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The Trial of Your Faith

"The trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 1:7).

The trial of our faith is "the process of proving what is genuine" in our faith superstructure. Being tried with fire carries the thought of being "refined." This process is more precious than gold, and we must always remember this.

Every trial, every persecution, every difficulty of life, permitted to come upon those who have made a covenant of sacrifice with the Lord, is intended to prove them and refine them. We could also say that the intent is to improve them by developing their faith and character.

The Need For Endurance

The endurance of these difficulties is cause for thanksgiving, because such difficulties are instruments designed to prepare us for our future glorious inheritance. As the Apostle Paul tells us in Romans 8:18 "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us." Peter states in 1 Peter 4:13: "But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy."

Whenever we pass through a fiery trial and are able to maintain our faith and confidence in God, our characters are more and more refined, like gold, and we are therefore more pleasing to God, who disciplines us, or trains us, for this very purpose. This was true even for Jesus as we read in Hebrews 5:8 "Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered." And from Hebrews 12:6-11 in part: "For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth. ... If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? ... Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby."

The word "chastening" in these verses (G3809) is often misunderstood. It means to educate or train a child in order to bring them to maturity. In this way even Jesus, as a New Creature, was educated, trained and developed. He learned from the trials he endured. The Manna for June 16 is also very appropriate. One more related scripture is found in Hebrews 2:18, "For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted."

More Precious Than Gold

The reason that the trial of our faith is more precious than gold is because the result (if faithful) will be the Divine nature. Gold is a proper symbol as it is considered of great value as a precious metal. However, the difference between literal gold and the Divine nature is too great for comparison.

1 Peter 4:12,13, "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy." We wish to focus on this text as an example of Jesus having had fiery experiences. We should not "think it strange" if the same testing is necessary for us. The sources of these fiery trials are the world, the flesh and the

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Devil. Of these three, the greatest enemy is our own flesh. The Devil and the world attack us through our flesh. There are also dangers in the Ecclesia as mentioned in Acts 20:29,30. And there are also special tests for the time in which we are living.

It is important to remember that God is not the source of our temptations, but He permits them as tests (James 1:13). The purpose of fiery trials is to try us, or to exercise us, in order for us to grow and develop as New Creatures.

Developing The Fruits

If properly received, these trials will develop in us the fruits and graces of the spirit. Additionally, we are not to choose the kind of fiery trials that we must have but are to leave it in the hands of the Lord. It is reasonable for us to look for divine deliverance and the opening of a way of escape from things too difficult for us to endure, or to flee from danger (Matthew 2:13, 10:23, 12:14,15).

One verse in particular is important here: 1 Corinthians 10:13, "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: however God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation **so direct the issue** that ye may be able to bear it" (Diaglott).

We should not try to bring persecution upon ourselves or expose ourselves unnecessarily to danger "tempting the Lord" but must follow Jesus' example in Matthew 4:5-7.

Our proper reaction to trials of faith permitted by the Lord should be with joy and rejoicing. (James 1:2, Romans 5:3-5). The Manna for April 28th is also very appropriate: "We have need of patience, and that can only be gained by trials. We have need of faith, and that can only be developed by necessities. We have need of experience for our future work, which can be gained only by such experiences which permit us to be touched with a feeling of the infirmities and difficulties and trials of those about us, to whom we shall be ministers and representatives when we reach the throne. For us ... the lesson of present experiences is to resist evil — not with evil but with good."

Thus, we see a progression: (a) Trials taken properly develop patience. (b) Patience under trial results in experience, preparing us for the next test of patience. The reverse is also true. Without patience we cannot gain experience.

The Work of a Refiner

Another illustration is found in Malachi 3:3, "And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the LORD an offering in righteousness."

The emphasis in this verse is on the removal of all impurities in our character, such as self-will, personal ambition, pride, outward forms of godliness, etc. The



Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego

literal refiner watches the crucible with great care to make certain the fire is hot enough to destroy all the impurities, but not too hot so as to destroy the precious metal. This promise should increase our trust and confidence in God. Our experience verifies the truthfulness of this promise. Until now, in each one of our lives, God has been 100% successful in refining and purifying us, yet at the same time protecting us from any harm to our New Creature (Hebrews 12:11). Fiery trials are not pleasant to our flesh while we are passing through them. But this text emphasizes the good results which we can appreciate in retrospect. The end result is pure metal which reflects the image of the great refiner — God.

The next illustration is found in Daniel 3. This is a familiar story, but it is not often considered from a prophetic standpoint. This prophecy concerns the golden image which Nebuchadnezzar had commissioned and set up in the plain of Dura. You are familiar with the story concerning Daniel's three companions — Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego — who refused to bow down to the golden image. They were thrown into the fiery furnace, but they were miraculously delivered. We appreciate this as a general example of God's great power to deliver, and of the uncompromising loyalty of those three Hebrews.

But there are two modern-day applications we can make from this prophecy. First of all, there is the practical lesson of God's ability to deliver us in all of our trials. This practical lesson is most pertinent to our personal daily trials of faith. Secondly there is the prophetic lesson regarding future events. These future events will bring about the final deliverance of the last members of the Little Flock and will take them beyond the veil. Both of these applications are pertinent to our theme text.

Confidence in God

The general lesson of Daniel 3 gives us confidence that God can and will make all things work together for our good in our daily experiences (Romans 8:28). These daily deliverances and over rulings give us confidence that God will ultimately bring us "through

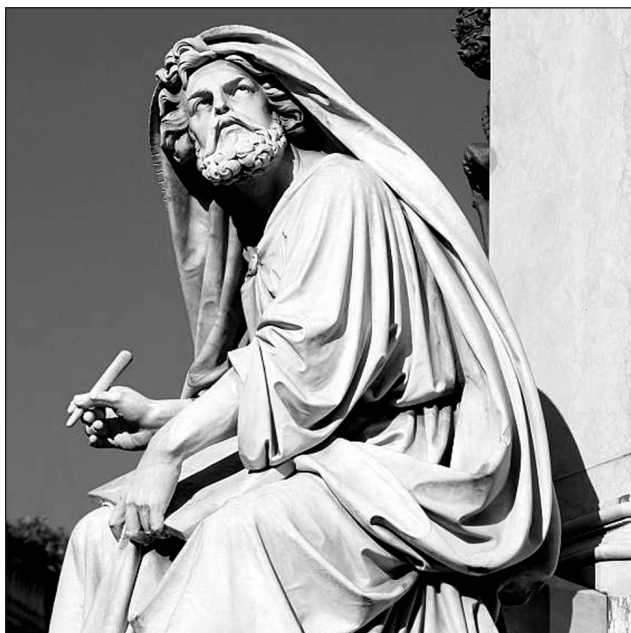
the valley of the shadow of death” (Psalms 23:4). And in the words of Job 13:15, “Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him.” This degree of confidence and trust is what we all strive for.

But someone may say: “My faith is weak.” Then we are reminded of the beautiful lesson found in Mark chapter 9. Jesus said to the man whose son was possessed by a demon: “If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth.” The man’s reply to Jesus was: “I believe! Help thou my unbelief!” What a helpful lesson this is for us. Our faith is not perfect, but we can pray as this man did: “I believe! Help thou my unbelief!” Additionally as the Apostles prayed in Luke 17:5, “Lord, increase our faith.”

Whether our final deliverance comes as a result of a personal fiery trial like the recent COVID 19, or as a result of prophetic fulfilments, the deliverance will come, and it will be overruled by our loving Heavenly Father. “Faith can firmly trust Him, come what may.”

There is a similar concept in Isaiah 43:2, “When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee.” At times our trials seem like a flood of waters that threaten to overflow us, but the Lord has promised that He will be with us and bring us safely through to the other side. The “other side” could mean further opportunities here, or it could be the “other side” of the veil. We trust in the Lord to decide what kind of deliverance we will have.

