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The Full Assurance of Hope

“Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water” (Hebrews 10:22, texts from ESV).

When Paul wrote his letter to Hebrews, he was worried about the steadfastness of some brothers to be faithful to God until the end of their journey. He talks about this in Hebrews chapter 6. He strongly warns them about “falling away” when he tells them in (verses 4-6), “For it is impossible, in the case of those who have once been enlightened, who have tasted the heavenly gift, and have shared in the Holy Spirit, and have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the age to come, and then have fallen away, to restore them again to repentance, since they are crucifying once again the Son of God to their own harm and holding him up to contempt.” But even though he thus warned them strongly against falling away, he believed that they are able to achieve better things, when he continues in (verses 9, 10), “Though we speak in this way, yet in your case, beloved, we feel sure of better things — things that belong to salvation. For God is not unjust so as to overlook your work and the love that you have shown for his name in serving the saints, as you still do.” Having said this, he goes on to advise them in what way it will come to their salvation, when he says in (verse 11), “And we desire each one of you to show the same earnestness to have the full assurance of hope until the end.”

Keeping this full assurance of hope helped these brothers achieve their salvation. We too need this kind of full assurance of hope. Our obedience to God and our faith in God and his promises is constantly being tested in this evil world. How can we have such “full assurance of hope”? What is Paul actually referring to when he speaks of “full assurance of hope”?

Paul also says that if they have such full assurance of hope, it will help them to reach the goal of their calling as he continued to say in (verse 12) “so that you may not be sluggish, but imitators of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.” So

our hope that Paul meant is to be the heirs of the promise. Which promise will we inherit, and how can we have such a “full assurance of hope” in this promise that it will endure until the end?

We see that Paul was talking about the Abrahamic Covenant and the promises included in this covenant. We see this when Paul says next in (verse 13), “For when God made a promise to Abraham, since he had no one greater by whom to swear, he swore by himself.” This is the promise sworn by God that Paul meant when he spoke of the full assurance of hope, and he continues in (verses 16, 17), “For people swear by something greater than themselves, and in all their disputes an oath is final for confirmation. So when God desired to show more convincingly to the heirs of the promise the unchangeable character of his purpose, he guaranteed it with an oath.”

Hope in God’s Word

We have great hope in the word of God, and God has sworn to us that He will fulfil his promise to the heirs of the promise. And if we have a clear understanding of this inheritance sworn by God and the position of that promise in God’s plan, it gives us strength of faith

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and we can achieve the full assurance of this hope.

We know that every word in the Bible is true and we can trust all the promises and teachings that are in the Bible and we can receive a great blessing through all these scriptures. But this promise to Abraham is very special. First, we are told that it is for “the heirs of the promise.” And God wanted to show more convincingly its unchangeableness and therefore God made an oath. Can we hope for any stronger assurance for our faith?

Thus Paul encourages us that this promise of God and this oath, give us the assurance of a great hope that comes to our salvation when he writes in (verse 18), “so that by two unchangeable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have fled for refuge might have strong encouragement to hold fast to the hope set before us.”

This promise and oath about which Paul writes is very familiar to us. God promised to Abraham a great blessing that would come to all mankind. Genesis 22:16, 18 NASB says: “By Myself I have sworn, declares the LORD ... In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed.”

In this promise we can see God’s blessing for all mankind. It also clearly shows the two salvations, which have always been very dear to Bible students. First the seed of the promise is blessed and then through this seed all the nations on earth are blessed. And when it says “all nations,” it clearly means every person who has ever lived throughout human history. God has sworn this covenant with Abraham, and it is the basis of all the promises to bless both the church and the world. This covenant was made four thousand years ago, but it will surely come true. It is a sure and firm covenant that God has sworn and it is a firm foundation for the hope that we have. But we need to have patience to wait for God’s right time and way for everything to come true.

The Seed of Promise

When we first look at this seed of promise, Paul assures us that this seed is Christ. He says in (Galatians 3:16 NASB): “Now the promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. He does not say, ‘And to seeds,’ as referring to many, but rather to one, ‘And to your seed,’ that is, Christ.”

