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“Thou Anointest My Head With Oil”

(Psalms 23:5)

The pouring of oil on the head seems rather unusual when shepherding sheep. However it was the common custom of oriental shepherds to pour oil on the heads of their sheep, particularly at the close of the day or when they were weary from travel. To the sheep it was a welcome and refreshing service rendered to them by the shepherd. In this custom we find another beautiful illustration of our Great Shepherd’s care for us and the blessings which he bestows upon us through Jesus, our Good Shepherd.

Oil is used in the Scriptures as a symbol of the Holy Spirit. The anointing oil poured upon the heads of Israel’s high priests was a type of the anointing of Jesus with the Holy Spirit. The apostle says of him that he was “anointed with the oil of gladness above your companions” (Hebrews 1:9 NASB). The New Testament also speaks of the anointing which we have received of Christ, while John refers to it as an “anointing from the Holy One” (1 John 2:20 NASB). The term “anointing” suggests lubrication and smoothness, so in this also there is an allusion to oil as symbolizing the Holy Spirit and what it accomplishes in our lives.

In this lesson we might think of David as representing Christ and the church, in which case his head would represent Jesus, our head. The statement, “Thou anointest my head with oil,” indicates what is elsewhere clearly taught in the Bible, that the anointing of the Holy Spirit came first upon the Head of The Church (our Lord Jesus), and throughout the Gospel age it has been received by the various body members only by virtue of the fact that they are in him, as members of his body. We can therefore truly say to Jehovah, our Great Shepherd, “Thou anointest my Head,” that is, Christ Jesus. From him, who is now our Good Shepherd, that anointing has reached us. Oh how we do rejoice in the blessings that accrue through the anointing of the Holy Spirit thus received!

While the original anointing of the Holy Spirit came upon Jesus, each member of his body receives of the same anointing. Symbolically speaking, this “oil of gladness” runs down from the Head and covers the entire body. One of the primary scriptural lessons associated with the “anointing” of the Spirit is that of the divine commission to serve. The prophecy of Isaiah 61:1-3 relates to this, indicating that the entire Bride of Christ is anointed to “preach good tidings,” and thus to bind up the broken hearted.

With this divine authority to represent our dear Heavenly Father on the earth comes also a wonderful assurance of divine acceptance and approval, and from this standpoint the anointing of the Holy Spirit illustrates the thought of comfort. Our Lord Jesus referred to the Holy Spirit as a Comforter (*parakletos*) which he would send, a Comforter which would represent him, and through which he would be represented among his followers throughout the entire Gospel age. John 14:16,26, 15:26, 16:7,13. This influence would be sustaining, helping, and comforting.

The Holy Spirit was indeed a great comfort to Jesus, our Head. When it came upon him at the time of his baptism, he heard a voice from heaven saying, “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased”

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(Matthew 3:17). What greater comfort could be given to anyone than to be assured of divine sonship! This assurance afforded the Master strength for the trials through which he was called to pass. Forty days later, when Satan challenged the Master's sonship, Jesus could and did resist him with the words "it is written," for there was no doubt in his mind as to where he stood with his Heavenly Father. When the anointing of the Holy Spirit came upon Jesus it also enlightened him concerning his Father's plans and the part he was to have in that plan of salvation. We read that the "heavens were opened unto him" (Matthew 3:16).

Through the medium of the Holy Spirit Jesus was guided and strengthened for every step of the narrow way in which he walked. If he is our "Head," the same comforting blessings of the Holy Spirit which filled him with joy will be our daily portion. Jesus promised, in fact, that he would give his peace to his faithful followers (John 14:27). This peace is ours because of the many assurances of the Bible which give us confidence and courage despite the difficulties of the narrow way as we walk in the steps of the Master.

A very interesting summary of the blessings which accrue to us as consecrated, Spirit-anointed followers of Jesus, is presented in the 8th chapter of Romans. Opening the subject the apostle writes, "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." Notice that Apostle Paul is here speaking of those who are "in Christ Jesus." This means that Christ Jesus is their Head, the Head upon whom first was poured the anointing of the Holy Spirit. To such as have him as their Head, there is no condemnation from the Heavenly Father, "if" they walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit.

Here we find that there is a condition attached to its fulfillment, there is an "if" clause which must be disposed of by faithful obedience in order that the assurance of the promise may properly belong to us. To be assured that we stand approved before our Heavenly Father, that for us there is no condemnation, is indeed a rare blessing. We have learned by experience, by observation, and from the testimony of the Scriptures, that "there is none righteous, no, not one" (Romans 3:10). We have learned also that God cannot look upon unrighteousness with any degree of tolerance. But the wondrous grace provided through Christ Jesus is that those who are in him, and are following the leadings of the Holy Spirit which has reached them through him, are not under condemnation! So the Heavenly Father looks upon us through the lenses of Christ's righteousness.

Later in the chapter, the apostle emphasizes this thought with even greater force, saying, "God is the one who justifies: Who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus is he who died, yes, rather who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us" (Romans 8:33,34). How precious the very thought that from God's standpoint there



Jesus, our teacher, and our justifier

is no condemnation, for it is He who, through the redemptive work of Christ, has justified us freely from all sin. What difference, then, does it make as to who else may assume to condemn us, whether the devil or his agents?

This condition of "no condemnation" also depends upon the indwelling of the Holy Spirit of a being filled and guided by that Spirit. "They that are in the flesh cannot please God," writes Apostle Paul (Romans 8:8). Then he explains that we are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, "if so be that the Spirit of God dwell" in us. This means that we can please God if we have complied with the conditions, and those conditions are the full surrender of our own wills. It is in a way a symbolic beheading of ourselves and the acceptance of Christ as our Head, and then walking after the Spirit which we receive as a result of being "in him" (Revelation 20:4).

Life to Mortal Bodies

The Apostle writes further that "if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you" (Romans 8:11). This life to our mortal bodies is an energizing of them for the service of the Lord. The fallen flesh by nature does not incline toward spiritual things and shrinks from being sacrificed in the service of the Lord and of the Lord's people. It is very hard to keep a live sacrifice on the altar. But through the anointing of the Holy Spirit, received through our Head, Christ Jesus, our bodies are stirred up, to serve the interests of the new creature. The flesh may become "weary in well doing," but if we continue to walk after the Spirit it will be revived, even as the sheep, when weary at the close of the day, were refreshed when the shepherd anointed their heads with oil.

He continues, "For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are the sons of God" (Romans 8:14 NASB). It was when Jesus was anointed by the Holy Spirit that he heard the reassuring message from his Heavenly Father, "This is my beloved Son."

And now, if we are “in Christ Jesus,” and if we walk after the Spirit by which he was anointed, we have that assurance that we also are “sons of God.” This Spirit which we have received, Apostle Paul explains, is not “a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but to a Spirit of adoption as sons that enables us to address our God as ‘Abba! Father!’” (Romans 8:15).

And “the Spirit Himself,” writes Apostle Paul, “testifies with our spirit, that we are the children of God, and if children, heirs also, heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with him so that we may also be glorified together” (Romans 8:16,17). How precious is this testimony, that the Spirit Himself testifies that we are the children of God! But note again the requirement, the stipulated condition: this blessed witness of the Spirit is ours only, “if indeed we suffer with him.”

