and belief become stronger; many believe they will live to see the truths of Koreshanity manifested in this earth. The Koreshans exemplify that rock faith of our forefathers, who gladly withstood persecutions and cut a path to freedom in this new world.

Unlike many communistic communities, driven from the old world to America seeking liberation from oppression, the Koreshan Unity is purely an American movement. Most of the members of the Unity are native born, living in communism because they believe it to be God's plan for attainment of salvation. Though the movement arose during the depression years of the seventies and eighties, yet religion was the immediate motivating force which gathered them into a common life. These people gladly gave up their belongings to a common cause and took little in return, that they and others might know God's plan and be saved for the perfection they believe to be in store for them.

Thirty-nine years of service has wrought feebleness in body, but not so in faith. Having their faith and the attainments of the past, they live in the joy of one who knows truth and has done right, resting in contentment; the Lord's will will be done they feel, regardless of the rest of the world. Whatever discomforts must yet be borne are as nothing, for has not life hardened them in the school of experience; for are not their customs, organization, life, their very being, all a product of their mind and labor?

Alcohol, tobacco, profanity, and similar indulgences are held as worldly defilements of the body and spirit, which must be overcome before perfection may be attained. These habits are strictly ruled from the Unity, and this ruling is stringently adhered to by all, for it is sinning against God and Koresh to indulge. So closely do the Koreshans hold to their belief that the Unity store does not even deal in cigarettes or cigars.

A visitor notices no peculiarity in the speech of the Koreshan, for thirty-three years of association with the southern dialect has wrought the usual results. Time has finally made them typical Floridians in speech.

The dress of a Koreshan is no different from that of other people, excepting perhaps that it is less costly



and somewhat simpler. From the same stock of standardized goods that furnishes every one an assortment of purchases, comes the apparel worn by Koreshans. They do not make their own clothes, excepting at times overalls and shirts, but buy them collectively through the usual channels of world distribution. The mode of life of the Koreshan is governed by the income of the Unity, which is necessarily the case, for under their corporate organization many complications are evaded by spending from year to year the entire receipts.

Their food is simple, consisting of the less costly staples, yet is sufficient and substantial. An evening meal would be made of hash, sweet potatoes, cucumbers, prunes, cookies, and bread, with the inevitable glass of milk and well filled honey jar. Before partaking of each meal, the president or ranking officer reads grace from a book prepared by Koresh, a separate grace for each meal during the week. The bell rings five minutes before the hour -- breakfast at seven; dinner at twelve, and supper at six, excepting Sunday evening, when a light lunch is served at five. At meals the sexes are separated; six tables for the women and five for the men. At the east end of the dining hall, on each side, is a table. One is occupied by brother officials and the other by sister

officials of the Unity. At these tables, also, guests of the Unity are entertained. Between these two tables, there is a vacant table which was the table used by Koreshe during his life.

Four children, two boys and two girls, who are common property of the Unity, wait upon the tables. It is their duty to set tables, attend to needs, and finally wash the dishes after the meals are finished. By the use of tap bells on each table, these servers are called to administer the wants of the Koreshean members.

Following the noonday repast, some one reads the head lines from the Tampa Tribune or Jacksonville Times-Union, which often provokes much laughter from the assembly, in what they believe to be inconsistencies and variations of capitalist functioning in the world at large. Any news which does not fit within the concepts of the Koreshean doctrines and beliefs is looked upon as mistakes of Christianity, with its inability to make a perfect, livable universe. Some day, they feel, those babbling tongues and false printings will be made right in God's plan of divine involution. Present sufferings of people in the world are merely a part of development and predestination, which cannot be evaded unless people know and accept the

truth of Koreshanity.

