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## Christ, Our All in All

*"But of Him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, sanctification, and redemption" (1 Corinthians 1:30).*

As we have begun a new year, an honest appraisal of ourselves (2 Corinthians 13:5, NASB) must lead to the conclusion that, as members of the fallen and sinful race of mankind, we have nothing of virtue or character by which we can commend ourselves to God, with the hope of being acceptable to Him because of our own righteousness (Romans 3:10). This means that our sonship privileges in His family are possible through the abundance of His grace in providing a way whereby He could be just and still be the Justifier of those who come to Him through Christ (Romans 3:26). Salvation and all the divine blessings are ours, because of the Heavenly Father's love in giving His Son to be our Redeemer (Ephesians 2:8).

The value of salvation is appreciated most by those who, having a proper evaluation of their own fallen condition, realize their great need for it (Psalms 34:18). Those who come to Him in simple faith and full devotion, may not only enjoy peace with God through His divine favor, but have access to the inner chambers of His grace, and there rejoice in the hope of the glory of God (Romans 5:1,2). This "great salvation," the apostle explains, began to be spoken by our Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him (Hebrews 2:3).

Jesus' first advent marked the opening of the age during which the high, or heavenly calling of those who were to reign with him in glory was to operate. Not until he came and shed his blood as the Redeemer of both the Church and the world would it have been possible for anyone to meet the conditions laid down for those who are called to "glory, honor and immortality" (Romans 2:7).

### Christ — Our Wisdom

Not only was Christ the first one to walk in the narrow way that leads to immortality, but only

through his merit, and by virtue of his counsel and example, is it possible for others to walk acceptably in the same narrow way (Matthew 7:14). As our text emphasizes, Christ is our wisdom our righteousness, our sanctification and our redemption, or deliverance. In other words, he is all and everything to us that is necessary in order that we may be "heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ" in the heavenly reward offered to the saints during this age (Romans 8:17).

One of the official titles the Scriptures give to Jesus is that of Counsellor (Isaiah 9:6). If we are to be truly wise it is essential that we follow the instructions and leadership of Christ. "The fear (reverence) of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom" (Proverbs 9:10). To reverence the Lord implies respect for His words of enlightenment and instruction, a respect that will lead us to fully obey the divine will (Philippians 2:13).

The quality of reverence for God is necessary from the very beginning of our approach to Him. We recognize His greatness, perfection of holiness, and our own unrighteousness. To recognize this is the true foundation of wisdom's structure, for it implies willingness and desire to put aside our own imperfect ways and to accept the counsel and will of God.

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Approaching God in this attitude of humility, and recognizing the need for a Redeemer, is the first step in the way of wisdom. Those who are called by God also need to recognize the wisdom of making a full consecration of themselves to do the Father's will, devote themselves fully to Him who has promised to give to them wisdom which is from above (James 1:5). The Word of God becomes the guiding light of our lives only when we devote ourselves unreservedly to the doing of His will.

Christ is our wisdom in this fuller sense also because he is to us the living Word of God. He is the Captain of our salvation, the Head of the body, who, in being guided by the words of God himself, has shown us the true meaning of those instructions as they affect the lives of those who are following in his footsteps (Hebrews 2:9-11).

### **Wisdom From Above**

The Apostle James gives us an over-all picture of heavenly wisdom, saying that it is "first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy" (James 3:17 ASV). Heavenly wisdom which is in harmony with the divine character of love. Christ did so wonderfully display the love qualities of heavenly wisdom as he went about in the divine service. Christ was first "pure." He was this by nature, even as a child; having been born perfect. His moral and intellectual purity was sealed by his obedience to the Law Covenant. He was pure also in his whole-hearted devotion to the divine will from the time of his consecration at Jordan until the very end of his earthly life. Jesus was fully devoted to the doing of his Father's will in harmony with the instructions of the written Word (Matthew 4:10).

### **"Then Peaceable"**

The Apostle Paul admonished that "if it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men" (Romans 12:18). This beloved servant in the narrow way knew, even as Jesus exemplified in his life, that putting purity first in the consecrated life means that we will not always be able to dwell in peace in the world and with the worldly-minded. By putting purity first, Jesus did not yield to the adversary's suggestions to compromise the divine will. It was not his desire to avoid the persecutions that came upon Him. He fully resisted "the god of this world" (2 Corinthians 4:4).

One of the prophetic titles descriptive of the spirit of Jesus' mission to earth, was that of the "Prince of Peace" (Isaiah 9:6). In his Sermon on the Mount, he beatified the peacemakers. The gracious words which fell from his consecrated lips promoted peace and good will in the lives of those whose hearts were not flawed by selfishness, and whose minds were not blinded by the darkness of this world. But because the darkness hates the light (John 3:19, 20), the Master's words



*The Apostle James*

of peace and good will stirred up enmity against him by the world. In following the Master's example, we may not be confronted with similar large and dramatic issues to test the purity and whole-heartedness of our devotion to God, but his loyalty to the principles of righteousness in all matters of life, constitutes a perfect guide for us (John 16:33).

Putting purity first in the carrying out of our consecration vow will cause us the loss of worldly friendships, and may even test the depth of our devotion as it applies to our association with some who profess to be followers of the Master. Where issues of the truth and its service are concerned, we are to follow the example of Christ who, by the appointment of our Heavenly Father, has been made unto us the embodiment of heavenly wisdom. Worldly wisdom often compromises principle to avoid suffering, but Jesus did not do this. He was guided by his knowledge of the divine will even though it meant travail and sorrow (Isaiah 53:11).

### **"Gentle, Easy to be Entreated"**

Following the course of heavenly wisdom must lead to gentleness of character, heart, and disposition. Christ was pleasingly gentle and so 'easy to be entreated' that even the children were not leery in his presence. Those who sought for the blessings he could bestow were given his consideration even though they succeeded only in touching the hem of his garment. The Master's gentleness was in keeping with his purity (Hebrews 7:26, 1 Peter 2:23).

In our desire for peace, and in our disposition to promote it, we, like the Master, should be gentle. We should have an open heart toward those who we meet and for those, by divine providence, we may have blessings of comfort and joy in the Holy Spirit, if they would receive them. Yet, as with Jesus, so with us, we will not be easily entreated to walk contrary to the will of God, or to lend our support by sympathy, word or deed to anything that is out of harmony with the spirit of heavenly wisdom.

### **"Mercy and Good Fruits"**

Heavenly wisdom rejoices in mercy. How beautifully Jesus exemplified this quality of the divine character,

both in his teaching and manner of life. When he was asked how far one should go in forgiving, he gave that “seventy times seven” (Matthew 18:22) formula of divine mercy. When adapted in the Christian life, it serves to bypass nearly all friction and disputes that otherwise rob followers of the Master of the fullness of joy in the Lord that should be theirs. Whether in our individual lives as Christians, in our homes, or in the ecclesia, the mercy element of heavenly wisdom serves to sweeten all our experiences and to make us more like our Father in heaven.

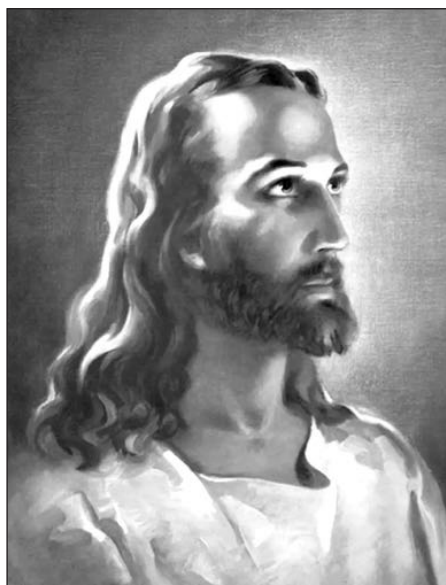
Fruits of the Christian life are the fruits of the Spirit. The growth of this fruit and its proper ripening take place in the heart which is illuminated with the wisdom from above (Galatians 5:22-23). Here again the fullness of our devotion to God will be the measure of the fruitage developed in our lives. If we are to be full of good fruits, we must be empty of self. The will of God in Christ then becomes the all-possessing power of our lives, so that we can develop good fruit.

### “Without Partiality”

The Scriptures explain that “ye are all one in Christ Jesus” (Galatians 3:28). Therefore, to show partiality in our dealings with fellow-members of the body of Christ would display a lack of wisdom from above. Just as God is no respecter of persons, so we who are trying to be like Him must ever maintain His viewpoint, which is one of love that seeks to bestow blessings upon all. The outward features of the natural man are ignored by those who have the spirit of the Lord, the spirit of wisdom which comes from above. To be partial in our dealings with each other, would be contrary to the course of heavenly wisdom, and the example set by Christ. True, some of the disciples seemed to be more appreciated by the Master than others, and these were granted some additional privileges. His nearness to Peter, James and John was because of their greater love and understanding of him. God is not unjustly a respecter of persons, yet he makes it plain in his Word that He draws especially near to those who draw near to Him (James 4:8).

### “Without Hypocrisy”

The heavenly wisdom which we see exemplified in Christ is also “without hypocrisy.” It is so pure, peaceable, gentle, and merciful toward all, that there is no need for hypocrisy where it is in control. Those guided by heavenly wisdom must, of necessity, be out of harmony and sympathy with all that is sinful — not merely outwardly, but in their hearts and characters. To be truly a follower of Christ, who is our wisdom, we must indeed be a doer of the word (James 1:22).



Christ Jesus

When analyzing the wisdom which is from above, we find that in the life of Christ we have a perfect example of how it should control those who are following him in the narrow way. Not only, therefore, does the beginning of wisdom lead us to Christ as the Redeemer, but we find wisdom’s perfection manifested in his every word and deed, which, by God’s grace, we are trying to copy in our own lives (1 Corinthians 1:24).

### Christ — Our Justification

In addition to being our wisdom, as we see from our studies, the apostle explains that Christ is also our righteousness. In explaining this point, Paul used the Greek word *dikaiousune*, which literally means “equity,” and specially, “justification” (*Strong’s*). Various forms of this same Greek word are used in the New Testament, and are translated as “justified,” “justification,” and, also righteousness. As used in our text, the word could properly be translated justification. Considering the literal meaning of the word *dikaiousune* as being equity, we have a comprehensive view of what Christ means to us in connection with our relationship to the Heavenly Father and our hope of life. He is our “equity,” that is, His merit is the thing of value which gives us a standing with the Heavenly Father, and permits us to enjoy the privileges of fellowship, or partnership, with the Father and the Son.

No matter how perfect our heart’s intentions may be toward God and righteousness, how determined we are to lay down our lives in the divine service, and how much we appreciate the invitation to suffer with Christ, that we may reign with him. It is the equity of Christ’s righteousness imputed to us by divine grace that makes it possible for us to render an acceptable sacrifice.

The fact that Christ’s righteousness makes up for our deficiencies does not mean, as the apostle explains, that we can “continue in sin, that grace may abound” (Romans 6:1). We should daily wage an aggressive struggle to control our thoughts, words, and deeds, to bring them into captivity to the will of God. The merit of his righteousness is imputed to us upon the basis of our faith, giving us a standing of righteousness or justification before God (Psalms 40:2). Our continued standing with the Heavenly Father as His children depends upon Christ being our righteousness to the very end of the way (1 Corinthians 15:57).

### Christ — Our Sanctification

Sanctification signifies setting apart to holy service. The Greek word *hagiasmos* used in our text





Holiness to Jehovah

which declares that Christ is made unto us sanctification literally means purity, or purification (*Strong's*). We should remember that the standard of purity to which the apostle refers is a purity of relationship to God and a full dedication of ourselves to do His will. The true meaning of sanctification from the divine standpoint is illustrated by the inscription appearing on the mitre worn by Israel's high priest, which read, "HOLINESS TO THE LORD" (Exodus 28:36, 37). It meant in the case of the typical priest that through a properly constituted and carried-out service of consecration or dedication, he had been set apart to serve God in the holy things of the tabernacle, including the offering of sacrifice.

In the consecration service by which Israel's priests were dedicated to fill the office of the priesthood, a part of the blood from the ram of consecration was placed upon the tip of the right ear, the right thumb, and the great toe of the right foot (Leviticus 14:13, 14). This indicated the comprehensiveness of their consecration. Antitypically, in the case of those who follow the Master, it would mean that all of life's powers are to be dedicated and used in the divine service. As the blood was put upon the thumb of the right hand, so our consecrated sentiments should be. As the blood was put upon the great toe of the priest's right foot, so we will endeavor to walk in the footsteps of the Master, to walk by faith in the way that the Spirit leads, to walk as he walked (2 Corinthians 5:7). We will say to our God, "Search me, O God, and know my heart" (Psalms 139:23). As the blood was placed upon the right ear of the priest, so our hearing is to be one of faith. We are to "hearken unto the voice of the Jehovah" (Deuteronomy 30:10) that we may know and do His will. If the dedication of our lives is complete, if our devotion is whole-hearted, we will not pay attention to suggestions of any kind, whether from the world, the flesh or the Adversary, which may turn us aside from the narrow way (James 4:7).

The life of the fully consecrated is one in which moments and days are made to flow in channels which can be used for showing "forth the praises of him who hath called us out of darkness into His marvelous light" (1 Peter 2:9). Our every thought and power should be used in keeping with the divine will (2 Corinthians 10:5). We want the will of God to be in our heart so completely that our life can be poured out to Him, being consecrated fully and forever to the doing of His will (Philippians 2:13, Romans 12:1).

Jesus, praying on behalf of his Church, asked that they be "sanctified" by the truth (John 17:17).

Ignorance and error will not sanctify. Our study of God's Word should be sincere, and in the spirit of humility, that we may glean from its pages what God expects of us. The Prophet Micah expresses this sentiment, when, enumerating the requirements of the divine will, he lists among them, "walk humbly with thy God" (Micah 6:8).

## Christ — Our Deliverance

Christ is also made unto us "redemption," says the apostle. The word redemption is here used in the sense of deliverance, or salvation, which is the outcome of the redemptive work — the result of a ransom, or a corresponding price, having been given. It is the same Greek word translated, "deliverance" in Hebrews 11:35. The thought is that of the Church's full victory through Christ, and the attainment of a position of glory with Him in the Kingdom. But if this ultimate and full deliverance of the church is to be realized, there must also be the intermediate and incidental deliverances of the faithful all along the narrow way. Christ is made unto us deliverance, both in our daily experiences of trial and testing, as well as in the final deliverance from this "vile body," in the glories of the first resurrection (Philippians 3:21).

The redemption provided by Christ is yet to result in the deliverance of all mankind from sin and death, but in the divine program the redemption and deliverance of the Church comes first. The redemption, or deliverance, which is in Christ Jesus, both as it applies to our present experiences and also to our ultimate deliverance into the Kingdom, is always identified with the sacrifice of our Lord, made on our behalf. In connection with that sacrifice, our Lord was severely tested and tried, and the apostle explains that by reason of this, he can deliver them from temptations which otherwise might overpower them (Hebrews 2:17, 18).

Because Christ is dealing with us as a faithful and sympathetic High Priest, we have the promise that "God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able: but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to endure it" (1 Corinthians 10:13 ASV). He may permit us to stumble temporarily, but even such an experience he will help us, and deliver us.

If, through all of our daily experiences in the narrow way, we learn to put our trust more fully in Him who is our redemption and deliverance now, who has provided a covering for our sins, we will finally experience that great and ultimate deliverance into the Kingdom. This grand hope is especially meaningful today because the signs around us in the world indicate that the entire Church will soon be delivered and united with her Lord. If we are faithful as individuals we can take comfort in the Master's blessed assurance, "When these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption [deliverance] draweth nigh" (Luke 21:28 KJV).

# The Effect of the Pandemic on Christendom

## Introduction

As Bible students, we naturally look at major world events from a prophetic standpoint. It is proper to “watch and pray” as our Lord Jesus told us (Matthew 26:41). We do not know if this current “birth pang” (1 Thessalonians 5:1-3) is the final one or if it is merely another spasm. Time will tell. Regardless, it is a major event that ranks in importance with World War I and World War II. The effects of the Pandemic are global. The world as we knew it only a few months ago is gone, perhaps forever. We should consider soberly what we should be watching for, and more importantly, what we should be doing.

## Overview

The Bible tells us, and Brother Russell foresaw, that the prominence of Christendom will not continue to be a dominating influence in the world. In fact, expectations are that anarchy will begin in the Western World and will end with the home governments of Gog and Magog (Ezekiel 38, Volume 4, page 557).

We have already seen changes that are contributing to a decline in Christendom.

(1) Support for the Jewish people has gradually diminished, and will continue to decline until “all her lovers will forget her” as stated in Jeremiah 30:14. In proportion as the Western World abandons the Jewish people, to that extent any special favor from God, related to that support for the Jewish people, is being and will continue to be withdrawn.

(2) Christian principles have been abandoned and, beginning in the late 1960s, evolution, higher-criticism, liberalism, and relativistic morality have taken over. This trend has grown worse and worse in recent years and is accelerating the decay of Western Civilization.

(3) Western Society has become more polarized, politics has become more dysfunctional, and social dissatisfaction and unrest have increased.

(4) The Pandemic has resulted in severe financial difficulties that have aggravated all of these problems further, and this will lead to a general weakening of the Western World, not only financially, but politically and militarily as well.

## What is Christendom?

“Christendom” or the “The Christian World,” is the geographic region where Christianity is a vital part of the inhabitants’ lives.

“Christendom” is also defined as the collection of countries where Christian principles (as they understand them) are upheld by the Government.

The “Western World” is another term used to identify a certain region where Christianity is the majority religion. This region includes the United States, the United Kingdom, and Western Europe.

The region dominated by the Eastern Orthodox religion is generally considered separate from “Christendom,” a fact supported by Bible prophecy.

In the Harvest Message the term Christendom is applied to the “field” of the Wheat and Tares Parable (Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43). The Harvest Work has been most predominant in the regions of so-called Christendom. Only recently has the focus of the Harvest Work changed to other countries such as Africa and India.

What has happened in Christendom since the Pandemic started? There are five areas to be considered. Perhaps there are more.

- (a) Restriction of liberties
- (b) Economic crises and instability
- (c) Polarization and social unrest
- (d) Political dysfunction
- (e) General fear for the future

## (a) Restriction of Liberties

The Scriptural basis for this expectation is found in the closing experiences of John the Baptist, the prophetic picture in Daniel 3, Jesus’ words in John 9:4, several places in the Book of Revelation, and other prophecies.

For many years, the Brethren have wondered how it would be possible for all the governments of Christendom to restrict personal liberties in such a way that the majority of people would accept those measures, at least for a time. The Pandemic has provided such an opportunity.

As a result of the Pandemic, face-to-face religious services, such as weekly meetings and Conventions, have been stopped all over the world. We are still able to meet online, but we do not know how long this will continue to be possible. It would be very easy for our liberty in this area to be restricted further.



John the Baptist

As a result of the Pandemic, Brethren in many countries are greatly limited in spreading the Gospel message as public meetings, door-to-door witnessing, and other similar activities are no longer permitted. Much of the present Harvest Work is now conducted electronically. It would be quite easy for our liberty in this area to be restricted as well.

As a result of the Pandemic, travel has also been severely reduced, especially international travel and we do not know how long this will last.

### **(b) Economic Crises and Instability**

The Scriptural basis for this expectation is found in Isaiah 2:17-21, Ezekiel 7:19, Zephaniah 1:18, James 5:1-9, Revelation 18:9-19 and other places.

Brother Russell wrote many articles and discussed in great detail his expectation that the ultimate financial collapse in the world would be one of the major factors in the Great Time of Trouble. Volume 4 is filled with such references. Volume 6 also tells us about this expectation, stating that the climax of the Great Time of Trouble will be a “financial storm that shall sweep over Christendom” (Volume 6, pages 579-580).

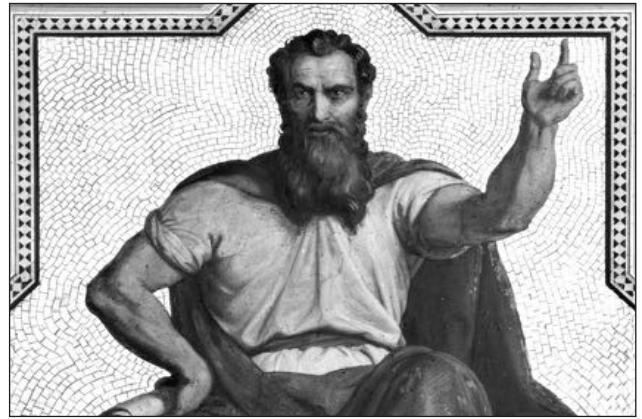
The Pandemic has created global economic instability that has not been experienced in modern times. However, its effect is most pronounced in the Western World. We are only in the beginning stages of this crisis, and the ability of governments to prop up the global financial system is limited. The longer the Pandemic lasts, the greater this crisis will become.

One of the most pronounced effects of the Pandemic is on the place of the U. S. Dollar in the world economy. There are now serious discussions about the possibility that the U. S. Dollar will be replaced as the key global currency. Such a change would have a dramatic effect and lead to even more instability, especially in the United States.

The Pandemic has already had a huge personal impact on hundreds of millions of people. Many millions have lost their jobs. Governments have provided unprecedented amounts of financial assistance to the unemployed, and to businesses. This has greatly increased the amount of government and private debt which was already at record levels. Since all government debt today is supported merely by public confidence, sudden and disastrous changes can take place because of a loss of such confidence. Eventually they will “cast their silver and their gold into the streets” as the Scriptures tell us.

### **(c) Polarization and Social Unrest**

The Scriptural basis for this expectation is found in Psalms 46:1,2, Isaiah 24:19,20, Luke 21:25,26, Revelation 11:18, Revelation 18:21, and other places. The raging waves of the sea and the nations being angry are symbolic expressions of this breaking down of society.



*The Prophet Joel*

Another set of Scriptures is found in Joel 2:11 where it describes what we call “the Lord’s Great Army.” Notice that verse 1 applies this prophecy primarily to Christendom: “Blow ye the trumpet in **Zion** and sound an alarm in my **holy mountain**: let all the inhabitants of the land tremble: for the day of the LORD cometh, for it is nigh at hand.”

Never in recent history has there been so much polarization in society as we see today. Political parties are becoming more extreme on both ends of the spectrum, left and right. Racial inequality as a social issue has spread from the U. S. across the globe, but especially in Christendom. The division between rich and poor is greater than it has ever been, especially in the Western World, leading to more polarization and dissatisfaction. The Pandemic has been a strong contributing factor in all of these and other areas.

There have been periods of social unrest in the past, but never so widespread or so severe as what we are seeing developing today.

Polarization leads to further unrest. Unrest leads to additional restriction of liberties. This becomes a vicious cycle that tends to anarchy, which we know is to be the final result. Add to this vicious cycle the next point:

### **(d) Political Dysfunction**

The Bible speaks of the French Revolution as an example of the trouble to come upon Christendom. We find this in Daniel 12:5-7, Revelation 10, and Revelation 12:15,16. The French Revolution was brought on by political dysfunction which contributed to polarization. This led to financial crises which resulted in greater and greater dissatisfaction, social unrest, and eventually to anarchy.

We see the same forces at work today. In fact, the degree and extent of political dysfunction, especially in the Western World, is the greatest it has been in modern history.