Now the scriptural viewpoint of this can be more readily understood. The Apostle Peter explains that the operation of the Holy Spirit in the minds of the Old Testament prophets caused them to testify concerning “the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow.” Throughout his epistle Peter makes it plain that these foretold sufferings of Christ are participated in by his body members. It was this, then, that Apostle Paul had in mind when he wrote that the Spirit Himself testifies or bears witness with our spirits that we are the children of God, “if indeed we suffer with him.” If we are in Christ Jesus, and partaking of his sufferings as a result of laying down our lives in divine service, then the testimony of the Holy Spirit through the prophetic writings of the Old Testament applies to us and assures us that, like Jesus, we are the children of God, and joint-heirs with him in the glorious kingdom of blessings which he establishes.

The Apostle Peter reminds us that the Holy Spirit, through the prophets, not only testified concerning the sufferings of Christ, but also of “the glories to follow” (1 Peter 1:11). In keeping with this testimony, Paul writes, “For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us” — that is, the promised “glory that should follow” the suffering.

“The anxious longing of the creation,” Apostle Paul explains, “waits eagerly for the revealing of the sons of God” (Romans 8:18,19). We need only to reflect upon the many promises of kingdom glory that are to be found in the Old Testament, and to note the many promises of how that glory is to be manifested for the blessing of all the families of the earth, to make us long for the time to come when, together with all the divine sons of God, it will be our privilege to manifest the glory of God to the eternal joy of all nations.

“We Know” That “All Things”

Those of us who, through our consecration and the acceptance of God, have come into Christ, and are walking in accordance with the Holy Spirit by which he



Jesus is our shepherd.

was anointed, have the assurance that we have “been called according to his purpose” because we love the Lord sufficiently to have made a full consecration to do his will. Of those thus called, Paul writes that “all things” work together for their good (Romans 8:28). But it requires a strong faith to be assured of this at all times and under all circumstances.

Taking our minds back to the illustration of the shepherd and the sheep, we can imagine what difficulty the sheep would have, if they were capable of reasoning on the matter, to understand how some of the experiences of the day would be of a benefit to them. Should the shepherd lead them through a barren wilderness in order to reach green pastures beyond, or perhaps over rugged mountain passes to find refreshing waters, it would be difficult for the sheep to comprehend the necessity of the hardships thus imposed. But no matter how difficult the way, the shepherd would understand the necessity thereof; if the sheep could but grasp the thought, they would know that “all things” were working for their good.

It is through faith we are able to understand what the sheep could not grasp; namely, that all the experiences through which our Good Shepherd is leading us are for our very highest and eternal welfare. “We know” this, Apostle Paul wrote. The reason we know it is that we have received the anointing of the Holy Spirit and under its blessed influence have been enlightened to know something of the meaning of the trials along the narrow way. We may become bruised and weary from the hardships of the way, but the anointing of our “Head,” which has reached us through him, soothes and comforts by making us “know” that “all things” are working together indeed for our “good.”

Some of the “all things” are of course so pleasant and refreshing. The Good Shepherd leads us beside “still waters,” and he maketh us to “lie down in green pastures.” These blessed provisions are a delight to all the Lord’s sheep. But there are other “things” among the “all” that are different, and in these, too, our faith needs to see value, so that by them we are drawn even closer to the Good Shepherd and made to realize more fully our dependence upon him. It is in this vein

that Paul asks, “Who will separate us from the love of Christ [our Good Shepherd]? Will tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? Just as it is written, ‘For your sake we being put to death all the day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered’” (Romans 8:35,36).

Here the apostle has enumerated some of the truly trying experiences of the Lord’s sheep, yet they should not be permitted to weaken our confidence in the wisdom and the tender loving care of our Good Shepherd. We may be “considered as sheep to be slaughtered,” and if we were “walking after the flesh” we would decide under such circumstances to cease following the Good Shepherd. But inasmuch as we are walking “after the Spirit,” we should know that all the Lord’s sheep are to be sacrificed. That just as Jesus himself, our “Head,” was led by the Spirit to the slaughter as the Redeemer of the world, so it is our privilege. Now that he is exalted to glory and is our Good Shepherd, we are to follow in the footsteps of sacrifice which he so clearly outlined by his example.

Thus, in all these “we overwhelmingly conquer,” gaining the victory through faith in the Great Shepherd, faith in the Good Shepherd, faith in the divine plan, and faith that if we perform obediently our part in that plan, we shall ultimately “dwell in the house of the Lord forever.” Knowing this certain outcome of the “all things” which are working together for our good, we can say with the apostle that we too are “convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor



We thank Jesus for his services to us.

things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 8:37-39).

How thankful we are, for the anointing of our “Head,” and that as members of his body all the riches of divine grace involved in that anointing have come to us. No good thing will be withheld as long as we abide in him (Psalms 84:11). All our needs will be supplied. Strength will be given through the “Spirit of power” (2 Timothy 1:7). We will be directed in the way in which we should walk. We will know that God is for us, and we will realize that because God is for us, nothing and no one can be successfully victorious against us, for he is greater than all our enemies (Romans 8:31, 1 John 4:4) Truly, we can say with the Psalmist that because our Great Shepherd has anointed our “Head” with oil, our cup is running over.

“Follow Me”

“And He said to them, ‘Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men’” (Matthew 4:19 NASB).

This was the simple statement that Jesus made to two brothers, Simon called Peter, and Andrew, fishermen on the Sea of Galilee. They were going about their business of casting their nets into the lake. This seemingly simple statement was sufficient for them to leave their nets and follow Jesus. Also, these simple words were sufficient for the sons of Zebedee; James and John, to leave their boat and their father and to follow Christ.

Little is said about what the disciples knew about Jesus before they were called. From John’s gospel we see that some were disciples of John the Baptist, and that when John saw Jesus walking, the disciples heard him say “Behold the Lamb of God.” Andrew was one of those disciples, and it is recorded, “He found first his own brother Simon and said to him, ‘We have found the Messiah’ (which is translated Christ)” (John 1:41 NASB).

John tells of Jesus finding Philip and saying to him, “Follow me.” It appears that as Philip came from the

same city as Andrew and John, that they had spoken to him about Jesus. It is very interesting to note what Philip said to Nathanael. “We have found him of whom Moses in the Law and also the Prophets wrote — Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph” (John 1:45 NASB). Nathanael was not convinced, stating, “Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?” Jesus did not criticize Nathanael, but saw his heart intention, stating of him, “Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom I find no deceit.”

The call to Matthew to “Follow me” is one of the most interesting calls. Tax collectors were hated by the Jews, as the taxes they collected were for the Roman Empire and many of the tax collectors charged high fees for their service, adding to the burdens of the Jews. Why would Jesus call him? It certainly raised the ire of the Pharisees when they saw Jesus and the other disciples at Matthew’s home. “And it happened that he was reclining at the table in his house, and many tax collectors and sinners were dining with

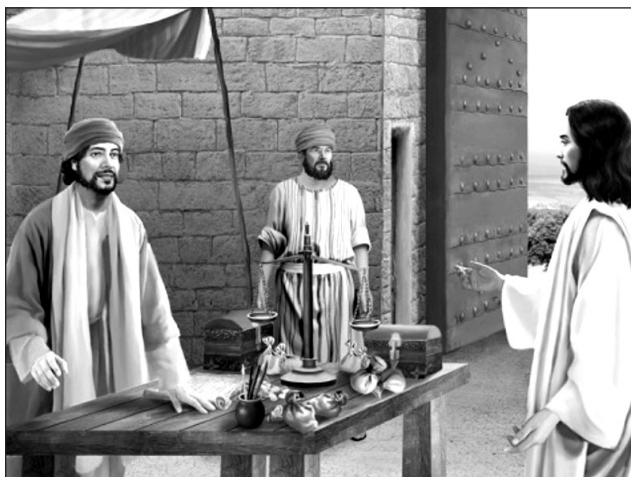
Jesus and his disciples; for there were many of them, and they were following him. When the scribes of the Pharisees saw that he was eating with the sinners and tax collectors, they said to his disciples, ‘Why is he eating and drinking with tax collectors and sinners?’” (Mark 2:15-16 NASB). It appears that Matthew was quite wealthy and had a profitable business, and yet when asked “Follow me,” he got up immediately and followed Jesus.