That same bell which calls members to their meals, likewise, on Sunday evenings, calls them to meeting. On the left sit the men, on the right sit the women, as they worship the Messiah, Koresh, from whose works the readings are taken. The hymn book is also a product of Koreshanity, having been written by Koresh and a member, Reverend E. M. Castle. Worship is under the direction of the Board of Management of the Unity. The president directs the singing, in which all join heartily. These meetings are not closed affairs, but are open, not only to outside believers of Koreshanity, but also to the general public, which they gladly welcome.

The Koreshans take great delight in music, having always, from the very beginning of the Unity, a well coached orchestra. Some of the members have exceptional talent, which draws much interest from their fellow brethren and surrounding neighbors. Even at practices of the Koreshan orchestra, there is always to be found a large following of admirers. From time to time, this band of musical performers plays outside of the Unity Hall, accepting these invitations as opportunities for spreading Koreshanity.

People in the vicinity of the Unity report the Koreshans to be affable neighbors, always fair in all dealings and most obliging with favors. A Koreshan is more than glad to do his part in maintaining the goodwill of those outside his community, whether they be friends or strangers. All business is transacted upon the highest plane of integrity, and the Koreshans rather give freely than excite enmity. For scrupulously fair conduct the Koreshans are unsurpassed, and there is nothing which they will not do to accommodate others.

All that a Koreshan asks of a person is that he give the doctrine of Koreshanity a fair hearing; if he can not accept its precepts, the Koreshans feel no malice. All people have an equal right to their beliefs; perhaps others are right, but the Koreshans feel that theirs is the true essence of life and cannot be forced upon any one. Therefore live and let live — how different from the concept held by Christianity.

Those four children, who came to the Unity with their parents, come under the control and guardianship of the Board of Management, through an appointed matron and teacher of the colony, until they reach lawful age, at which time they may freely apply for full membership.

The education of these children is not omitted while they are growing to maturity, for they are trained for life and service. It is the plan of the Unity that they shall be able to do something useful, and in this ideal the child is brought up. Aside from general usefulness and adaptableness, the child must have a cultural education in order that he of his own reason may choose to stay or leave the colony. After supper each evening, six nights a week, the president of the Unity devotes two hours to teaching the rudiments of reading, writing, history, arithmetic, and geography.

The Koreshan, however, with all of his good characteristics, yet remains far from that perfection which he hopes ultimately to attain through Koreshanity. Some day in the embodiments of the sons of God, he will live in perfection of character in a DIVINE COMMUNISM.

## CHAPTER VIII

### INDUSTRIES AND COMMUNITY WORK

To Koreshans, work is not unpleasant, for in this communistic community all are working for the good of the group. If one asks them why they work, now that they have property which can more than amply support them, they answer always with that same ardor of soul, "we are building the foundation for a divine communism. Not only are we helping the world to attain perfection but also we are preserving at Estero the vitellus of the universe and the New Jerusalem." In religion is found the stimulus to work for the Koreshans living at Estero.

The philosophy of Koreshanity, and its concomitant Communism, has left upon the temperament of its followers a certain fullness and carefreeness, which, with age, gives no place for hurry or worry. Expressed in the terms of one of its members: "We are, through our group system of cooperation, not worried by the necessity of work, nor hurried nor bodily strained in performing it. Such stress is characteristic of the competitive system that the rest of the world must endure until divine communism displaces it. The burden

of competition with the world at large rests upon the shoulders of the group as a whole and not upon the individual." <sup>1</sup> Should a member be sick, he need not fear poverty and starvation, but is cared for by his fellow members, who gladly support him until he can also help support the group. Long hard hours, which are characteristic of capitalistic labor, are not necessary to maintain the Unity with subsistence and the comforts of life. Work within the colony is alternated as much as possible to alleviate monotony.

The Koreshans do not have ultra-modern material goods or equipment, but those goods which they have are far better than those obtained by the average person in the United States. Savings through large scale buying of goods have made this possible. The president estimates that between four and five thousand dollars is the average sum paid by the Unity to the world at large for food, clothing, and the personal necessities of the members of the Unity. <sup>2</sup> Distributing this amount among the sixty members, each person lives within the colony for a year in comfortable style upon approximately ninety dollars. Thus the Koreshan Unity is not entirely

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<sup>1</sup> Interview with Doctor Wilson, a member of the Board of Directors of the Unity.