The Pandemic has been a strong contributing factor to this political dysfunction, as government leaders and parties fight and argue about proposed solutions, primarily based on self-interests, while the people perceive that their interests are not being served.



### (e) General Fear for the Future

Luke 21:26 aptly describes our day: “Men’s hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken.”

Even before the Pandemic there was a high level of fear in society. The degree and extent of that fear has been increased dramatically by the Pandemic.

So we see the foregoing five factors active in Christendom today, we see that these five factors have been aggravated by the Pandemic, and we see the potential for greater effects in the future. The following paragraph from Volume 4, page xiv summarizes the situation very well:

“The masses will be restless under their restraints but will be conscious of their weakness as compared with the kings and princes, financial, social, religious and political, who will then hold sway. The majority of the poor and the middle class prefer peace at almost any price. The masses have no sympathy with anarchy. They realize truly that the worst form of government is better than none. The masses will seek relief through the ballot and the peaceful readjustment of earth’s affairs for the elimination of evil, for the placing of monopolies and utilities and the supplies of nature in the hands of the people for the public good. The crisis will be reached when the hitherto upholders of the law shall become violators of the law and resisters of the will of the majority as expressed by the ballot. Fear for the future will goad the well-meaning masses to desperation, and anarchy will result when Socialism fails.”

What we have considered so far naturally leads us to our next major question:

### (3) How does the Pandemic fit into the prophetic sequence of events?

There are many prophetic events which have already been fulfilled since the Second Presence of our Lord. It is not possible to consider all of these, but some of the more prominent ones include the call “Come out of her My people!” The “increase of knowledge and running to and fro” is another prophecy that is obvious to all. The end of the Times of the Gentiles and the events which prove this conclusively is another. And perhaps one of the most powerful of all is the regathering of the Jews to their homeland and the re-establishment of Israel as a nation.



*Flag of Independent Israel*

We find this prophetic sequence in at least two places:

- (a) Elijah’s vision in 1 Kings 19:11,12, and
- (b) Amos 5:19 and context.

The **purpose** for examining these two prophecies is to trace their accurate fulfillment so far, and then to see how the Pandemic might fit into them.

#### (a) Elijah’s Vision

We are all familiar with this vision of the Wind, the Earthquake, the Fire and the Still Small Voice.

The **Wind** was so powerful that it “rent the mountains, and broke in pieces the rocks.” This reminds us of the prophecy in Daniel 2 and the striking of the multi-metallic image. Wind represents war, and the “Great War” as it was called (World War I) started right on time (to the day) in 1914. (This was on the 9th of Av, according to the Jewish calendar, the exact day when the first Temple was destroyed 2,520 years earlier.) Mountains represent Kingdoms, and the Kingdoms most affected by the Wind feature of the Time of Trouble have been, and still are, so-called Christendom. This part of Elijah’s Vision had a beginning of fulfillment in 1914, and continues until today in spasms.

The **Earthquake** represents revolution. Social revolution has been the natural consequence of the War phase of the Time of Trouble. Great spasms of social revolution began near the end of World War I, with the Bolshevik Revolution, and continue until today.

The **Fire** represents anarchy. We have seen anarchy on a limited scale in certain parts of the world. Incidents of anarchy have generally followed a sequence. War creates problems: financial, political, etc.; this leads to Revolution and attempts at social reform that prove unable to solve these problems; the end result is anarchy. The French Revolution is an example from the past, Libya is a more recent example, and there are others.

We have not yet seen anarchy on a global scale, but we do see many indications of incipient anarchy all over the world. So we are perhaps at the beginning of, or very close to, the Fire phase of Elijah’s Vision.

These observations tell us that we are on the verge of anarchy, the fire of Elijah’s Vision, and that the Pandemic is pushing the world closer to that condition. Will there be something more? We don’t know, but we believe that the time is short. We wait longingly for “the still small voice” which will say to the raging waves: “Peace! Be still!”

#### (b) Amos 5:19

A sequence of events is given in this verse concerning a man. Several factors in the context support the idea that he could represent Christian Society. The following is presented as a suggestion.



*The British Lion*

(1) The man flees from a **Lion**, representing the Divine Right of Kings which ruled in Christendom prior to 1914. This came to an end in World War I, during the first phase of the Time of Trouble.

(2) A **Bear** meets the man, representing Socialism, the second phase of the Time of Trouble. Though it spread over much of the world, Socialism cannot solve the world's problems. The Soviet Union fell in 1989. Any Socialistic movement which currently exists, or rises in the future, will also fail.

(3) The man flees from the Bear, enters his **House**, and leans his hand on the Wall. Brethren in the past, decades prior to the fall of the Soviet Union, believed that the House represented Nationalism or Protectionism. The House as a symbol conveys the idea of protection. The Wall as a symbol conveys the idea of support. Recently, even before the Pandemic, there was a strong movement toward Nationalism and Protectionism in the Western World. The Pandemic has prompted many governments, especially the United States, to adopt stronger and stronger protective measures.

(4) A **Snake** bites the man. Nationalism, instead of providing an environment of protection and support, will become a prison, and the final destruction will come from within: anarchy. All attempts at government by fallen man will eventually fail. Christian Society, the Western World in particular, will fall first. The reasons for saying this will be considered later.

### **A Related Excerpt from the Harvest Message**

“The Scriptures indicate that pestilences, as well as physical convulsions, will mingle with anarchy in making up the sum of the great trouble approaching, which will be a judgment from the Almighty to reduce the world to humility and submission, and make mankind ready to hear ‘Him that speaketh from heaven,’ whose voice shall thus ‘shake the earth [society], and also the heavens [ecclesiasticism]’ (Hebrews 12:26-29).” — Watch Tower, May 1st 1895

So we see a further confirmation of the thought that events such as the current Pandemic will “mingle with anarchy” and form a part of the Great Time of Trouble. The world recovered from the Great Pandemic of 1918. Perhaps it will recover from the

one we are experiencing now. This possibility seems unlikely, but everything is in the hands of the Lord, and He will decide the matter.

### **(4) What Do We Expect to Happen in Christendom in the Future?**

We do not know what the future holds in detail. We only know what the Scriptures tell us, and the broad view of those prophecies as given in the Harvest Message.

There are many prophecies which are not yet fulfilled, or which are only partially fulfilled. Some of these prophecies may have some connection with the Pandemic.

Five areas were already considered regarding the *current* effects of the Pandemic on Christendom. The possible *future* impact will now be considered in greater detail.

#### **(a) Restriction of Liberties**

The spasms of the Great Time of Trouble will lead to many problems for the “heavens” or powers of control. The governments of “Christendom” will look to the Nominal Church for help. The combined efforts of Church and State, symbolized by the croaking of the frogs, will be to preserve the status quo and quell any opposition (Revelation 16:12-16). As mentioned before, we do not know how this total restriction of liberty will come about, but the Pandemic may play an important role. We must continue to “watch and pray” and more importantly, we must use the liberty we still have before it is taken away.

#### **(b) Economic Crises and Instability**

The economic effects of the Pandemic have been global and catastrophic. These effects will last for many years. It seems certain that this important feature of the Great Time of Trouble has progressed greatly because of the Pandemic. The Pandemic has already led to much instability all over the world, but especially in Christendom. We expect this instability to increase.

Revelation chapter 18 shows that Great Babylon will be destroyed while the financial and political leaders stand “afar off.” This suggests that the religious institutions of Christendom will fall before the rest of the “heavens” or powers of control. Here is a brief quote from Volume 1, page 241: “The time of trouble, as it will affect the world, will be after Babylon has begun to fall and disintegrate.”

The “Beast” and the “False Prophet” (religious systems) are cast into the “Lake of Fire” first, but the “Dragon” is later cast into the “Bottomless Pit” to be released after the thousand years has expired. (Revelation 19:20, Revelation 20:1-3, 7-10). Satan is behind all three agencies, but it is the Civil Power aspect that is shown under the symbol of the Dragon. The authority and influence symbolized by the power of the Dragon, Satan’s last vestige of control,



will be totally suppressed after the destruction of the Religious systems. However, the Church will be complete before any of these three agencies are rendered powerless.

Another prophecy which has not yet been considered is also important. Ezekiel chapter 38 shows a sequence of events harmonious with what has already been considered.

Israel is now regathered to her homeland and is a nation again. This is a fulfillment of many prophecies. In this chapter we are told that a time will come after this regathering when Israel will be “dwelling safely” and “without walls” and “having neither bars nor gates” (verses 8 and 11). At the same time, they are shown as being extraordinarily rich: “having gotten cattle and goods” and “silver and gold” (verses 12 and 13).

Gog and Magog (north and east of Israel) first go westward but are then drawn southward to Israel (verse 4). They go to “take a spoil” and to “carry away silver and gold, to take away cattle and goods” (verses 12 and 13 again).

What is the connection of this prophecy to our subject?

Israel must be at peace with her Arab neighbors. We see some strong indicators of this possibility in recent developments, politically and economically.

The region will have stability and economic prosperity at a time when the rest of the world does not, Israel will be “dwelling safely at the time when the rest of the world is in its wildest commotion” (Volume 4, page 553).

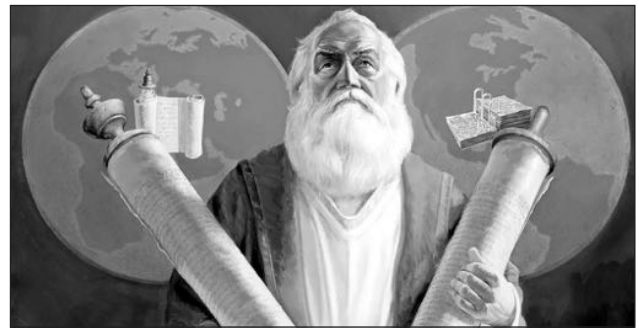
No one will come to help Israel against the invasion of God and Magog. All her lovers will have forgotten her (Jeremiah 30:14). One likely reason is that the Western World at that time will be too weak to assist. This weakness, shown in other prophecies, will be financial, political, and social weakness. The effects of anarchy will already be felt in the Western World at this time.

The Pandemic is already affecting the Western World (Christendom) with financial, political, and social weakness. There will probably be a combination of factors which will further weaken Christendom in the future.

There may be more than one Pandemic. Physical convulsions such as Earthquakes, Hurricanes, Fires, Floods, and other natural disasters are already adding to the financial weakness and instability and will likely continue to do so.

### **(c) Polarization and Social Unrest**

With the French Revolution, several factors led to the violent overthrow of that government. One factor then was a polarization of society that led to social unrest. The dividing of the people into two classes is already begun, and is taking place along financial, political, and social lines. Government leaders are causing much of the political polarization. Financial



*The Prophet Ezekiel*

“kings and princes” are causing a division between the rich and the poor. Social problems are dividing the masses as well. The Pandemic has aggravated these problems, and the resulting pressures will continue to make matters worse. Future polarization and social unrest will increase because of many factors.

### **(d) Political Dysfunction**

Much of the dissatisfaction of the masses is a result of the inability of current leaders and politicians to solve the problems that are affecting society. This dysfunction is generally a result of selfish infighting to advance their own agenda and to gain more power. Once again this is a strong parallel to the causes of the French Revolution.

“The masses will seek relief through the ballot and the peaceful readjustment of earth’s affairs ... The crisis will be reached when the hitherto upholders of the law shall become violators of the law and resisters of the will of the majority as expressed by the ballot” (Volume 4, page xiv).

The Pandemic is the latest crisis that political leaders and politicians have been unable to solve. There will be other crises in the future.

### **(e) General Fear for the Future**

“Fear for the future will goad the well-meaning masses to desperation” (Volume 4 Foreword). Regardless of the causes, or how big a role the Pandemic plays in those causes, the final result will be anarchy.

### **In Conclusion**

The Pandemic is only one of many factors. We must not ignore it, but we must consider it, and discuss it. The Pandemic is important, but there are also other forces working toward the eventual destruction of the present order. We need to look at all these factors.

We should consider soberly what we should be watching for, and more importantly, what we should be doing. Let us endeavor to “do with our might what our hands find to do” before “the night wherein no man can work” puts an end to the Harvest Work.

And most importantly, let us never forget what lies beyond the dark clouds of trouble, and the fires of anarchy. Let us continue to pray: “Thy Kingdom come! Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.”

# W. E. Vine

William Edwy Vine was born in 1873 in Dorset, England. His father ran the Mount Radford Boarding School in Dorset, which was relocated to Exeter in 1875, it was in Exeter that he spent the remainder of his youth. His parents were both deeply religious and played an integral part in his religious education and his decision to be baptized at the age of 14 in the Plymouth Brethren Christian Church, Exeter.

At 17 he began his first job as a teacher at the Mount Radford Boarding school (his father's school), and he later moved to Aberystwyth to commence his studies at the University College of Wales. He completed his studies at London University, receiving his Bachelor of Arts with honours and his Masters of Arts in ancient classics in 1906, which greatly help him in his writings.

In 1899 he married Phoebe Baxendale in her home county of Lancashire, and they had five children. In the early years of their marriage they lived in Exeter, and had returned to the Mount Radford Boarding school where he took up the position of assistant headmaster. Phoebe was an ideal companion, and later a faithful nurse when pain and weakness affected his life. Vine would wake early every day to read and study the Bible before work, but his life was not all focused on study. He felt it was an important part of his religious practice to also spend time outdoors enjoying God's creation, doing walks, rowing, sailing, and swimming. He also devoted much of his time to his children, helping them to construct block towers and sandcastles, playing the violin or piano, and singing for them. He also made time for preaching and teaching of the scriptures in his local area. He influenced young people through Sunday School and Bible Class, turning the conversation to serious spiritual matters.

On one occasion he rescued three boys from drowning in a choppy sea.

In 1909 he was offered a job with the missionary magazine, *Echoes of Service* in Bath, which was published monthly and recorded the activities of the missionaries from the British Isles. The role involved reading correspondence from hundreds of missionaries, often reading, and responding to sixty to seventy letters a day and arranging funds from the local congregations to be sent to these missions. He continued to work there for the remainder of his life.

Vine was also an Elder at his congregation in Bath, which had over 250 members at the time. His

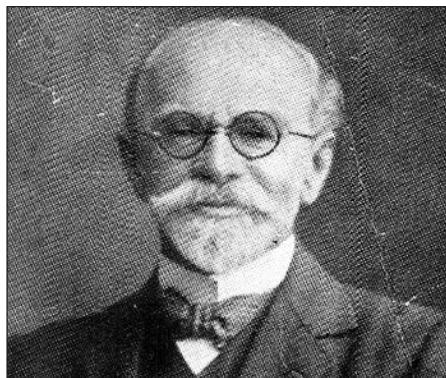
dedication to his role was shown by always being the first to arrive in order to personally greet people on their arrival. He also made regular visits to individuals who were ill or in need and would include them in prayers during the congregation's prayer meetings.

In 1927 his health began to decline, and he was subsequently diagnosed with heart disease, which caused many bouts of unconsciousness and constant weakness. This did not stop him from continuing his work at *Echoes of Service*, as an elder, his writing, or even visiting those who were ill or in need.

Vine began his writing career while he was still completing his studies in 1905 with the joint publication with C.F. Hogg of a correspondence bible study course of 1 Thessalonians and then Galatians. He went on later to complete more of these studies, including Philippians, 1 Corinthians, 2 Thessalonians, 1 and 2 Timothy, Titus, Hebrews, James, and 1, 2 and 3 John. All these and his many other works his writings were enough to fill five large volumes, which were published by Gospel Tract Publishers of Glasgow.

It is of course for his largest work that he is most renown, *Vine's Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*, commonly referred to as *Vine's*. He published this work in 1940 in a set of four volumes. It is designed as a cross-reference for words in the Authorised King James Version to the Greek words in the original New Testament. It provides a concise meaning of the original Greek word, if there are several Greek words that may translate to the same English word. *Vine's* distinguishes the shadings of meaning and connotation that may be lost in the English translation. There are a number of Greek words that may be translated by the one English word. *Vine's* has also been designed to be used in conjunction with *Strong's Concordance*, as every word is numbered with the equivalent Strong's number so one can use it more efficiently.

It is said of this work in his Biography, "The English reader with little or no knowledge of Greek has, of course, concordances and lexicons. These provide a skeleton: Vine clothes it with the flesh and sinews of living exposition, and in so doing makes available for the ordinary reader the expert knowledge contained in the more advanced works." To the last day of his life he was active in the service of others, in prayer, dictating letters, resting a while because of the weakness he felt. He finally succumbed to heart disease in 1949, three months after his 50th wedding anniversary. He continued his work with *Echoes of Service* right up till his dying day.



W. E. Vine

# Peace

*“If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men” (Romans 12:18 NASB).*

**T**he letter to the Romans was written while Paul was in Corinth. The Corinthian Church was not an easy church to preach to. There was conflict between the believers who followed different leaders. There was immorality in the Church, so bad that those outside the church were aware of it. There were disputes of the eating of different foods. It was a stressful time for Paul as he was among people who often opposed him.

One of the reasons he wrote his letter to the Romans is that peace would not have been easy for them. It would have felt as unnatural to them as it can to us, amid hardships, never-ending opposition, and personal differences.

“If possible,” *i.e.*, as much as is under our control and would be consistent with supreme love, service, honour, and obedience to God, we are to live peaceably “with all men.” This general rule applies where principle is not violated. Paul shows in earlier verses the efforts we should make for peace. It is not always possible to secure peace with those all around us. Yet, Paul reminds everyone that peace is possible.

The Greeks thought that peace was the idea of harmony and the absence of hostility and violence. But Paul taught that peace is the feeling that we can bring during hostility. This peace is a wholeness we have because of our relationship with God.

Just before his crucifixion, Jesus said to his disciples, “Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Do not let your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful” (John 14:27 NASB).

Peace is a gift that our Heavenly Father gives to believers. This gift distinguishes us from those in the world. It is our union with Christ that makes this peace possible. Paul writing to the Philippians tells them “And God’s peace [shall be yours, that tranquil state of a soul assured of its salvation through Christ, and so fearing nothing from God and being content with its earthly lot of whatever sort that is, that peace] which transcends all understanding shall garrison and mount guard over your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 4:7 AMP).

Our demonstration of peace during hardships makes it noticeable as particularly rare and odd. To live peaceably with all seems like such an impossibility. It is made possible because of Christ in us and by following his example as the prince of peace.

In our opening text, Paul does not say, “As far as it depends on **other** people to bring peace.” No, he says, “So far as it depends on **you**.” Our peace is not prevented by choices of other people. It flows from



*Eirene, goddess of peace,  
with her son Pluto*

our choices. To achieve this, we must keep our hearts swept clean of bitterness and remain humble even when we are wronged.

Peace evidences a life of forgiveness. It is not that people all around you are peaceful, or that your relationships are always peaceful. It is releasing oneself from the binding effects, constricting force, and constraining feelings of anger. Living in the comfort of peace is so much better than living in the constraints of being unable to forgive and forget.

Finally, “Pursue peace with all men, and the sanctification without which no one will see the Lord” (Hebrews 12:14 NASB).

## Comment, “The Pillar of Cloud”

Dear Brethren, We always respect our Brethren and their opinions. But here a few words of comment on the article “The Pillar of Cloud,” from last issue, an agreeable article, well written. Our single point of concern respects the use of the Divine Name. The article quoted from Strong’s, word 3078, which refers to it as the Jewish National Name for God. However, we observe, it was not the Jewish people who chose this name. In fact they refuse to utter it, and in the first and second centuries a Jewish person could be taken to court by the Sanhedrin for blasphemy if they pronounced it.

The Divine Name, the “I AM” or “will cause to be” — Jehovah — was given to Moses by God Himself. This was in reply to Moses’ question, “Suppose I go to the Israelites and say to them, ‘The God of your forefathers has sent me to you,’ and they say to me, ‘What is his name?’ What should I say to them? This is what you are to say to the Israelites, ‘Jehovah the God of your forefathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you’” (Exodus 3:13-15).

Psalms 83:18 (RVIC) says, “That they may know that thou alone, whose name is Jehovah, art the most high over all the Earth.” The RVIC makes it plain in simple language. “I am Jehovah [not LORD, but Jehovah], that is my name, and my glory will I not give to another, neither my praise unto graven images” (Isaiah 42:8, RVIC).

The name Jesus, given him by God, reflects this also. It is the same as the name Joshua, and corresponds to the Hebrew Jeshua (Yeshua), in its fullest form Jehoshua, “Jehovah is Salvation.” Thus Jehovah is not the Jewish national name for God, for they had nothing to do with the name Jesus, but rejected him, as they did his heavenly Father. — *Br. Richard Tazzyman*



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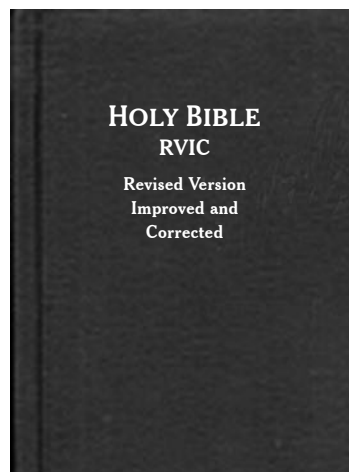
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[www.australianbiblestudents.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/The-Bible-Teachings-on-the-Covenants2.pdf](http://www.australianbiblestudents.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/The-Bible-Teachings-on-the-Covenants2.pdf)

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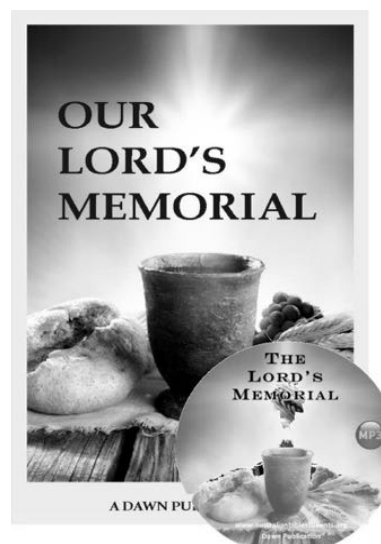
This convention will most likely be online  
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For more information

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## The Date of the Memorial

**Friday, 26 March, 2021**  
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For those who are  
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# The Bible Teachings (Part Nine)

*On the Covenants — Mediator — Ransom — Sin Offering — Atonement*

*Berean Series of Bible Studies • Berean Bible Institute • PO Box 402, Rosanna, Australia 3094*


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## THE NEW COVENANT IN THE BOOK OF HEBREWS

### New Covenant Not for Church

If the New Covenant, in no sense of the word, belongs to the Church — that is to say, if we are not under the New Covenant, if it belongs merely to Israel, and through Israel to the world, why does the Apostle have so much to say concerning it in the Book of Hebrews?

### Necessity for Book of Hebrews

To appreciate the necessity for the Book of Hebrews, we must mentally take our stand back in apostolic days and get our bearings as though we were living there under those conditions. Thinking of matters from this sympathetic standpoint the answer to this question is very simple, very plain. The early Church for seven years after our Lord's baptism, for three and a half years after His cross, was composed exclusively of Jews.  until the end of Israel's promised "seventy weeks" of special favour could the Gospel message go outside of that nation at all. We remember that Cornelius, a just man, who prayed always and gave much alms, was the first one from the Gentiles to be received. In his case we remember how it was necessary for God to specially prepare St. Peter for such a remarkable change in the Divine method of dealing.