In Luke we have the account of others that apparently were called to follow Jesus. “Now after this the Lord appointed seventy others and sent them in pairs ahead of him to every city and place where he himself was going to come” (Luke 10:1 NASB). Their task was to prepare the cities and places where Jesus was heading to prepare those who had an ear to hear the message that Jesus would bring.

Counting the Cost

There was a cost to following Jesus, as each of the disciples had jobs that they were doing which they set aside to follow Christ. Those that were fishermen did have the opportunity to go fishing occasionally, but of others, such as Matthew, there is no record of him continuing to collect taxes.

In Luke chapter 9 the following exchange is recorded between Jesus and one desiring to follow him. “I will follow you wherever you go.” And Jesus said to him, “The foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head” (Luke 9:57-58 NASB). We are not told whether the person did follow Jesus, but it appears that Jesus was warning him that the way would not be easy. To another Jesus asked, “Follow me.” But he said, “Lord, permit me first to go and bury my father.” But he said to him, “Allow the dead to bury their own dead; but as for you, go and proclaim everywhere the kingdom of God” (Luke 9:59-60 NASB). To some readers this may appear cruel, as the Jews buried their dead usually within 24 hours, so it appears that this man wished to look after his father until he died however long that might be. Jesus knew that there were other family members who could look after the father.



Jesus calling Matthew

Rich Young Ruler

Matthew, Mark, and Luke all record the exchange between Jesus and this rich young man. Jesus answered his question, “what do I do to inherit eternal life?”, telling him to obey all of the commandments. The young man seemed to understand that this was not enough, stating “All these things I have kept from my youth” Jesus said to him, “One thing you still lack; sell all that you possess and distribute it to the poor; and you shall have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me” (Luke 18:18-22 NASB). The young man went away grieving, for he owned much property. Jesus had not expected him to sell everything to be dependent on others, but knew that this man’s heart was attached to worldly things.

My Sheep Hear my Voice and They Follow Me

Not all that hear the words of Jesus follow him. At his first advent Jesus gave the message from his Father to the lost sheep of Israel. He performed many wondrous signs and miracles to show the love and power of God, and yet many, especially the religious rulers, did not accept him as the Messiah, as their traditions and desire for worldly honour and recognition blinded their eyes and blocked their ears to the wonders that were set before them. Jesus told them “But you do not believe because you are not of my sheep. My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me” (John 10:26-27 NASB). Today, hearing Jesus’ voice is through hearing and reading the word of God. Paul states “He called you through our gospel, that you may gain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ” (2 Thessalonians 2:14 NASB).

Following Jesus

The call to follow Jesus is not to a group, or a certain nationality, but is a very personal one. It is not a demand, no one is forced to follow Jesus. This is shown in the verse, “No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me **draws** him” (John 6:44 NASB). From there the offer to “Follow me” comes from Jesus. Accepting this invitation does not come without a cost. Jesus states, “Those who come to me cannot be my disciples unless they love me more than they love father and mother; wife and children, brothers and sisters, and themselves as well” (Luke 14:26 GNB). There must be a change in a person’s priorities. Another condition was, “Those who do not take up their cross and follow in my steps are not fit to be my disciples” (Matthew 10:38 GNB). Not all those who are called will literally lay down their lives for Jesus, but they are called on to value him so highly that they do not count their lives as precious to themselves anymore.

The Apostle Paul brings out what “take up the cross” really meant. He speaks of his position as a Pharisee, he was a Hebrew of the Hebrews, as a keeper of the law he was blameless, and a persecutor of Christians.

After his conversion he wrote, “But all those things that I might count as profit I now reckon as loss for Christ’s sake. Not only those things; I reckon everything as complete loss for the sake of what is so much more valuable, the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have thrown everything away; I consider it all as mere garbage, so that I may gain Christ” (Philippians 3:7-8 GNB).

Following Jesus Today

The followers of Jesus today can be divided into categories, as occurred during Jesus first advent on earth. Jesus spoke of those who were following him, “I am telling you the truth: you are looking for me because you ate the bread and had all you wanted, not because you understood my miracles” (John 6:26 GNB). They were not following him for his doctrines, which were confirmed through the miracles he performed. One that followed Jesus for the right reason was Nicodemus. “Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher sent by God. No one could perform the miracles you are doing unless God were with him” (John 3:2 GNB). Others came there because they were fed and were satisfied. Today there are those who are satisfied with the social interaction they receive from their church, with little interest in the true message.

When we accept the call “follow me,” we attempt to imitate our Lord and Master. Paul tells us, “Where the Spirit of the Lord is present, there is freedom. All of us, then, reflect the glory of the Lord with uncovered faces; and that same glory, coming from the Lord, who is the Spirit, transforms us into his likeness in an ever-greater degree of glory” (2 Corinthians 3:17-18 GNB). In Galatians the effect of the Holy Spirit, which is gifted to those who truly commit to following Jesus, produces the following effect on the life of that person. Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness,



Nicodemus, who came by night

goodness, faithfulness, humility, and self-control (Galatians 5:22-23 GNB).

The invitation to “Follow Me” was extended to all people from all walks of life, they were all sinners who were not asked to become righteous before they could accept the call. Paul reminded them, “Christ came into the world to save sinners, among whom I am foremost of all” (1 Timothy 1:15 NASB). He also showed the selection criterion, saying, “for consider your calling, brethren, that there were not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not

many noble; but God has chosen the foolish things of the world to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to shame the things which are strong” (1 Corinthians 1:26-27 NASB).

When our Lord called Matthew, he was criticized by the Pharisees for choosing sinners, eating with tax collectors and sinners. He told the Pharisees “But go and learn what this means: ‘I DESIRE COMPASSION, AND NOT SACRIFICE,’ for I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners” (Matthew 9:13 NASB). It is not enough just to believe the truth. We are also to live the life that these doctrines teach.

There are some that start out following Jesus but fall to the wayside as shown in the parable of the Sower. This does not mean that Jesus condemns them, but shows that the way is narrow, and the going can be very difficult. This is also set out in John chapter six, where the message from Jesus became more challenging, and many started to fall away. When the disciples were asked, “You do not want to go away also, do you?”, hopefully the true follower can join Peter in saying “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have words of eternal life. We have believed and have come to know that you are the Holy One of God” (John 6:67-69 NASB).

The Security of the Tree Planted by the Water

“But blessed is the one who trusts in the LORD, whose confidence is in him. They will be like a tree planted by the water that sends out its roots by the stream. It does not fear when heat comes; its leaves are always green. It has no worries in a year of drought and never fails to bear fruit”
(Jeremiah 17:7-8 NIV).

These verses are part of the section titled “The Sins of Judah.” Jeremiah tells them, “Judah’s sin is engraved with an iron tool, inscribed with a flint point, on the tablets of their hearts and on the horns of their altars. Even their children remember their altars and Asherah poles beside the spreading trees and on the

high hills” (Jeremiah 17:1-2 NIV).

Written With a Pen of Iron

Judah’s idol worship was so ingrained that it is indelibly written in their heart and the inscriptions were inscribed with a flint point, possibly a diamond,

and written on brass or copper. The inscriptions were also written on the horns of the altar. The Apostle Paul read the inscription on the altar at Mars Hill. “As I walked around and looked carefully at your objects of worship, I even found an altar with this inscription: TO AN UNKNOWN GOD. So, you are ignorant of the very thing you worship — and this is what I am going to proclaim to you” (Acts 17:23 NIV). Judah had followed the example of the heathen nations that they were supposed to have destroyed as they entered the promised land.