We must never simply “float with the current,” but must put forth all our effort to do our part in passing through such trials. And like the three Hebrews, when we pass through the fire — the fiery trials — they cannot harm our New Creature, rather they are working together for our good, and for our development and preparation for our future work.



Isaiah, the prophet

Trials at the End of the Gospel Age

1 Corinthians 3:11-15 gives a powerful lesson concerning the special fire of the time in which we live. These verses have had a general application throughout the Gospel Age. But Paul draws our attention to the special trials of “the day” — the Harvest of the Gospel Age — the time in which we are living (Malachi 3:2, 2 Peter 3:10, Zephaniah 3:8, etc.).

All who remain on the rock foundation of Christ and the Ransom will be saved. The degree to which we build character will determine whether we will have part in the Little Flock or the Great Company. All gold, silver, and precious stones will resist the fire. These represent Divine Truths and corresponding character. All wood, hay, and stubble will be burned up. These represent human traditions, theories, and worldly practices and corresponding character.

No one builds perfectly. Hopefully, by the Lord’s grace, we are building with gold, silver, and precious stones to the best of our ability. However, if we find that there is a proportion of wood, hay, and stubble in our lives, we should ask the Great Refiner for the necessary experiences to burn up those elements and purge them from our character. And then, when the fiery trials come, we must submit patiently to them.

The Great Company fail to daily strive to have these elements purged from their characters, just as they fail to daily ask the Lord to clean the spots from their robes. Eventually they will come off victors, if they stay on the solid rock foundation, but they will have lost the great reward to which they were called.

Our day is perhaps the most difficult time period in Church history. The influence of the world is stronger than ever before. The activities of the Fallen Angels are greater than ever before. It is more necessary today than ever before to “put on the whole armor of God” in order to be able to stand (Ephesians 6:10-18).

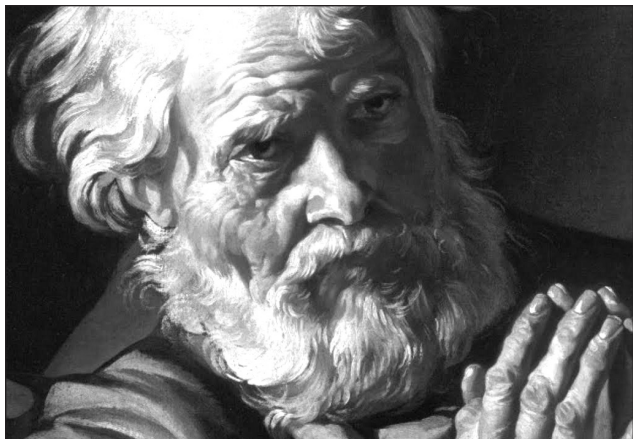
The Enemy Against the New Creature

Verse 12 has special significance: “For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against wicked spirits in high places.”

Verse 13 tells us that the armor will be most important in “the evil day” in which we are living. And we believe that a special armor has been supplied for us in this Harvest period. What is this armor? It is the complete “armor of light” (Romans 13:12) which was only partially available in previous periods of the Gospel Age. It is only with this complete armor that we will be able to stand in this evil day.

The Harvest Message is God’s special provision of “meat in due season” served by our returned Lord Jesus, through a Faithful and Wise Servant. This special provision is what assists us in putting on the whole armor, which was not possible before.

It is more difficult today than ever before to put Ephesians 5:16 into practice, “Redeeming the time, because the days are evil.” It is not only worldly



The Apostle Peter, "What manner of persons ought ye to be?"

influences that try to steal our time. We have many valid earthly obligations that also consume our time and means. Please read the Manna of October 30th, which contains valuable advice. And this Manna must be balanced with the one from January 19th. We must pursue the proper balance between taking care of our valid earthly obligations and "redeeming the time."

The Effect of the Pandemic

Today we have the unique circumstances of the Pandemic which put even greater pressure upon us when we are trying to "stand in the evil day." All of us have had to make many and drastic changes in our daily lives, and some more than others. How many have had to adjust to working from home? How many have lost their jobs? How many have suffered severe financial crisis because of this disease? How many have suffered serious illness, or even lost loved ones because of this disease? What should our reaction be to all these things?

2 Peter 3:11, "Seeing then that all these things [are being] dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness?"

Luke 21:28,31, "And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh. ... When you see all these things come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand."

The things of this life are temporary. They can pass in an instant. How important are the words of Matthew 6:19-21, "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt ... where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."

We are all familiar with Romans chapter 8. Most often quoted is verse 28, but verses 31 to 39 are also important: "What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.

I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." These verses are more than a hope, they are a promise.

The Weakness of the Flesh

However, an item is missing from the list in these verses. There is only one thing that can separate us from the love of God, and that one thing is self. But as the Apostle Paul says in another verse: "But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you" (Hebrews 6:9).

Of similar import is the Manna for February 8th. The important lesson here is to become familiar with the promises, and then to claim them as our own. Another precious Scripture is Psalms 103:14, "He knoweth our frame ... that we are dust."

God does not expect perfection from us, but He does expect us to strive for perfection, but He knows we cannot attain to that standard. He wants to see how much effort we will put forth to follow in the footsteps of Jesus. But we must always have the robe of righteousness to cover our imperfections. We must have clearly in mind God's part, Jesus' part, and our part in regard to the trial of our faith (Philippians 2:12,13, 2 Corinthians 3:5, Psalms 18:32, Psalms 91:15, John 15:5, 1 John 5:4).

Jesus said, "without me ye can do nothing." But the Apostle Paul adds: "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me" (Philippians 4:13).

Jesus also said in John 16:33, "These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world."

Our Forerunner

Jesus is our forerunner (Hebrews 6:20). Jesus has gone before us, to prepare the way and to make it easier for us to follow. Jesus shows us that it is possible to overcome the world.

And all these thoughts should give us peace, even in the midst of fiery trials (John 14:27, Isaiah 26:3, Philippians 4:7).

From the Manna of July 17th: "It is a peace which implicitly trusts to the divine wisdom, love, justice and power, a peace which remembers the gracious promise made to the Lord's faithful — that nothing shall by any means hurt His faithful, and that all things shall work together for good to them that love God. ... This peace and the faith which inspires it, can look up through its tears with joyful expectancy for the glorious fruition of our hopes, which God has promised and of which our present peace and joy are but the foretaste.

May our loving Heavenly Father continue to grant us peace in the midst of fiery trials, and may He help us to always remember that the trial of our faith is more valuable than gold.

Our Anointing Through Christ

"To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory" (Colossians 1:27).

The Scriptures frequently speak of the church as being "in Christ," giving the thought of membership in His body (Romans 12:4,5, 1 Corinthians 12:12-27). Our Lord Himself used the figure of a vine and its branches to convey the same thought. He spoke of himself as the vine, and of the Church as the branches in the vine, partaking of nourishment through the vine (John 15:1,2). This is not the thought, however, that is expressed by the apostle's words, "Christ in you, the hope of glory."

This expression in various slightly different forms occurs many times in the New Testament. The consecrated children of God are spoken of as being in Christ Jesus, whom God gave to be Head over the Church which is his body. We are "baptized into Christ" (Romans 6:3). This the Apostle Paul explains as the mystery hidden from the ages, but now is made known to us, that God was reconciling the world unto himself (2 Corinthians 5:18,19, Colossians 1:26). Thus Christ is composed of many members (1 Corinthians 12:12). The word Christ signifies anointed. All who will be members of the royal priesthood will be anointed — not separately, but collectively. "Now he which stablisheth us with you in Christ and hath anointed us is God" (2 Corinthians 1:21). This was pictured during the Jewish Age by the installation into office of both the kings and the high priests of Israel. According to the Jewish law, every king and every high priest must be anointed, or else he could not serve. The oil which was used in this ceremony was of a peculiar kind, which was not to be used for any other purpose (Exodus 30:22-33).