### Jews and Gentiles on Equality Caused Disturbance

We remember that years after this, the question of involving the Gentiles and eating with them, or in any sense of the word recognising them as being on equality with the Jews, was one which caused continual disturbance in the Church and amongst the most prominent of the apostles of the time. Years after Cornelius had received the holy spirit Teachers from Jerusalem went to Antioch and found that there Gentiles were received on an equal footing with the Jews in the Church of Christ without, in any sense of the word, subscribing to Moses and the Law Covenant. They were shocked and expressed themselves in such positive terms that the Antioch Church sent Paul and Barnabas with others to Jerusalem that a full conference on the question might be had. Guided of the holy spirit the Apostles reached right conclusions, yet even Peter was so little in sympathy with these conclusions that years after we find St. Paul reproving him for dissimulation and refusing to eat with the Gentile brethren when Jewish brethren were in the company — through deference to the law Covenant, which somehow all Jews felt must be recognised and subscribed to. St. Paul seems to have been one of the apostles who, early on, got the proper focus on this subject.

## Judaizing Teaching Affected Gentiles

We find that this Judaizing teaching was not only in the ascendancy in Palestine, but that its influence in considerable measure affected the Gentiles. St. Paul's Epistle to the Galatians, for instance, shows how many of them, Gentiles by birth, had been misled into believing that whatever blessings they might enjoy through Christ and the original Abrahamic Covenant, they must also become amenable to the Law Covenant. Note that the Apostle's letter to the Galatians is almost exclusively devoted to this subject, and remember that the Galatians were not Hebrews, or, at least, the majority of them were not.

In that epistle he found it necessary to show that he had equal authority with the other apostles as a teacher — that the Galatians might know that he was as well qualified as the others, and as folly authorised to instruct them respecting their obligations; that his word was authoritative; that the Gentiles were not under the Law Covenant, but under the Grace Covenant — the original Abrahamic Covenant. He recounts that he did not get his instruction or his knowledge of the Gospel from the Apostles at Jerusalem, but that, so far as it was concerned, he had under the Lord's Providence been their instructor, rather than they his instructor (Galatians 2:1-14).

### Paul's Argument in Galatians re Law Covenant and Gentiles

Note carefully the Apostle's appeal in Galatians 3. "O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the Truth, before whose eyes (of understanding) Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you? This only would I learn of you, Received ye the spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of Faith?" etc. His entire argument in this chapter is to show that the Law Covenant never was over or binding upon the Gentiles, but only upon the Jews.

He shows also that the Law Covenant, instead of advancing the Jew, condemned him, so that the Jew needed to be specially redeemed from the curse or sentence of that law Covenant, by our Lord's death by crucifixion. Throughout this chapter St. Paul contrasts the law Covenant, from which the Jews were desirous to get free, with the original Abrahamic Covenant, which had only free children. He shows that the Gentiles were received under this Abrahamic Covenant of grace (favour), whose blessings are conferred on a basis of faith and not as a basis of works, as under the Law Covenant.

## **Paul's Argument that Binding Obligations Necessitate Mediator**

St. Paul shows further that the Law Covenant had Moses for a Mediator because that Covenant placed binding obligations of obedience to the law upon all who came under it. But reasons the Apostle, the original Covenant made with Abraham was not so. It imposed no binding obligations and therefore it needed no mediator and had no mediator. "Now a mediator is not a mediator of one, but God is one" (Galatians 3:20). That is to say, a mediator is not necessary to a Covenant in which only one person is bound. In the case of the Abrahamic Covenant this is so: God is the one person bound by that Covenant; hence there is no need of a mediator for that Covenant to see to the faithful performance of the contract. However, as there was no mediator to guarantee a contract or Covenant on God's side, He gave to Abraham and to all who would be of his faith, the best possible guarantee that God did not make the Covenant lightly, in a trifling manner or thoughtlessly; for, in addition to pledging His Word, God gave His oath — that the Covenant was secure, sure, could not fail. It was this that gave Israel such great hope in that Oath-Bound Covenant.

## **Law Covenant Did Good Service to the Jews**

The Apostle proceeds to show that the Law Covenant did a good service for the Jews in that it prepared them and brought them to Christ, the great Teacher; that by hearing His message, His invitation, they might exercise obedient faith, sacrificing faith, and, being baptised into Christ, might put on Christ — become members of His Body. All such, Jew and Gentile, bond or free, male or female, would be members of the one Body, of which Jesus Christ is the Head. This chapter winds up with the forceful statement, "If ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's Seed and heirs according to the promise" (the Covenant made to Abraham).

## **Galatians Not Under Law Covenant**

All this argument was to show the Galatians that, so far from needing to get under the law Covenant, they had no need of it whatever and those who were under it needed to get out from under it, in order to be able by faith to accept Christ as their Redeemer and Justifier, and by faith to consecrate their lives unto death, that they might be acceptable to God as members of the Body of Christ.

## **Paul's Argument Against Error of Getting Under Law Covenant**

The fourth chapter to the Galatians continues the argument, the expostulation against the error of wanting to get under the law Covenant, until, with tears in His pen, the Apostle writes, "My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you, I desire to be present with you now, and to change my voice (to one of utterness), for I stand in doubt of you. Tell me, ye that desire to be under the law (Covenant), do ye not hear the Law?" Do ye not realise its bondage, its impossible exactions? "Behold, I, Paul,

say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing. For I testify again to every man that is circumcised (every Jew), that he is a debtor to do the whole law. Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are (trusting that you are) justified by the Law (Covenant); ye are fallen from grace" (Galatians 4:19-21, 5:2-4).

## **Law Covenant a Burning Question in Early Church**

We have, perhaps, said sufficient to prove that the question of the Law Covenant was a burning question in the early Church, not only with the Hebrews, but also with the Gentiles. It seemed impossible, especially for the former, to learn that the Law Covenant, after having been in force, with all the wonderful paraphernalia of the Jewish dispensation, its laws, its sacrifices, etc. — that it, after all, was not necessary and that a Gentile could really have access to the Abrahamic Covenant through Christ easier than could a Jew.

## **Book of Hebrews Written to Counteract Powerful Error**

It was to counteract the powerful error of that day that St. Paul wrote the Epistle to the Hebrews. It certainly has been a valuable epistle to the Gentiles, but it was written specially to the Hebrews, and because of their tenacious adherence to the law Covenant, from the dominating influence of which they seemed not to be able to free themselves.

## **Book of Hebrews Written to Prove New Dispensation**

The Epistle to the Hebrews was written to prove that a totally new dispensation of Grace, and not of Works, had been ushered in through Jesus at Pentecost. He would have them see that Moses' faithfulness as a servant and Head of a typical priesthood, was inferior to Christ and the Royal Priesthood, of which He is the Head. He would have them see that Moses and his house were types and servants or illustrations of good things to come; but that Christ and His "elect" are sons of God, who will minister the real blessings of the future. He would have them see that there was a Canaan rest to which Moses led the willing and obedient — priests and people of Israel — and that there is a greater rest which remains for the people of God, to which Christ will lead His people; and that those who by faith accept of Christ now may enter by faith into His rest in advance, now, in their hearts.

## **Book of Hebrews Teaches the Coming of a Greater Priesthood**

Noting that the Hebrews were long accustomed to look to the earthly priests and yearly ministrations for the cleansing away of sin, the Apostle calls attention to the fact that the Lord Jesus is the High Priest of a new order of priests and that His Church are those under-priests. Answering their objections that Jesus was not of the tribe of Levi and therefore not entitled to the priesthood, he shows them that God had already foreshown that there would be a new priesthood of a different kind; that Melchizedek was a type of that new priesthood.



He gives the intimation that while Jesus and His Church in the flesh in their sacrificing work were typified by Aaron and his sons, nevertheless the real work of this higher priesthood is a future one of glory when Jesus, the great Priest, and the Church, His Body, an under-priesthood, associated with Him, will be installed in a kingly, as well as a priestly office, and in ruling, as well as teaching authority. These glories of the Christ in the Royal Priesthood of the Millennial Age were not at all represented in Aaron, but were quite well represented in Melchizedek, who was a king at the same time that he was a priest. His greatness was shown, in that Abraham did him homage and paid tithes to him. And since Levi, the Father of the priestly tribe, was in Abraham's loins at the time that the tithes were paid, therefore he and all his sons inferentially paid tithes to Melchizedek and thus the Melchizedek order of priesthood was recognised as higher than the Aaronic.

### **Jesus a Priest Before He Came Into the World**

With this foundation for his subject the Apostle (Hebrews 7:18-22) points out that it evidently was not God's intention to allow the Law Covenant to stand perpetually, nor to allow its priestly arrangements to continue forever. He proceeds to show that prophetically Jesus was made a priest by Divine appointment long before He came into the world — that God said of Him, "I have sworn and will not repent, thou art a priest for the age after the order of Melchizedek" (Hebrews 7: 21) — not after the order of Aaron. This oath shows that the priesthood of Jesus was superior to the priesthood of Aaron which was established without any Divine Covenant of this kind.

"By this much was Jesus made a surety of a better testament or Covenant." That is to say, the fact that God by His oath had recognised this higher order of priesthood particularly implied that in due time a New Covenant would supplant the Law Covenant, which the Hebrews felt must be perpetual.

### **Not Paul's Argument that New Covenant Had Been Established**

The Apostle does not argue that the New Covenant had been established, nor that the new priesthood had been established in its office of combined kingship and priesthood. He merely points to the fact that such a New Covenant is assured by God's promise, which implied the doing away with the Law Covenant and its priesthood, and the introduction of a better one. He proceeds to show that Israel and the world needed a higher order of priesthood than the Aaronic to inaugurate the reign of righteousness under the New Covenant. He points to the two sacrifices of Lev.16, and intimates that our Lord will fulfil that Day of Atonement type by two offerings; first, for His own sins (not for His individual sins, for He had none), but for the sins of those accepted during this Gospel Age as the under priesthood, the "members of His Body"; and then later a second sacrifice for the sins of the people — the world in general.

### **When Christ and Church Were Offered in Sacrifice**

He tells us that the typical work of Atonement by the Levitical priest repeated this Atonement work every year (on the Atonement Day), but that our great Priest does it once for all time in the great antitypical Day of Atonement, in which He offers up Himself — first individually, and secondly His members, collectively. In this connection we are to remember that as Christ offered Himself in sacrifice at Jordan, and not at Calvary, so also, He offered His Body, the Church, collectively in sacrifice at Pentecost. As the laying down of the life of the man Christ Jesus proceeded through three and a half years, and was finished at Calvary, so likewise the laying down of the life of the Church has proceeded since Pentecost, and it will not be finished until the last member of the Body shall have suffered with Him — been faithful even unto death.

### **Sacrificing Only Figuratively Finished When Paul Wrote Hebrews**

This was shown in the type; for, after the priest had sprinkled the blood of the bullock, he appeared at the door of the tabernacle and laid his hands (power) upon the head of the lord's goat (which represented His consecrated Church) and slew it. We see, then, how this entire work of sacrificing may have been said to have been accomplished at the time when St. Paul wrote the Book of Hebrews. The Apostle does not proceed to tell of the consummation of this Gospel Age but drops the matter here by showing the two sacrifices performed. That he does wish us to understand that the second sacrifice of Atonement that was offered at Pentecost is evidenced by the fact that he speaks of the Church as under-priests in the Holy, enjoying the light of the Golden candlestick, the table of shewbread and the golden altar privileges, and waiting until the testings shall have been completed and we shall have passed beyond the vail, even into heaven itself, where the blood of this second sacrifice of Christ will then be offered in the propitiatory on behalf of the world.

### **Mediator of a Better Testament**

Hebrews 8 opens with the words, "Now of the things which we have spoken this is the sum: We have a high Priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens; a minister (servant) of the sanctuary and of the true tabernacle." Verses 3-5 show that the sacrificial work already referred to was a necessity before he could enter the still higher work of distributing to Israel and the world the blessings of God's favour secured by the "better sacrifices." The glorious High Priest in heaven has a more exalted service (ministry) than the earthly priests, and, accordingly, He is the Mediator of a better Covenant or Testament than the law Covenant. The Apostle is here showing that our lord's sacrificial work needs not to be continued throughout eternity; but that He has been exalted to the heavenly plane, and has another work to accomplish, namely, as the Mediator of a better Covenant than the Law Covenant. He is trying to get their minds away from the thought that they are under

the law Covenant. If he can convince them that Christ is the antitype of Moses and the antitype of Aaron, he will thus convince them that there must be a higher Covenant and arrangement for the blessing of the world than the law Covenant in which they were trusting and which they considered indispensable. The remaining verses of the chapter and Jeremiah 31:31 show that such a better Covenant was in contemplation.

### **Paul and Hebrew Christians re New Covenant**

Neither St. Paul nor the Hebrew Christians at Jerusalem and elsewhere to whom he wrote the epistle, had any thought that they were living under the provisions of the New Covenant. As he shows in Chapter 6:19,20, they were all hoping in the Abrahamic Covenant: but some of them had the erroneous thought that they additionally needed the law Covenant and that it would be perpetual. St. Paul's argument is that God never intended it to be perpetual, but merely to prevail for a time as a schooling until Christ should come as the antitype of Isaac—the antitypical heir of the Abrahamic Covenant. He now shows that The Christ is in due time to be the Mediator of the New Covenant with Israel as a proof that their old law Covenant was not intended to last forever. Why should they be trusting in the old law Covenant, when God distinctly tells that “after those days He will make a New Covenant with the house of Israel,” and that Messiah (with His members now being selected) is to be the Mediator of that New Covenant, and is merely waiting for the completion of the Church to finish all the ministration necessary to put that Covenant into operation — the blessing of Israel and all the families of the earth?

### **Paul's Contrast of Typical and Antitypical Arrangements**

Chapter 9 contrasts the typical arrangements made for the service of the law Covenant and the making of its blessings effective to Israel, with the arrangements for the service of the New Covenant to make its blessings effective to Israel and all people who shall eventually avail themselves of its privileges. All the paraphernalia of the Tabernacle and the work incidental to the typical sacrificing were so much necessary to the putting of that law Covenant into effective operation for all the people of Israel. And similarly, on a spiritual plane, there are antitypes, including better sacrifices, all of which are incidental to the putting of the New Covenant into operation for Israel and that all mankind may avail themselves of its privileges. The antitypical priest has appeared — “Christ being come a High Priest of good things to come.” Those future good things represent the glorification of the Body of Christ, the blessing of Israel and all the families of the earth.

### **Dead Works of the Law vs. Blood of Christ**

All those blessings on a higher plane are abundantly provided for in God's arrangement. For if the typical

arrangements of the law Covenant needed a cleansing from sin by blood, and if the blood of bulls and goats, etc., typically accomplished this, how much more full of value should we esteem the sacrifice of Christ — how much more able to purify our consciences? Shall we not esteem the blood of Christ aside from the law Covenant sufficient for our sins? And, as believers in His merit, shall we not conscientiously drop dead works of the law Covenant and trust to something higher, even to the merit of the antitypical High Priest? It is for this cause, or to this end, that He is the Mediator of the New Covenant, so that eventually all Hebrews condemned to death under the law Covenant may be released from it as in Romans 11:27 he declares will be the case as soon as the elect, the Body of the great Deliverer, the great Mediator, the great Priest, shall have been completed.

### **Hebrews Nine Shows Special Work of Christ on Behalf of Jews**

In Hebrews 9:15 St. Paul shows that there is a special work of Christ on behalf of the Jews: they being under the death sentence of the law Covenant, Christ's death on the tree was necessary for them, because that was the special “curse” of the law. Thus, a basis is laid, whereby all the transgressions of the Hebrews under the law Covenant may be fully cancelled, under the provisions of the New Covenant when it shall become effective (Romans 11:27). Not only so, but this special redemption of the Hebrews enabled those called of God from that nation during this Gospel Age to receive a share in the promise of the eternal inheritance — as members of Christ under the original Abrahamic Covenant.

### **Death of Victim before Ratification of New Covenant**

Then follows a statement of the general principle — that where a Will or Testament is made, the death of the testator is implied, and only after the death of the testator could its blessings be enjoyed. Our lord having earned a right to human perfection and human life by obedience to the Law Covenant conditions, laid down those earthly rights in sacrifice, in harmony with the Father's will. And, when raised from the dead a New Creature of the Divine Nature, He possessed those earthly rights which He laid down as a ransom price for mankind, with the right to dispose of them. His Testament or Will disposing of those earthly rights could have been so made as to give them at once to fleshly Israel by sealing for them the promised New Covenant. But instead the Testator gave those earthly blessings to the household of faith, those called out from the nominal Jewish Church during and after His earthly ministry, and to “us” of the Gentiles since, on condition that they join in His sacrifice, “suffer with Him,” “be dead with Him,” participate with Him in the glorious privileges of the Abrahamic Covenant provision.



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## The Day of Pentecost

*“And when the day of Pentecost was now come, they were all together in one place.  
And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit” (Acts 2:1,4 ASV).*

Pentecost has been observed as a religious holy day by Christians for centuries. It is held in remembrance of the begetting of the Holy Spirit which came upon Jesus’ disciples as recorded in our opening text. The word Pentecost is derived from a Greek word meaning “the fiftieth day” and has as its origin Israel’s Feast of Harvest. This year the Jewish feast, and the day of Pentecost which it prefigured, will be commemorated on the eighteenth day of May, according to Hebrew reckoning.

The principal feature of the Feast of Harvest was the waving of two bread loaves before Jehovah. These loaves were made from the early fruitage of the spring grain harvest. Fifty days earlier, on the 16th day of the month Nisan, a “sheaf,” or handful, of ripe grain was waved before Jehovah. It was unbaked, and consisted of the very first pure, uncontaminated kernels of grain which had been harvested.

The instructions regarding the waving of the sheaf and the Feast of Harvest are recorded in Leviticus 23:10,11,15-17: “Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye be come into the land which I give unto you, and shall reap the harvest thereof, then ye shall bring a sheaf of the firstfruits of your harvest unto the priest: And he shall wave the sheaf before Jehovah, to be accepted for you: on the morrow after the sabbath the priest shall wave it. And ye shall count unto you from the morrow after the sabbath, from the day that ye brought the sheaf of the wave offering; seven sabbaths shall be complete: Even unto the morrow after the seventh sabbath shall ye number fifty days; and ye shall offer a new meat [grain] offering unto Jehovah. Ye shall bring out of your habitations two wave loaves of two tenth deals: they shall be of fine flour; they shall be baked with leaven; they are the firstfruits unto Jehovah.”

The marvelous fulfillment of this picture centers in Jesus. As the antitypical slain Passover Lamb, he died

on the cross on the 14th of Nisan (Isaiah 53:6,7, John 1:29, 1 Corinthians 5:7). He was placed in the tomb before sundown the same day, and lay there all the next day, which was the Sabbath. In the early morning of the 16th of Nisan, the third day, Jesus was resurrected by the mighty power of God (Matthew 28:1-6, Luke 24:1-7). Thus, the same day that Israel’s priest was waving the sheaf of grain in the temple, the fulfillment of that picture had taken place — the resurrection of Jesus. He was, as Paul later states, the “firstfruits” of those who “slept” in death (1 Corinthians 15:20).

Since the Jewish Feast of Harvest was a celebration of the firstfruits of their grain harvest, the “sheaf of the firstfruits” was considered a part of the harvest. This is shown to be true, because the date of the feast was reckoned by counting fifty days from the day the sheaf was waved before Jehovah by Israel’s priest. Similarly, in its greater fulfillment, the fifty days until Pentecost was measured from the resurrection of Jesus.

Beginning at Pentecost, and throughout the present Gospel Age, the Heavenly Father has been seeking those from every nation, kindred and tongue who will faithfully walk in the footsteps of Jesus, and thereby be counted as part of the “firstfruits” unto God. The “two wave loaves” of the Jewish feast,

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which were prepared from flour made from the grain of the new crop, picture this firstfruits class. Thus, spirit-begotten followers of Jesus since Pentecost are the first to benefit from his death and resurrection. They have, as Paul says, “the firstfruits of the Spirit” (Romans 8:23).

The instruction given to Israel was that the two loaves were to be baked with leaven. Leaven is used in the Bible to represent sin (Luke 12:1, 1 Corinthians 5:6-8). Taking these two things into account, we see that the prospective members of the spiritual firstfruits are selected from the world while still under the effects of sin. However, they become acceptable as an offering to God because the sheaf of grain, Christ Jesus, was offered first, covering their sinful Adamic nature.

### The Day of Pentecost

In Acts 1:1-3 we read that Jesus had been seen by the apostles on various occasions for a period of forty days following his resurrection. Now he was assembled together with them one final time. He instructed them not to depart from Jerusalem, but “wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me. For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days hence” (verses 4,5, Mark 1:6-8). Jesus then ascended to heaven, and the eleven apostles, following his instructions, waited together at Jerusalem. Ten days later, on Israel’s feast day — the “day of Pentecost” — we have recorded the words of our opening text. The record says that upon receiving the Holy Spirit, the apostles “began to speak with other tongues,” or languages. This was evidence that the promise of the Heavenly Father, the Holy Spirit, had indeed been fulfilled.

Since this was one of Israel’s feast days, there was a multitude of Jews gathered from many regions, and who spoke various languages. When they realized that the apostles were addressing them so that each understood in his own language, they were amazed (Acts 2:5-12). Some, realizing that the apostles were not learned men, but fishermen and the like, accused them of being drunk with wine. Peter stood up, however, saying that none of them were drunken, but rather the words of the prophet Joel were being fulfilled. Quoting from Joel’s prophecy, Peter said, “And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams. And on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy” (verses 13-18, Joel 2:28-32).

This fulfilment of Joel’s prophecy related to the development of the firstfruits class during the Gospel Age. As of yet, Peter’s hearers knew nothing about the operation of the Holy Spirit as it was to affect the lives of the footstep followers of Jesus. The



*The Day of Pentecost*

only experience that they could relate to was with the prophets of Israel. God had dealt with them, in conveying his message and instructions, by visions and dreams. Therefore, that is how Jehovah instructed Joel to describe his dealings with the spirit-begotten during the Gospel Age. Peter’s words signified just the beginning of the fulfillment of this wonderful prophecy. Its full accomplishment will be in Christ’s kingdom, when God’s spirit will be poured out upon the remainder of mankind — “all flesh.”

The enlightening effect of the Holy Spirit upon the mind was immediately evident in the Apostle Peter. He was one of those who just ten days before had indicated by the question to Jesus concerning the establishment of the kingdom that he believed it should start at that time (Acts 1:6). The Holy Spirit had now enabled him to understand that there was a great work to be done before the Messianic kingdom would begin. This new insight was revealed in his interpretation of the prophecy by Joel and by the balance of his wonderful sermons recorded in the second and third chapters of the Book of Acts.