This worship of idols was something that had not just happened, but had continued for a long time. Their children had been witnesses to this idolatry, and when they had become adults, they continued the practice. Jeremiah goes on to warn them, if they do not repent, the Lord will give away their land, wealth, and treasures. The problem for Judah was that they trusted in man, they were drawing strength from mere flesh, and had turned their hearts away from the Lord.

The Result

“That person will be like a bush in the wastelands; they will not see prosperity when it comes. They will dwell in the parched places of the desert, in a salt land where no one lives” (Jeremiah 17:6 NIV). You would have thought with this warning that the Jews would have heeded the warning and turned to God, but as recorded, this happened time and time again because of their stony hearts. Even when God sent his only begotten Son to die for their sins, except for a few, this did not melt their stony hearts.

Not all would be lost, there was hope in the letter to the Hebrews “But God found fault with the people and said: ‘The days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the people of Israel and with the people of Judah. It will not be like the covenant I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt, because they did not remain faithful to my covenant, and I turned away from them, declares the Lord. This is the covenant I will establish with the people of Israel after

that time, declares the Lord. I will put my laws in their minds and write them on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people’ (Hebrews 8:8-10 NIV).

Trust In the Lord

Jeremiah must have felt like Elijah, who stated, “I am the only one of the LORD’s prophets left, but Baal has four hundred and fifty prophets (1 Kings



The prophet Elijah

18:22 NIV). He was surrounded by the idols, their altars, and the sacrifices, and yet he had the courage to bring a message of hope. The vision of a parched desert where no one can live, to the blessings that are available to those who put their trust in the Lord. Judah would have to throw off their trust in the idols and turn to the Almighty. Jeremiah may have remembered the words of the Psalm, “Taste and see that the LORD is good; blessed is the one who takes refuge in him. Fear the LORD, you his holy people, for those who fear him lack nothing” (Psalms 34: 8-9 NIV).

Our Duty

The duty required of us — to *trust in the Lord*, to do our duty to him and then depend upon him to bear us in doing it. When the world around us tries to deceive or threaten us, we need to reaffirm our commitment to God who is all-sufficient both to fill up the place of those who fail us and to protect us from those who set upon us. It is to *make the Lord our hope*, his favour the good we hope for, and his power the strength we hope in.

The Comfort

The comfort comes from doing of this duty. He that does so will be *as a tree planted by the waters*, a choice tree, about which great care has been taken to set it in the best soil, so far from being like *the heath in the wilderness*; he shall be like a tree that *spreads out its roots*, and thereby is firmly fixed, spreading them out *by the rivers*, whence it draws abundance of sap, which denotes both the establishment and the comfort which those have who make God their hope. They are at ease, enjoying a continual security and serenity of mind. A tree thus planted, thus watered, does *not see when heat comes*, does not sustain any damage from the most scorching heats of summer; it is so well moistened from its roots that it shall be sufficiently guarded against drought.



Like trees by a river

Mediator and Advocate

"My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous" (1 John 2:1 NASB).

"For there is one God, and one mediator also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus" (1 Timothy 2:5 NASB).

In these two verses Christ is spoken of as having a role as an Advocate and as a Mediator.

As a Mediator

Understanding Christ's role as a mediator means looking at who can be a mediator and what are their duties. It is then necessary to see how this role fits in with God's plans, especially as to when this role is applied.

In the Old Testament the term mediator is not found, although the Septuagint uses the word in Job 9:33. Job appears to have lived during the Patriarchal age and asks the question in reference to God. "For He is not a man as I am that I may answer Him, that we may go to court together. There is no umpire between us, who may lay his hand upon us both" (Job 9:32-33 NASB). In verse 35 Job gives the reason for his question: "Then I would speak and not fear Him; But I am not like that in myself" (Job 9:35 NASB). There is a note of despair which characterizes this passage showing that Job has no hope that such an arbitrator between him and God existed. Job acknowledged the position that God held and he as a mere human trembled at the thought of standing before God without an umpire / mediator between them.

This thought of the need of a mediator is brought out further when the Israelites left Egypt to become a nation chosen by God from all the nations of the world (Deuteronomy 7:6-8).

With the giving of the Law Covenant at Mount Sinai the Israelites realised that they needed a mediator to be between them and God. In Exodus chapter 20 the giving of the law is recorded. At the end of the Ten Commandments the people spoke to Moses: "All the people perceived the thunder and the lightning flashes and the sound of the trumpet and the mountain smoking; and when the people saw it, they trembled and stood at a distance. Then they said to Moses, 'speak to us yourself and we will listen; but let not God speak to us, or we will die.' Moses said to the people, 'do not be afraid; for God has come in order to test you, and in order that the fear of Him may remain with you, so that you may not sin.' So, the people stood at a distance, while Moses approached the thick cloud where God was" (Exodus 20:18-21 NASB).

In the previous chapter the Israelites were given a wonderful promise. "Moses went up to God, and Jehovah called to him from the mountain, saying, 'thus you shall say to the house of Jacob and tell the sons of Israel: You yourselves have seen what I did to the

Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings, and brought you to Myself. Now then, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be My own possession among all the peoples, for all the earth is Mine; and you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. These are the words that you shall speak to the sons of Israel.' So, Moses came and called the elders of the people, and set before them all these words which Jehovah had commanded him" (Exodus 19:3-7 NASB). The Israelites then pledged, "All that Jehovah has spoken we will do!" (Verse 8).

The need for a mediator soon became apparent as the Israelites, servants of God, failed to keep their promise. The Israelites had left Egypt three months before they made their promise to God. Moses was then instructed to go up into the mountain for 40 days and 40 nights to receive further instructions from God about the tabernacle and the religious services that the Israelites were to observe. While Moses was on the mountain the Israelites came to Aaron and said "Come, make us a god who will go before us; as for this Moses, the man who brought us up from the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him" (Exodus 32:1 NASB).

Aaron, Moses' brother, heeded the call of the Israelites, collecting the gold that they had brought from Egypt and made a golden calf which they could worship. God's reaction is recorded in the following verses. "Go down at once, for your people, whom you brought up from the land of Egypt, have corrupted themselves. They have quickly turned aside from the way which I commanded them. They have made for themselves a molten calf and have worshiped it and have sacrificed to it and said, 'This is your god, O Israel, who brought you up from the land of Egypt!' Jehovah said to Moses, "I have seen this people, and behold, they are an obstinate people. Now then let Me alone, that My anger may burn against them and that I may destroy them; and I will make of you a great nation" (Exodus 32:7-10 NASB).

The next verses show Moses in action as a mediator between God and the Israelites, pleading, "Turn from Your burning anger and change Your mind about doing harm to Your people. Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, Your servants to whom You swore by Yourself, and said to them, 'I will multiply your descendants as the stars of the heavens, and all this land of which I have spoken I will give to your descendants, and they shall inherit it forever.' So the LORD changed His mind about the harm which He said He would do to



Moses at Mount Sinai

His people” (Exodus 32:11-14 NASB).

Many times during the journey to the Promised Land, Moses was called upon to mediate between the rebellious Israelites and Almighty God. This demonstrates that a mediator is, as the name suggests (and as the Greek word used for mediator, *mesites*, literally means): “The one who mediates or stands in the middle.” Thus, a mediator is one who has links with two opposing sides. He sympathizes with both and is trusted by both. And as the assigned “middleman,” he represents each side to the other with the goal of mending a broken relationship.