But Jesus does not form this seed of promise alone, for Paul continues in Galatians 3:27-29 NIV, “For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.”

The members of the true church are the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:27), of whom it is said that they are baptized into Christ and that they belong to Christ. Thus it is shown that they are together this heir of the promise, the heir of the covenant that God



Isaac, the boy of promise, a picture Christ and the Church

has sworn, as it is said in Galatians 4:28, “Now you, brothers, like Isaac, are children of promise.”

Thus the church has the privilege to enjoy God’s promised blessings before anyone else. And the church, as the body of Christ, will thus bless all the nations together with Christ.

David’s Throne

When Christ, as the seed of promise, blesses all the nations on earth, he establishes his kingdom and rules it as God’s promised king. Israel typified this kingdom and the royal right to rule Israel that was given to David was a type of this promised king. And God assures us of this government in Psalms 89:34-37, “I will not violate my covenant or alter the word that went forth from my lips. Once for all I have sworn by my holiness; I will not lie to David. His offspring shall endure forever, his throne as long as the sun before me. Like the moon it shall be established forever, a faithful witness in the skies.” As the seed of the promise, Christ will be this king whose right to rule God has sworn, and his kingdom will be a kingdom of peace and righteousness forever and ever, blessing all mankind. This we are promised in the book of Isaiah, where it is said in Isaiah 9:7, “Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.” This throne of David is also described to us in Luke 1:31-33, where it is said, “Behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.”

Thus, the seed of the promise that God has sworn is also the king that God has sworn and he reigns in righteousness forever. And we, as the body of Christ, may be with Christ on the throne in this kingdom. This is what Jesus assures us in Revelation 3:21: “The one who conquers, I will grant him to sit with me on

my throne, as I also conquered and sat down with my Father on his throne.” This authority to sit as a king on this throne is promised to Christ, both the head and the body, as God has sworn the oath to David.

Fleshly Seed vs. Seed of Promise

When we look at the seed of Abraham, we see that the natural seed of Abraham is different from this “seed of promise.” The natural seed of Abraham was the first one to whom the access to this class of the “seed of promise” was offered. Fleshly Israel was kept under the Law Covenant and the law was their schoolmaster to bring them unto Christ, as it is said in Galatians 3:22-24, “But the Scripture imprisoned everything under sin, so that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe. Now before faith came, we were held captive under the law, imprisoned until the coming faith would be revealed. So then, the law was our guardian until Christ came, in order that we might be justified by faith.”

Thus the Law Covenant did not bring the eternal blessings to all nations that we expect to come through the Abrahamic covenant. Nor did the “seed of the promise” come through the Law Covenant. This is shown in Galatians 3:17-19 NIV, where it is said, “What I mean is this: The law, introduced 430 years later, does not set aside the covenant previously established by God and thus do away with the promise. For if the inheritance depends on the law, then it no longer depends on the promise; but God in his grace gave it to Abraham through a promise. Why, then, was the law given at all? It was added because of transgressions until the Seed to whom the promise referred had come.”

Thus we see that the Law Covenant was meant to be valid only until this seed of promise came. And Paul also says that Abraham’s wives were types of these covenants. Abraham’s original wife, Sarah, represented the covenant of the church, and the handmaid Hagar represented the Law Covenant, as Paul says in Galatians 4:24), “Now this may be interpreted allegorically: these women are two covenants. One is from Mount Sinai, bearing children for slavery; she is Hagar.”



Hagar, a picture of the Law Covenant

Thus, Sarah typified the original promise of the Abrahamic covenant of the seed of promise that would come through this covenant. That is why the covenant of the church is sometimes called the Sarah covenant. It has also been called a covenant of sacrifice, because Psalms 50:5 says, “Gather to me my faithful ones, who made a covenant with me by sacrifice!” And sometimes it has been called the grace covenant, because Romans 6:14 says, “For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace.” But as Paul says above, it is not called a Law Covenant.