### Comfort, Teacher, and Guide

The night before he died, Jesus promised the apostles: “The Holy Spirit whom the Father will send at my request, will teach you everything, and will bring to your memories all that I have said to you” (John 14:26, *Weymouth New Testament*). An apostle had to be one who had been with Jesus, hearing his words and observing his every action — the one exception being Paul, who later was given special visions and revelations to accomplish this purpose. It was because of the fulfillment of Jesus’ promise concerning the Holy Spirit and its enlightening influence, starting at Pentecost, that the New Testament record of the apostles and other writers could be provided in an accurate and harmonious form. Otherwise much would have been lost.

In the last hours of his life Jesus desired to comfort his followers before his departure, and so in a very general way he told them something of the Holy Spirit. He said that after he went away he would ask the Father to send them a “Comforter,” the “Spirit of truth.” It would be a power that would not be discernible by the world, but they would know that they had it because its influence would be upon them and dwell in them. The Spirit of truth, Jesus also said, would guide them “into all truth” (John 14:16,17, 16:13). The thought was that after the Holy Spirit came upon them, they would be able to receive a complete knowledge and understanding of God’s plans and purposes.

In John 15:15 Jesus explained that because of the enlightenment to come by means of the Holy Spirit, he could make known to them everything he had heard from the Father. This would mean a change had taken place in their status. They would no longer be considered servants, because a servant does not know what his master is doing. Rather, they would be friends, or associates, and as Paul later says, sons of God. “For, as many as by God’s Spirit are being led, the same, are God’s sons, — For ye have not received a spirit of servitude, leading back into fear, but ye have received a spirit of sonship, whereby we are exclaiming — Abba! Oh Father!” (Romans 8:14,15, *Rotherham Emphasized Bible*)

Paul continues, saying that these “sons” are prospective “heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ,” if they suffer with him. (vs. 17) Jesus had indicated this to the apostles prior to his death, saying that because of this close relationship to him and the Father, they would suffer persecution, just as he had suffered (John 16:1-3).

## Baptized with the Holy Spirit

John the Baptist, in identifying the start of Jesus’ earthly ministry, stated, “He that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Spirit.” (John 1:33) Jesus was the first to receive this baptism of the Holy Spirit, and being found faithful, he became the instrument by whom it would then come to his footstep followers. On the day of Pentecost, Peter thus testified: “This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear” (Acts 2:32,33).

We are aware of the change that came upon Jesus after he was bap-

tized with the Holy Spirit. In Matthew 3:16 we read: “Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him.” The thought seems to be that then all the hidden things of God’s Word began to be revealed to him. Assuredly, Jesus, with his perfect mind, knew the Scriptures. However, there were many hidden things in the prophecies and shadows of the Old Testament that were not to be revealed until the proper time.

The 40th Psalm is a prophecy about Jesus at this time in his life. Verse 6 reads as follows: “Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire; mine ears hast thou opened: burnt offering and sin offering has thou not required.” The key thought in this verse is that Jesus’ ears were opened. In other words, he was able to both hear and understand things that were not known by him before. This information included the many details of God’s plan for the redemption and reconciliation of the world of mankind and his part in it. We also believe that Jesus then understood that there would be associates with him who would share in his sufferings and his glory. The first of these were his chosen apostles, to whom he promised to send the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit has had an enlightening effect upon the church throughout the Gospel Age. The Apostle Paul describes it as the “earnest,” or pledge, of our inheritance (Ephesians 1:14). The Holy Spirit enables us to know and appreciate our relationship to the Heavenly Father.

It also makes possible our knowledge of the privilege and responsibilities of sonship. The Apostle Paul stated, “Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God” (1 Corinthians 2:12). It is a knowledge of these things that enables us to walk more fully in the footsteps of Jesus.



*Baptized with the Holy Spirit*

## A New Age Begun

From the standpoint of the day of Pentecost being an event to be remembered, the following points should be considered. The work that was started that day marked the beginning of a new age — the Gospel Age. From this point the Holy Spirit was to be engaged in a work that had never been done before — the development of a New Creation that would have the potential of being like God himself. The apostle wrote: “Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new” (2 Corinthians 5:17).

We recognize, from the standpoint of God's covenants, that the Abrahamic Covenant and its promises had lain dormant for many centuries. During this time the Law Covenant was added, "till the seed should come to whom the promise was made" (Galatians 3:19). In verse 16 of this same passage we read: "Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ." The death and resurrection of Christ, the promised seed, activated the Abrahamic Covenant and supplanted the Law Covenant, which had served as a "schoolmaster" to lead God's chosen people, Israel, to Christ (verses 24, 25). Finally, in verses 26-29, we learn that Christ, the seed class, is to be composed

of many members, both Jews and Gentiles, and that all the true footstep followers of Jesus are "children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ."

Thus we understand that the day of Pentecost marked the beginning of the development of those who would, along with Christ Jesus, be inheritors of the heavenly phase of the kingdom. The Holy Spirit cannot be poured out on the rest of mankind until the work of completing the Christ, the firstfruits class, is ended. Then will come that glorious time when the Messianic kingdom will be established, and God's laws will be obeyed "in earth" as they are "in heaven" (Matthew 6:10).

## The Lesson of Forgiveness

*"Forgive us our sins; for we ourselves also forgive every one that is indebted to us"*  
(Luke 11:4 ASV).

When our family goes traveling, we select a book and my wife, Sr. Jan, reads to us during the driving portions of the trip. For a recent trip, our son Eric requested that Jan read the third book in **Br. Eugene Burns'** "Alive Again" series. That volume is entitled, *Fingers Stained with Evil*.

The book begins with the raising to life of Tomas de Torquemada (1420-1498). During the Spanish Inquisition of the late 15th century, he served as the Grand Inquisitor of Spain from 1483 until his death. He put hundreds, if not thousands, of people to death by burning or hanging for heresy. He confiscated all the property of the families of those he executed, so that many spouses and children also died from homelessness and starvation.

In **Br. Eugene's** story, during the resurrection, Torquemada meets several of his victims, who tell him that what he did to them and their families was unforgivable.

In recent years, as victims of crime have been given the opportunity to speak at the sentencing hearing of those who have been convicted of the crime, we often hear them say that what was done to them is unforgivable. We can all grasp why victims, or families of victims, would feel that way.

But there are notable exceptions to this pattern. Some victims, and their families, instead choose to describe the awful impacts the crime has had upon them, and then tell the offender that they forgive them. These exceptions are powerful testimonies to the transforming power of love and its expression through forgiveness.

On February 1, 2020, the unimaginable happened, an alleged drunk driver in a SUV mounted the footpath and struck seven children who had been walking to

buy ice creams. Four children were killed, and one seriously injured. The Three siblings aged between nine and thirteen were killed along with their eleven-year-old cousin. Two other children suffered minor injuries.

To many who came to leave notes, flowers and toys at the crash site, the fact that he was drunk (three times over the limit) and was found to also have cocaine and MDMA in his system meant that this was an unforgivable sin. However just days after the accident the mother Leila made the following statement.

"The guy, I know he was drunk, driving on this street. Right now, I can't hate him. I don't want to see him, I don't hate him," she said. "I think in my heart, I forgive him, but I want the court to be fair. It's all about fairness. I'm not going to hate him, because that's not who we are."

For many that would have been the end of the matter, let justice take its course. But for the parents of the children lost they wanted to do more. On December 31, 2020 the two sets of parents, plus the surviving siblings came together to launch "i4give Day". The father of the three children, a practicing Christian, stated:

"My days are empty. My heart is aching. Tears of hopelessness visit me each day. I am dying on the inside and it's hard to take much more. However, I faced a choice, the choice that I want you all to comprehend. What path do I take? The path of destruction or the path of construction? I chose to seek my refuge in my strength. I chose to obey my father in heaven and forgive. There is power in forgiveness. It is a sign of strength. Forgiveness



gives you freedom and allows you to live your life peacefully.”

As Christians, we know how important and central the concept of forgiveness is to God’s plan of ransom and restitution. We know how much we have been forgiven, and we clearly know that learning to forgive others is an absolutely essential element of our character if the doors of heaven are to be opened to us.

Forgiveness is not always easy as sometimes the ones that injure us either physically or mentally do not do it only once. The Jews had a tradition to forgive someone three times and no more. The Apostle Peter was sure that he had lifted the bar high with his statement “Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him? Up to seven times?” We can imagine Peter’s surprise when Jesus answered “I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven (Matthew 18:21-22 NASB).

**Ellis J. Crum** penned a hymn opening with, “Jesus paid a debt he did not owe, because we owed a debt we could not pay.” This is portrayed in the Parable of the Two Debtors “For this reason the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his slaves. “When he had begun to settle them, one who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him. “But since he did not have the means to repay, his lord commanded him to be sold, along with his wife and children and all that he had, and repayment to be made. “So, the slave fell to the ground and prostrated himself before him, saying, ‘Have patience with me and I will repay you everything.’ And the lord of that slave felt compassion and released him and forgave him the debt. But that slave went out and found one of his fellow slaves who owed him a hundred denarii; and he seized him and began to choke him, saying, ‘Pay back what you owe.’ So his fellow slave fell to the ground and began to plead with him, saying, ‘Have patience with me and I will repay you.’ But he was unwilling and went and threw him in prison until he should pay back what was owed” (Matthew 18:23-30 NASB). The result of the failure to forgive by the servant is shown with the lesson for us “And his lord, moved with anger, handed him over to the torturers until he should repay all that was owed him. My heavenly Father will also do the same to you, if each of you does not forgive his brother from your



Ellis J. Crum

heart” (Matthew 18:34-35 NASB).

**But are there some things that are unforgivable?**<sup>1</sup> The pages of human history are filled with stories of unbelievable violence against one another accompanied with unbelievable suffering. Humanity’s social and political history is replete with stories of betrayal, oppression, neglect, and hatred.

Despite the magnitude of these injustices, that mankind has perpetrated on mankind, God does not regard these as unforgivable. Our challenge as Christians is to take God’s perspective in such matters, and then act accordingly. It matters not whether the offense was done by someone within our fellowship or someone in the world.

As the peoples of this world have become more divided on many levels-racially, economically, politically, religiously, we must remember that as individuals, following Christian principles, we can rise above and bridge those divides by following the pathway of forgiveness.

Our God’s justice is restorative, not retributive. His entire plan for humanity is designed to bring about a restoration of the relationship He wishes to have with His creation and a restoration of the relationships He intended people to have with each other. The most powerful part of that plan is the forgiveness of sin, hurts, and offenses made possible by the atoning sacrifice of Jesus.

As we seek to live godly lives, we should be gaining a perspective of ourselves and others like God’s perspective. We can no longer be satisfied with looking at others the way the world looks at them, to judge them as the world judges them. We must have the “higher perspective” that sees the human dignity of every individual — a perspective that looks beyond the sins and failings of their human nature. And then we must live our lives in accordance with this higher perspective. We must forgive ourselves and others for not being perfect.

Returning to the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus said, “Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy” (Matthew 5:7). How much we each need God’s mercy! American author Max Lucado wrote, “Relationships don’t thrive because the guilty are punished, but because the innocent are merciful.”

Jesus also said, “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God” (Matthew 5:9).

(1) During the Gospel Age only the Church is under divine judgement and this judgement is with the Heavenly Father. The criterion for God not to forgive someone is set out in Hebrews “For if we go on deliberately and willingly sinning after once acquiring the knowledge of the Truth, there is no longer any sacrifice left to atone for [our] sins [no further offering to which

to look forward] (Hebrews 10:26 AMPC). One important aspect is the meaning of the word ‘knowledge,’ from the Greek word *epignosis*, meaning precise and correct knowledge.

At the end of the Millennial Age those who decide to follow Satan will be subject to second death from which there is no forgiveness (Revelation 20:14-15, Revelation 21:8).

The Message paraphrase renders it this way: “You’re blessed when you can show people how to cooperate instead of compete or fight. That is when you discover who you really are, and your place in God’s family.”

The Apostle Paul wrote, “If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone” (Romans 12:18). As far as it depends on us. How far are we willing to go to live peacefully with others? Are we willing to forgive them any and all offenses they have committed toward us or others? God our Saviour has shown us that He is willing “who desires all men to be saved and to come to the (accurate) knowledge of the truth (1 Timothy 2:4 NASB).

What perspectives can help us find the strength to forgive others, even when the harm they have done to us is great?

- **Acknowledging our own imperfections** and refusing to make comparisons between ourselves and the offender. The Apostle Paul confessed that he was not aware of any accusations that could be made against him, but quickly acknowledged that that did not mean he was perfect. “My conscience is clear, but that does not make me innocent” (1 Corinthians 4:4). “All of us have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23).

- **Consider how much God has forgiven us**, and He did it before we even asked for it. Jesus came and paid the penalty. “God demonstrates his own love for us in this: while we were still sinners, Christ died for us” (Romans 5:8).

- **Separate the sin from the sinner in your mind** to the best of your ability. Try to think about the positive value the offender may have as a person now, or at least the person he or she can become in God’s kingdom. “Each of us is more than the worst thing we’ve ever done” (Bryan Stevenson).

- **Remember Jesus died to save the offender too**, just as he did for you.

- **Jesus prayed for God to forgive those who were crucifying him.** Stephen asked God to forgive those who were stoning him.

- **Remember the Permission of Evil** is part of God’s Plan.

- **Realize what the offender did was not about you** (even if directed at you). It was about him or her—their feelings, their anger, their emotions, their needs, as perverse or evil as those may have been. Jesus warned us that at the end of the age, “Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will

grow cold” (Matthew 24:12). When we are insulted or hurt, we can choose to respond with grace and forgiveness. “Grace is when somebody hurts you and you try to understand their situation instead of trying to hurt them back” (author unknown).

Forgiving is not something we do for someone else (although truly repentant offenders may need our forgiveness to heal from their guilt and shame). Forgiving is primarily something we do for ourselves so that our lives are not tied to the injuries and pain of past experiences. Let us follow the advice of the Lord Jesus and the Apostle Paul.

“Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you” (Ephesians 4:31-32).

“So, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience; bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you” (Colossians 3:12-13).



Br. Eugene Burns, “Alive Again” author

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He paid a debt he did not owe,  
I owed a debt I could not pay,  
I needed someone to wash my sins away;  
And now I sing a brand new song,  
Amazing grace all day long,  
Christ Jesus paid a debt  
That I could never pay.

He paid a debt at calvary,  
He cleansed my soul and set me free,  
I’m glad that Jesus did all my sins erase.  
I now can sing a brand new song,  
Amazing grace all day long,  
Christ Jesus paid a debt  
That I could never pay.

One day he’s coming back for me,  
To live with him eternally,  
Won’t it be glory to see him on that day!  
I then will sing a brand new song,  
Amazing grace all day long  
Christ Jesus paid a debt  
That I could never pay.

Ellis J. Crum

# “God’s Great Mercy”

*“Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy” (Matthew 5:7).*

One of the most soulful books of the Bible is the book of Lamentations. It was written, we believe, by the prophet Jeremiah. In the book we see the broken heart-felt cry of one who is crying over the loss of the soul of Israel. The prophet witnessed the destruction of Jerusalem and its aftermath in 586 BC.

The author alternates between horrifying accounts of the destruction of the city and the sufferings of its inhabitants, descriptions and confessions of the sins which caused it, appeals for divine help, and the holding out of hope because of God’s great mercy. We will break this book down into the five chapters that are recorded and reveal the tragedy that followed! The following punishments were prophesied as far back as Deuteronomy chapter 28 verses 14-20, “And do not turn aside from any of the words which I command you today, to the right or the left, to go after other gods to serve them.

“But it shall come about, if you will not obey the Lord your God, to observe to do all His commandments and His statutes with which I charge you today, that all these curses shall come upon you, and overtake you. Cursed shall you be in the city and cursed shall you be in the country. Cursed shall be your basket and your kneading bowl. Cursed shall be the offspring of your body and the produce of the ground, the increase of your herd and the young of your flock. Cursed shall you be when you come in and cursed shall you be when you go out. The Lord will send upon you curses, confusion and rebuke, in all you undertake to do, until you are destroyed and until you perish quickly, on account of the evil of your deeds, because you have forsaken Me.”

## Lamentations

Lamentations 1:1,2: “How lonely sits the city that was full of people! She has become like a widow who was once great among the nations! She who was a princess among the provinces has become a forced laborer! She weeps bitterly in the night, and her tears are on her cheeks; she has none to comfort her among all her lovers. All her friends have dealt treacherously with her; they have become her enemies.”

Sounds very similar to how Israel will be treated at the end of this age! To help outline in our minds how this story unfolds, we suggest the following. The first lament pictures Jerusalem desolate as a result of Nebuchadnezzar’s destruction of the city. In chapter two it clarifies the cause of the desolation and resulting captivity. Chapter three stresses the purpose of Judah’s

plight. In chapter four it focuses on Jerusalem’s past and present condition. And finally, in five we read of the prayer appealing to Jehovah for mercy.

We must not forget that God is the central figure in this book, not Jeremiah, or the Judahites. This book is a revelation of God, as is every book in the Bible. The aspect of God’s character that shines through the book from the beginning to the end is His sorrow. Sin and apostasy not only result in inevitable discipline for people, but they cause God great pain. He does not enjoy punishing His people for their unfaithfulness.

In this book of Jeremiah, we sense the heartbreak of God Himself. We can also see foreshadows of Jesus Christ’s heartbreak over rebels against God, which come through strongly in the Gospels, where Jesus’ heartbreak recalls the sentiments that Jeremiah expressed in Lamentations. We read of this in Matthew 2:17,18. “That which was spoken through Jeremiah the prophet was fulfilled, saying ‘A voice was heard in Ramah, weeping and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children; and she refused to be comforted because they were no more.’”

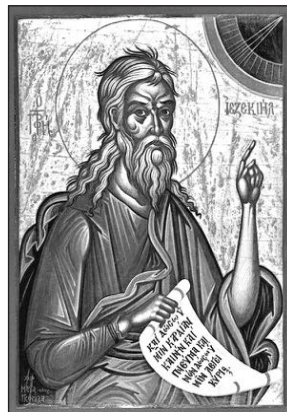
## The Book of Jeremiah

The book of Jeremiah contains many warnings about the judgments that would come, whereas the book of Lamentations contains much mourning over the judgment that had come. The fall of Jerusalem is the focus of both books. There is an old expression, “How did we get here?”

Chapter 1 explains how. Israel had unfaithful ministers who gave unsound advice to the people. In Isaiah 56:10-12 we read, His watchmen are blind all of them know nothing, all of them are dumb dogs unable to bark, dreamers lying down, who love to slumber; And the dogs are greedy, they are not satisfied. And they are the shepherds who have no understanding; they have all turned to their own way, each one to his unjust gain, to the last one. “Come, they say let us get wine, and drink heavily of strong drink; and tomorrow will be like today, only more so.”

## Ezekiel

There are many references to the term “Watchman” in scripture, but none as descriptive as the one found in the book of Ezekiel concerning the fall of Israel, Chapter 33:1-16. These words of Ezekiel are a powerful witness against Israel, showing why they will be judged, and judged severely by God. “The word of the Lord came to me saying, “Son of man, speak to the sons of your people, and say to them: If I bring a sword upon a land, and



Ezekiel





*The sin of Jeroboam*

the people of the land take one man from among them and make him their watchman and he sees the sword coming upon the land, and he blows on the trumpet and warns the people, then he who hears the sound of the trumpet, but did not take warning; his blood will be on himself. But had he taken the warning; he would have delivered his life. But if the watchman sees the sword coming and does not blow the trumpet, and the people are not warned, and a sword comes and takes a person from them, he is taken away in his iniquity; but his blood will I require from the watchman's hand. Now as for you, son of man, I have appointed you a watchman for the house of Israel; so you will hear a message from My mouth, and give them a warning from Me. When I say to the wicked, O wicked man, you shall surely die, and you do not speak to warn the wicked of his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity, but his blood I will require from your hand. But you on your part warn a wicked man to turn from his way, and he does not turn from his way, he will die in his iniquity; but you have delivered your life."

### **King Jeroboam**

So, we begin to see the seriousness of the iniquity of Israel over the past several thousand years, when they did not listen to God's words. For example, 1 Kings 14:10, "Therefore behold I am bringing calamity on the house of Jeroboam and will cut off from Jeroboam every male person, both bond and free in Israel, and I will make a clean sweep of the house of Jeroboam, as one sweeps away dung until it is gone." Why does God tell them this? The answer lies in the 15th verse, "For the Lord will strike Israel, as a reed is shaken in the water; and He will uproot Israel from this good land which He gave to their fathers, and will scatter them beyond the Euphrates River, because they have made their Asherim, provoking the Lord to anger." The Asherim were cult objects that were used in the worship of the fertility goddess Asherah.

### **King Hoshea**

In the reign of Hoshea king of Judah much evil was committed and done in the sight of the Lord. 2 Kings 17:17-19, "Then they made their sons and their daughters pass through the fire, and practiced divinations and enhancements, and sold themselves

to do evil in the sight of the Lord, provoking Him. So the Lord was very angry with Israel and removed them from His sight; none was left except the tribe of Judah. Also Judah did not keep the commandments of the Lord their God, but walked in the customs which Israel had introduced."

Why had Israel done these terrible things after receiving so many blessings from Jehovah? In 17:7 we have a picture of their great fall, which is common even unto this day, verses 7-11, "The falling came about because the sons of Israel had sinned against the Lord their God, who had brought them up from the land of Egypt from under the hand of Pharaoh, king of Egypt, and they had feared other gods and walked in the customs of the nations whom the Lord had driven out before the sons of Israel, and in the customs of the kings of Israel which they had introduced. And the sons of Israel did things secretly which were not right, against the Lord their God. They burned incense on all the high places as the nations did which the Lord had carried away to exile before them; and they did evil things provoking the Lord."

Today, have any of the Christian nations done any different than Israel did in the past, no, and that is why they will be judged severely at the end of this age! We are horrified when we read all the things Israel endured, but we must remember they had walked somewhat in the light and witnessed the miracles of God personally!

### **Jeremiah Chapter Two**

In chapter two the wrath that came upon Israel which had been foretold in Deuteronomy verse one; "How the Lord has covered the daughter of Zion with a cloud in His anger! He has cast from heaven to earth the glory of Israel and has not remembered His footstool in the days of His anger." The reference to the footstool is found in 1 Chronicles 28:2 as are the words of King David. "Then King David rose to his feet and said, listen to me, my brethren and my people; I had intended to build a permanent home for the ark of the covenant of the Lord and for the footstool of our God. So I had made preparations to build it." Returning to Lamentations verse 2-3, "The Lord has swallowed up; He has not spared all the habitations of Jacob. In His wrath He has thrown down the strongholds of the daughter of Judah; He has brought them down to the ground, He has profaned the kingdom and its princes. In fierce anger He has cut off all the strength of Israel."

This condemnation that fell on Israel in ages past is to be replayed in the closing end of this age, and possibly beyond. The book of Hebrews chapter 10 verses 28-31 read, "Anyone who has set aside the Law of Moses dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. How much severer punishment do you think he will deserve who has trampled underfoot the Son of God and has regarded as unclean the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has

insulted the Spirit of grace? For we know Him who said, Vengeance is Mine, I will repay. And again, The Lord will judge His people. It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God.”

There are several truths worthy of consideration here, First, the Old Testament was divinely designed to consist of carnal ordinances. Hebrews 9 verses 10-12 refer to the old and the new way, “Since they only relate to food and drink and various washings, regulations for the body imposed until a time of reformation. But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things to come, He entered through the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this creation, and not through the blood of goats and calves, but through His own blood, He entered the holy place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption”, Secondly we see that God can and does work through ungodly nations to bring about His will, as shown with Nebuchadnezzar’s razing of Jerusalem!