The Greek word *mesites* is used five times in the New Testament. Once it is used to speak of Moses, and the other four refer to Jesus Christ as the mediator of a covenant.

Moses: Why the Law then? It was added because of transgressions, having been ordained through angels by the agency of a mediator, until the seed would come to whom the promise had been made. (Galatians 3:19 NASB).

Christ: “For there is one God, and one mediator also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus” (1 Timothy 2:5 NASB). “But now He has obtained a more excellent ministry, by as much as He is also the mediator of a better covenant, which has been enacted on better promises” (Hebrews 8:6 NASB). “For this reason He is the mediator of a new covenant, so that, since a death has taken place for the redemption of the transgressions that were committed under the first covenant, those who have been called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance” (Hebrews 9:15 NASB). “And to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood, which speaks better than the blood of Abel” (Hebrews 12:24 NASB).

In looking at the context of 1 Timothy 2:5, it becomes clearer to why Christ is the only one qualified to be the mediator of the New Covenant. “God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and one mediator also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself as a ransom for all, the testimony given at the proper time” (1 Timothy 2:3-6 NASB).

God desired all men to be saved. The problem was that “all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23 NASB). Man could not provide a ransom, as recorded in Psalms 49:7, “No man can by any means redeem his brother or give to God a ransom for him” (NASB). God already knew that man would fail, and so a plan had been devised for a ransom to be prepared from the foundation of the world (Revelation 13:8). Because of the ransom price having been paid, mankind can be raised from death in the Millennial Age. They are not raised perfect in heart and mind and so cannot stand before God in their own right. They need one who can stand between them and God. A mediator needs to have a knowledge of both parties so that they can be brought together. Paul is specific that it was the perfect man, Christ Jesus, who can mediate for them. He has experienced life on earth as a human being, as well as being with his Father as the only begotten son, and after being raised from the dead sits on the right hand of God.

Hebrews 8:6 speaks of Christ having a more excellent ministry, i.e., the previous ministry had been organized by God using the tribe of Levi, but being from fallen man they often failed to fulfill God’s orders. The ministry they offered was not capable of bringing everlasting life to those that they served. The Law Covenant just demonstrated how sinful they were, and although it was designed to bring them to Christ, because of the hardness of heart, they failed to recognize the Messiah in their midst.

The New Covenant will allow mankind to receive the promises of the eternal inheritance shown in Jeremiah 31:31-32. “Days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, not like the covenant which I made with their fathers in the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, although I was a husband to them, declares the LORD.”

In a way this is the main theme of the Bible. It starts right from man’s fall in the Garden of Eden, with a promise to Eve, “And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise you on the head, and you shall bruise him on the heel” (Genesis 3:15 NASB). Through the promise to Abraham, after him offering to sacrifice Isaac as recorded in Genesis 22:16-18, God said this. “By Myself I have sworn, declares the LORD, because you have done this thing and have not withheld your son, your only son, indeed I will greatly bless you, and I will greatly multiply your seed as the stars of the heavens and as the sand which is on the seashore; and your seed shall possess the gate of their enemies. In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice” (NASB). This, plus the promise of a New and Better Covenant, all pointed to Christ, because without his sacrifice nothing could be achieved. In Genesis God and Man are estranged, death entered mankind, and communication between

both parties was broken. After the work of the Mediator in the Millennial Age, with man learning to walk up the road of righteousness and coming to know the rift will be healed, death will be removed, and man will be restored to what God had planned from the beginning of creation.

It is noteworthy that Paul reminds the Hebrews, to whom the Law Covenant was made, those that God had led by the hand, out of Egypt, becoming for the first time the nation of Israel, that these same people, natural Israel, would be those to whom a New Covenant would be made. Like the first covenant, it would have a mediator and would require full obedience to gain everlasting life.

Nearing the end of the book of Hebrews, which appears to be written before the destruction of Jerusalem, Paul reminds the Hebrew Christians about Christ and what they should do. "Therefore, Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people through His own blood, suffered outside the gate. So, let us go out to him outside the camp, bearing his reproach. For here we do not have a lasting city, but we are seeking the city which is to come" (Hebrews 13:12-14 NASB). They were to leave Jerusalem, the home of their former religion, leaving it behind, and to set their eyes on the city to come, a spiritual city.

As an Advocate

"My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an **Advocate** with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and He Himself is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world" (1 John 2:1-2 NASB).

The word Advocate in this verse comes from the Greek word G3875, *parakletos*. Thayer's definition of this word is: (1) summoned, called to one's side, especially called to one's aid.

(1a) one who pleads another's cause before a judge, a pleader, counsel for defense, legal assistant, an advocate. (1b) one who pleads another's cause with one, an intercessor. (1b1) of Christ in his exaltation at God's right hand, pleading with God, the Father, for the pardon of our sins. (1c) in the widest sense, a helper, succourer, aider, assistant. (1c1) of the Holy Spirit destined to take the place of Christ with the apostles (after his ascension to the Father), to lead them to a deeper knowledge of the gospel truth, and give them divine strength needed to enable them to undergo trials and persecutions on behalf of the divine kingdom.

It is interesting that this word is only used five times in the Bible, and in each case it is by the Apostle John.

(1) "And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another **Comforter**, that he may be with you for ever" (John 14:16 ASV).

(2) "But the **Comforter**, even the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that



John, the Apostle

I said unto you" (John 14:26 ASV).

(3) "But when the **Comforter** is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall bear witness of me" (John 15:26 ASV).

(4) "Nevertheless, I tell you the truth: It is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the **Comforter** will not come unto you; but if I go, I will send him unto you" (John 16:7 ASV).

(5) "My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an **Advocate** with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous" (1 John 2:1).

In John's Gospel the word is translated as "comforter" in the KJV, ASV, and in some other translations as "helper," referring to the Holy Spirit which the Heavenly Father would send once Christ had ascended to heaven. Through this, the believers would be taught all things, also spoke as the Spirit of Truth.

In 1 John 2:1, perhaps no one English word adequately conveys the full meaning of *parakletos*, but the translators' choice of "advocate" is quite apt, as descriptive of the intercessory role of Christ *in relation to his church*.

An advocate is one who speaks on behalf of another, especially in a legal context, the one represented being for some reason unable to speak for himself. Our faith and consecration as believers places us where the Heavenly Father already accepts our sincerity of heart and intention as righteousness, not demanding that actual perfection of conduct which is as yet impossible.

The Law Covenant had just about fulfilled its purpose and the relationship between God, Christ, and those true followers was about to change. They were no longer going to be slaves to the Law Covenant. "You are my friends if you do what I command you. No longer do I call you slaves, for the slave does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you. You did not choose me but I chose you, and appointed you that you would go and bear fruit, and that your fruit would remain, so that whatever you ask of the Father in my name He may give to you" (John 15:14-16 NASB).

There was going to be another change in the relationship between Christ's disciples and God, but this had to wait for his death, resurrection, ascension to heaven, and applying the Holy Spirit at Pentecost.

The coming of the Holy Spirit brought about the change in how God viewed those that believed. In John chapter 1 it is evident that the Law could not make them children of God, only servants. They needed to change, as stated: "But as many as received him, to them he gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in his name, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God" (John 1:12-13 NASB).

This was all part of God's plan, as shown in Galatians 4:4-7: "But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, so that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons. Because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, Abba! Father! Therefore, you are no longer a slave, but a son; and if a son, then an heir through God" (NASB).