The Order of Melchizedek

In the original covenant with Abraham, God promised Abraham the seed of the promise by swearing an oath. This oath was confirmed to Isaac and Jacob after him. And we are assured that this seed will bless “all the nations of the earth.” Since the Law Covenant could not bring these blessings, neither to Israel nor to all nations, God has promised a new covenant and a better priesthood under which these blessings will come. And again of this new priesthood God swears to us that he will establish this blessed priesthood. Psalm 110:4 says, “The LORD has sworn and will not change his mind, ‘You are a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek.’”

Paul shows us that Jesus Christ is the high priest in this priesthood. He says in Hebrews 5:5, 6, “So also Christ did not exalt himself to be made a high priest, but was appointed by him who said to him, ‘You are my Son, today I have begotten you’; as he says also in another place, ‘You are a priest forever, after the order of Melchizedek.’”

Thus we can see that just as God has sworn that Christ is the “seed of promise” that blesses all the nations of the earth, so God has also sworn that he is the promised high priest. Paul says about this in Hebrews 7:19-22, “for the law made nothing perfect; but on the other hand, a better hope is introduced, through which we draw near to God. And it was not without an oath. For those who formerly became priests were made such without an oath, but this one was made a priest with an oath by the one who said to him: ‘The Lord has sworn and will not change his mind, You are a priest forever.’” This makes Jesus the guarantor of a better covenant.

And just as the whole body of Christ, the church, belongs to the seed of the promise, so also the body of Christ belong to this priesthood of the promise. For to us it is promised in Revelation 20:6: “Blessed and holy is the one who shares in the first resurrection! Over such the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ, and they will reign with him for a thousand years.” Thus, this priesthood according to the order of Melchizedek, that is sworn by an oath, also belongs to the church together with Jesus, as they, as under-priests, bless all the nations on the earth in Christ’s millennial kingdom.



The prophet Jeremiah, who spoke of a New Covenant

A New Covenant

The priesthood is always associated with a covenant, just as the Aaronic priesthood was part of the Law Covenant of Israel. Hebrews 7:12 says, “For when there is a change in the priesthood, there is necessarily a change in the law as well.” Even in the Law Covenant of Israel, the promise of eternal life was made if they could fulfill the Law Covenant. When no one was able to fulfill this law, and Israel’s Law Covenant was unable to provide the desired blessings, Paul indicates that it will be replaced by a new Law Covenant. Through it, Christ will bring the blessing, promised to Abraham, to Israel and to “all nations.” Paul shows us in Hebrews 8:6 that “the covenant he (Christ) mediates is better, since it is enacted on better promises.”

We are told about this new covenant at first in Jeremiah 31:31-34, where it says: “Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, declares the LORD. For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the LORD: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And no longer shall each one teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, ‘Know the LORD,’ for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, declares the LORD. For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.”

Here we are shown that the new covenant will be made with Israel, when it is said that “I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah.” Just like it says that the old covenant was made “with their fathers.” Furthermore, it is shown here that it is a Law Covenant, when it is said that the law will be written on their hearts. The difference

with the old Law Covenant is that the new one has a perfect mediator and a perfect priesthood, which is able to raise anyone who is willing to perfection and is able to write the law on their hearts.

Jeremiah also shows that this new covenant will be made “after those days.” He does not specify when these days are, but Paul tells us when this new covenant with Israel will be established. Paul says in Romans 11:25-27, “Lest you be wise in your own sight, I do not want you to be unaware of this mystery, brothers: a partial hardening has come upon Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in. And in this way all Israel will be saved, as it is written, ‘The Deliverer will come from Zion, he will banish ungodliness from Jacob’; ‘and this will be my covenant with them when I take away their sins.’”

Thus, Paul shows that the blessings of the new covenant of Israel await the time when the “fullness of the Gentiles has come in,” that is, all the members of the body of Christ, have proved their loyalty and have passed to the other side of the veil to heaven. Abraham’s “seed of the promise” must be full before it can begin its work of blessing all the nations under the new covenant.

We can also fully trust that our high calling to follow Christ, the calling to become Abraham’s “seed of promise,” which is our “hope,” is still open to us, because this new covenant with Israel has not yet begun, and Israel has not yet turned their hearts toward their Messiah. Nor do we see any other covenant or blessing between the “covenant by sacrifice” to the church and the “new covenant” that we should now proclaim. But we can still trust in the hope given to us, to be “Abraham’s seed, heirs according to the promise.”