<sup>2</sup> See page 77

self-sufficing, but, obviously, it is far from being entirely dependent upon society as a whole. How else could these people maintain their position in American society with such a sum?

In the Koreshan Unity there are sixteen departments of industry. These are; the Printing and Publishing Department, the General Store Department, the Machine, Light and Power Department, the Home Commissary Department, the Architectural and Construction Department, the Dairy Department, the Poultry Department, the Apiary Department, the Dentistry Department, the Naturapath Department, the Laundry Department, the Art Department, the Plant and Shrub Department, the Bakery Department, and the Koreshan University Educational Department. Each of these departments is under an official who is responsible to the works committee representing the Board of Directors. These sixteen departments are by no means all financially remunerative; most of them are maintained at a cost to the Unity for the service of its members. Five industries, the General Merchandise Store, the Guiding Star Publishing House, the Machine Shops, the Bakery, and the Plant Industry, provide the major portion of the income for the Unity. The President of the Unity



believes, however, that there are a number of industries which, if properly manned and equipped, could be made very remunerative.

The General Merchandise Store of the Koreshan Unity functions as the primary bread winner, and without its assistance the community would have its income sharply reduced. The store serves not only as an enterprise for monetary gain but also as a medium through which the Unity may buy goods cooperatively at wholesale prices and distributes them among the members. A member merely reports his or her needs to the matron or president, who together act as a committee supervising the division of goods. When the request is approved, the member receives the goods from the Unity store. Thus the common treasury of the Unity pays to the store only the wholesale price of the goods. As the common treasury of the Unity is the same treasury used by the store, the transaction actually consists only of a book entry. Under this system, as stated previously, the cost per person for each year is unbelievably small.

From the Guiding Star Publishing House, the Koreshan Unity receives its next largest income, though this is relatively small. The history of this institution dates from the beginning of the Koreshan Unity; in fact it was

returns only a small income.

The Guiding Star Publishing House in 1906, as a response to political injustice framed against the Koreshan Unity, issued a weekly paper, the American Eagle, in order that the Unity might gain some recognition in the politics of Lee County. Not only was the American Eagle published that the Koreshan Unity might gain recognition but also to expose the corrupt politics at that time existent in the county. The paper has paid for its printing from the first, and consequently is surviving today, though gain from it is very small. The Laws of Florida require publications of this nature to be self-sustaining, thus these papers can not be printed for free propaganda. <sup>1</sup>

The Guiding Star Publishing House, when not occupied in publishing its papers, will accept jobbing from outsiders. Any remaining time is spent in printing Koreshan books, pamphlets, advertising material, et cetera. The demand for these services is not large at present, and the return is consequently small.

Turning now to the machine shop and power plant, we find another industry which contributes to the common

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<sup>1</sup> Interview with Henry D. Silverfriend, vice-president of Unity.

Bread for Estero, Bonita Springs, Naples, and surrounding territory is furnished from the oven. The profits from the bread sold to the public pay the cost of providing the community with bread.

It has been estimated by the president of the Koreshan Unity that the common treasury of the colony received, from all of its industries and sources of gain in 1927, an income of seven to eight thousand dollars. Of this amount at least five thousand was expended for food and clothing for the members, the remainder being expended upon the upkeep of the property. Through various means, the Koreshan Unity has come into possession of some two thousand acres of land, distributed in Lee, Collier, Glades, and Palm Beach Counties, and some twenty odd buildings. The total property is valued by the president at approximately one million dollars. This figure is set high, yet under no condition would the Unity part with it at any price, for it is the foundation of the New Jerusalem.