This shows the change from slaves to sons and heirs of God. The Gentile believers were also grafted in to become sons, sons through faith in Christ Jesus. As such they have access to the Father through an Advocate. "Who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus is he who died, yes, rather who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us" (Romans 8:34 NASB).

During his years of anxious concern for his spiritual children, he must all too often have seen the frailty of human nature lead a brother or sister into sin, bringing some to bitter remorse and to the dread that all was lost. Thus, the provision of an advocate was very important, one that could truly understand man's situation. "Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin. Therefore, let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need" (Hebrews 4:14-16 NASB).

Jesus pleads the cause of the repentant sinner, the believer during the Gospel Age. He does this based on his own blood, shed for Adam's posterity, but imputed first to those who are justified by faith in that cleansing blood. Our Advocate works constantly on our behalf to maintain our peace with a God whose justice is perfect and unbreakable, but whose love found a way to reconcile sinners to himself. Our Lord's role as our Advocates ends when the Church is complete.

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our affliction so that we will be able to comfort those who are in any affliction with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God" (2 Corinthians 1:3-4 NASB).

Br. Agripino (Greg) Polistico

In Memory

Br. Greg, as he was known by the Philippine brethren, was the founding elder of the Taguig class. In 2006 he contacted the Dawn Bible Students in the USA requesting the Dawn to arrange for elders to come to the Philippines to help the brethren grow spiritually.

The Dawn asked Br. Ray Charlton and Br. Adam Kopczyk from Australia, would they be willing to travel to the Philippines and visit the brethren. The first visit was made in 2006 attending the class in Taguig, visiting the brethren. The following year Br. David Christiansen (USA) joined Br. Ray and Br. Adam as they expanded the trip to include other classes in the Philippines.

Br. Greg was instrumental in organizing these trips to visit the brethren and studying with them in General Luna and Buena Vista. Br. Greg translated the discourses

for those who did not have a clear understanding of English.

The trips overseas to the Philippines ended in 2019 due to travel restrictions imposed by Covid. During 2006 to 2019 Br. Greg assisted in the running of seven seminars in Cebu as well as many trips to Buena Vista, and Dipolog, to run mini conventions.



Br. Agripino (Greg) Polistico

Over the many years of service, Br. Greg assisted the brethren throughout the Philippines by translating many of the Dawn booklets as well as translating the Dawn lessons and Volume one. His work was greatly appreciated by the brethren, especially by those who did not have a good command of the English language.

He will be missed by the many brethren he helped in the Philippines, and by those in Australia and the USA who knew him.

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On the Covenants, Mediator, Ransom,
Sin Offering, and Atonement.

This book was published by the Berean Bible Institute during the 1970's and sets out the teachings from the Bible on topics which so eluded many in the Christian world. The insert in this edition of the Peoples Paper covers the next part of this 274-page book. For Brethren who would like to read more of the content, it is available through the Berean Bible Institute's official webpage.

www.australianbiblestudents.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/The-Bible-Teachings-on-the-Covenants2.pdf

The Heart of a Lesson

His name was Bill. He had wild hair, wore a T-shirt with holes in it, jeans, and no shoes. This was his wardrobe for his entire four years of college. He was kind of eccentric but very, very bright. He became a Christian while attending college.

Across the street from the campus was a prosperous and very conservative church. They wanted to develop a ministry to the students but were not sure how to go about it.

One day Bill decides to go to the church. He walks in with his wild hair, jeans, T-shirt, and bare feet. The service has already started, so Bill starts down the aisle looking for a seat. The church is completely packed, and he can't find a seat. The well-dressed people look a bit uncomfortable, but no one says anything. Bill gets closer and closer to the pulpit, and when he realizes there are no seats, he just sits down right on the floor.

By now the people are really uptight, and the tension in the air is thick. About this time, the minister realizes that from the back of the church, a deacon is slowly making his way toward Bill. The deacon is in his eighties, with silver hair and a three-piece suit. A godly man, very elegant, very dignified. Leaning on his cane, he walks down the aisle toward the boy.

The church is utterly silent except for the clicking of the man's cane. All eyes are focused on him. The minister can't even preach the sermon until the deacon does what he has to do. Everyone expects the deacon is going to eject Bill from church — and who could blame him?

But now they see the elderly man drop his cane on the floor. With great difficulty, he lowers himself to sit down next to Bill and worship with him, so he won't be alone.

Everyone chokes up with emotion. When the minister regains his control, he says, "What I'm about to preach, you will never remember. What you have just seen, you will never forget."

"Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works and glorify your Father who is in heaven" (Matthew 5:16 NASB).

Be careful how you live. You may be the only Bible some people will ever read.

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OFFICE OF ADVOCATE AND MEDIATOR CONTRASTED

The “Mystery of God”

The fact that the Church is “the Mystery of God” has become more clear within the last twenty years. We know that Christ and the Church are separate and distinct from the world in every particular. They are neither under the old Law Covenant nor under the new Law Covenant, but are a peculiar people, called, sanctified, developed, under a special Covenant by themselves, in which none of the world will ever participate. This the Scripture styles the Covenant of Sacrifice: “Gather My saints (holy ones) together unto Me (saith the Lord); those that have made a covenant with Me by sacrifice. (Psalms 50:5). This special class of saints, or holy ones, who make the Covenant of Sacrifice have as their Head the Lord Jesus Himself. When this company shall have completed their Covenant by Sacrifice, this present Age will end. Moses of the law Covenant given to Israel represented specially the Law Covenant which will be given to the world through the antitype of Moses — The Christ. In other words, the Mediator of the Law Covenant was one man.; but the Mediator of the New Law Covenant of the Millennial Age is the new Man, of which Jesus is the Head — and the Apostle declares that the members are made up of those elected from Jews and Gentiles.

“Better Sacrifices” Basis of New Covenant

From the time of Jesus down, the Mediator of the New Covenant has been in process of selection, and the “better sacrifices,” as the basis for the New Covenant have been in process of offering. During this Gospel Age Jesus has not exercised His office as Mediator for the World; and the world has no relationship with God, but still lies in the Wicked One. The Mediator Himself has been in process of development. As the Apostle declares, God raised up Jesus first and since has been raising up the Church, and soon will finish the raising up. It is this Mediator or Prophet of whom St. Peter speaks in Acts 3:22,23. (See also 1 Timothy 2:5,6.) No mediating can be done until the Mediator of “many members” has qualified for the office. His qualification consists of His sacrificing, according to His Covenant of Sacrifice. The Christ, Head and Body, are, therefore, the Mediator for the world in a prospective sense — in the same sense as Jesus, the Babe, could be spoken of as the Saviour and the King. He is only now becoming the King and has yet saved only a few of His people.

Distinction Between Work of Mediator and Work of Advocate

There is a wide distinction between the work of a

mediator and the work of an advocate. The Great Mediator between God and man — The Christ of glory — will fill the Mediatorial office for a thousand years and complete it only by the end of that time, when He will deliver over to the Father, fully reconciled, all who can be brought into harmony with the Divine arrangement. The work of an advocate is different, and according to the Bible, relates only to the work which Jesus accomplishes on behalf of the Church during this Age. The Church will need no advocate in the future. The world has no advocate now. “We have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous.” It is Jesus individually who is the Advocate for us — “the Church, His Body.” He advocates our cause — first of all by imputing to us the merit of His sacrifice, thus making us presentable in the Father’s presence and acceptable as sons of God. Because of this Advocacy, we have received the holy spirit and are New Creatures in Christ. As New Creatures we still need our Advocate, because we cannot do the things that we would — perfectly. We have imperfections of the flesh, which, as New Creatures, we cannot fully control. Hence, we need a Throne of Grace and an Advocate through whom we may maintain our present relationship with the Father, and thus not be condemned with the world (Z. 1916, 220).