### Jeremiah Chapter Three

Chapter three of this lament is the mountain peak of the book. Here Jeremiah bares his heart, as he frequently does in prophecy. His life was one long martyrdom, in which he served as both judge and intercessor for people bent on their own destruction. Jeremiah never loses complete hope as he says, “Jehovah is my portion” He begins chapter three by these words, “I am a man who has seen affliction because of the rod of His wrath. He has made me walk in darkness and not in light. Surely against me He has turned His hand. He has broken my teeth with gravel; He has made me cower in the dust, and my soul has been rejected from peace; I have forgotten happiness.”

There are three poetical books in the Old Testament that deal primarily with the problem of suffering. Job treats the problem of personal suffering, and Lamentations deals with the problem of national suffering. Habakkuk also deals with the problem of national suffering. These three books present the problem of God’s justice and His love, or divine sovereignty and human responsibility, though they fall short of solving it.

In the 19th-25th verses of chapter three, Jeremiah began to rationalize the predicament he finds himself and his nation in. “Remembering my affliction and my wandering, the wormwood and bitterness. Surely my soul remembers and is bowed down within me. This I recall to my mind; therefore I have hope. The Lord’s loving kindness indeed never cease, for His compassions never fail.” They are new every morning; Great is Thy Faithfulness. The Lord is my portion, says my soul, Therefore I have hope in Him. The Lord is good to those who wait for Him.”

No prophet pleaded with a people in a more impassioned manner, calling for a national conversation, than did he. No one, except Jesus, was treated



*Jeremiah (Michelangelo)*

with more national contempt! The anguish he endured was painful. “My eyes run down with streams of water because of the destruction of the daughter of my people. My eyes pour down unceasingly without stopping, until the Lord looks down from heaven. My eyes bring pain to my soul” (verses 48-51).

The second time Nebuchadnezzar stormed the city was when Jehoiakim rebelled against him and Nebuchadnezzar replaced him with Zedekiah as the ruler. And he did evil in the sight of the Lord according to all that Jehoiakim had done, 2 Kings 24:18. All this disobedience came to bear on Judah.

### Jeremiah Chapter Four

Chapter four tells of the inconceivable horror that fell on the people. Jehovah God let the enemy have full reign over His people, to teach them the evilness of sin, and the flagrant disregard of His covenant with them! This siege against Jerusalem lasted for 18 months. Famine was acute. The tongue of the suckling child cleaves to the roof of his mouth for thirst! The young children ask bread, and no man breaks it unto them. Conditions were so horrible that the hands of pitiful women did away with their own children so that they are slain with the sword are better than they that are slain with hunger. But Judah was only reaping what she had sown. Her iniquities were many; the prophets and priests had been corrupted, and the people rejoiced therein. In Jeremiah 5:30-31 the words of God says it all, “An appalling and horrible thing has happened to this land; the prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests rule on their own authority; and My people love it so! But what will you do at the end of it?”, He says.

Remember that certain truths rule here. First, when children suffered, some doubtless wondered, where is God? Even today when countries such as the US, Canada and England go to war in order to save an entire country, children also suffer. This is an evil world that is plagued with evil, and sometimes the innocent suffer! And so it was, with Israel, back then!

The suffering of God’s people is a problem because it pits the love of God against His Justice. On the one hand God loves people and has promised to do what is best to bring about their blessing. But on the other hand, God punishes people for their sins, and this does not seem to be loving. This is the same problem

that children have who grow up in homes where their parents tell them they love them — and yet punish them. Careful attention to the word of God solves this problem, in most cases, because God has explained why He punishes those whom He loves. Yet at other times, as in the case of Job, whom we mentioned earlier, there does not appear to be adequate reason for their suffering. They only saw the punishment. They had forgotten the reasons for it given in the Mosaic Covenant. This problem was what also concerned the prophet Habakkuk as well.

A great revelation of Lamentations is the covenant faithfulness of God, despite the covenant unfaithfulness of His people.

## **The Results of Unfaithfulness**

The consequences of the siege of Jerusalem, which Jeremiah chronicles in all their horrors, were the fruit of unfaithfulness to God. People cannot escape the death that sin brings — even God's people. Romans 6:23 expresses a universal truth: sin always results in death in some form. The Judahites thought that they could get away with their sins, but even though God was slow to judge them, they finally experienced the devastating consequences of sin. Perhaps one of the reasons we do not hear much discussion on Lamentations today, is that our contemporaries do not want to be reminded of their sin any more than Jeremiah's people did. If there were more preaching on Lamentations, people would have to face up to the fact that sin leads to terrible devastation!

Today we are beginning to see the moral judgments begin to fall on sinful man, as it was in those ancient days! God is moving slowly but very powerfully as He did then. The religious systems are being judged first. In recent times we have seen more and more people coming forward about sexual abuse they have faced as children, bringing lawsuits against the religious institutions that allowed this abuse to continue within their organizations. These cases have resulted in billions of dollars in damages being awarded to the victims. While this will not immediately cause a collapse of these organizations, the public spotlight is beginning to shine. Case after case has been filed world-wide on these egregious acts.

Recently another mainstream church shows signs of breaking up due to differences with members that are LGBT. The spiritual begins to erode first! On the secular side, we begin to see nations embroiled in riots and major political controversy. Religion has come to the forefront as the Muslims try to assert their perceived rights over others religious beliefs!

When we see and hear of all these problems facing the world, I'm reminded of the scripture in Matthew 24:6-8 which states, "And you will be hearing of wars and rumors; see that you are not frightened, for those things must take place, but that is not yet the end. For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and in various places there will be famines

and earthquakes. But all these things are merely the beginning of birth pangs."

Turning our attention back to Israel, we begin to see the Hand of God in their affairs. Since 1949 Israel has been involved in 16 wars of various types, the first being their war of Independence, 1947-1949. None were LOST! All of these wars and skirmishes can be attributed to Edom. In ancient times, Edom in one way or another, regardless of which nation was involved has crushed Israel until our day. The year 1948 was the turning point, in which I believe God began to turn His face back to His chosen people.

In our theme scripture we see the prophetic words spoken so many thousands of years ago by the prophet Jeremiah, Lamentations 4:21, "Rejoice and be glad, O daughter of Edom, who dwells in the land of Uz; But the cup will come around to you as well, You will become drunk and make yourself naked."

We must not forget that God is the central figure in Lamentations. The aspect of God's character that shines through the book from beginning to end is His sorrow! He does not enjoy punishing His people for their unfaithfulness. We can also see foreshadows of Jesus Christ's heartbreak over rebels against God, which come through strongly in the Gospels, where Jesus' heartbreak recalls the sentiments that Jeremiah expresses in this book.

Verse 22: "The punishment of your iniquity has been completed." That word completed according to Strong's word number 8552 means to come to the full, finished. Of course, there will still be trials for the nation of Israel, but not to the extent of the past. Her trials in the future will be those attributed to the fall of Adam, not to the Mosaic Law.

How does God feel when His people wander away from Him, squander His blessings, and get into trouble? He still loves them and remains committed to blessing them, even though He allows them to reap the whirlwind that they have sown.

## **Parable of the Prodigal Son**

To illustrate this facet of God's character, we close with Luke 15:11-32, the parable of the prodigal son.

"And he said a certain man had two sons; and the younger of them said to his father, Father give me the share of the estate that falls to me. And he divided his wealth between them. And not many days later, the younger son gathered everything together and went on a journey into a distant country, and there he squandered his estate with loose living."

Now here is where the parable really comes into play. In verse 18 is a profound statement by the son. "I will get up and go to my father, and I will say to him, Father I have sinned against heaven and in your sight." Has this happened yet? No, not yet until these words recorded in Zechariah 12:10 come to pass. "And I will pour out on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplication so they will look on Me whom they have



pierced; and they will mourn for Him, as one mourns for an only son and they will weep bitterly over Him, like the bitter weeping over a first born.”

Then the balance of this parable will become a precious reality. “And he got up and came to his Father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt compassion for him, and ran and embraced him and kissed him. And the son said to him Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight; I am no longer worth to be called your son. But the Father responded quickly by ordering his slaves

to bring the best robe and a ring and sandals for his feet, and said this son of mine was dead, and has come to life again; he was lost, and has been found.”

In Romans Paul says, “I do not want you brethren to be uniformed of this mystery lest you be wise in your own estimation, that a partial hardening has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in; and thus all Israel will be saved; just as it is written, “The Deliverer will come from Zion, He will remove ungodliness from Jacob. This is my covenant with them when I take away their sins.”

## The Light of Truth

*“For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work” (2 Thessalonians 2:7).*

**W**as the light of truth extinguished during the reign of the man of lawlessness? This Bright light that burned during the time of Jesus and his disciples started to flicker and get dimmer as the last apostle died.

Slowly, the truths started to be twisted and distorted just as Jesus prophesied it would be. But this light was never completely snuffed out. As time passed the man of lawlessness’ influence on the church increased until around the year 325 during the first Nicaen council, the false doctrine of the trinity was accepted as Cannon Law.

Although the false church accepted this, there were many who would not accept this falsehood including

- Constantius II, (Son of Constantine) who ruled after his father from 337-361,
- Valens, Emperor of the Eastern Roman Empire, 364-378
- Eusebius, Archbishop of Constantinople from 339-341 (he actually baptised Constantine).

These men were all opponents of the false doctrine of the trinity. Eusebius actually ordained a Goth called Uilas as a Bishop, and Uilas went to preach to his own people, the Goths.

So for many many years, the goths, Vandals and other Germanic tribes were anti-Trinitarian. Uifila stated “I Uifila, Bishop and confessor have also believed and in this, the one true Faith, I make my Journey to my Lord, I believe in only one God the Father, The unbegotten and invisible, and in the only begotten Son, our Lord, Master and God ... therefore there is one God of all who is also the God of our God, and one holy spirit and I believe the Son to be subject and obedient in all things to God the Father!”

These Germanic tribes held these beliefs until their destruction by the eastern Roman empire. The Lombards were the last to abandon their Arian beliefs accepting the trinity in AD 653. Although it appeared that the flame of truth was snuffed out, another candle of light appeared in the late 4th Century — a person

by the name of Vigilantius, born in Southern France, near the Pyrenees Mountains. Vigilantius was interested in God’s word, but he saw many falsehoods in the Roman Catholic Church. He witnessed some of the ecclesiastical riots that were occurring on a regular basis. One was when Damasus was elected Pope (AD 366). The dissensions in Rome were so violent that the gates of the Basilica, where his rival (Ursinus, Anti-Pope) was consecrated, were broken open, the roof torn off, the building was set on fire, and 137 persons were killed.

Similar riots also took place in Palestine, and it was stated “that their private quarrels (that is the churches) were as furious as the Barbarians!” He saw that the church was not following scripture when they forbade married men to act as priests, or for priests to marry, that so called religious orders were springing up into a Monastic life of self denial and austerities, religious processions, worship of relics, all night vigils of prayers for the dead, acceptance of Sunday as the holy sabbath day. He was not the only one to speak out against the errors of the false church — but what is quite notable, is that these others — such as Helvidius (4th Century) and Jovinian (4th Century) were all from Northern Italy and that is the area that the Waldenses had settled in. Until recently they were thought to have originated from a man called Peter Waldo who was born in the 12th Century, but this is not accepted today as it appears that these Waldenses were actually the fruitage of these Italians of the early 4th Century. In fact Vigilantius has been called the “Forerunner of the Reformation” (Quote from William Stephen Gilly, *Vigilantius and His Times*, page 12). Also, a quote from the book by George Faber, *The ancient Vallenses and Albigenses*, pages 275-279, called him “one of the earliest of our protestant forefathers.”

Note: If you would like more articles on the early History of the Church in the Wilderness, please let us know!

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# “The Lord is Risen Indeed”

The story of our Lord’s resurrection is one of exquisite despair and beauty. The crucifixion had smitten the Shepherd and scattered the sheep. In grief and silence the faithful few had removed the body from the cross and laid it in the new tomb of Joseph of Arimathea.

It was Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of James and Joses and Salome who brought the spices to anoint the body. In the dim dawn of the day following the Sabbath they stole to the tomb. The thought of the resurrection did not occur to them. They thought only that the grave had been rifled. One of them, Mary Magdalene, fled away, blind to everything but her own loss, saying, “They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid Him.” The angels in the tomb gave to the other two the glad truth, “He is not here, He is risen, as He said.” Before this truth was brought home to them, they were in despair, their hopes were buried. They had entertained high hopes, but now since Jesus had died, their hopes were dashed. How different when the fact of the resurrection was made known—what joy replaced their despondency! It became true to them, “We are begotten to a lively hope by His resurrection.”

Because He lives, we have grounds for hoping that we shall live also. In His resurrection lies our assurance. It is an interesting study to trace the harmony on this subject between the various writers of the Bible. Matthew, Mark and Luke, Peter, John, and Paul, all make mention of His resurrection. Each account is different, depending on the point of view of the writer, but they are unanimous in affirming the fact that Jesus died and rose from the dead. Remarkably, it is not difficult to combine these various accounts and arrange them into one connected and complete picture. By so doing, we perceive our Lord’s first work was of consoling and encouraging.

He first appeared to the women, turning their sorrow to joy. This was early in the morning, the same day He arose. Then He appeared, the same day in the afternoon, to the two disciples going to Emmaus. As a stranger He talked with them, and finally revealed Himself to them, by the familiar way in which He broke bread with them. Unable to contain themselves, they hastened back to Jerusalem to tell the good news.

They were witnesses not only of all the wonderful things He had done; they were witnesses not only of the fact that He was crucified and buried but witnesses especially of His resurrection. How thankful we are that these records have been preserved for the Church today.

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## The Bible Teachings

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 at —

[www.australianbiblestudents.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/The-Bible-Teachings-on-the-Covenants2.pdf](http://www.australianbiblestudents.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/The-Bible-Teachings-on-the-Covenants2.pdf)

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# The Bible Teachings (Part Ten)

*On the Covenants — Mediator — Ransom — Sin Offering — Atonement*

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## Death of Both Head and Body of Victim Necessary

The brethren understood that they were called to be “members of the Body of Christ” and that it would be after the completion of this “Body” that the Lord’s favour would return to natural Israel, and that He would build again the tabernacle of David which had fallen down; that through them as members of the great Benefactor or Mediator of the New Covenant, a blessing might go to the world and “that the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles upon whom God’s name is called” (Acts 15:16,17). The brethren addressed were reminded that the death of the Testator was necessary to these: not only the death of Jesus as the original testator to give the blessing to the Church, His Body, but also the death of the Church, His members, under His Headship, to again serve as Testator, and to die, so as to leave those restitution rights for the benefit of Israel and the world under the New Covenant.

## Central Purpose of the Book of Hebrews

Let us never lose sight of the central purpose for which this Book was written — that it was to prove that the law Covenant must give way, give place, to the New Covenant. Hence all the things connected with the typical law Covenant should be expected to have antitypes in connection with the antitypical New Covenant. Thus, the sacrifices of the law, which came at the beginning of their year on the Day of Atonement, before the sins of the people could be forgiven, must here find parallel in “better sacrifices” than the bullock and the goat. The New Covenant cannot go into effect until these antitypical sacrifices are accomplished. He thus proved the inferiority of everything Jewish and connected with the law Covenant; that all Christians might see that instead of going back to that or holding on to it, they should rather be grasping, looking forward to the antitypes, and grasping their share in the “better sacrifices.”

In verse 24, of the 9th chapter of Hebrews, the Apostle indicates how much of the sacrificing has already been finished; namely, that the High Priest has gone into the “most holy,” “now to appear in the presence of God for us” — for Spiritual Israel. But he adds we must not expect him to do this every year, as it was done in the type. We must not think that Christ’s sacrifice could avail us only in conjunction with the Jewish institutions as additional thereto. To so suppose would imply that such annual sacrifices would have been necessary from the foundation of the world. But this was not the case: Abraham and others were justified by faith before the Law Covenant was instituted. In the end of the age

Christ appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. And as men-priests are appointed to die, as symbolically represented in the animals they sacrificed, and as they after this passed into the Holy, and were there put on Judgment, or tested before they entered the “Most Holy,” so Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many, and, to them that are looking for Him, He shall appear the second time, not as a sin-offering, but to grant the salvation secured by the merit of His sacrifice — to inaugurate the New Covenant, and as its Mediator to set up its kingdom for the overthrow of sin and death and the establishment of righteousness and life.

## Two Offerings In One

Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many, the Apostle says. His type shows us two offerings, yet the two were parts of one. The first represented the Head, and the second, the Body. The two sacrifices of the Day of Atonement were really one, because the second was based upon the first. The offering as a whole was evidently for the sins of the whole world. Evidently, as the Apostle says, the next thing to be expected, to be waited for, is His finishing His sacrificial work, finishing the sprinkling of the blood the second time, and then coming out, as typed in the high priest clothed “in garments of glory and beauty,” representative of His elements of glory and power. He will stand forth as the Mediator of the New Covenant, the great Messiah, Prophet, Priest, King and Judge.

## Recognising Under-priests as Members of the High Priest

Only those who recognise that the under-priests are the members of the High Priest can appreciate this picture. The Lord by His own blood justified us, His Church, His prospective members, when “He ascended up on high, there to appear in the presence of God for us” as our Advocate and High Priest — to sprinkle the Mercy-Seat — to satisfy divine justice on our behalf. He began His secondary offering of His “members” as soon as the Father accepted His offering for us at Pentecost.

## Lord’s Goat vs. Consecrated at Pentecost

There “the Lord’s goat” was killed, sacrificed, and the ignominious burning outside the camp commenced. What was done with those ready at Pentecost has continued to be done with their successors since for now nearly nineteen centuries. The sacrificing, burning, etc., have continued, just as in the figure of the High Priest’s anointing, the oil ran down to his feet, so antitypically the holy spirit has come upon



each “member” accepted as a joint-sacrificer. The Lord mean time sits at the right hand of Divine favour, awaiting the consummation of the burning of His sacrifice — expecting or waiting until then to make the final sprinkling of His blood “for all the people” before Justice shall turn over to Him the control or dominion of the world for reconstruction, during the Millennium, under the terms of the New Covenant.

### **Appearing the Second Time**

The appearing a second time is to the waiting people — the groaning creation waiting “for the manifestation of the sons of God” in the glory of the Kingdom (Romans 8:19, 22). It is wholly different from His coming, or Parousia, during the harvest time to the Church. His appearing will be in power and great glory, yet only to be recognised by Israel and the world as they shall look for and seek for His Kingdom. “When He shall appear, we also (His members) shall appear with Him in glory.”

### **Sanctified Through the Offering of the Body**

In the 10th chapter Paul proceeds along the same line, proving that Jesus is the great High Priest. He represents Him as saying, “lo, I come to do thy will, O God.” (verse 9). Christ there began the taking away of the first, the typical Covenant, that He might establish the second, the antitypical Covenant. Verse ten shows how we, who have become His disciples, are sanctified by accepting His will and saying, as He did, “Lo, I come to do thy will, O God.” We are sanctified through the offering of the Body of Jesus Christ because we, accepted as members of His Body, are set apart to this great priestly, kingly, mediatorial work with Him. Incidentally notice here that previously we were “justified” through the merit of Jesus’ sacrifice, but that now we are sanctified through the offering of the Body. It is only as we obtain this great privilege of sacrificing as members of His Body that we can have any expectancy of participation with Him in His glory. This Body was offered once for all. The individual members of the Church are not offered separately. The one “Lord’s goat” represented the one entire Body of Christ, the “little flock,” all who, during this Gospel Age will be accepted as members and lay down their lives in sacrifice with Him. In verse twelve Paul shows that this one sacrifice of Christ (in two parts, Head and Body) having been offered (the Head at Jordan, the Body at Pentecost), our Lord rests from any further sacrificing, knowing that full satisfaction will be affected by the work already accomplished.

### **Perfection of Mankind Awaits Consummation of Church’s Consecration**

The great Priest has since waited until the Father’s time for putting all things of earth into subjection under Him; because by the one offering (in its two parts), He hath perfected forever them that are sanctified. That is to say, the first part of His offering justified His members and their participation in the second part effected their sanctification and secured for them a share in the First Resurrection. Moreover, the

perfecting of all mankind who shall eventually be saved during the Millennium will be the result of Christ’s one sacrifice in its two parts (bullock and goat). As a result of these “better sacrifices,” eventually all mankind shall have an opportunity of becoming sanctified, holy, perfect. The Apostle says that the holy spirit through Jeremiah’s prophecy (31:31) witnessed to this, testified to this ultimate efficacy of the antitypical priest’s work. Then he quotes this reference of the New Covenant, “after those days,” and assures us that when the time of remission of sins shall have come, there will be no more offering for sin. Thank God that with the end of this Age, when the sufferings of the Body of Christ will be finished, then, all sacrificing opportunities being ended, the opportunities for blessing mankind through the merit of those sacrifices will be only beginning!

### **Under-Priests Now Entering the Holies**

In verse nineteen the Apostle reverts to the fact that while this great work is still incomplete, we, brethren (prospective under-priests), may have the boldness (courage) to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which He has consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, His flesh; we may by faith realise ourselves as under-priests, members of the High Priest’s Body, joint-sacrificers with Him and -under His ministration. We may enjoy now the privileges and blessings of the Holy and be assured that, as members of the great High Priest, and Mediator, we may ultimately go beyond the veil, even into heaven itself, entering that glorious plane of life through sharing with Him in His death. This special way He consecrated for us as the High Priest, by making the merit of His death, typified by the blood of the bullock, applicable to us, permitting us in the strength of that justification to sacrifice with Him and to become His members in glory.

### **Forsake Not Assembling**

Paul exhorts all these fellow members to hold fast to their faith, to provoke one another to love, to not forsake the assembling of themselves, etc. If Moses’ Law inflicted a death penalty, assuredly the one who would willingly transgress under greater light would suffer a more severe punishment. The punishment of those under Moses’ Law was death, but not Second Death, because they had not secured release from the first death; but for us who have been released by “faith in His blood” and who have been consecrated, joined with Him in sacrifice — for us to do despite all the favours and privileges of God’s grace; for us to ignore the great High Priest, for us to count as a common thing our engagement, our consecration to share with our Lord in His death, in His sacrifice, in the blood of the New Covenant, this would mean the taking of ourselves completely out of all of the Divine arrangements intended for our blessing. Verse thirty shows that this is no idle suggestion of the Apostle. We are to remember Him with whom we have been dealing, Him through whose mercy in Christ we have been justified and Him whose holy spirit we received

as an earnest of our inheritance when we presented our bodies living sacrifices, in harmony with His call, that we might become joint heirs with Jesus in glory. To forfeit all this would be a fearful thing — the Second Death.