It was always the principle of Koresh that any enterprise of legitimate nature might be undertaken by the members of the Unity. Through trials, tribulations, and successes, Koresh told his followers they would

finally attain perfection, and those who could not at the end of this age measure up would only attain the fruitage in perfection in another harvest time.

In 1906, a member by the name of Webster was given, at his own request, the power of attorney to purchase a furniture enterprise in Bristol, Tennessee, but was also told not to involve the Unity corporation in any debt. He soon had the Koreshan Unity involved in a mortgage of \$27,000, however. It was not long until the enterprise failed completely and went into the hands of the receivers, leaving a debt of \$17,000 to be paid by the Unity. From this load, the colony did not recover until 1925. Today the Koreshan Unity stands free from any indebtedness.

Under divine communism, there will always be work, but it will be devoid of harshness, drudgery, injustice, and exploitation, and the workman will receive the full reward of his efforts. Labor will then be the criterion for valuation, but love for fellowman will guarantee the comforts of life to every one in a DIVINE COMMUNISM.

## CHAPTER IX

### KORESHANITY AND CAPITALISM

Koreshanity does not condemn Capitalism and Christianity, but rather treats them as a phase in the process of development to perfection in Communism and Koreshanity. Capitalism is a necessary era in climbing finally to that order ordained by God; it can not be avoided by the world but must be endured to attain coordinated universal perfection. Ultimately, the inconsistencies of capitalism and Christianity, so adjudged by Koreshanity, will be driven from the earth, and in their place will come, peacefully and unnoticed, Communism and Koreshanity.

Industrialism and machine mass production will remain a part of the new Communism, though far different from the industrialism of Capitalism. Instead of private ownership of the machine of production, these will be owned by society as a whole, and in place of money as a standard of valuation, labor will be the basis. Koreshanity thus differs from social reform movements in that it is not a reform but a revolution, not a revolution in the sense of conflict but rather an entire displacement of existing institutions by a distinct system ordained by God.

The Koreshans tell us that their order of communism has no connection whatever with any movement or idea in history, except that instituted by the Lord Jesus, and is itself not a man conceived institution but a divine law of God.<sup>1</sup> Koresh has originated nothing in himself but has only interpreted God's fore-ordained and predestined arrangement of the world. These people term all other forms of communism fallacious, speak of their own form as not an experiment but an everlasting order. The Koreshans further add that they differ materially from socialism in that they are not attempting to reduce the entire world at once to the conception and application of the principles of communism and cooperation. Such is not the true progress of involution to perfection. The kingdom of righteousness, Koreshan Communism, will begin as a small center of organic power and unity; it will gather impulse under God's law of involution, and eventually, from this small beginning, enlarge to the dimensions of a universal kingdom.

Koresh comments upon modern socialism in his pamphlet entitled, General Information Concerning Membership and Obligations of the Koreshan Unity. Here he

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<sup>1</sup> In this connection, however, see p.1

states that modern socialism is entirely theoretical and experimental. He adds, further, that socialism as an experiment would prove a disastrous failure, because it is an attempt to place society upon a basis which is entirely contrary to the laws of order as they obtain in the universe as a whole. Koresh calls modern socialism the insanity of democracy.

It is impossible, the Koreshans explain, to live according to the Holy Scriptures and yet live in a society of capitalism. The Bible tells us, "love thy neighbors as thyself." It is impossible in a world of competition to obey this command, having, for instance, a store across the street from your neighbor, who, like yourself, is endeavoring to sell his merchandise at a profit. Not only do you, according to the Koreshans, break the law of Christ, but also you steal from the buyer. Interpreting the eighth commandment, "thou shalt not steal", a person selling an article for more than he himself has paid for it is stealing from his fellow man that amount -- a store keeper is a long way from Koreshan perfection.