THE RANSOM NOT THE SIN-OFFERING

Distinction Between Sin-Offering and Ransom

Word “Ransom” in Old Testament and New Testament The word “ransom” in the Old Testament seems to be used less definitely than in the New Testament. In the Old Testament, the Hebrew word translated ransom is kopher, and signifies a covering, a protection, as when we read, “The wicked shall be a ransom for the righteous” (Proverbs 21:18) — their covering, their protection. The righteous are few and uninfluential in the world; and laws would not generally be made especially for their protection. The laws of society -are made for the masses of the people — not for the saints; but those laws made for the people in general we — the Lord’s saints — have as a covering.

“Ransom” — A Covering in Old Testament

The Prophet David declares that no man can give a ransom for his brother (Psalms 49:7). That is to say, all mankind are imperfect through the Adamic fall. All are sinners; therefore, none could stand before God in the sense of justifying themselves; and thus, unable to justify themselves, they would be wholly unable to justify another — their brother. Here the thought is very similar to that attaching to the word “ransom” in

the New Testament, showing that to be such a ransom, or covering, requires perfection, righteousness, which no man of all our race possessed, except the Man Christ Jesus, “holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners,” who was therefore able and qualified to give Himself “a Ransom for all, to be testified in due time.” 1 Timothy 2:6.

“Ransom” — A Corresponding Price in New Testament

The word in the New Testament Greek used for “ransom” is very explicit; it signifies a price to correspond, or a corresponding price. The implication is that something was lost that needs to be re-purchased, redeemed, bought back; and the thing which is competent to purchase it back must be of equal value to the thing lost or forfeited — no more, no less — a “corresponding price.”

Why a Ransom Was Necessary

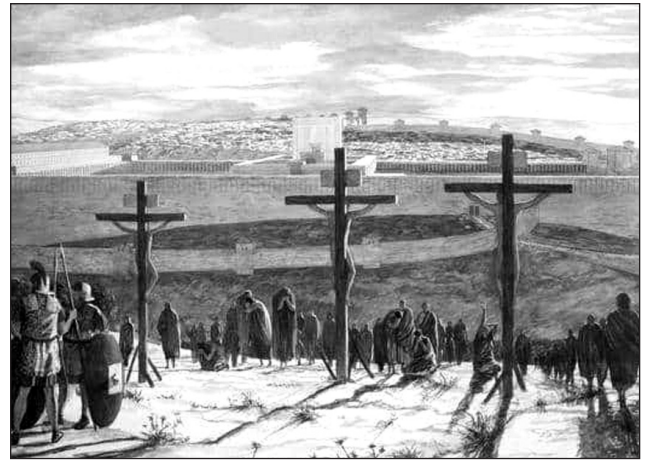
The thing that was lost by Father Adam for himself and all of his family was the right to life. As the perfect man, God’s arrangement provided him with the privilege of living forever on condition that he would be obedient, loyal to his Creator. His sin was disloyalty, disobedience, and its penalty was death — the forfeiture of the right to live. Thus, because of Adam’s disobedience, he came under the death sentence, “dying, thou shalt die” (Genesis 2:17, margin). Adam’s children were born to him after he had thus forfeited his life-rights, and he was unable to give them more than he possessed — a dying nature. Thus, we read: “Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all, for that all have sinned, etc. (Romans 5 :12).

God’s Dignity Must Be Preserved

God reveals to us in His Word that while He wishes to be merciful and to receive back to Himself all the willing and obedient of the race, nevertheless He must maintain the dignity of His own Law and cannot set aside the death sentence except upon the conditions which He has arranged; viz., a Ransom. If Adam is ransomed from the sentence of death, Justice will have no further claim against his life, and the ransom would have the right to restore Adam and his race. But no ransom could be found amongst all the family of men; for all were sinners — none was perfect, all had inherited the blemishes of sin. Hence God’s arrangement — the sending’ of His Only Begotten Son to be the Redeemer, the Ransomer, of Adam and his family, and ultimately to be the Restorer of all that was lost.

A Great Reward Attaches to Carrying Out Divine Plan

To this service — to this carrying out of the Divine Program — God attached a very great reward of glory, honor and immortality. The Logos, “The beginning of the creation of God,” “the first born of every creature” (Revelation 3:14, Colossians 1:15), accepted the Divine arrangement gladly and humbled Himself. Leaving the honors and favors of His high position on the spirit plane, He was made flesh in order “that He by the grace



Jesus was our Ransom.

of God, should taste death for every man” (Hebrews 2:9) as the Ransomer of Adam. St. Paul tells us of Him as the One “who for the joy that was set before Him, endured the cross, despising the shame,” and now as a result, “is set down at the right hand of the Throne of God” (Hebrews 12:2), henceforth expecting, waiting, until the time shall come for Him to bless Adam and his race for whom He had already died — waiting that the Father in due time, after the selection of the Bride Class, may put all things in subjection under Him — under the Messiah — that He may reign a thousand years for the uplifting of those for whom He died.

The Philosophy of the Ransom

As the sinner was the perfect man, Adam — in full harmony and fellowship with God and only a little lower than the angels and crowned with glory and honor as a perfect human being — so the one who would redeem him, or be his ransom, must have all these qualifications. He must be a man, and a perfect man; in him God’s image and likeness must be complete; he must be crowned with the glory and honor of perfection; he must be “holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners” and in full fellowship with God.

God’s Requirements Met

All these requirements were fully met in the Man Christ Jesus when He was thirty years of age, at which time He presented Himself at Jordan to complete and confirm His consecration unto death, giving Himself a Ransom-price for all the race, to be testified to them all in due time . As a bullock could never take away sin by its death, neither could an angel or other spirit being ever take away sin by dying for Adam. Under the Divine arrangement, the Redeemer must be a corresponding--price to the one redeemed. Jesus was all this; nothing more was either, necessary, or possible. There was nothing lacking in the merit of the perfect Man to redeem the first man and his family; nothing therefore that the Church could give or do that would help in the matter. Justice could accept only the corresponding price.

Ransom-Price in Hands of Justice

That Ransom-price, that Corresponding-price for

Adam, has already been placed in the hands of Justice. Jesus did this in His consecration at Jordan, in that He agreed to do the

will of the Father even unto death; and on the Cross He declared, "Into Thy hands I commit My spirit" — the spirit of life, His right to life, which He had not forfeited, either by sin or otherwise. That Ransom-price, Price sufficient to redeem Adam and all of his race, has been in the hands of Justice as a deposit ever since, and is there now — still unapplied. It cannot be applied piecemeal, a little to each one; when applied, it must be applied for all at the same moment.

Why Merit Must Be All Applied At One Moment

Why must it be applied all at one moment? Because it is the one life. It would require the entire merit of Christ's sacrifice to recover Father Adam from his condemnation, and it would require the entire merit of that sacrifice for any one of the children of Adam. The Ransom cannot be divided up into millions of parts and a little piece given to each member of the race. The whole sacrifice of Christ was necessary for each one of the race and is sufficient for the entire race, when it shall be so applied. It is to be applied for the entire race, but not until the Father's time has come for turning over the race to the Redeemer — not until His appointed time for the Redeemer to take possession of the race as King of kings and lord of lords, to establish over them His glorious Kingdom, to release them from the power of sin and death and to give them all the Restitution privileges which His Ransom-sacrifice makes possible.