The anointing which our Lord and the members of His body have received is different from anything else in the whole world. It is the anointing of the Holy Spirit, which is spoken of as the spirit of holiness, the spirit of a sound mind, the spirit of truth, and the Spirit of God. It is reflective of a mind that is fortified and strengthened by the Word of the Lord. It is the spirit, the disposition, which is associated with a sound mind, with holiness, with truth and with the Word of God (2 Timothy 1:7). This enables its possessor to view things more correctly, giving wisdom and grace for the affairs of life far beyond any that they would have had without it.

As the anointing of kings and priests in Israel was the divine evidence that they were accepted to office, so was it with our Lord Jesus. The Apostle Peter tells us that "God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power" (Acts 10:38). Our Lord was set apart for a very high office. In harmony with the divine arrangement, he is to be the great antitypical King and Priest, "after the order of Melchizedek" (Hebrews 5:6).

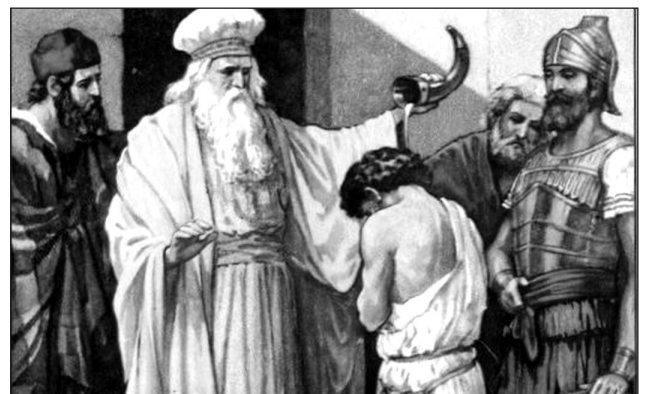
During the Gospel Age, God has been setting apart those who are to be members of the body of Christ.

John 17:17 reads, "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth." The word sanctify has the significance of "set apart, made holy." These are invited to be kings and priests unto our God, and they are called, "a royal priesthood" in 1 Peter 2:9. Consequently, when one is received into this body, under the headship of Christ, he comes under the anointing of the Holy Spirit. "But you have an anointing from the Holy One" (1 John 2:20, New American Standard Bible). Taken from the Greek word *chrisma*, which refers to an endowment of the Holy Spirit, this anointing is from the Heavenly Father in that He alone can give the recognition. It is from the Son in that we can come to the Father only through Him (Matthew 11:27).

This is illustrated by the consecration of the Jewish high priest. The holy oil was poured upon Aaron's head, typifying the anointing of our Lord at the time of His consecration. The oil then ran down to the very skirts of Aaron's garments, thus typifying the anointing of the body of Christ, which is the Church. This descent of the Holy Spirit upon the Church was manifested at Pentecost (Acts 2:1-5).

Distinction Between Anointing and Begetting

The anointing of the Holy Spirit is slightly different from the begetting of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit which came upon Jesus at Jordan was both the begetting and the anointing power of God. John saw and bore record that our High Priest was thus anointed. "And John bare record, saying, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him" (John 1:32). Our Lord was the Anointed from the moment at which he was begotten. It was also so with the Church at Pentecost. They were waiting for acceptance of God. Our Lord had appeared in the presence of the Father as their Advocate, in order that their sacrifices might be acceptable (1 John 2:1). When the Father recognized their acceptance by shedding forth the Holy Spirit



David anointed in his youth

— when there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and “sat upon each one of them” (Acts 2:3, Revised Version) — that recognition was both their begetting and their anointing. The former — the begetting — represents the matter from the individual standpoint, and the latter — the anointing — from the collective. We are begotten individually, but we are anointed collectively.

This Spirit which we receive from our Heavenly Father abides in us, and this anointing will continue with his body members as they progress and strive to lead a life which is pleasing to the Lord. “The anointing which we have received abideth in us” (1 John 2:27). The apostle urges us to, “Grieve not the Spirit.” (Ephesians 5:30) We are also reminded in 1 Thessalonians 5:19 to “quench not the spirit.” We should be on guard so that the spirit of holiness in our heart continues to grow. Do nothing that would violate your covenant, conscience, or your new mind. The begetting represents the beginning of our experience, and the resurrection, the completion. Each is individually begotten and born of the Spirit. Jesus taught that a change of heart and life, as shown by John’s baptism, was necessary, but more is necessary: the still higher begetting and birth of which I (Jesus) am now telling you. This involves the Spirit of God, the spirit of holiness, and the spirit of the truth (John 3:5,6).

In the picture of anointing the whole body is anointed. At the beginning of the Gospel Age, the one body was anointed, and all who will be members of that body come under that one anointing, all these will share in His resurrection — the first resurrection — the chief resurrection. “We know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is” (1 John 3:2). We read also in Colossians 3:4, “When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him, in glory.”

The Anointing Not the Mind of Christ

Not only was our Lord begotten to the new nature, anointed of the Holy Spirit, but each member of the body must be similarly begotten, for “flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God” (1 Corinthians 15:50). If we have received this anointing, we are eligible to all that God has promised to The Christ — primarily to the Head, and to the members of His body. As God foreknew the great Shepherd of the sheep, the



Christ, the Shepherd of the sheep

Redeemer, He also foreknew this class (Romans 8:29, Ephesians 1:4,5).

Long before our Lord came into the world, God had planned that there should be an anointed company, the Head of which should be our Lord and the body of which should be the Church (Ephesians 1:3,4,22,23). Jesus was to have the first place in the Church and those associated with him would be those who would have his Spirit, his will, who had made a full consecration of their lives to do God’s will faithfully, even unto death (1 Peter 1:2-4).

For those who have this spirit of consecration, and have presented themselves in sacrifice, our Lord stands as the Advocate before the Father to make good for them, to cover their blemishes and imperfections. Our Lord’s work is not that of anointing but of making it possible for us to be received by the Father. The anointing is of the Father but by the Son. The Apostle Peter says that Jesus, having received the Spirit of the Father, shed it forth (Acts 2:33).

If we have this Spirit of God, it is an evidence to us that we are children of God. So, if we possess it, we maintain the relationship of sons (Romans 8:9,14). Then the resulting thought is that if we are children of God we are “heirs of God and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ,” “to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time” (Romans 8:17, 1 Peter 1:4,5).

The words of our text suggest the thought that whoever has the Spirit of God has the evidence that he is an heir of glory and will receive the reward, if found faithful. On one occasion, which we have already quoted, the Apostle John said, “But the anointing which ye have received of Him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you” (1 John 2:27). Those who have this anointing have no need that anyone teach them that fact for they have the evidence of it, the proof of it in their own hearts and experiences. These evidences are more apparent to themselves than to anyone else. The evidences that one has been anointed may not be understood except as we have the instructions of the Word of God. The Scriptures give us an outline of the witness to the possession of the Holy Spirit. They tell us that the Holy Spirit, the begetting power in us, leads us more and more to have the mind of Christ. We were not anointed with the mind of Christ, but with the Holy Spirit, whoever has the Holy Spirit will find that he will develop the mind of Christ. “Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 2:5).

Characteristics of the Mind of Christ

The mind of Christ is the desire to do the Father’s will. Our Lord, when a child, said on one occasion to His mother, “How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be about My Father’s business?” (Luke 2: 49). We recognize that we have a Heavenly Father, whose



Paul with Timothy, a loyal disciple

service is the highest possible service. Those who are His must have this spirit.

If we have the spirit of loyalty to our Heavenly Father, to the truth and to the brethren, we have the mind, the disposition of Christ. We also have the weaknesses of the flesh, but it is our privilege to fight against these and to become more and more transformed in the spirit of our minds, to have our minds more centered in the truth and in the service of the brethren (1 Timothy 6:12). If there is a decrease of zeal in this direction then we may know that there is danger of going backward instead of forward. 1 John 2:15 admonishes us to, “Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.” We should seek our pleasures, not from earthly sources, but from the heavenly source. “Set your affection on things above, not on things of the earth” (Colossians 3:2).