Koresh calls especial attention to the scriptural warning, "the love of money is the root of all evil", and interprets this to mean, "money is the root of all

evil." He continues, "the commonwealth idea is a more practical and cheerful incentive to industry than the satanic system of money, which, in opposition to the gospel of the Lord, is at the foundation of all woe, misery, and death in the world." <sup>1</sup> Speaking of capitalism, Koresh writes:

"Money makes banks,  
"Banks make poverty,  
"Poverty makes rags,  
"Rags make paper,  
"Paper makes money,  
"Money makes banks," <sup>2</sup>

-- and so on as long as Capitalism and Christianity exist.

The Koreshan interpretation of the Bible gives an explanation of the poverty of the world. An article entitled, "Bread and Butter", found in the Flaming Sword, March 26, 1892, is well worth our attention.

"Jehovah, meaning breadkeeper, will always effect a distribution of the earth's products when He is appropriated by humanity; but when divorced from man, as at present, He is not responsible for empty stomachs. Koreshanity has for its ultimate object the feeding of the masses; if it fails in such a purpose, when unfolded by baptism, it will sink out of sight. By teaching the true doctrine of immortal life and the means of its attainment

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<sup>1</sup> Koresh: General Information Concerning Koreshan Unity (pamphlet)

<sup>2</sup> Flaming Sword, June 12, 1892.



it expects to reclaim men and women from the selfish relations that they at present sustain, and by a great system of Cooperation or Communism -- involving a common treasury as in the days of the primitive church -- it expects to unite the producer and consumer, who are now at war. This is the only solution to the bread and butter problem. When people get the devil out of them, by imbibing the true doctrines of Koresh, they will not suffer each other to starve, for the reason that no one will practice dishonesty, nor attempt to shirk his share of labor. If, after many centuries of labor in civilized society, so-called Christianity cannot destroy dishonesty and indolence, these abominations can be justly charged to its account."

Thus Koreshanity would have us believe that divine communism will do away with the problem of poverty found under our present order of society.

Koreshanity offers a solution for the Malthusian theory of population and subsistence, as such exist today. The Koreshans admit the Malthusian axiom (i.e., Population tends to breed up to the limit of subsistence) under present conditions of society, but state that this doctrine will not hold when the era of world wide Koreshanity has finally arrived. In that perfected world of divine

communism, matter and life will be equalized and balanced, and through the constant interchange of matter with the astral center, of life with the God center, and of matter with life, life and subsistence will be kept in a perpetual relation. The universe contains a constant amount of matter and spirit, which by the laws of God, is kept in equilibrium through the principle of acquisition and elimination to and from the center of the universe.

The negro question, a present bone of contention and agitation, will, explains Koresh, be solved ultimately in Koreshanity. The negro is capable of involution, and this process will eventually perfect him as a part of the great era of the sons of God, where his physical embodiments will have been eliminated, leaving only the perfect spirit.

Contrary to the accepted theory of democracy, Koresh says there is not and never will be equality of all people. Involution has not perfected some beings as far as others, and on this basis inequality will be a part of the ultimate divine communism. The distribution of goods will not be equal. The highest forms of life, the perfect sons of God, will receive most, and the amount of goods received by the lower forms will

decrease in proportion to their distance from perfection. The least perfect men will receive only that amount necessary for a decent living standard. All, however, will receive an abundance of life's necessities under divine communism, through their involved willingness to work.

Finally, though democratic government is the best thus far involved, it will be displaced in that ultimate era by a new system. The Koreshans believe that the true form of government is a divine imperialism, with unity of church and state; such is to be the Kingdom of God in earth. The sons of God will then be the rulers of men, for by involution they have attained to greatest perfection. This is a continuation of the theory of the inequality of humanity. That ultimate government will take a portion of its form from democracy, but in addition it will include imperialism. Until that Kingdom in earth arises, the Koreshans pledge their full support to the government of the United States, and to the just and right administration of the present system.

But eventually the sons of God will be the rulers in a DIVINE COMMUNISM.