The Sin-Offering

In the meantime, another feature of the great Heavenly Father's Plan is working out — an arrangement by which a certain number of the children of Adam may become associates with Jesus in the suffering of this present time and in the glory that is to follow. This feature of the Plan is not the providing of a Ransom; for that was already provided in the death of Jesus; but this plan is to provide an under-priesthood who are eventually to be kings with the Saviour — a Royal Priesthood. Evidently, therefore, the Sin-Offering must not be confused with the Ransom-price, for the Ransom price is complete, and was complete before the Church was invited to come into this position of self-sacrifice.

What the Jewish Day of Atonement Pictured

The Jewish Day of Atonement pictured the entire work and operation of the Sin-Offering, which began in the person of Jesus. The death of Jesus was typified by the killing of the bullock on the Day of Atonement. That was the great sacrifice for sins —



Golden Altar

a Sin-offering, which was made by Jesus, who offered up Himself. He was both the anointed Priest of God and also the devoted Sacrifice. The merit of that Sacrifice might have been applicable to all the people; but if so, there would have been no room for the sacrifice of the Lord's Goat Class, the sacrifices of the under-priests, who, if faithful, are by and by to be made the Royal Priesthood of the Millennium. In the type, the High Priest allows the merit of his sacrifice to be applied to himself and his house — himself representing the Household of Faith, the consecrated ones who will fail to become members of the Body of Christ and will instead be on the spirit plane, "a great multitude" who will serve God, day, and night in His Temple — in the Church glorified.

Offerings Made During the Gospel Age

This passing of the merit of Jesus' Sacrifice, first of all, to and through His Church does not diminish the merit of that sacrifice nor its value, for everyone who shares in that merit, participates on condition that he will surrender his earthly rights, following in the footsteps of Jesus. The priestly class includes those who keep their covenant arrangement, voluntarily and heartily lay down their lives in the Lord's service. The Great Company Class is composed of those who have failed to fully surrender their earthly lives and rights and will therefore have these earthly rights taken from them through great tribulation. Any others who receive of the lord's favor during this Age and fail to get into one or the other of those classes — if they fail to become members of either the Royal Priesthood or of the Levite -servant company — cannot retain any Restitution blessings or privileges but will die the Second Death. Thus, the entire merit of Jesus, designed for Adam and his race, merely passes through the Church Class, the consecrated one, on its way to Adam and his race. 'The Church having the opportunity, by reason of this arrangement, to share with Jesus in suffering for righteousness' sake — the great High Priest accepts our consecrated beings and makes them part of His sacrifice, and the full measure of His merit as the Ransom-price passes on to humanity to give Adam and his family Restitution privileges for a thousand years.

"Better Sacrifices" Not Made by Church but by High Priest

These are the better sacrifices and offerings for sin not made by us but made by the great High Priest whom the Father has appointed for the purpose. This great High Priest has been completing His sacrifice for sins; first His own flesh, and then the flesh of all those who have come unto the Father through Him during the past nineteen centuries. He will soon complete His sacrificial work and glorify with Himself those who suffer with Him — making of them His consorts in His Messianic Kingdom. Then He will apply on behalf of all mankind the merit of the sacrifice which He finished at Calvary and which He has merely loaned or imputed to the Church during this Gospel Age.

When Justice Will Have No More to Do with Mankind?

This Sacrifice will be given fully, completely, everlastingly, to Justice, appropriated as the full offset of Original Sin. Forthwith Adam and all of his children will be turned over by Justice into the hands of Jesus. Divine Justice will have no more to do with mankind. All will be under the administration of the Millennial Kingdom. For a thousand years the Redeemer, the Ransomer of the race, will teach, reward, punish, deal with humanity for their instruction in righteousness and their uplift from the sin and death condition giving to everyone a full opportunity for returning to perfection.

Result at End of Millennial Age

At the close of the thousand years, Messiah having accomplished everything possible for every member of the race, will turn over all to the Father and will say to the sheep class, "Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the (earthly) Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world" (Matthew 25:34). All others, found unworthy of everlasting life, will be destroyed in the Second Death, symbolically pictured as a devouring-fire. Thus, we have striven to make plain the distinction between the Ransom-price and the application of the Ransom price, and the Sin-offering and the blessings resulting to the Church from the privilege of participation in those sin offerings — the sufferings of Christ.

Christ's Merit Not Divided. Three Interesting Questions

We take occasion here to answer some related queries.

Question — Is it proper to say that we, the Church, receive by imputation "a certain portion" or "our share" of the merit of the Ransom now — during the Gospel Age?

Answer — The person using this language might have the proper thought but would not be using the best words in which to express that thought to avoid being misunderstood. As above shown, all the merit of Christ is necessary to each member of the race. If we divide up the merit of Christ, nobody would have enough. If it were all given to one, the others would get none. God's Plan, therefore, is to hold that Ransom-price in reserve until the due time for the inauguration of Messiah's Kingdom, and then apply that price and transfer the whole race at one time to Jesus to the Messianic Kingdom. Then during the Millennium, it might be proper to say that everyone will be receiving the Restitution blessings as his share or participation in the Ransom merit; but strictly speaking, the whole blessing of the whole world is the ransom blessing.

Not a Portion but the Entire Merit Imputed

Question — If the Ransom has not yet been applied, apportioned, credited, to the race on the Books of Justice, and if we who are of the Church are members of the world, how do we participate in the Ransom blessings?

Answer — The entire Ransom merit being in the hands of Justice, the one who owns that merit, Jesus — in harmony with the Father's Plan — imputes it to the

whole company who will accept the offer of this Gospel Age and surrender themselves sacrifices to walk in the Master's footprints. There is quite a difference between giving and imputing, just as there would be a difference between giving a man a thousand dollars and imputing to him a thousand dollars by endorsing his note. Jesus, as our great Advocate, imputes to us, or endorses us to the full extent of our contract with the Father. Our contract is that, like Jesus, we will surrender our earthly rights.

Church Not Worthy Only as Advocate Endorses

The Heavenly Father could not recognise us as worthy of entering into such a contract, except as our great Advocate endorses for us, or guarantees us, in the matter. What does He guarantee? He guarantees that we shall lay down our lives — that our earthly lives shall be fully surrendered in due time.

Three Classes for Whom Jesus Becomes Surety

As we have seen, there are three classes for whom Jesus becomes Surety, Guarantor. First are those who fully and completely carry out their contract, both in letter and spirit, laying down their lives voluntarily, after the Master's example. These will be the "more than conquerors," the members of the Body of the Anointed. Next will come the Great Company class, who will eventually be conquerors, but not "more than conquerors." Because conquerors, they will be granted everlasting life on the spirit plane; but because of lack of zeal and love, they will fail of the election as members of the Body of Christ.

Some Neither Conquerors nor More Than Conquerors

Third, there are those who will be neither more than conquerors nor even conquerors, but failures — turning back to sin, like the sow to her wallowing in the mire. These will die the Second Death. Our great Advocate, the High Priest, having endorsed for all of these, will thus be ultimately free from all liability for them in that they all will have died according to the flesh and none of them will receive or retain Restitution rights or privileges. These Restitution blessings will be fully and completely released when the last member shall have gone into death.

While Church in Flesh Restitution Blessings Impossible

Question — Would it be proper for us to suppose that the world might begin to receive its share of Restitution blessings while some of the members of the Church are still in the flesh?

Answer — No! This would be an impossible thought. The whole merit of Christ is mortgaged by the imputation which Jesus has made of His merit to the company consecrating during this Age. This mortgage must be released fully, completely, before the New Covenant can be sealed and put into operation for giving Restitution blessings to Adam and his race. Hence, we are not to expect any Restitution, either of the Ancient Worthies or others, until the little Flock shall have passed beyond the veil, and the Great Company class shall have passed through its tribulation (Z. 1916, 310).