We are not speaking about those things (family, home, job), but we are told “If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them” (John 13:17) — the things that make for our peace. If you appreciate these principles applicable to all the affairs of life and do not lose your focus concerning the things which are most important, you will be blessed, helped in His service, and prepared for the Kingdom in which His Father has promised us a share. “Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth...But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven” (Matthew 6:19,20).

The chiefest of all treasures is the personal love and friendship of God and Christ. The honor and privilege of our calling to be “the Bride” should make that the supreme treasure, in comparison with which every other treasure is insignificant.

Other Evidence of the Anointing

In addition to having the mind of Christ, we have other evidence that we have been anointed. We find ourselves needing the spiritual food and to satisfy our hunger, our Heavenly Father has provided us the knowledge of the divine plan and the knowledge of our Lord. Each new view gives us fresh inspiration (Psalms 104:24). We do realize that the Heavenly Father is able to “give them their meat in due season” (Psalms 104:27). If one has earthly mercies, and dispenses them, God may give him

the privilege of further growing in a way pleasing to him (Matthew 5:16).

If we love the truth, we will serve the truth. This service is sure to bring upon us the disapproval of the world. The world will say that we are doing it for some selfish reason, for they are sure to fail to see the real purpose of the truly consecrated people of God. If we endure these things we thereby prove ourselves to be good soldiers of Jesus Christ. The selection and preparation of the members of the body of Christ for future work is going along unaware by the world of mankind (1 Kings 6:7).

If devotion to the will of the Father brought upon our Lord shame; ignominy, we must not wonder why we are treated likewise (Matthew 5:10-12). If the world called the Master of the house of sons Beelzebub, they will assuredly call His followers some evil name (Matthew 5:44). The willingness to receive all this as a part of our reasonable service is a further evidence that we have been anointed.

A special test to these anointed ones is their love for the brethren (John 15:13, 1 John 3:14). Probably the Lord's people find that they can very easily love some of the brethren, but that there are some that we may not feel as close to. We must remember the thoughts as expressed in 1 Corinthians 12:12-21. So, we must develop love for all the brethren and a desire to render them assistance as opportunity arises.

The evidence that one has been anointed with the Holy Spirit includes: an increasing desire for spiritual things, to assist others to grow in knowledge and heavenly grace, persecution from the worldly minded, and the development of the mind of Christ — a disposition that is loving, generous, forgiving toward others and which is reverential toward God and obedient to His will. This is further illustrated to us in the words “present your bodies a living sacrifice wholly acceptable to God which is your reasonable service” (Romans 12:1). Whoever finds, on self-examination, that he has these evidences in his own heart of a full devotion to God's will, has the witness of the Spirit that he is a child of God. “For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ's, then ye are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise” (Galatians 3:26,29).

The Hope of Glory

The word “glory” carries with it the thought of honor and dignity — sometimes also that of brightness or shining. The Scriptures speak of the Heavenly Father as having the excellent glory, that glory unto which none others can approach. Our Lord Jesus is said to have been received up into glory — honor and distinction. Of Adam, it is said that he was “crowned with glory and honor,” was put over the beasts of the field, the fowl of the air and the fish of the sea (Psalms 8:5-8, Genesis 1:28). In this connection the word “glory” seems to indicate that Adam was made in the image of his Creator.

Applying these same thoughts to ourselves, we find that at the present time we have no glory. What blessing

we have received is the possession of the Holy Spirit, the evidence of our adoption into the family of God. This, however, is merely the beginning of the glory which the Heavenly Father has promised to those who are faithful — merely the earnest of the Spirit. To have the Holy Spirit in us is to have the anointing in us. If we allow the Holy Spirit to operate in us and faithfully co-operate with it, the end will be glorious.

Thus, the anointing which we have received — the Spirit of Christ in us — is the hope or basis of the glory which we are expecting — a glory which is to be like that of our Redeemer — a glory which is above that of angels, principalities and powers — a glory which is next to that

of the Lord. This anointing, this Spirit of Christ within us is the promise, hope or basis of all that is coming. Therefore, we should heed the admonition of the apostle that we quench not the anointing, this Holy Spirit of Christ. On the contrary, we are to cultivate, develop, and give attention to it. If we allow it to die, neglecting the help which our Heavenly Father has supplied, or quench it by indulgence in sin, we would demonstrate that we are unworthy of the blessing. We are to strive to, “Prove all things; hold fast that which is good. Abstain from all appearance of evil” (1 Thessalonians 5:21,22). Our goal is to hear the words “Well done, good and faithful servant!” (Matthew 25:21).

The Good Shepherd

*“He restores my soul; He guides me in the paths of righteousness For His name’s sake”
(Psalms 23:3).*

“**H**e saves my life,” is the literal meaning of David’s poetic expression of “He restores my soul.” The “soul” is the living being. In the case of the Christian it is the new, spiritual life, the “new creature,” as Paul states in 2 Corinthians 5:17. A restoration of life is necessary even before one can be a follower of the Good Shepherd, for we were all members of the fallen and dying race. Through faith in the atoning blood we receive justification to life, and upon this basis can be acceptable to the Lord.

We can all rejoice in this wonderful provision which was made for us through Christ for without it we could not be sheep in his pasture at all. The restoration of the soul which David speaks of is a provision of divine grace by which we are blessed after becoming followers of the Good Shepherd. As new creatures in Christ Jesus we have various enemies, the world, flesh and the adversary which are ever on the alert to do us harm, even to separate us from our Shepherd and to destroy our new life. By listening carefully for the Shepherd’s voice, by following him closely at all times, we are protected from these enemies, if inadvertently we fall into their clutches, he rescues us and restores our life.

As a shepherd boy in that rugged country of Judea, David was well acquainted with the dangers which almost continuously threatened the sheep which were under his care. He knew that the enemies of the sheep were lurking around constantly, ready to destroy and devour the sheep. He knew that without his watchfulness and skill as a shepherd, they would lose their lives. Therefore David could write of Jehovah’s tender care, “He restores my soul.”

Dangerous enemies of the sheep in David’s time were the wild animals which roamed the country. David encountered these in his experience as a shepherd, on one occasion slaying a lion which had attempted

to take a sheep. Besides reflecting on the background of his own experience, David spoke prophetically of the manner in which the Good Shepherd cares for his sheep of this Gospel age. Apostle Peter warns us, “Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.” (1 Peter 5:8)

Necessity of Restoration

“He restores my soul,” implies a certain amount of failure, else soul restoration would not be necessary. David spoke from personal experiences, for although he was a man after God’s own heart, he had been guilty on more than one occasion of serious lapses into unfaithfulness to God and to the divine law. David knew that a “good man” does stumble and fall down; but he also knew that the “everlasting arms” were ready to help such rise up again. (Deuteronomy 33:27).

“A man’s goings are established of Jehovah; And he delighteth in his way” (Psalms 37:23). This reference is to one who hearkens to the voice of the Good Shepherd, and endeavors to follow his leadings. His steps are established of Jehovah; and by walking in these steps makes him a “good man.” His own righteousness does not make him good, for “there is none righteous, no, not one” (Romans 3:10). But he is reckoned good by God because his heart is right, and because his unwilling imperfections are not imputed to him. God delights in all who are “good” from this standpoint, and through the Good Shepherd exercises his protective care over them.

This care is manifested particularly in times of greatest need. David says, “Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down; For Jehovah upholdeth him with his hand” (Psalms 37:24). The fact that one may fall does not mean that they are abandoned by the

Lord, for if their heart is right, and they cry unto the Good Shepherd for help, their soul will be restored. How blessed is this assurance! A similar thought is expressed by the apostle when he urges us to come boldly to the “throne of grace,” to obtain mercy and help in time of need (Hebrews 4:16).

When we are in need of soul restoration and are indeed privileged to cry out to the Good Shepherd for help; but if we are to be heard it is essential that we recognize our failures and seek restoration to the fold of divine care. “Create in me a clean heart, O God,” wrote David, “and renew a right spirit within me” (Psalms 51:10 ASV). So it is essential that we have a “right spirit” in order to enter the narrow way. However, through the deceptions of the adversary, the allurements of the world, or the pleasures or cares of the flesh, our spirits may not continue to be “right.”