### **Cast Not Away Your Confidence**

However, the Apostle urges, let us not be discouraged, but remember our past experiences, our illumination, and the afflictions which we have endured, and let us not cast away our confidence, and faithfulness, for the reward will be great. Chapter eleven deals with the faithfulness of God's people during the past ages and dispensations, and, closing, tells us that there is a reward for all of those faithful ones in God's great plan, but something far better still for us, the members of the Body of the Messiah, the Mediator, Priest and King, so that they, without us, should not be made perfect; or, as Paul says in Romans 11:31, "Through your mercy they also may obtain mercy." And then, through them under the New Covenant, Israel and all the nations will receive their intended share of the same Divine mercy, passed through Christ and then through the Church, His Body.

### **Consecrated Should Consider Ancient Worthies**

Chapter twelve still addresses this consecrated priestly class. It suggests that these servants and handmaids, specially begotten of the holy spirit, specially called, having the "high calling," specially devoted to sacrifice, should think of the Ancient Worthies and the faithful witness for God and the Truth which they bore — to which they witnessed by their martyrdom, that these may strengthen us and encourage us to run faithfully in the race that is set before us. He urges that these prospective kings and priests look away from the afflictions and persecutions incidental to their sacrifice and loyalty to Christ; that they look to Jesus, the author of their faith, who is also to be its finisher; that they remember His example and what He endured and that everyone whom the Father accepts into the house of sons under this call must expect to have chastisings, disciplines and various testings of faith and obedience for the development and crystallization of character. He exhorts (verse 15) that we shall watch diligently, lest any fail of attaining to the full privilege of God's grace. And he warns that roots of bitterness may come and defile, and also that, yielding to the pleasures of sin for a season, would signify the selling of this great birthright — that Esau got the mess of pottage, but that Jacob got the birthright by his self-denial, and that similarly we are to endure.

### **The Inauguration of the Law Covenant Typed the Institution of the New Covenant**

The reason for all this carefulness on the part of the consecrated under-priests is that they have not come to (have not approached) Mt. Sinai and the wonderful sights and scenes incidental to the inauguration of the law Covenant, but they have approached (Strong's lexicon, come near) to Zion, a Mountain and City of

the living God — the Heavenly Jerusalem. We have come so near to the antitypical Mount, the Kingdom of God, so near to the antitypical New Jerusalem that we already by faith behold that New Jerusalem, that glorified Church, the Bride, the Lamb's Wife, from which the blessings are to flow to Israel and the world, as figuratively coming down from heaven to earth. We are surely nearer to that glorious consummation than was the Apostle. If he could say that the Church of Christ, following Him, their leader, had approached or were approaching or coming near to that heavenly Kingdom condition, how truly may we assent to this today. "Evidently now is our salvation nearer than when we first believed" — nearer than when the first members of the Body of Christ walked in this narrow way of self-sacrifice.

### **Contrasting Things Expected Soon With the Past**

The Apostle proceeds to contrast the things which we may soon expect at the inauguration of the New Covenant with Israel with those things which occurred as types in the inauguration of the Law Covenant. He continues not only are we approaching or coming nearer every day to the heavenly Jerusalem, the Kingdom condition, but also coming nearer to our association with the holy angels, whose numbers are innumerable, whereas ours are limited — 144,000. More than this, we are approaching, coming near, to the "general assembly of the Church" by participation in the "First Resurrection" — "His Resurrection" (Philippians 3:10), for we are "members of His Body." Additionally, we are approaching God, the Judge of all; soon we shall be ushered into the presence of the great King Eternal. As the Apostle declares, our Lord, our Redeemer, our Advocate, having had charge of us during the period of our schooling and sacrificing, and as the Father's representative, having raised us from the dead to glory, honour, and immortality, "will present us faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy" (Jude 24). He is the Judge of all. To fall into His hands now, during the sacrificing period and before we have finished our course, would mean to fall out of the hands of our Redeemer and Advocate and to insure condemnation to the Second Death. But then, to be presented before Him faultless will signify that the great Judge will approve us, even as He approves all the holy angels.

### **Spirits of Just Men Made Perfect**

Additionally, we are approaching, or coming near, to the "spirits of just men made perfect." This would seem to apply to the "great company," who will be justified in spirit through destruction of the flesh, though they fail in their sacrificing agreement and will not, therefore, be of the Body of the Christ, Priest, Mediator, King of glory. Next, we read that we have come near to Jesus, the Mediator of the New Covenant. He was prophesied from of old to be the Messiah of Israel and the Messenger or Mediator of Israel's Covenant. He is our Bridegroom, our Advocate, our Head. We, His members, shortly will be forever with our Lord and see

Him as He is and share with Him the glorious work of His Mediatorial Kingdom, by which Israel first, and through Israel all the nations, will receive the blessing of the Spiritual Seed of Abraham.

Then the New Covenant, having been sealed, so far as Divine Justice is concerned, by the application of the precious blood, passed through the Church and made effective “for all the people,” the time will come for the application of the blood of sprinkling to all the people — during the Millennium.

### **Type and Antitype of Sprinkling Law and People**

In the type we read that in instituting the Law Covenant, Moses sprinkled first the Book of the Law, representing Divine Justice, and then, on the basis of this satisfaction, his Mediatorial work began toward the people, and was typically represented by the sprinkling of them with the same blood of the Covenant. So, in the antitype, Our Lord’s blood (the blood of the bullock, Leviticus 16 was applied on our behalf — on behalf of His Body and His house and secured the forgiveness of our sins and opened the “new and living way” for our sanctification — for our privilege of sharing with Him in “His death,” partaking of “His cup.” Finally, when the Church shall have finished using the blood, and, by God’s grace through it, shall have attained to Divine nature in glory, that same merit (as the blood of the Lord’s goat) will be applied “for all the people” at the close of this Age by sealing the New Covenant.

### **Settling All Claims of Divine Justice**

This second application for the people, “For the sins of the whole world,” will settle completely all the claims of Divine Justice against every member of Adam’s race and put the future interests of all into the hands of the Mediator — Jesus, and the Church, His Body. Forthwith the work of reconciliation manward will begin. This is represented as the sprinkling of the people with the blood of the New Covenant.

Each one of Adam’s race, as he comes into proper relationship with the Lord, will receive his share of the sprinkled blood until, by the close of the Millennial Age, when the great Mediator shall turn over His Kingdom to the Father, every member of Adam’s race will have had fullest opportunity to enjoy his share in this sprinkling. Does that symbolical sprinkling in any sense of the word imply condemnation, responsibility for the blood of Christ, as in Abel’s case, when his blood figuratively was said to call to God for vengeance upon his murderer? Oh no! While the death of Christ and of many of His members has been of violence, yet this fact will not call for vengeance, because the life was voluntarily surrendered a sacrifice for the sins of the world. The sprinkling of the blood of the New Covenant upon all the people during the Millennial Age, then, will mean the impartation to each one of his share of the great blessing secured by the sacrifice accomplished by our Lord, “the Lamb of God which taketh away (eventually) the sin of the world.”

### **“Him that Speaketh from Heaven”**

The Apostle intimates that our ascended and glorified Lord is to speak from heaven at the time indicated, the time to which we approach or come near. The prophet tells us that all the blind eyes shall be opened to see Him, to recognise His dominion; and that all the deaf ears shall be unstopped to hear, to comprehend, His message. And Peter, speaking of that same time, declares, “It shall come to pass that the soul that will not obey that Prophet (Jesus the Head and the Church His Body raised up during this Gospel Age) shall be destroyed from amongst the people” (Acts 3:23).

### **A Warning from Paul**

The Apostle interrupts his argument respecting the future, to throw out a cautionary suggestion to the under priests, the members of the Body of Christ, saying, “See that ye refuse not Him that speaketh.” Our eyes and our ears have been opened in advance of the world’s. We have been greatly blessed by this Divine favour. But our responsibility is proportionate to our favour. If we refuse the instructions of our Head, our Lord; if we submit ourselves not to the disciplines in the School of Christ; if we neglect to share in His death and to present our bodies living sacrifices, in harmony with our covenant; if we, as the branches, do not bear the fruit of the Vine, our trial for eternal life may end adversely.

### **Speaking Yet Once More**

Resuming his narrative of the great thing to which we approach, or come near, the Apostle continues to contrast between these coming things pertaining to the New Covenant with the inauguration of the typical law Covenant. He says, “Whose voice then shook the earth; but now he hath promised, saying, yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven” — the earth symbolising society, and the heaven symbolising ecclesiasticism. The Apostle comments on the prophecy, saying that this expression yet once more implies such a thorough work of the shaking that everything that is temporary, out of accord with the Divine order, shall be shaken out, so that, at the beginning of the Mediatorial Kingdom and the administration of the New Covenant nothing will remain in power or organisation except those things which cannot be shaken, because of their harmony with God.

### **Holding Fast**

Continuing this thought that then we shall be with our Lord as His members, participating in His Mediatorial work, we read, that Since, therefore, we are to receive an unshakable Kingdom, with reverence and godly fear we are to hold fast to the grace of God bestowed upon us, which will permit us to serve God acceptably (not only now sacrificially, but also in the administration of the Kingdom), for gracious as our God is, He is consuming fire towards all unrighteousness.





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## The Riches of His Grace

*"In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace" (Ephesians 1:7 NASB).*

Paul's letter to the Ephesians sets out many spiritual lessons. Chapter one contains the words "the riches of His grace."

Paul sets out the fact that every spiritual blessing comes from above. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him. In love He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved. In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace which He lavished on us. In all wisdom and insight He made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His kind intention which He purposed in Him with a view to an administration suitable to the fullness of the times, that is, the summing up of all things in Christ, things in the heavens and things on the earth. In Him" (Ephesians 1:3-10 NASB).

Weymouth's translation states "It is in Him, and through the shedding of His blood, that we have our deliverance — the forgiveness of our offences — so abundant was God's grace" (Ephesians 1:7). Grace is that which bestows or occasions pleasure, delight, or causes favourable regard. Strong's dictionary for grace is of manner or act, especially the divine influence upon the heart, and its reflection in the life, including gratitude. Additional meanings of acceptable, benefit, favour, gift, gracious, joy liberality, pleasure, and thanks worthy are provided by scholars.

### The Blessings

The blessings of redemption and forgiveness in him reach us and have influenced each of our hearts. Ephesians 1:8 says, "which he lavished on us." To think

that our Heavenly Father chose us in him before the foundation of the world, is something very precious indeed. To be in him, is to be in Christ and the letter to the Ephesians emphasizes this many times.

In verse 13 the pledge of the Holy Spirit is given. "In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation — having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is given as a pledge of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of God's own possession, to the praise of His glory" (Ephesians 1:13-14 NASB). The Holy Spirit is a foretaste and is given in advance as security for the rest.

There is indeed a blessedness to be revealed in God's Plan of Salvation. As in his appointed time the first fruits will be followed by after fruits all under Christ, a summing up of all things in Christ, things in the heavens and things on the earth. What rejoicing there will be in the Kingdom when complete in heaven and on earth.

Jeremiah Rankin wrote the hymn "God Be With You" in 1880 so that his church choir had something to sing as a parting hymn. This hymn is a favorite amongst brethren to close conventions and at bedside of the infirmed or departed loved ones.

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Some have had loss, some trials, some tests and some loneliness or distress, but we have God's arms unfailing around us. We have his counsel and word of truth daily and we have our brethren assisting in these times. God has been with us since we last met, and God will be with us till we meet again.

## Current Conditions

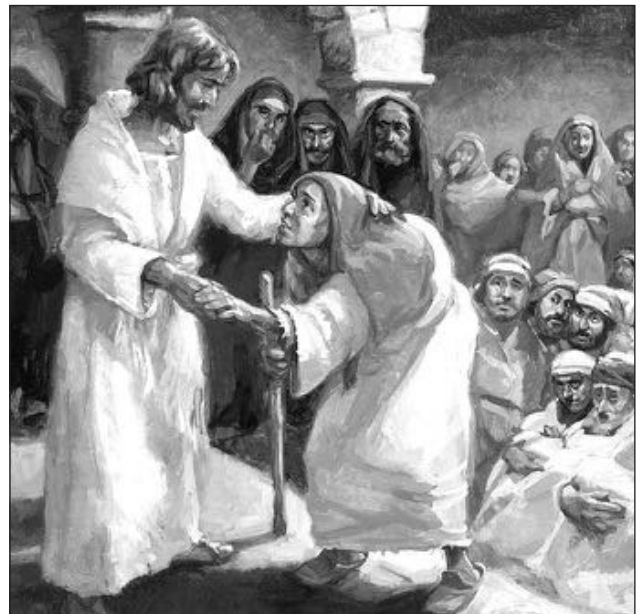
As we look out into the current world conditions, the effects of separation, people looking for strength and not finding it, we see fear and darkness. Yet, we who are in Christ can be people for God. The nation of Israel is an example of God's dealing with his people. "But you, Israel, My servant, Jacob whom I have chosen, Descendant of Abraham My friend, You whom I have taken from the ends of the earth, and called from its remotest parts and said to you, 'You are My servant, I have chosen you and not rejected you. 'Do not fear, for I am with you; Do not anxiously look about you, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, surely I will help you, Surely I will uphold you with My righteous right hand'" (Isaiah 41:8-10 NASB).

God instructed Moses to remind the people "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" (Exodus 19:4-6 NASB).

To be God's own possession is really a special gift. In the plan of God, the gospel age with the advent of Christ, the coming of the Messiah brought an opportunity for not just the Jew, but the Gentile to come into Christ, to become children of God. Peter, after speaking of the Jews who had rejected Christ brings out a wonderful promise.

"But you are A CHOSEN RACE, A royal PRIESTHOOD, A HOLY NATION, A PEOPLE FOR God's OWN POSSESSION, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; for you once were NOT A PEOPLE, but now you are THE PEOPLE OF GOD; you had NOT RECEIVED MERCY, but now you have RECEIVED MERCY" (1 Peter 2:9-10 NASB). We are a people for God's own possession. We are purchased with a price and that price was Christ's own blood.

Peter speaks of how a newborn yearns for their mother's milk, once they have tasted it and likens that to once "you have tasted the kindness of the Lord" (1 Peter 2:3). We certainly have tasted the kindness of the Lord and continue to partake of it. Our Heavenly Father is faithful and true. Every trial overcome by the people of God will be to His glory. Kindness and graciousness are attributes of our Lord Jesus which we receive from the Heavenly Father through Him in that we can be called, chosen and faithful.



*Christ, our source of grace*

In the New Testament many of the writers used the words "grace of God" as a greeting or a farewell. Three examples are:

- "Greet all of your leaders and all the saints. Those from Italy greet you. Grace be with you all" (Hebrews 13:24-25 NASB).
- "The grace of the Lord Jesus be with you. My love be with you all in Christ Jesus. Amen" (1 Corinthians 16:23-24 NASB).
- "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time" (1 Peter 1:3-5 NASB),

## Christ as a Source of Grace

The Apostle John speaks of grace coming through Christ, but that it is ultimately part of God's redemptive plan. "And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth" (John 1:14 NASB).

The Lord Jesus bestows bountiful blessing, instructions and demonstrates a perfect standard. Although Christians at this time do not have the pleasure of walking with Christ like those who were present during his first advent the Apostle Paul states, "and though you have not seen Him, you love Him, and though you do not see Him now, but believe in Him, you greatly rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory" (1 Peter 1:8 NASB).

The Apostle Peter when speaking of the call of the Heavenly Father writes "If you address as Father the One who impartially judges according to each

one's work, conduct yourselves in fear during the time of your stay on earth; knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ. For He was foreknown before the foundation of the world but has appeared in these last times for the sake of you who through Him are believers in God, who raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God. Since you have in obedience to the truth purified your souls for a sincere love of the brethren, fervently love one another from the heart" (1 Peter 1:17-22 NASB).

## Fervent Love

Fellowship, favour, and growth in love is the work to which the Christian is called. "But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift" (Ephesians 4:7 NASB). Can we fit more of the grace of Christ in our lives? Are unnecessary distractions in our lives holding us back? The Apostle James gives advice through practical examples. "But He gives a greater grace. Therefore, it says, "GOD IS OPPOSED TO THE PROUD, BUT GIVES GRACE TO THE HUMBLE." Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded. Be miserable and mourn and weep; let your laughter be turned into mourning and your joy to gloom. Humble yourselves in the presence of the Lord, and He will exalt you" (James 4:6-10 NASB).

## Greater Grace

The passage mentions "He gives a greater grace" This will require a greater Spirit of Holiness, turning away from the spirit of the world. How can this be achieved? Paul wrote in Corinthians "Now He who

establishes us with you in Christ and anointed us is God, who also sealed us and gave us the Spirit in our hearts as a pledge" (2 Corinthians 1:21-22 NASB). Without this gift of the Spirit we would not have the wisdom to develop the Christ like character we require. The start of the Christian walk is often the easy part, as the journey progresses the difficulties come. King David started his journey as a shepherd boy, anointed as King. The start in many ways was easy as Saul was still king, and David could still tend to his father's sheep. Once he was King the difficulties and temptations started. He wrote "O Lord, open my lips, that my mouth may declare Your praise. For You do not delight in sacrifice, otherwise I would give it; You are not pleased with burnt offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; A broken and a contrite heart, O God, You will not despise" (Psalms 51:15-17 NASB).

## A Contrite Heart

The meaning of having a contrite heart can be described as to collapse, physically or mentally, the break as in a sore. There is a beautiful promise to those that have a contrite heart. "For thus says the high and exalted One Who lives forever, whose name is Holy, "I dwell on a high and holy place, and also with the contrite and lowly of spirit in order to revive the spirit of the lowly and to revive the heart of the contrite" (Isaiah 57:15 NASB). This brings about a wonderful healing, comfort and pardon which leads to peace, a new heart condition. In the letter to the Hebrews there is a wonderful promise "draw near with confidence." Paul explains why this is possible. "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).

We receive grace and blessings through Christ and grow in the graces of God's Spirit to help us in our time of need. We are to develop compassion and sympathy when we see our brethren in times of need. We are also touched by the world's sufferings and their time of need. As this time is short and we long for the establishment of Christ's Kingdom. The only answer to the world's dilemma is divine intervention.

## The World's Perspective

During a recent report marking 75 years since the end of World War 2, it was stated that the news of the war ending had brought much celebration, dancing in the streets and relief it was finally over. Yet when one woman was asked why she had not responded to the good news that the war was over she replied, "The war is never over, my two sons are not coming back!"



*Jesus speaking with the woman of Samaria*





*The Beauty of God's Word*

In this statement we see the hopelessness of the world, yet we may find grace to help in time of need.

The beauty of the truth of God's word, the Divine plan of the ages — the hope of the resurrection, restitution, and the Kingdom are all spiritual blessings. The natural blessings in our life are also gifts through which we may praise our Creator. The words of King Solomon tell of God making everything beautiful in its time. "He has made everything appropriate in its time. He has also set eternity in their heart, yet so that man will not find out the work which God has done from the beginning even to the end. I know that there is nothing better for them than to rejoice and to do good in one's lifetime; moreover, that every man who eats and drinks sees good in all his labour — it is the gift of God. I know that everything God does will remain forever; there is nothing to add to it and there is nothing to take from it, for God has so worked that men should fear Him" (Ecclesiastes 3:11-14 NASB).

## **The Blessings of Life**

The blessings of life are remarkable, man's home on earth, so acutely designed through creation. The glories of the plant and animal kingdoms, higher and lower forms of life as well as the heavenly and earthly form separate and distinct. Paul states "The God who made the world and all things in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands; nor is He served by human hands, as though He needed anything, since He Himself gives to all people life and breath and all things; and He made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined their appointed times and the boundaries of their habitation, that they would seek God, if perhaps they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us; for in Him we live and move and exist, as even some of your own poets have said, 'For we also are His children'" (Acts 17:24-28 NASB).

## **Christian's Confidence**

We can have confidence in the Lord to keep us in His love and His remarkable promises for the future.

It is the power of our Heavenly Father that sustains us. Timothy was told of God's power "who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was granted us in Christ Jesus from all eternity" (2 Timothy 1:9 NASB). The Psalmist also says of the protection from God "For the LORD<sup>1</sup> God is a sun and shield; The LORD<sup>1</sup> gives grace and glory; No good thing does He withhold from those who walk uprightly" (Psalms 84:11 NASB).

This confidence should never be taken for granted. The opportunity for service, or to witness, to study, to meet with brethren, to develop Christian character and to bear fruitage is our responsibility. The Apostle Paul gives the following advice:

- "He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him" (2 Corinthians 5:21 NASB).

- "And working together with Him, we also urge you not to receive the grace of God in vain — for He says, "AT THE ACCEPTABLE TIME I LISTENED TO YOU, AND ON THE DAY OF SALVATION I HELPED YOU." Behold, now is "THE ACCEPTABLE TIME," behold, now is "THE DAY OF SALVATION" — giving no cause for offense in anything, so that the ministry will not be discredited" (2 Corinthians 6:1-3 NASB).

The present Gospel age is for the selection of the Bride for Christ, the Divine plan will be wisdom to the believer as they grow into 'the deep things of God'. The scriptures outline that we will reap what we sow. Our Heavenly Father gives just the right experiences to his people. Paul speaking of his experience reminds the reader what he was told "My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness." Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me. Therefore, I am well content with weaknesses, with insults, with distresses, with persecutions, with difficulties, for Christ's sake; for when I am weak, then I am strong" (2 Corinthians 12:9-10 NASB).

(1) Strong's number H3068, *yeh-ho-vaw*. From H1961; (the) self-existent or external; Jehovah.

# Who Were the Anabaptists?

*“God resisteth the proud but giveth grace [undeserved kindness] to the humble” (James 4:6).*

**T**he scriptures clearly teach that the majority of mankind who are searching for the truth come from the humbler classes of society. So, it is no surprise that the Anabaptist Movement found most of its supporters from this class of people. This movement had its beginnings during the 15th Century in Western Europe around the same time as the Reformation. These people were tired of the false teachings from the Roman Catholic Church and thought that the Protestant reformation was not going fully in the right direction. They could be classed as the Radicals of the Protestant Reformation! For this they became the most persecuted religious group, both by the Protestants and Catholics. Just in Holland and Friesland (part of the Netherlands) alone, by the year 1546, at least 30,000 had been put to death!

## What Caused all this Persecution?

The major cause was that the Anabaptists realized that the baptism of infants was not scriptural, and that all who had been baptized as infants should be re-baptized when they reached adulthood. They believed that only when a candidate was old enough to freely confess their faith in Christ they could request to be baptized. So, they held the belief that infant baptism was not valid, as infants are unable to make a conscious decision to be baptized.

## Other Important Differences

They did not believe in returning evil or bearing arms, or holding civil office, resorting to law courts, or the taking of oaths, and their movement was largely a lay movement. They also believed in the separation of Church and State. A few of them also did not believe in the trinity, so it seems that they were the earliest pioneers of Unitarianism in Europe.

## Johannes Campanus

He was considered to be one of the greatest scholars of his day. Besides rejecting the Trinity, he also objected to the doctrine of Transubstantiation. He believed that the bread and wine always remained as bread and wine, but they symbolically represent the flesh and blood of Christ. His beliefs upset many Protestant reformers, especially Luther, who called Johannes Campanus a blasphemer and an adversary. Others called for his execution. Campanus also believed that Jesus and his Father are two distinct persons and are one only in the same way as a husband and wife at marriage become one flesh. He also taught that the Father has authority over the Son.