## CHAPTER X

### FUTURE PROPHECY

In the preceding chapters we have treated the Koreshan principles as they are today, and as they expect to be in the future, but that which precedes the ultimate is only superficial and illusory. The fact is, Koresh has left only a partial revelation as to how Koreshanity shall be ushered into the earth. Under the nom de plume of Lord Chester, and in the form of fiction, which Koresh considered to be best in the face of opposition, he foretells the future of Capitalism and Christianity. This story is entitled, The Great Red Dragon, or The Flaming Devil of the Orient. This, though vague, gives a brief revelation of the future. Koresh, in whom the Koreshans believed to be all knowledge, did not disclose the day nor hour when the sons of God would arise, neither did he tell all the events which would precede it.

In the author's note to The Great Red Dragon, Koresh states that there is coming a world wide catastrophe. This calamity will arise in accordance with predictions of the Bible and in accordance with the natural course of events growing out of the system of competition, which will usher out the Christian dispensation and give birth to the Koreshan era. <sup>1</sup> The coming termination of the present

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<sup>1</sup> Koresh: The Great Red Dragon, page 5

era is not to be confined to any one portion of the world; in the establishment of the Universal Kingdom, in which God will reign, the entire human race will come under the process of change.

The story of The Great Red Dragon is, as has perhaps already been implied, a prophecy of war between the United States and the Orient, which is to culminate in the new dispensation of Koreshanity. The essence of this story will be briefly included here; the reader should bear in mind that it was written in 1906.

In the future, perhaps not far hence, a time will come when the United States will be engaged in mortal conflict with Japan and China. Before the Orient is finally subdued, the United States will be brought near to annihilation, and only through the plan and power of heaven will this country finally throw off the attack.

The entire fleets of both the United States and the Orient will, in the early days of conflict, be gathered for battle off the coast of California. There will be a tremendous impending struggle, in which, by a single stroke, the entire naval force of either nation may be utterly destroyed, leaving that nation's shores open to attack.

From its base, the American fleet will be decoyed by the Oriental ships into a great battle. The Oriental fleet will steam past, to be immediately pursued by the Western. Closer and closer the American array will draw upon the Eastern, only, in a seeming moment of glorious victory, to be utterly shattered and destroyed by concealed mines. Though the Japanese strategy will sacrifice much of its own blood, yet American humanity will pay the price.

Thus swallowed into a chaotic abyss, the American nation is left a wretched prey to Oriental greed. "Let all Japan feed her appetite upon the accursed Caucasian; prepare, ye heavy laden of the Orient, for the possessing of the promised land", shouts the trumpeter throughout the Orient. The van of oriental families moves in waves behind its victorious army, which penetrates the American continent at will. The United States lies devastated, its population depleted.

It is the plan of the universe and the decree of heaven that America will be the land of a superior race and the vitellus for the sons of God. The yellow man is little more than an animal in the scale of involution and will not be numbered among the perfected sons of God.

From oblivion, as the Mongolian approaches the vortellus of the universe, arises a new device to be the savior of the world. This product is invented by the power of God in the Koreshans, taking the form of a radio directed aeroplane. The yellow man will be repulsed and totally destroyed, in Lakeland, Florida.

The Koreshans tell us that Koresh prophesied the world war of 1914 <sup>1</sup>, foretelling not only particulars but also the exact date on which the war later took place. May 30, 1928, has been designated by Koresh as being the most momentous in the history of the world, but its real significance is not given, other than that the momentous period shall not end until 1936. <sup>2</sup> Perhaps the war with the Orient will at that time take place -- but no one knows.

This much, however, Koresh does tell -- when the battle of Armageddon takes place, it will be followed by a DIVINE COMMUNISM.