A “right” spirit is one of purity toward God, of zeal for Him, for his people, for His truth and the service of the truth. It is the spirit of joy, peace, love, kindness, mercy and patience in our dealings with our brethren and with the world. It is a spirit of alertness for the doing of God’s will, a spirit that seeks for opportunities to sacrifice time and strength and means in the service of God.

It is possible for this “right spirit” to change. One of the faults Jesus found with some of Israel was that they had lost their “first love” (Revelation 2:4). Here is a lesson which all of us may well take to heart. It is so easy to lose that “right spirit” with which we started out in the narrow way. A root of bitterness, a bit of discouragement, a measure of selfish ambition or of false pride, or the spirit of indifference, can readily creep in, and almost before we are aware of what is taking place. The “right spirit” of consecration to God, devotion to Him and to His cause, is measurably buried or suppressed. If we recognize this, or its threat we should seek the throne of grace. David expresses the proper attitude, saying to his God, “Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy Holy Spirit from me” (Psalms 51:11).

That “right spirit” which we had when we first became sheep in the Lord’s pasture was one which was in tune with God’s own Spirit, His Holy Spirit. In consecration we gave ourselves to the Lord, and he blessed us with an infilling, of his Holy Spirit. We were thus at one with him, and we felt his presence near to us. It would be tragic indeed to lose his Holy Spirit and so we pray for him not to remove it from us. We should operate with him by emptying our hearts of all self-will that there may be room for his Spirit to dwell therein and to continue guiding us in his ways.

“Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation,” David states in (Psalms 51:12). If we pray to him, we can be assured that he will restore our soul, and with that will come the original joy of the Lord which was ours when we possessed that “right spirit.” All of the Lord’s people who may have lost in any measure the joy that was theirs when first they found the truth and

the Lord, should take these essential steps to have their souls restored and their joy revived!

The Shepherd’s Care

God’s abounding grace and his enduring mercy are so beautifully expressed, “He restores my soul.” If upon self-examination we find that we lack this proper attitude toward the Lord’s sheep everywhere, even the sick, then we may well wonder if perhaps we have not ourselves lost our first love. It is well in this connection that all of us remember the admonition, “Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed that he does not fall” (1 Corinthians 10:12).

To be assured that soul restoration is available for erring ones among the Lord’s sheep enhances our appreciation of God’s love and mercy. The more we know of God’s love, the greater the incentive to be faithful to him. But despite our best efforts, we will daily come short of the perfect standard he has set for us. In this sense we are daily in need of soul restoration. Daily we need to seek divine forgiveness. Daily we need the care of the Good Shepherd. Appropriately then, all the consecrated followers of the Lord can say of him that he is their Shepherd, and that he restores their souls.

Paths of Righteousness

“He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness or his name’s sake” (Psalms 23:3).

In that rugged country where the shepherd David tended his father’s sheep it was essential to lead the flock from one feeding ground to another and to follow paths which had been previously used. These might lead through mountain passes, or ravines, or over the barren wilderness of the desert. It was the shepherd’s task to be acquainted with these paths, to know the safe ones. It was essential to the well-being of the sheep to follow the leading of the shepherd, whether to new pastures or to a place of safety for the night.

How beautifully this illustrates our dependence upon the Lord, our “Good Shepherd,” for surely as new creatures we are surrounded by a wilderness beset with pitfalls and dangers of many kinds. There is a pathway of sure progress out of this wilderness, but we cannot walk in it except by following the leadership



Jesus, teaching his disciples

of the Good Shepherd. It is not easy to follow the Good Shepherd, as the “paths of righteousness” which he chooses for us are seldom wide and smooth. Instead, they are narrow, rugged, and often uphill. It is possible to walk in these paths only if we keep our eyes fixed upon the Good Shepherd and depend upon him to furnish us with strength in our every time of need (Hebrews 12:2).

The Psalmist’s use of the term “paths” in the plural suggests divine leading in all the individual ways of our lives. The entire life of a Christian is spoken of by Jesus as a “way,” and he described it as a “narrow way” (Matthew 7:14). We walk in this narrow way from the time we give ourselves to the Lord until we finish our earthly course in death. All of the Lord’s sheep of this Gospel Age fold, are walking in the same narrow way but within its boundaries where the Lord leads his individual sheep from one experience to another, overruling them all for their eternal good.

While the Good Shepherd may be permitting some of his sheep to traverse the stony paths of affliction, others may be finding the way comparatively smooth. But whether the way is smooth or rough, it is a path of righteousness. Literally a “right way” and if we are faithful in following the Lord’s leadings, we will eventually enter into “glory, honor, and immortality.” But no matter how difficult the way may be, or at times how pleasant, all of our experiences go to make up our walk in the “narrow way.”

Must Follow Faithfully

Our responsibility as sheep is to follow the leadings of the Good Shepherd else we may discover that we are walking in the wrong paths. The Psalmist suggests that one great danger is following the “works of men.” “Concerning the works of men, by the word of thy lips I have kept me from the paths of the destroyer” (Psalms 17:4). For if we follow the “works of men” we may be led into the paths of the destroyer, and that the only safeguard against this is to be guided by the words which come from the lips of the Good Shepherd.

Having entered the narrow way, the “paths of righteousness,” making a covenant with the Lord to do his will, we can remain in the right paths only by keeping that covenant. The Good Shepherd is of course merciful. He knows our weaknesses. “All the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth”. He is merciful to those who are walking in the paths of righteousness. But this is true only if our hearts are perfect toward him and we do the very best we can to follow the voice of the Good Shepherd. The Psalmist explains that the Lord’s paths are “mercy and truth unto such as keep his covenant and his testimonies” (Psalms 25:10).

“For His Name’s Sake”

The Good Shepherd leads his flock in the paths of righteousness for his name’s sake. All the works of



Moses was faithful.

God will ultimately rebound to the glory of his great name. Remembering this will help us to realize that our chief concern in all we do as co-laborers with the Lord should be for the glory of his name. We have a wonderful illustration of this in the case of Moses when he prayed for the salvation of Israel in order that God’s name might not be brought into reproach before the Egyptians.

The Israelites were rebellious. After they had been in the wilderness for some time, God suggested to Moses that He would destroy the nation entirely and start a new nation with Moses as its head. To one less devoted to God than Moses, this idea would have doubtlessly appealed. But this great leader of Israel was more concerned about the glory of God’s name than with his own advancement and advantage.

Moses we recall offered his own life as a substitute for the nation in order that God’s name might not be brought into reproach.

In Moses we have a beautiful representation of full devotion to God, that places the glory of God’s name ahead of one’s own advantage. It is only such devotion that will assure our remaining in the paths of righteousness. How fitting the words, “He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name’s sake.” It is eminently proper that the Good Shepherd should lead us in the right way for this reason. When we get the proper viewpoint we will realize that the well-being of all intelligent creatures throughout the universe depends upon a proper recognition of the Creator’s sovereign right to be the Ruler of their lives, and that all creation properly should give glory to his name.

Every feature of God’s great plan of the ages is designed to give him glory, and that is particularly true concerning the arrangements of the “narrow way.” Those who are being led in the “paths of righteousness,” are being prepared not only to share his glory, but also to reflect his glory throughout all the earth. It will be through the instrumentality of Christ and the church that the “glory of God” will be caused to fill the whole earth as “the waters cover the sea” (Isaiah 11:9). It is indeed for his name’s sake, then, that the “little flock” of this Gospel Age are being led in paths of righteousness by the Good Shepherd, The whole objective of their being led is in

order that through them the glory of God will become better known to all mankind and even to the angels.