## What Did He Believe About the Holy Spirit?

He taught that it was the power of God, in which He (Jehovah) prepares and carries out all things through his active force — the Holy Spirit. He hoped that the false Church would reinstate true Christian teachings — he was mistaken! The Catholic Church Authorities arrested him and he spent the next 20 years in prison, passing away in the year 1575 (approximately). While others in the reformation were showing hatred to one another, even engaging in armed conflict, Anabaptists did not engage in this, but tried to show Christian love to all.

## Dirk Willems

An Anabaptist called Dirk Willems was born in the Netherlands in the 1500s. He was re-baptized as a young man in Rotterdam, thus rejecting the false teaching of infant baptism practiced both by Catholic and Protestant churches (which many continue to this day). Remarkable events surround this young man. For this so-called crime, he was arrested in 1569. During his imprisonment he was able to escape across the frozen moat outside his prison. He was chased by a prison guard onto the thin ice of a frozen pond. Due to his light weight (as a result of his prison rations) he was able to cross safely. The guard following was not so lucky, falling through the ice. He called for help in the icy water. Because of his faith, Willems turned around and came back to save the



*Dirk Willems, saving the guard*

life of his pursuer. This act of *Agape* love (love based on principle) led to his recapture and ultimate death. “This is my commandment, that you love one another just as I have loved you. No one has love greater than this, that someone should surrender his life for his friends” (or enemies. John 15:12-13).

Willems did just this. He was convicted by seven Judges and ordered to be burned at the stake on May 16, 1569. However, not all Anabaptists were exemplary in their conduct. Some in the name of

religion committed crimes, and some of them ran into gross immorality. However, diligent study of the Bible enabled many of the Anabaptists, such as Campanus and others, to distinguish truth from error. Even though not all the conclusions reached by these truth seekers were in full harmony with the scriptures, these men humbly searched the scriptures and treasured the truths that they did learn.

1 Thessalonians 5:21, “but prove all things; hold fast that which is good [fine].”

## To Not Be In Want

*“Psalms 23:1, “The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not want.  
(2) He makes me lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside quiet waters” (NASB).*

**M**ost Bible versions use the word “LORD” in capitals, but the word is Strong’s 3068, meaning Jehovah. Is not our Lord Jesus Christ our shepherd? For many Scriptures show that Jesus is our Good Shepherd (John 10:11). But there is no conflict of thought, for Jehovah is the Chief Shepherd, as we read: “Behold, the Lord Jehovah will come as a mighty one, and his arm will rule for him: behold, his reward is with him, and his recompense before him. He will feed his flock like a shepherd, he will gather the lambs in his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and will gently lead those that have their young” (Isaiah 40:10,11 ASV).

In the great and notable Day of the Lord Jehovah, His right arm Jesus, shall come and rule for Him and Jesus has the rewards to give. In the above verses, when he comes it is not that his work has culminated, but that his work is before him.

We are his flock. “To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out. When he hath put forth all his own, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice” (John 19;3,4).



David as shepherd

## I Shall Not Be In Want

The Lord’s true sheep can say from the heart, “I shall not be in want,” only if they heed the voice of the Chief Shepherd. When they do hearken to him, how bountifully all of their needs are supplied! No good thing will the Shepherd withhold from those who walk uprightly (Psalms 34:11). “I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee” he has promised. (Hebrews 13:5). “My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness,” is another blessed assurance of the Chief Shepherd which gives even the weakest of the sheep the comfort and encouragement they need for every difficulty of the way (2 Corinthians 12:9).

We experience “not to be in want” because Jehovah provides our needs, but what are these needs? He supplies the basic necessities of life such as food, shelter, clothing, water, and security. He also provides rest from anxiety, fear, and want, because “Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof” (Matthew 6:34). From a natural standpoint, sometimes only the bare necessities of life are provided. But certainly from a spiritual standpoint, we are supplied with abundance.

David was a shepherd caring for his father Jesse’s sheep. He well knew the responsibilities of a shepherd, as the sheep were their assets, their wealth, providing income for the family. In Australia, USA, etc., the pastures for sheep are broad and stretch for hundreds of acres or hectares where sheep are largely nurtured for their wool and meat. However, the conditions and setting of the Middle East in David’s time match the wording and illustrations used in this Psalm.

So, it is important to keep this in mind when considering the beauty of the Psalmist’s reference to green pastures. The pastures of the east are often barren wastelands, or deserts, which are rarely refreshed by rain. But an oasis can be found here and there, produced by a spring of water, or a little stream draining a ravine or a mountain side. There





*He leads us by still waters.*

the grass is green, luscious, delicate, toothsome, and so nourishing.

The trained shepherd knows where in the desert lands such green pastures can be found, and the sheep which follow the leadings of the shepherds are always assured of an abundance of food. It does not matter to them how vast and barren is the wilderness with which they are surrounded. For the shepherd always knows their needs and leads them to where these are bountifully supplied.

What meaningful and important lessons are in this for the “sheep” of the Lord’s pastures! We are all surrounded by a wilderness of sin and selfishness, barren of spiritual nourishment which is so vital to new creatures in Christ Jesus. Certain forms of life can survive in the desert, so the worldly-minded find the weeds of worldly pleasure that give them some degree of satisfaction. But the gold and treasure, the pomp and beauty, as well as all the various social amenities of the world, are a barren wilderness to the Lord’s sheep. For in them they find no soul-satisfying portion. Jesus said to these, “I have chosen you out of the world,” and in following this call they are led to green pastures of spiritual nourishment and joy which satisfies their longings as nothing else would do (John 15:19).

### **He Maketh Me to Lie Down**

“He maketh me to lie down” is a beautiful suggestion of rest in the Lord. It does not imply indifference or inactivity, but contentment based upon the assurance that in following the Good Shepherd we have nothing to fear, that all our needs are supplied abundantly according to the riches of his grace. It is a symbol of that rest of faith into which it is the privilege of all consecrated to enter and there in abide.

The expression, “As sheep having no shepherd,” was first used by Moses concerning Israel when he asked God to appoint someone to take his place as leader (Numbers 27:17). Joshua was appointed to be

Moses’ successor, and Jesus, the antitypical Joshua, then came to be the true shepherd of Israel.

The Apostle Paul explains that the Israelites under the leadership of Joshua failed to enter into the rest that could have been theirs had they believed (Hebrews 4:6,8). The Israelites lacked the necessary faith in God and in their appointed leader, Joshua. Lacking faith, they could not be content and really at rest. They feared their enemies, were fearful of their food supply, and on occasions feared one another. Because of their lack of faith in God’s arrangements, they did not conform to them. This exposed them to many evils. That which they feared often came upon them because of their unbelief.

This should serve as a valuable object lesson to us. Jesus the antitypical Joshua has been appointed as our “Good Shepherd,” our Leader, and if our faith can lay hold firmly upon all the assurances of divine grace given to us in His word, we should be well and will truly have rest of both heart and mind. But all the reassuring promises of God, the Chief Good Shepherd, are conditional upon our following the voice of Jesus our Good Shepherd.

“To lie down” in green pastures also implies the thought of being satisfied. How well satisfied should all the Lord’s people be today! Surely, he has provided so abundantly for our spiritual nourishment. The truth is our food, the green pastures to which our returned Lord as the Good Shepherd has led us in these closing days of the Gospel Age. How wonderfully satisfying we have found that truth to be.

Sheep are ruminating animals, they chew a second time what they swallow, i.e. they chew the cud. Sheep ruminating in a field is like meditating or pondering and taking in of the harvest message. We digest it, but it stays in our hearts and minds, and we meditate on the Divine Plan when we go to bed at night (Psalms 119:87).

### **Why The Truth Satisfies**

There is no danger of the truth failing to satisfy our hungering after righteousness if we continue to consider it in comparison with the weeds and thistles of human tradition upon which so many try to feed. For it is indeed like a green pasture in the midst of a barren desert. Sheep should never be dissatisfied with the luscious grazing to which the shepherds lead them.

What a wilderness some of us were in before we were led to the truth! Having so many questions for which we had no answers — like a true faith in God, in His Word, in His plan, and our place in that very plan. These very questions are still asked by wanderers in the wilderness.

But the time came when we heard the voice of the Good Shepherd, the voice of the truth. We followed it and it led us to green pastures of satisfaction. All our questions were answered, and we could feed

constantly upon all the gracious promises of God that are centered in Jesus Christ, that nourish and strengthen us according to our daily needs. Surely, we should be satisfied!

There may be a tendency at times to forget the barrenness of the wilderness from which we were delivered. Satisfied with answers to all the vital questions which troubled us, we may after a while wander out to the edge of the green pastures and cast our eyes around for some other food. Or we may imagine that the truly rich and soul-satisfying food consists of speculation and hair-splitting. But brethren, we cannot live and prosper spiritually on speculation, guesses, and unproved theories. Such things can be entertained for a while, but inevitably leave the Lord's sheep with an aching void in their hearts. Nothing but the plan of God, and all the rich promises associated with that plan, can continue to satisfy. In no other pastures can the Lord's sheep "lie down" in contentment, conscious that they have been well fed with the spiritual food best suited to their needs.

### Green Pastures

The sheep are so dependent upon the goodness and wisdom of the shepherd in leading them to good pasture. There is significance in the fact that the pastures to which the Lord Jesus leads his sheep are "green." Green grass often turns brown and dry, but not so with the pastures the Lord provides. They are always fresh and green, luscious, delicate, and toothsome. So it is with the truth to those who learn to know and appreciate its value. It is as new every morning and fresh every night. This is because it is God's truth and, like Him, it abides forever.

Some may say, "Well, I learned that 25 years ago," and with that thought, that it is about time we had something new. Possibly their spiritual appetites have been impaired, probably by mixing food from other sources with that which the Lord provides in the green pastures of His Word and plan. With natural man, when one's stomach becomes upset by poisons or wrong combinations of food, then even pure wholesome food loses its appeal. So it is with new creatures. There is a danger in feeding upon food other than the pure doctrines of the Divine Plan, as we may become poisoned to the extent that the simple truths of the Gospel will no longer appeal to us. For a time we may imagine we have found something better than the Lord provided, but sooner or later we will discover our mistake for our souls will become spiritually impoverished.

What wonderful food has been provided in the green pastures to which the Good Shepherd has led us! Natural man eats to live, so the "food" of the new creature is that which provides life. Jesus said that unless we eat his flesh and drink his blood we will have no life in us (John 6:53). Here, then, is the very essence of all our spiritual food. We partake of Christ,



*Jesus is the bread of life.*

not by eating his literal flesh, but by accepting the great fact of his redemptive work on our behalf and conforming our lives fully to the doing of his will.

Jesus said, "The flesh profiteth nothing" — that is, it will do you no good to eat my flesh (John 6:63). Then he added, "the words which I speak unto you, they are Spirit and they are life." The teachings of Jesus were the reiteration of God's plan as it is centered in him. By accepting and obeying these teachings, we receive the life provided for us in the Redeemer. It is thus that we feed upon him and thereby receive life.

Jesus said to the Adversary, "man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (Matthew 4:4). The truth, then, is the Word of God — it is the entire plan of God. It is likened to bread, and to refreshing water, because both of these are necessary to life. The thought is the same when we think of the truth as the green nourishing grass to which our Good Shepherd leads us.

How soul satisfying is the pasture of present truth into which the Good Shepherd has led his people in the end of this Gospel Age. We should appreciate the nourishing food he has so abundantly provided for us! It is fitting that we should appreciate and use all of this food, not just wander around nibbling a blade of grass here and there.

In thinking of the Word of God, we are reminded that "every" word that comes from God is essential to life. How great is our loss if we only feed upon certain portions of the Word of God! However, human weakness and limitations often cause a tendency along this line. To be particularly interested in prophecy, and every time we go to the Bible we search out only those portions which foretell events of our times or of the immediate future. Feeding our minds merely upon such prophecies, in our fellowship with the brethren, this subject will always be uppermost in our minds. In the meantime we will be getting lean spiritually.

God has given us the prophecies to stimulate our faith and to enlighten us as to the times in which we

are living so that we may know our part in his plan, but as new creatures we cannot thrive spiritually on an exclusive diet of prophecy. We need a balance, as there is other food to be found in the green pastures to which our Good Shepherd has led us and we need that too.

“Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our lord Jesus Christ” (Romans 5:1). Justification is one of those basic doctrines of the Scriptures. By it we are assured of our acceptableness with our Heavenly Father, in that He deals with us favourably as his children. This knowledge is indeed strengthening to our faith and encourages us to go boldly to the throne of grace to obtain mercy and to find help in every time of need. But we should not attempt to live on justification alone. The doctrine of justification is to assure us of our standing with God.

How rich is the spiritual food provided in the book of Revelation, but the Good Shepherd does not want us to remain in the Revelations corner of the pasture all the time! To concentrate only on the one thing, and neglect everything else, leads to an unhealthy spiritual condition which will sooner or later manifest itself in our lives as new creatures.

Equally erroneous is the viewpoint that a Christian should feed exclusively on the devotional truths in Bible study and meditate merely upon faith, hope, love, and prayer. Indeed, all the Lord’s sheep should endeavour to keep close to the Good Shepherd, but to do this we must also follow his voice, which is the voice of truth. The plan of God for us and for the world is outlined in the doctrines and is essential that we know that plan in order to take our proper place in it. Our hearts may be filled with love for God, but if we are not doing what he wants us to, we are not living close to him, as it is by the doctrines that his will is revealed.

## Still Waters

This Psalm mentions sheep beside a stream that is not deep, but one that gives a certain sound, and is very restful. A gentle rippling sound of a brook can give a delightful feeling of peace and rest as it has such a calming effect. The Hebrew has a more personal thought of “he laid me down besides the waters of restfulness.” Moffatt has, “He leads me to refreshing streams, he revives life in me.”

Water was not plentiful in that desert country where David tended his father’s sheep. Therefore, it was paramount for the shepherd to know where to find water and to lead the sheep to these places of refreshment, or they would perish. It was, as the Psalmist expressed it, “A dry and thirsty land” (Psalms 63:1) — or, as the margin states, a “weary land without water.” This was true then of most of the literal land of Israel and it is symbolically true of conditions throughout the world and in worldly churches, Babylon. God’s sheep, his true people, find no refreshing truth anywhere in the world. They must

be led by the Good Shepherd to the fountains of “still waters.”

But first, like David, they must realize their need. They must discover the dryness of the “land,” and become truly thirsty for the living waters. Jesus said, “Blessed are they which ... thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled” (Matthew 5:6). Once we realize the arid conditions of the world by which we are surrounded, we will listen carefully for the voice of the Shepherd in order that we might be led to the refreshing waters.

## Grazing Together

Following our Good Shepherd into green pastures provided by his love means giving attention to the matter in which our spiritual food is provided by him. Sheep keep together in a flock when they graze. The shepherd does not provide an insulated patch of grass for each individual sheep, or for little groups who may prefer to remain separate from others. This is an important lesson for all to remember. If we have heard the voice of the Good Shepherd — the voice of present truth — and have followed that voice into the green pastures of spiritual food now so abundantly available for his flock, we will find ourselves in association with other sheep who have heard the same voice. If we have the right viewpoint, this association should be both a blessed and a happy one.

At all times we should keep close to the Good Shepherd and remember the sound of his voice. To the extent that all sheep do this, they will remain together in a flock. It is possible for one to be led away from the flock through too much sympathy for the straying sheep, or through sympathy manifested in a wrong way. We should not permit ourselves to be carried away by our emotions in matters of this kind.

The voice of truth comprehends not only doctrines, but God’s arrangements for his sheep, his instructions concerning under-shepherds, their qualifications, the manner of their appointment, etc. The voice of the Good Shepherd warns us against novices and those not qualified as under shepherds. If we do not heed



*He leads us to green pastures.*



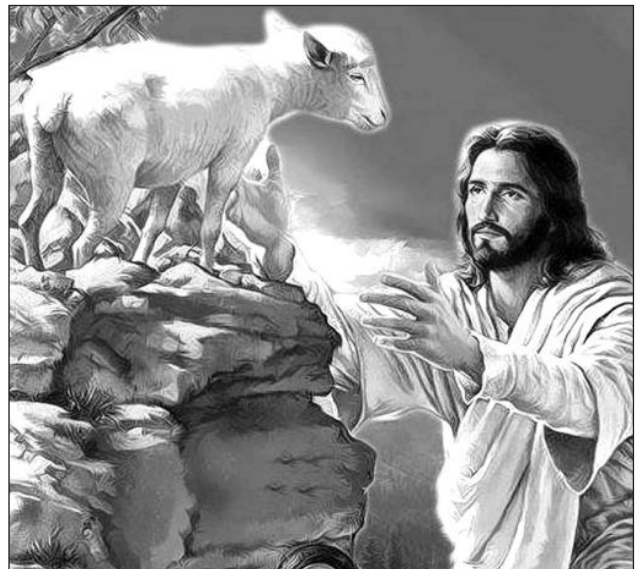
these warnings and instructions we are sure to suffer spiritual loss and find ourselves separated from the flock, at least in spirit, and possibly making a nuisance of ourselves among other sheep.

The Good Shepherd keeps his sheep together and does not separate them. Any who are truly serving him as under shepherds will use their influence to keep the sheep together. This is one of the surest ways of detecting the voice of a Good Shepherd in the service of others.

There will be divisions among the sheep, but woe to those who are responsible. The Good Shepherd wants his sheep to be together. Those who have the spirit of the Good Shepherd will exert their influence towards that end. To do otherwise is to lend support to a spirit which is not of God.

We can clearly and surely say that we are well fed today! The Good Shepherd acting under the direction of the Chief Shepherd Jehovah, has in these last days led us into pastures of present truth, and how refreshing and bountiful is the food. The poisonous weeds of error have been removed and we are rejoicing in the pure doctrines of the divine plan. There is nothing lacking in the pasture. Not only do we have the truth itself — from the start of creation to restoration — but we have the Good Shepherd's arrangements.

In the *Studies in The Scriptures* we have the truth, properly balanced, and we have set forth God's ecclesia arrangements for the proper cooperation of his



*Jesus is our shepherd.*

people that they build one another up in the most holy faith. The Good Shepherd is caring for our needs. He is withholding no good thing from us, and we can readily “lie down” in contentment and in peace, putting our complete trust in him, knowing that no evil will befall us as long as we follow his voice and remain together in the pasture which he has provided.

Psalms 84:11, “For Jehovah God is a sun and a shield: Jehovah will give grace and glory; No good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly” (RVIC 2020).

## Choosing the Will of the Father

*“The Lord GOD has opened My ear; And I was not disobedient, nor did I turn back”  
(Isaiah 50:5 NASB).*

**B**efore we can choose to follow the will of the Father, we need to come to an understanding of what His will requires. The Psalmist writes about the desires of the Heavenly Father, “Sacrifice and meal offering You have not desired; My ears You have opened; Burnt offering and sin offering You have not required. I delight to do Your will, O my God; Your Law is within my heart” (Psalms 40:6,8 NASB).

Christ is our example in following the will of the Father. Just before his death he told the disciples “That the world may know that I love the Father” Why, because “I do exactly as the Father commanded me”. Paul writing to the Hebrews states “Although He was a Son, He learned obedience from the things which He suffered. And having been made perfect, He became to all those who obey Him the source of eternal salvation” (Hebrews 5:8-9 NASB).

Luke records that when Christ was troubled, He would go to the mountains to pray often spending the

whole night communing with his Heavenly Father. The reason for this is explained in John's Gospel “Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, unless it is something He sees the Father doing; for whatever the Father does, these things the Son also does in like manner” (John 5:19 NASB).

His whole life was in complete obedience to the Father. The word obedient and obedience in Philip-pians 2:8 and Hebrews 8:5 come from the same root word, Strong's #5219, “attentively listening, by implication submissive.” “... he humbled himself by **becoming obedient** to the point of death, even death on a cross” (Philippians 2:8).

The mindset of obedience — **attentive hearkening to the Father** is one that as followers of Christ we must not only to learn but put into practice. James reminds us “But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves” (James 1:22 NASB).

# The Choice to Rejoice

*"My inmost being will rejoice when your lips speak what is right"  
(Proverbs 23:16 NASB).*

**H**abakkuk's prayer is recorded in chapter three, of the prophet himself nothing is recorded. He reveals the spiritual character of Jehovah, being more concerned that His holiness should be vindicated rather than Israel should escape punishment because of their idolatry.

It had been revealed to him the troubles that were to come on Israel. He records his reaction, "I heard, and my inward parts trembled, at the sound my lips quivered. Decay enters my bones, and in my place I tremble. Because I must wait quietly for the day of distress, For the people to arise who will invade us" (Habakkuk 3:16 NASB).

Habakkuk goes on to describe a time of trouble and famine that was to come upon his people. "Though the fig tree should not blossom and there be no fruit on the vines, though the yield of the olive should fail and the fields produce no food, though the flock should be cut off from the fold and there be no cattle in the stalls" (Habakkuk 3:17 NASB).

Israel was about to be taken captive into Babylon, they had relied on their own strength, they had sought an alliance with Egypt. "Woe to the rebellious children," declared Jehovah, "Who execute a plan, but not Mine, and make an alliance, but not of My Spirit, in order to add sin to sin; who proceed down to Egypt without consulting Me, to take refuge in the safety of Pharaoh and to seek shelter in the shadow of Egypt!" (Isaiah 30:1-2 NASB). They hoped that their alliance with Egypt would give them chariots for defense, forgetting that the geography of Israel made it unsuitable for chariots. If only they had put their faith in the Almighty, they would have been saved.

To many, the reaction of Habakkuk in the next two verses may seem strange. "Yet I will exult in Jehovah, I will rejoice in the God of my salvation. The Lord GOD is my strength, and He has made my feet like hinds' feet, and makes me walk on my high places" (Habakkuk 3:18-19 NASB). Habakkuk realized that even if he lost all earthly things, he would not lose God. God was his salvation, and somehow Israel would eventually be returned to their land.

He felt strengthened, that he would be able to run as a deer, that he would be lifted above earth's drudgery. It is interesting that this is similar to Moses' final

blessing on Israel, "Blessed are you, O Israel, who is like you, a people saved by Jehovah, who is the shield of your help and the sword of your majesty! So your enemies will cringe before you, and you will tread upon their high places" (Deuteronomy 33:29 NASB). How sad to think of the number of times they failed to keep the law and had to be disciplined by God.

There is a lesson here for us today. When we look around at the world we see such distress, hunger, famine, wars, and death. We are not to rejoice in their suffering, Apostle Paul states, "So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all people" (Galatians 6:10). We are to rejoice in the fact that we know that the end for this troubled world is close and that all will have an opportunity to hear the voice of the Lord and come forth from the graves.

Finally, when it comes to our trials and difficulties, may we remember the Apostle Peter's words, "Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though some strange thing were happening to you; but to the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ, keep on rejoicing, so that also at the revelation of His glory you may rejoice with exultation" (1 Peter 4:12-13 NASB).



*The prophet Habakkuk*

## *"Yet Will I Rejoice in the Lord"*

THOUGH the fig-tree shall not blossom,  
Though the olive's labor fail,  
Though a murrain, sore and grievous,

Smite the herd on hill and dale —  
Yet my soul shall bless and praise Him,  
And my faith shall still prevail!