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<sup>1</sup> Interview with Henry D. Silverfriend

## CHAPTER XI

### SUGGESTED CRITERIA FOR EVALUATION

In this thesis no attempt will be made to analyze and evaluate the Koreshan Unity critically. The present chapter will suggest several criteria by which the community might be evaluated, and, having indicated possible directions in which further analysis might be made, will leave to the reader the task of selecting the criterion, or criteria, which seems to him most significant and then evaluating the community according to the standard selected.

Evaluation leads to questions such as the following: Is this a better form of social organization than the competitive capitalistic system? In what ways is it better, and in what ways inferior? Does it lead to a higher and better life than that under which we now live? Is it in the line of social progress?

What is progress? There seems to be no definition of this elusive concept upon which people can agree at present. The word progress implies the idea of a goal, a goal toward which we are in fact moving, in so far as we can say that we are progressing. At present there is no unanimity of opinion as to what goal or goals should be toward which we should develop.



If it were true that mankind had agreed upon a goal and if it were true that we could measure the effects of our actions in such a way that we could prove that they did, or did not, bring us nearer our established goal, then we might be able to judge and evaluate various types of social organization -- among others, the Koreshan Unity.

Since at present there is no such agreement, the most that can fairly be done in this study is to suggest certain criteria for evaluation, certain methods by which various goals may be reached, leaving to the reader the task of selecting his own criterion and making his own evaluation.

Some persons believe that progress consists in the increase of material wealth, and the increase of power over man's physical environment -- greater productivity.<sup>1</sup> According to these, competition in production is the best means of getting economic resources into the hands of those who can manage them most efficiently. Competition will eliminate the less efficient, and, through a process of survival of the most efficient, progress will result. The ideals and institutions of the surviving group are the best -- they mean progress.

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<sup>1</sup> Vide, Carver, T. M., The Religion Worth Having, and other of Professor Carver's books.

Other persons largely disregard the increase of material wealth, and emphasize spiritual or mental development as the true goal of human endeavor -- the true progress. These persons say that the world needs a mental or spiritual awakening. However great may be the material wealth of a people, they cannot progress except by mental or spiritual development to the higher, the better, the more spiritual things of life. <sup>1</sup>

Still other persons hold that the true progress consists of increase of progress over both material and spiritual environment, if this be for the long run good of the group. With increasing progress, this group becomes ever larger, until it includes all humanity, and progress must be for the long run good of all humanity. That step means progress which is for the greatest good of the greatest number, in the phrase of the utilitarians. They proceed further to show how this long run good may be determined. For example, it is for the long run good of humanity that physical health and strength should be conserved and increased -- that fatigue, and unhealthy types of work should be eliminated from the economic process. In this view, whenever conflict arises between human and material wealth, the human resources are

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<sup>1</sup> The Buddhist religion furnishes an example of this philosophy.

infinitely more important to the group. <sup>1</sup>

The Koreshan Unity seems clearly to have less material wealth than other forms of social organization. Their productivity is lower and their industrial efficiency less than that of capitalism, and they do not have the institutions of private ownership, of marriage, or of the family. They do not have a socially stratified society or inequality in the distribution of wealth. Hence they do not have our capitalistic incentives of fear of poverty, social distinction, or pecuniary reward.

On the other hand, the Unity is enabled by its form of organization to keep its religion and its astronomical beliefs, to secure social and economic equality among its members, and probably to lessen internal struggles and conflicts within the group. It provides greater leisure and ease, less strain, fatigue and overwork, less fear of poverty, more freedom from competition, and greater safety in old age and sickness. It probably secures better health and longer life, and it secures greater love of work, a greater unanimity of purpose, more freedom of thought, and greater opportunity for reflective thinking, than does our system of capitalism.

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<sup>1</sup> Vide, Bristol, L. M., Social Adaptation, and other writings of Professor Bristol.

After all, in this catalog of differences, what is desirable and what undesirable, what is important and what unimportant? What will make for a better social organization, for a higher type of life, for more social progress? At present there is no agreement. Who can say what is best?

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