God's name becomes increasingly glorified in our own hearts daily as we come to know him better through the wonderful way the Good Shepherd leads us. We experience divine help to keep us from falling. Divine wisdom of his Word, points to the right way for us by serving as a light to our feet. His love overshadows us, and we sense the tenderness of his affectionate care in our every time of need. We rejoice too in his mercy. His glory is particularly reflected by his mercy, and we pray, "For thy name's sake, O LORD, pardon mine iniquity; for it is great" (Psalms 25:11).

The marvelous leading of the Good Shepherd thus enhances our appreciation of God's glory, so we come to know him better and are determined to serve him more faithfully, to follow him more closely as he leads us in the "paths of righteousness for his name's sake." To follow the Good Shepherd to the end of the "narrow way" means that we will follow him even unto death.

The shepherds of Israel were usually zealous in caring for their sheep with respect to all of their needs. They protected them from danger, led them into green pastures and beside still waters. They nursed them when they were bruised and sick. But the final purpose of this was that when it suited the shepherd he would lead his sheep to the slaughter. So it is with us in following the Good Shepherd, for the destination of those whom he leads in the paths of righteousness is death.

"Take up your cross and follow me," said the Master (Matthew 16:24). To take up one's cross and carry it is a symbol of walking in the road to death, and this is just what it means to follow Jesus. He is our Good Shepherd, but previously he walked in the very path in which he is now leading us. In Acts 8:32 he was "led as a lamb to the slaughter," and we are now walking in his steps. Not only do we remain in the "narrow way" by hearkening unto his voice, but we need also to trace his steps and walk in them.

We should not expect that the paths of righteousness are always paths of pleasantness. True, we have the joy of the Lord while walking in this "narrow way", the joys of faith, but often the way is difficult. As from start to finish it is a way of sacrifice that is so complete that it ends in death. Jesus was afflicted and suffered, and he finally died upon the cross. We can't expect that the narrow way will be made easy for us. But we can endure all things if by faith we keep the thought ever before us that the way we are being led in the "paths of righteousness" is "for his name's sake."

"If We Suffer With Him"

The glory of God's name is directly involved with the manner in which the Good Shepherd is leading us. Paul wrote to Timothy: "It is a faithful saying: For if we be dead with him, we, shall also live with him" (2 Timothy 2:11). "A faithful saying," is a promise of

God upon which we can depend. God has pledged the honor of his name; and his faithfulness, his integrity, guarantees that if we walk in the narrow way of sacrifice faithfully all the way into death, we shall, in the first resurrection, live and reign with Christ. "For his name's sake," the Lord leads us in the "paths of righteousness."

And when the Good Shepherd has led all of his "little flock" over the "paths, of righteousness," and when each one has reached the end of the way, by being faithful even unto death, then will be revealed the fullness of God's glory. This little flock of faithful followers will be raised to glory, honor, and immortality, to live and reign with Christ for a thousand years (Revelation 20:6). To these Jesus said, "Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom" (Luke 12:32). Truly, we have nothing to fear. God's name is at stake for he has promised us the kingdom if we are faithful. This is one of his exceeding great and precious promises repeated over and over again in the Scriptures.

For his name's sake the Lord will lead us in the right way not only that we may praise his name now, but in the future when all of the Gospel age flock have reached Mount Zion with the "Lamb". Then together with him they will rule the nations, for through them the glory of Jehovah's name will be caused to fill the earth as the waters cover the sea. Not only will God's glory thus be manifested to the world through the church, but to the angelic hosts as well. As the manner in which God is dealing with us is being made a spectacle to both men and angels.

Later on in the divine plan, another "way" will be opened up for the Lord's sheep. That will be the "Way of holiness." (Isaiah 35:8) It will not be for the Lord's sheep of this age, but for those "other sheep" mentioned by the Master in his parable, "which are not of this fold" (John 10:16). These are the sheep in the parable of the "Sheep and Goats." The "highway" in which they will be led will not be one of sacrifice leading to death. The end of that way will be perfection of human life, attained by the process of "restitution." To these the Good Shepherd at the close of the next age will say, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world" (Matthew 25:34).

Those who do not qualify to inherit the restored dominion of earth will be cut off in the second death. Thus the earth will be purified from all elements of opposition to God and to the recognition of his sovereign will. His glory will be apparent everywhere, being made manifest by the righteous ways in which he is now leading us through sacrificial death into immortal life. In like manner through the glorified Christ, Head and Body, the whole world of mankind will be restored to be at-one-ment with the Creator. With prospects of such glory, let us endeavor more earnestly than ever to follow the Good Shepherd faithfully, even unto death!

Seeing with Blinded Eyes

A blind woman sang “One Sweetly Solemn Thought” at a recent service, and we could feel the living presence of God in her voice. After the service Mrs. McGuire and I drove her to her home. “I am very happy in my religion: God has put many beautiful things in the world,” she said. Then as we helped her from the street to her cottage home, she casually explained, “I have never had sight.”

She had never seen a star-lit sky, a rainbow, a zigzag lightning flash, the halo of mist around the crest of a mountain, a million fishes splashing in a tropical river at sunrise. She had never seen a baby, a smile, a magnolia tree in bloom, a wooded hillside in autumn, a thick cloud, phosphorescence playing across the ocean breakers at night, or a rainbow painted by the setting sun across a canvas of dark clouds. Yet she spoke of many beautiful things!

But she had heard the voice of God through the greetings of friends, she had sensed the fragrance of the rosebud, tasted His providence in the cool water, and felt His presence through her fingertips as she studied her Braille New Testament. And the Beauty of the world made her happy. — Clive McGuire.

One Sweet Solemn Thought (Phoebe Cary 1852) Romans 13:11, John 4:2

One sweetly solemn thought
Comes to me o'er and o'er;
Nearer my home today am I
Than e'er I've been before.

Nearer my Father's house,
Where many mansions be;
Nearer today, the great white throne,
Nearer the crystal sea.

Nearer the bound of life
Where burdens are laid down;
Nearer to leave the heavy cross,
Nearer to gain the crown.

But lying dark between,
Winding down through the night,
Is the deep and unknown stream
To be crossed ere we reach the light.

Father, perfect my trust!
Strengthen my pow'r of faith!
Nor let me stand, at last, alone
Upon the shore of death.

Be Thee near when my feet
Are slipping o'er the brink;
For it may be I'm nearer home,
Nearer now than I think.

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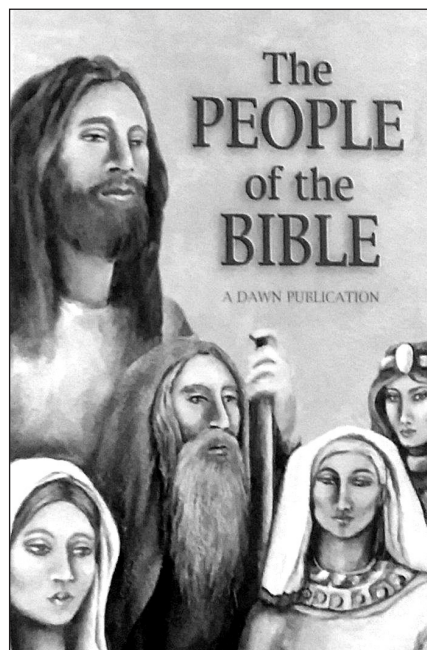
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Not of the Letter, But of the Spirit

Even with our dealing with the world we can serve them to some extent, as servants of the New Covenant, for we can make known to them something of its terms, which some of them may grasp by faith and others may not. We can explain that this New Covenant which will go into effect evidence Divine mercy and sympathy for mankind. We cannot minister to them the letter of the New Covenant because it has not been sealed. We can merely tell them of its spirit and endeavour to show to them the import, as respects the future, that justice and mercy will be tempered together for all. If the New Covenant were sealed now, the conditions are not such as would make it a blessing, for Satan is still the Prince of this world; sin abounds, and the Kingdom which is to bring deliverance has not yet been set up. The New Covenant is a Covenant of Law and of Works made possible — the same exactly as the Law Covenant, except with a better Mediator. If, therefore, the letter of the New (Law) Covenant could be forced now, it would be a great disadvantage to all coming under it, and, as the Apostle suggests it would be unto death. Hence it is much better for the world that it is not sealed and operative and that we who are, connected with it as prospective members of its Mediator merely explain to the opposing world the spirit of that Covenant, which can profit and enlighten and encourage only those who are feeling after God, and who have no heart rebellion against Him.