# Reaching the Heart

*“Whoever is united with the Lord is one with him in spirit” (1 Corinthians 6:17).*

Some years ago, at a drawing room function, one of England’s leading actors was asked to recite for the pleasure of his fellow guests. He consented and asked if there was anything special that his audience would like to hear. After a moment’s pause an old clergyman present said, “Could you, sir, recite to us the Twenty-third Psalm?”

A strange look passed over the actor’s face; he paused for a moment, and then said, “I can, and I will, upon one condition; after I have recited it, you, my friend, will do the same.” “I?” said the clergyman, in surprise. “But I am not an elocutionist. However, if you wish it, I will do so.” Impressively, the great actor began the Psalm. His voice and his intonation were perfect. He held his audience spellbound; and as he finished, a great burst of applause broke from the guests.

Then, as it died away, the old clergyman arose and began the Psalm. His voice was not remarkable; his intonation was not faultless. When he had finished, no sound of applause broke the silence, but there was not a dry eye in the room, and many heads were bowed.

Then the actor rose to his feet again. His voice shook as he laid his hand upon the shoulder of the old clergyman and said: “I reached your eyes and ears, my friends; he reached your hearts. The difference is just this — I know the Twenty-third Psalm, but he knows the Shepherd.”

A. C. Frey

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# The Bible Teachings (Part Eleven)

*On the Covenants — Mediator — Ransom — Sin Offering — Atonement*

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## Exhortation to Follow Christ as Goat Followed Bullock

The Apostle concludes the Epistle with exhortations to the Royal Priesthood, giving helpful suggestions as to brotherly love, hospitality, contentment, submission to those whom we believe to be over us in the Lord (Hebrews 13:7-17). He tells us to avoid new Gospels and to remember that as the earthly priesthood was nourished by the things of the altar, so we have a right to eat of a spiritual altar of which others may not eat. He then calls attention to the sin-offering (verse 11), that they were all burned outside the camp. Jesus, as the antitype of the bullock, was not only crucified outside the gate of Jerusalem, but suffered as an outcast from the social and religious systems of the time.

St. Paul urges that we, as the Royal Priesthood (typified by the Lord's goat of Leviticus 16), shall go forth also sacrificially outside the camp to suffer with Christ social ostracism, and with deadness toward the world. He fixes by this passage our identity with "the Lord's goat" of Leviticus 16, by assuring us that only the blood of the sin-offerings is taken within the vail — to sprinkle the mercy-seat. He also identifies this sin-offering by suggesting that the bodies of those beasts whose blood propitiated for sin were burned outside the camp. In exhorting the Church to follow the lord in this experience, he clearly identifies our lord with the bullock of the Day of Atonement and the Church with the Lord's goat, which followed all of the bullock's experiences (Z. 1909, 339).

## QUESTIONS ON THE COVENANTS

### Question

From Exodus 24 it appears that it was the blood of the peace-offerings and of burnt offerings (not of sin-offerings) which sealed the Law Covenant. Should we not understand the same to hold in regard to the New Covenant?

### Answer

#### Same 'Sacrifices from Different Standpoints

The sin-offering, burnt-offering, and peace offering evidently pictured the same sacrifices, but from different standpoints. In every case we would understand the bullocks to represent our Lord Jesus and the goats to represent the Church, the under-priesthood. The sin-offerings represented the sufferings of Christ and of all who walk in His footsteps as respects their relationship to the Lord, "Outside the camp," and their course as New Creatures inside the Holy and ultimately beyond the second vail in the Most Holy. And it shows the merit of the sacrifice eventually applied on the mercy-seat, and for whom applied — the blood of the bullock

first, for the Church, the blood of the goat afterward, for all the people.

## The Burnt Offering

The burnt offering shows the same sacrifices but from a different standpoint — that of Divine acceptance. It shows that the offering was made to God and accepted by God as a whole, even though, as shown in the sin-offering, the sufferings were inflicted by men and the services rendered unto men.

## The Peace Offering

The peace-offering (Leviticus 3) would appear to be another view or picture of the same sacrifices, representing the willingness of the individual who sacrificed — that nothing was of compulsion, so far as God was concerned; and that there was peace between God and the sacrificer, so that the offering was not made for his own sins.

## Peace and Burnt Offerings re Sealing Law Covenant

So then, it seems very appropriate that, as described in Exodus 24, it was the blood of peace-offerings and burnt offerings that sealed the Law Covenant. The sin-offering feature has to do with the satisfaction, but the burnt offering and peace-offering imply that the sacrificers voluntarily lay down their earthly rights in the interest of those who will be blessed under the New Covenant and that God accepts these sacrifices as sealing that New Covenant — entirely aside from the Atonement for Adamic sin, accomplished by the same sacrifices, viewed from the standpoint of the sin-offering.

### Question

#### Fleshly vs. Spiritual Israel re Requiring Mediator

The children of Israel, whom God called His firstborn, His own people, etc., had and needed a mediator. Should we not correspondingly expect that Spiritual Israel would require a mediator?

### Answer

The children of Israel, from God's standpoint, were a typical people — they represented typically all who would ever become Abraham's seed, on the heavenly and the earthly planes. Thus, it is written, "I have made thee a father of many nations." All who will ultimately be saved to relationship with God out of many nations were well represented in the many tribes of Israel.

God took one of those tribes, the tribe of Levi, and separated it from the others for His own special use and as a channel for the blessing and instruction of the other tribes, which represented all the families of

the earth. That tribe of Levi, as we have already seen, typified the “household of faith” — all those who will be brought into harmony with God through the Sarah division of the Abrahamic Covenant. These all, as a household of faith, are together styled the firstborn and are developed under the Faith or Grace Covenant, and not under the New (Law) Covenant.

The tribe of Levi itself was divided, a priestly class being selected, and the remainder of the tribe assisting or serving under them. So, in the antitype — a “little flock,” a priestly class, is selected for the pre-eminent position and constitutes “Abraham’s Seed” on the highest plane, the Divine nature. This class, The Christ, is composed of Jesus, the Head, and the Church, His members. As the centre of the Divine blessing this Royal Priesthood, of which the Redeemer is the Head, has a variety of titles and of offices — King, Priest, Judge, Lawgiver, Mediator, Father — and each of these titles indicates a special feature of its service as the Seed of Abraham in blessing all the families of the earth, represented by the remaining tribes.

The other tribes of natural Israel did need a mediator and the mediator was in the specially set apart tribe. Moses represented the entire priestly class and the tribe of Levi in his various functions as mediator between God and the nation.

### **Church in Heart Harmony**

It is true that God did sometimes speak of natural Israel as His first-born, and similarly Ishmael was the first-born of Abraham. The Apostle Paul calls our attention to this very matter, telling us that natural Israel corresponds to Ishmael, the son of Hagar, who represented the Covenant of bondage. Spiritual Israel constitutes the Church of the First-Born, the Body of Christ, and was never in bondage, being a child of the free woman, “the Heavenly Jerusalem, the mother of us all.” The Covenant of Grace was represented by Sarah. It had no mediator and needed none. Why does it need no mediator? Because those chosen under this Covenant of Grace are all at heart loyal to God, lovers of righteousness and haters of iniquity. These the Father was pleased to receive into His family, in response to their faith and consecration. They became members of the Body of the Mediator, who, during the Millennial Age, will represent God to mankind, enforcing His Laws and in His name uplifting the willing and obedient (Z. 1909, 339).

### **Question**

Please explain Hebrews 9:15, viz., Revised Version — “And for this cause He is the mediator of a New Covenant, that a death having taken place for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first Covenant, they that have been called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance.

### **Answer**

This text shows a contrast between the old law Covenant and the New (Law) Covenant. The original or Abrahamic Covenant, under which Christ and His Body as the Spiritual

Seed of Abraham is being developed, is not in the discussion. The Apostle wrote to those who still trusted in the law Covenant and declared that it was necessary, not only to believe in Christ, but also to keep the law and to be circumcised, in order to have any Divine favour. This the Apostle is controverting as untrue. He shows that the law Covenant mediated by Moses was typical of a superior New Covenant, of which Messiah is the Mediator.

Moses’ Covenant was already dead, to the extent that the prize it offered had been won by Jesus. It is still alive, however, upon all the Jews as a bondage from which they could get free only in one of two ways; either by dying to the law Covenant and to all its hopes and prospects and renouncing all earthly restitution rights and thus becoming a joint heir with Christ as a member of Messiah’s Body during this Gospel Age; or, accepting the other alternative, get free from the old law Covenant by transfer, when the New (Law) Covenant shall go into effect as its substitute, at the beginning of the Millennium. Then all Jews and their appurtenances will be transferred from Moses, the incompetent mediator, to the Messiah of glory, the competent Mediator of the better Covenant, whose provisions will bless Israel and all the families of the earth willing to come in under its benevolent provisions.

This text has no reference to any except Jews who were under the old law Covenant. It does not at all refer to Gentiles. It shows that God’s provision is that Messiah is the Mediator of Israel’s New Covenant and that His death, when so applied, will be sufficient to cancel the transgressions of Israel under their old law Covenant. This will make it possible for them as a nation yet to attain the earthly part of the Abrahamic Covenant’s provision for Abraham’s earthly seed, as the sand of the seashore. Thus, eventually Israel as God’s “called” nation will receive all that they ever expected — and more, Israel’s promises were not heavenly or spiritual, but earthly: “All the land that thou seest to thee (Abraham) will I give it, and to thy seed after thee”; and as the chief nation of earth, they were to teach all nations “every man under his own vine and fig tree.”

Those promises are sure as God’s Word. They merely wait until the “Mystery” of a multitudinous Mediator shall be finished (in sacrifice and in resurrection glory). Then the “Mystery” Mediator will have sealed Israel’s New Covenant by His death as its Testator. Then the “called” nation of Israel will “receive the eternal inheritance” for which they have waited more than thirty-five centuries. St. Paul explains this further in Romans 11:27-29, 31.

### **Question**

I understand the Man Christ Jesus, by the sacrifice of His human life, paid the ransom price for the whole world.

### **Answer**

As elsewhere shown, our Lord’s sacrifice did not pay for the sins of the world, but did provide the ransom price, which He will later present to Justice on behalf

of the sins of the world.

### **Question**

If He did not then at His death seal the New Covenant with His blood and become mediator of that New Covenant, could He offer the Church a share in His mediatorial work?

### **Answer**

The Scriptures nowhere say that our Lord sealed the New Covenant with His blood. Neither was it necessary for Him to seal the New Covenant before He would be its Mediator. He was the Mediator of the New Covenant- in the Divine purpose centuries before He became the man Christ Jesus. He was the Mediator of the New Covenant when born in Bethlehem in exactly the same sense that He was then the Saviour of the world: not because He had sealed the New Covenant nor because He had saved the world, but because He was the One through whom the world's salvation and the New Covenant for its blessing will eventually be accomplished.

Our Lord has not yet saved the world, nor has He acted as Mediator of the New Covenant; but He will accomplish both purposes during the Millennial Age; and at its conclusion the prophecy will be fulfilled, "He shall see of the travail of his soul and shall be satisfied." Our Lord was privileged to offer His Church a share with Himself in His Mediatorial Kingdom on condition that she would share in His cup of suffering and self-sacrifice — share in His baptism into His death. So doing she shall share His reward of glory, honour and immortality in "His resurrection" (Philippians 3:10). And sharing His glory and throne as His joint-sacrificer and joint-heir of the promise she would be with Him jointly the Mediator between God and men — the world — during the Millennial Age — the work of reconciling the world, or so many of them as may prove willing to receive the blessing- of regeneration.

### **Question**

I understand the New Covenant is a law of love; am I right?

### **Answer**

You are not right. There is a difference between a covenant and the law of a covenant. God's law given to Israel summarised was, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy mind, with all thy being and with all thy strength; and thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." That law is perfect and will be the basis of law of the New Covenant. Moses as a Mediator under his covenant purposed to give them eternal life if they would do so. But they were unable to keep that law perfectly in act and thought and word, and hence they reaped its condemnation of death and not its proffered blessing of life. Under that Covenant Moses was privileged to arrange sacrifices and offerings for sin, and thus year by year to cleanse the people for a year at a time from their original condemnation. But he had no means of actually blotting out their sins and no power or right to actually restore them to perfection and ability to keep that law.

The New Covenant will have the same law exactly, but the Mediator having by then paid over to Justice the ransom price of the world, secured by His own sacrificial death, will then have full charge of mankind and be fully empowered to deal mercifully with their imperfections and to help them step by step out of their sin and death condition back to perfection, and to cut off the rebellious in the Second Death. At the close of the Millennium, He will present the willing and obedient to the Father actually perfect.

Thus, it will be seen that God's dealings with mankind under the typical Law Covenant, and under its antitype the New Covenant, is along the lines of actual obedience to the Divine law, and not along the lines of reckoned obedience through faith. As obedience to the old Law Covenant held the reward of human perfection and life, so the rewards of the New (Law) Covenant will be similar — eternal life or eternal death.

Quite to the contrary of both of these arrangements, the Church is now called to a "heavenly calling" under the Abrahamic Covenant — to be members of the Body of Christ, who, with Jesus her Head, will constitute the Mediator of the New Covenant. The Church is "not under the law, but under grace," not judged according to the flesh and earthly restitution but judged according to the heart and intention; and required to sacrifice restitution rights to the attainment of "the high calling" life and glory on the spirit plane as members of the Mediator of the New Covenant.

### **Question**

Please explain John 13:34 — "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another." Was it a forerunner of the New Covenant He was about to seal for them?

### **Answer**

No, that "New Commandment" represents a higher law than was given to the Jew under the Law Covenant, hence higher also than will be given to Israel and mankind "under the New Covenant. The New Commandment mentioned by our Lord is not the Father's commandment at all, but the command of our Head, our Teacher, to all those who have entered the School of Christ and who are hoping to become "members" of the Anointed One — members of the Mediator, Prophet, Priest and King of the new dispensation. Justice could not give this new command: all that Justice could command is expressed in the Law given to Israel, namely, supreme love for God and love for the neighbour as for oneself. This new commandment which the Lord gave applies only to the Church of this Gospel Age. In effect it is this: If you would be my disciples, if you would share my throne and glory and immortality, you must have my spirit. You must do more than keep the Law. You must be more than just, you must be self-sacrificing. If you would share my glory, I command and direct that you love one another as I have loved you. (John 15:12) I have loved you to the extent of laying down my life for you sacrificially. You must have this same spirit and cast in your lot with me in self-sacrifice, or you cannot



be my disciples, nor share my glory, and associate in my work as the Mediator for the blessing of Israel and mankind. Whosoever will be my disciple must take up his cross and follow me, that where I am there shall my disciples be. Surely no one can doubt the Saviour's meaning — my disciples must die with me (Z. 1910, 13).

### **"ABLE MINISTERS OF THE NEW COVENANT"**

St. Paul says, "Our sufficiency is of God: who also hath made us able ministers (servants) of the New Testament (New Covenant); not of the letter, but of the spirit; for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life" (2 Corinthians 3:5,6).

### **Servants or Ministers of New Covenant**

How could St. Paul and other apostles be servants of the New Covenant, if no such New Covenant is yet in existence? A similar question might be raised respecting our Lord's statement that His memorial cup represented the blood of the New Testament, the New Covenant. The answer to these queries is: (1) There will be no blood of or from the New Covenant after it has been completed. The blood of the New Covenant is the blood prepared in advance of the Covenant, wherewith to seal it and make it obligatory — make it a Covenant. Our Lord's words respecting the cup were uttered before He died.

The cup was symbolical and pointed forward to His own death. It was shed for them, and was the basis for their reconciliation to the Father; but it was to be in due time the blood of the New Covenant — the blood with which the New Covenant would be sprinkled, sealed, made efficacious. It was offered to the Church more than eighteen centuries before the time for the sealing of the New Covenant, to grant the Church, the overcomers, the privileges of participation with Christ in His sacrifice, not only in the sense of Justification, but also in the sense of sanctification, or death with Him.

### **Symbol of Drinking "Cup"**

This St. Paul most distinctly asserts in 1 Cor. 10:16 saying, "The cup of blessing, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ?" The drinking of that cup symbolises our fellowship in the sufferings of Christ, our common union in all of the afflictions that came upon Him — our death with Him. By the time all of the members of the Body of Christ shall have taken part in this cup, the time will have come for the application of the merit of that communion cup, that united sacrifice of the Body, with and under the Head sealing the New (Law) Covenant with Israel, and, through Israel, for the benefit of mankind. When the disciples asked if they might not sit in His throne, the one on the right hand and the other on His left, He asked, "Are ye able to drink of the cup that I drink of?" (Mark 10:38). All who would sit in the throne must drink of the cup. All who will faithfully drink of the cup shall sit in the throne as members of the Body of Christ — "the Bride, the

lamb's Wife."

### **Ministers and Covenant Ready Before Sealing**

Take an illustration: Suppose some important documents were about to be signed and sealed. The document itself might be printed and while in the process of being signed might be spoken of as the covenant, agreement or declaration, although it would not be such a document, even after being printed, until duly signed and sealed. Similarly, the ink might by law be specified to be of a certain kind, and the person having charge of it might speak of it as the ink used, in the sense that it was the ink designed to be used in the signing of that Covenant when the proper time should come. Similarly, the person designated to be the mediator of that covenant might be so spoken of in advance of the signing. Similarly, those of his suite, who would accompany him as assistants and who would need certain preparation before they engage in this service, might be spoken of as the ministers or servants of that Covenant, even though it had not yet been signed and really made a covenant.

### **Church Now Qualifying as Ministers**

Thus, the Apostle speaks of himself and others as able servants of the New Covenant. He does not mean that the New Covenant is in effect, in operation, but that in view of this New Covenant which God has promised shall ultimately be signed and sealed and made effective, he and others, the entire Royal Priesthood, are servants of that Covenant, ministering, or serving its interests and fully qualified of the Lord to do so. Of ourselves we have no righteousness, no merit, that could be made effective for the sealing of that New Covenant with Israel. But, being justified by faith in the blood of Christ, we are made able or competent to serve the interests of the New Covenant. We serve it by laying down our lives as Joint-Heirs with our Redeemer for its sealing, and subsequently putting it into operation.

### **Church Now Act as Ambassadors**

Our position is that of ambassadors for God, explaining to men His mercy and His provision of the New Covenant, through which all may be blessed and recovered if they will. So many as receive our message with joy and turn from sin to follow our Lord may be invited to become members of the Body of Christ, the Body of Messiah, the Body of the Mediator, the Body of the great Prophet, the Body of the great Priest, the Body of the great King of the Millennial Age. So, then, we are ministers of the New Covenant in that we are laying down our lives in its service, in its interest, although it is not yet a Covenant, but merely a promise. We are not only laying down our lives but seeking out fellow-members of the Body of the Anointed One and assisting them in the laying down of their lives, under the assurance that these better sacrifices will soon be finished and their application be made by our glorious Head, and we with Him in glory.



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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).*

**T**he 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



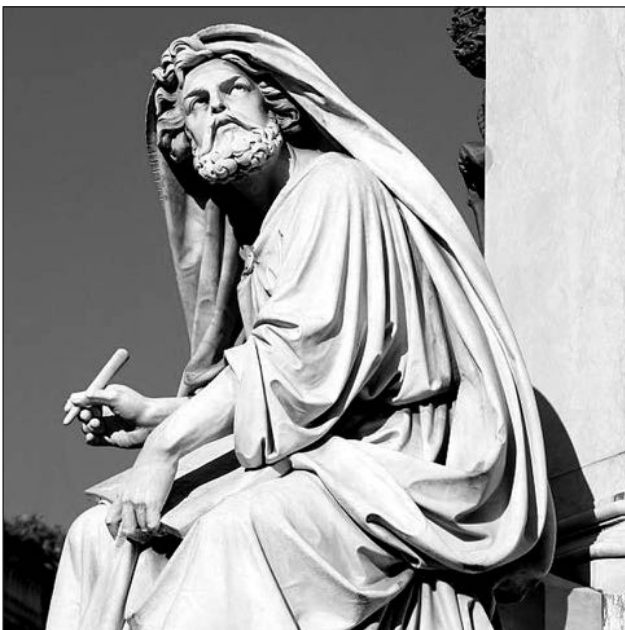
the valley of the shadow of death” (Psalms 23:4). And in the words of Job 13:15, “Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him.” This degree of confidence and trust is what we all strive for.

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).

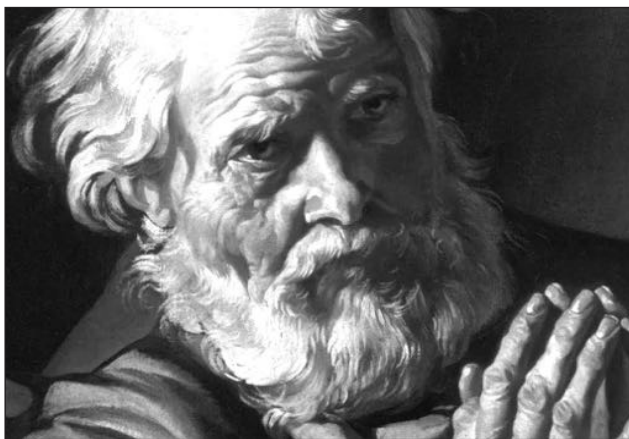
## **The Enemy Against the New Creature**

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).*

**T**he 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).

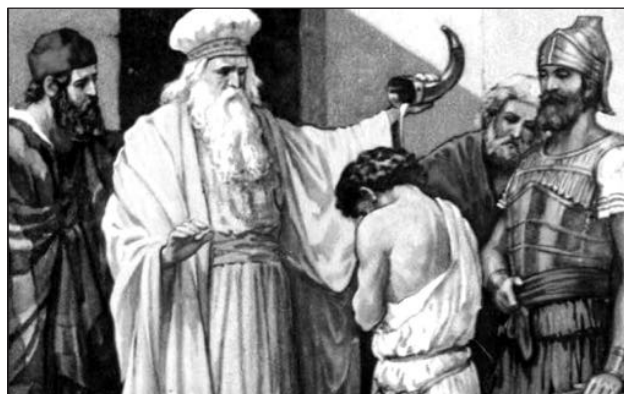
During the Gospel Age, God has been setting apart those who are to be members of the body of Christ.

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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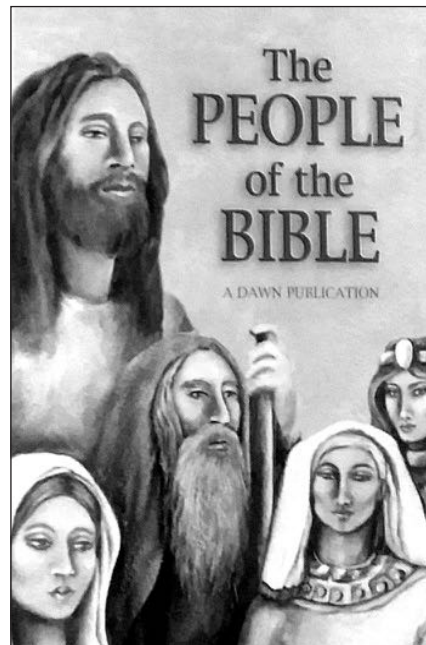
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# The Bible Teachings (Part Twelve)

*On the Covenants — Mediator — Ransom — Sin Offering — Atonement*

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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.