New Covenant Not Yet Operative

Thus, a believer in the Lord Jesus, justified by faith in His blood, would have the right to look forward to the Millennial Age and the blessed privileges of the New Covenant then to be inaugurated. And to the extent that he would live in accord with the conditions of that New Covenant, he would be the better prepared for the blessed privileges which will then be brought to the world. But he could not come under the letter of the New Covenant if he chose, for it has not yet been sealed. He could merely by faith come under its spirit.

Present Work of Ministers of New Covenant

But the special work of these ministers or servants of the New (Law) Covenant is to make known to such as are interested in and looking forward to the New Covenant and its blessing by faith, that God has some better thing for us — for the called, chosen and faithful, namely, that by consecration unto death, by drinking of His “cup,” we may be counted in as members of the Body of the Mediator, under the higher, the Abrahamic Covenant. “And if ye be Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s

Seed, and heirs according to the promise” Galatians 3:29 (Z. 1909-51).

THE NEW COVENANT AND THE NEW TESTAMENT

These two words in our English are the same word in the Greek. The explanation of the matter is this:

Blessings Upon Abraham for Jesus Only

The blessings of God upon Abraham were ostensibly given to the Jewish nation, but not actually so. A hidden meaning, or spirit, made that blessing, under the law, applicable only to Jesus, who alone kept the Law and inherited its blessings.

Heirs of Abrahamic Covenant

Secondly, That spiritual inheritance of the Law blessing came to all those who accepted Christ as the end of the Law and became united to Him by consecration unto death. Thus, Spiritual Israelites are the heirs with Jesus of everything pertaining to the Abrahamic Covenant.

Object of Jesus Keeping Law

However, our lord’s object in keeping the Law was not merely to gain life for Himself, but by dying and getting the new nature for Himself to be able to give to natural Israel, in harmony with the Divine law, the blessings which they had originally received, but were unable to retain through weakness of the flesh. Thus, through Jesus’ death, a testament — good-will — or blessing, was entailed upon natural Israel; but instead of giving them that blessing at once, by Divine arrangement it is given first to Spiritual Israel, the “Holy Nation,” the “Royal Priesthood,” the “Peculiar People;” it is given to these conditionally — that they will not keep it to themselves, but dying as members of the Body of Christ, they will join their Head in His will, or testament, giving all those earthly rights as the Seed of Abraham, to fleshly Israel.

Ministers of New Covenant

Thus, Jesus was the minister, or servant of the New Covenant which God proposed to make with Israel. Although He had a right to all that is to go to Israel, He kept it not, but freely surrendered it for us and them. We as His brethren, justified through faith in His blood (not through faith in the New Covenant), were permitted to become “able ministers of the New Covenant or New Testament” — able or fully qualified by our justification and by the terms of our sanctification, to be associated with our Lord and Head as sharers in His sufferings, proclaimers of His grace, announcers of the New

Covenant, and assistants one of another as members of His Body in the filling up of the sufferings of Christ to the intended end (Z. 1909-78).

DOES OUR LORD NOW OWN THE HUMAN RACE?

If a man were purchasing a building, had entered into negotiations for it, had signed a contract and were making arrangements to secure the money to apply it in payment for the building, it would be very appropriate, as soon as he had signed the contract, to say, this is the owner of the building. In the strict sense of the word, however, he would not be the owner until he had paid the price and all the receipts were properly given, and, instead of the contract, he had the deed. A contract is an agreement for the carrying out of a project; the deed witnesses the transaction actually accomplished.

Jesus' Right to Title "Lord of All"

As far as the contract was concerned, our Lord Jesus entered into it with the Father; and in view of His having given to the Father the ransom-price — "Even as the Son of Man came to give His life a ransom for many" — He already has a claim to being Lord of all, in a prospective sense, not in the actual sense, as there are millions of people on earth today of whom He is not Lord; their knees have not bowed; their tongues have not confessed. So He is not their Lord in the absolute sense, but His work is progressing, and, in view of the authority which will yet be exercised by Him and of the work which He will yet do, the Father speaks of Him prophetically as "lord of all."

The World Asleep in Jesus

We will here consider certain Scriptures as having a bearing upon the matter. We mention first the Scripture which says that the world "sleep in Jesus" (1 Thessalonians 4:14). How can they sleep in Jesus, unless Jesus owns the world, may be asked? We answer that they sleep in Jesus in exactly the same way that Abraham and all Israel sleep, and all the kings and prophets are said to be asleep. Not that Jesus at the time of their death had paid a ransom-price for mankind, nor had come into the world to do so, but because, in the Divine Plan, God had made arrangements for the entire transaction and had guaranteed that a Redeemer would be found, that a ransom-price would be given, and that all mankind would be recovered from the tomb. Further, God Himself spoke from that standpoint when He said that He was the God of Abraham and of Isaac and of Jacob, speaking as though they were really not dead at all, but merely asleep, waiting for Him.

Similarly, all who believed God could speak of and think of all who were dead as merely asleep for the time and awaiting the resurrection, even though Jesus had not yet come. The same is true since Jesus came and died. It is now still more reasonable and proper for us to say that all "sleep in Jesus," because now He is identified as the one who has given Himself a ransom-price for all. It is not that the price has been applied for all, but merely that He has placed in the Father's hands His sacrificed life, which is His to appropriate

and which is sufficient "for the sins of the whole world" (John 3:16). It has not as yet been appropriated for the world, but merely for the Church, for the price is first a satisfaction for our sins, the Church's sins, and afterwards for the sins of the whole world (1 John 2:2).

The church Alone Redeemed Thus Far

We will next consider the text, Ye were redeemed with the precious blood of Christ. (1 Peter 1:18,19). The reference here is to us, the Church, and does not extend beyond the Church to the world. It does not imply that the world is redeemed as yet. Jesus' merit, of course, is all-sufficient for the whole world, but He has not yet appropriated it for all men.

Only Church Yet Bought

We will consider another text, "Ye are bought with a price" (1 Corinthians 6:20). This text, similarly, speaks not of the world, but of the Church. It is the "Ye" class that were bought, and even they were not bought when Jesus died at Calvary. There, indeed, He committed to the Father's hands a price (Luke 23:46) sufficient for all; but it was not then appropriated for anybody — not even for us, not until His resurrection and ascension, when "he appeared in the presence of God for us" (Hebrews 9:24). Then we were bought. "Ye were bought with the precious blood of Christ." His blood was made the offset so far as believers are concerned.

As Yet Jesus' Propitiation for Church Only

Another text: "He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world" (1 John 2:2). We answer that He was a propitiation, satisfaction, for our sins, in one sense of the word, when He died, but the satisfaction had not then been applied for our sins. When He died the merit of His death was a satisfaction-price for the sins of the whole world, also, but it was not applied for the sins of the whole world. When He ascended up on high, He appeared for us, the Church class, and made satisfaction for our sins. Therefore, as we believe and make consecration, our sins are remitted. His merit is additionally the satisfaction for the sins of the whole world; but He has not yet applied it for the world, hence the world is not free from the penalty of sin; it is still under condemnation. Concerning us, however, the Apostle says, "We have escaped the condemnation that is on the world." And again he says, "We were children of wrath even as others." The others, we see, are still children of wrath. Why? Because that satisfaction for their sins has not yet been made. The great Redeemer has the satisfaction price; it merely awaits the due time for application.

Christ's Death and Resurrection Both Necessary

Notice another passage, "Christ died and rose and revived that He might be Lord of the dead and of the living" (Romans 14:9). This text very appropriately states the valuable transaction accomplished by our Lord. His death was a necessary feature of the redemptive work. His raising and revival were also



Christ's death, and resurrection, were necessary.

necessary features. And further, He could not have been Lord in any other way than by the Father's proclaiming Him "Lord of all," and "Let all the angels of God worship Him." But while He is proclaimed to be Lord of all, it will take time to bring about the recognition of it. In harmony with this, the Apostle says, "In the fullness of time God will gather together under Him (Jesus) all things in heaven and earth." But it will take the fullness of time, the fullness of the Millennial Age, to accomplish this gathering together under Him and making Him Lord of all. So, we see that prophetically and by Divine appointment He already has that office, but now He waits until His enemies shall be brought under Him or made His foot-stool, and all things shall be subjected to Him.

"A Ransom for All"

We next consider the text, "He gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time" (1 Timothy 2:6). The giving of Himself as the man Christ Jesus was when He presented Himself at Jordan and surrendered all to the Father's will. This work of surrendering His earthly life and all His earthly rights was fully accomplished at Calvary when He cried, "It is finished." He had finished the work the Father had given Him to do. He had given Himself to be "a ransom for all," and His death-merit is sufficient to constitute a ransom for all, as soon as it shall be so appropriated. Thus far, we see, it has been applied only for us who believe, and the time for its application for the remainder of the world will be at the beginning of the Millennial Age; but it will not reach all of the human family at the beginning.

When Christ's Merit Is Fully Set Free

While our Lord's merit is fully appropriated during the Gospel Age for all who come unto Him, it will be fully set free when the last of the consecrated ones shall have passed beyond the veil. His merit has been imputed to them for the very purpose of enabling them to be sacrificers and when it shall have been released by the death of the last of the consecrated, it will be again at His disposal for appropriation. Then the great High Priest will make the second sprinkling of the blood — not on our behalf, because we shall have no further need of it, having by that time become

perfect as New Creatures beyond the veil, members of His Body. The second sprinkling will be on behalf of "all the people" — all who will come under the New Covenant arrangements "to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile"; all who will desire, when they come to sufficient knowledge, under that New Covenant, to come under the merit of our Lord's ransom-price; and those who will fail to thus come, will reject the ransom-price and hence the blessings of restitution.

Blessing to Come Gradually

All these blessings will come gradually, not instantaneously, not by faith, but actually, by restitution processes. All through the Millennial Age the Christ will be giving men the benefit of our Lord's ransom or "corresponding price," and the full benefit of this price will not have been given until the work of the Millennial Age shall have been finished and shall have brought to perfection all who desire to be God's people, upon God's terms, as God never intended to give His blessings to any but those who desire to be in harmony with Him on His terms. God never intended to do anything for those who are willingly and intentionally contrary, such as Satan.

Dying for Church Also for World Harmonised

It may be asked how the foregoing will conform with the text, "That he (Jesus), by the grace of God, should taste death for every man" (Hebrews 2:9). We answer that this is God's great work which He purposed in Himself before the foundation of the world — that the ransoming of Adam and all his race should be accomplished through the death of Christ. Thus He tasted death for every man, whether the benefit of it was received on the Day of Pentecost, or later, during the Age, or whether they will get it at the beginning of the Millennial Age. It is for every man that He "tasted death," that He might give them the blessings that will come to the world of mankind down to the completion of the Millennial Age, and, if obedient, to all eternity.

Led Captivity Captive

"He ascended up on high and led captivity captive" — or, as another translation gives it, and we think more correctly, "He ascended up on high leading forth a multitude of captives." This passage shows that He was the leader of all the captive race. We, the Church, follow first; the "Great Company" follow next; the Ancient Worthies will follow soon afterward, and at the end of the Millennial Age He will bring in the remainder of the race. They will all be led forth, all delivered from the power of sin and death.

The Price One Thing — the Application of It Another

"For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly." This passage does not state that Christ made an application of His merit for the ungodly; it merely states that God arranged His plan so that it was necessary for Christ to die for the ungodly. Why did God so arrange it? He arranged it on behalf of, or in the interest of, the ungodly — not

merely the Jews and those who were, as some of us may have been, desirous of harmony with God, but for all the ungodly. The merit of His death was intended by the Father to be applicable to every member of the race, the ungodly race of Adam, all of them sinners and more or less depraved and degraded and out of the way.

Object for Which Price Was Given

Now, then, the object for which the price was given is one thing and the application of it is another. The purpose of Christ's death was to redeem the world, to be the world's ransom-price, that He might be the restorer of all. But in this Plan there are time and order; the work progresses step by step. The first step was for Christ Himself to secure eternal glory by His own obedience to death and to have as an asset something that He could give away — His earthly life, which He had not forfeited.

Steps in Application of Price

The next step was that He should ascend up on high and apply this price. He appeared as advocate for a special class of humanity. What special class? We answer, He appeared for all those from among men who should desire to come into harmony with God, who should desire to accept God's favour and to become members of the Body of Christ under an invitation or programme that God had arranged. When He appeared for these, He imputed the merit of His sacrifice on their behalf, and thus all this merit is absorbed, so to speak, in this one work first undertaken, this work of Justifying and assisting this special class who desire to walk in Jesus' steps, desire to suffer with Him that they may also share with Him the heavenly glory. He does this, not by first giving them earthly restitution, but by simply imputing His merit to them.

Imputation of Merit

This imputation of his merit, coming to those who have turned from sin, who are believing on the lord Jesus Christ, and have consecrated themselves to God, covers their Adamic sin and makes up for all deficiencies of their flesh, so that they can "present their bodies living sacrifices, holy and acceptable to God, their reasonable service" (Romans 12:1). In other words, He becomes endorser for these. They are not sufficient of themselves, but He guarantees for them that if they will faithfully perform this laying down of their lives, His merit will continue to be applied for all their imperfection. These are the Royal Priests, whom He in one picture represents as His Bride, and in another as members of His Body. These are "more than conquerors."

Great Company and Second Death Classes Re Merit

Then comes the secondary class, not up to this standard — a class that does not voluntarily, heartily



Earth will be a paradise home for mankind.

and cheerfully lay down their lives in the desire to please the Father and do His will. These, nevertheless, are loyal at heart and are restrained from full sacrifice only through "fear of death," through fear of what it will cost them. They will be tested to the point that they will be obliged ultimately to lay down their lives, and to do so with a willing mind. They fail of coming off more than conquerors because of per-

mitting experiences designed to test them to retard their progress in the matter of gaining the high position offered them, thus they become the Second Company. There is, also, a third class, those who die the "Second Death," who "draw back unto perdition."

Merit Not Available Until All Three Classes Finish

By the time that these three classes shall have finished their course, all the merit that Christ imputed will be available again as at the first; all will be at His disposal afresh. Then it will be applied in the dealing of the New Covenant which will be made with Israel but which will be broad enough to include every individual of all the nations of the earth who will be willing to come under the same terms and to become the children of Abraham through faith and obedience.

"The Redemption of the Purchased Possession"

In this connection let us consider the text, "In whom ye also trusted after that ye heard the Word of Truth, the Gospel of your salvation, in whom also after that ye believed ye were sealed with the holy spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession" (Ephesians 1:14).

Church's Inheritance

The holy spirit now granted to the Church is the earnest or foretaste of our inheritance. What are we to inherit? We are to "inherit all things." First of all we are to inherit the Divine nature, and secondly, we are to inherit the great Abrahamic promise that through us, in union with our Lord Jesus, as members of His Body, all the families of the earth shall be blessed. We speak of ourselves as being of the Lord's purchased possession, and when we are changed to receive His glory, this part of His possession will be complete, and we shall be perfected with Him and be under His direct control.

The World a Part of the Purchased Possession

After this another feature of the same possession, and linked in as part of this same promise, will become operative. The precious blood will then be applied to seal the New Covenant on behalf of the sins of all the people and the work of recovering the still larger possession will progress until the close of the Millennial Age, when the whole possession will have been brought into line and everything subjected to His rule and turned over to the Father.