And the blessings brought by the seed of promise are not limited to fleshly Israel. The blessings of the new covenant will apply to “all the nations,” as promised to Abraham. Zechariah 8:23 promises us, “Thus says the LORD of hosts: In those days ten men from the nations of every tongue shall take hold of the robe of a Jew, saying, ‘Let us go with you, for we have heard that God is with you.’”

Thus, all nations will partake of these restitution blessings. The blessing of all nations is confirmed in several prophecies. Isaiah 49:6 says, “It is too light a thing that you should be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob and to bring back the preserved of Israel; I will make you as a light for the nations, that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth.”

Misunderstanding of the New Covenant

Throughout the long gospel age, it has been taught in Christianity that the new covenant belongs to the church. This would mean that Israel would no longer have any new opportunities and blessings ahead of them, even though they are the natural seed of Abraham. Because of this, they were persecuted during the history of Christendom, because it was

not believed that God would bless them any more. Likewise, it was not believed that the world, “all the nations,” would have any blessings to look forward to after the “seed of promise” was full. That’s why we are happy that we can see that God will still make a new covenant with Israel and they still have great blessings ahead of them, which were part of God’s promise to Abraham. Likewise, we see that the blessing of the whole world through the new covenant is still future.

God Has Sworn

Thus, we have seen that we have “the full assurance of hope” in those promises that God has sworn, to which Paul refers to in Hebrews chapter 6. So when God desired to show more convincingly to the heirs of the promise the unchangeable character of his purpose, he guaranteed it with an oath.

God has sworn with an oath that he will especially glorify Abraham’s “seed of promise,” through which God’s blessings will come to all the nations. And we are clearly promised that this seed is Christ Jesus as its head and the Church as his body.

God has sworn that in his kingdom, Jesus, as a descendant of David, will sit on the throne as a righteous king and will bless all the people under the New Covenant. And to us, the church, is promised that we will sit with him on his throne.

God has sworn that in God’s kingdom Jesus is the royal high priest after the order of Melchizedek, who will bless all the nations under the new covenant. And God has promised that we, the church, as the body of Christ, are partakers of this royal priesthood.

God has sworn with an oath that through this Abrahamic “seed of promise” He will bless Israel and “all the nations” on earth, all the people who have ever lived on earth.

Such oaths that we have received from God give us the full assurance of hope of our “high calling” to joint-heirship with Christ. And they also give us the full assurance of hope of God’s plan to bless the whole world.

Regarding this great hope, Paul still promises us when we come back to our beginning chapter in Hebrews 6:19, 20, in which he says, “We have this as a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul, a hope that enters into the inner place behind the curtain, where Jesus has gone as a forerunner on our behalf, having become a high priest forever after the order of Melchizedek.” The role of an anchor on a ship is to keep the ship safe, firmly and securely in its place in the midst of the stormy sea. The anchor is hidden under water and cannot be seen with the naked eye. But it sticks firmly to the bottom of the sea and gives assurance that despite the stormy sea around the ship, the ship is safe. Through these oaths that God has sworn, we have a sure and firm anchor of hope in heaven to keep us safe on the stormy seas of the world. If we hold fast to the heavenly things promised in God’s word,

it gives us hope of a great future blessing. It is a very sure hope because it is based on God’s oaths. If we let go of this hope, we are at the mercy of the storms of the world.

Our Trials

We may have many difficult trials on our way where we should show our loyalty to God as we strive faithfully to follow in the footsteps of Christ. We may have various doubts on our way. But these promises sworn by God are absolutely sure and very clear, even though the world does not see them. Understanding, knowledge and the full assurance of such a hope gives us a lot of strength to endure the various trials we experience on our journey. Ephesians 1:17-19 says, “that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him, having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe.”



Melchizedek, a figure of Jesus

God’s Promises

These exceeding great and precious promises that are sworn by God assure us that God will never break these promises that he will not change or improve them in any detail. We can rest in hope, we can be sure of this, that he who began a good work in us will bring it to completion. Does not this knowledge of the unchangeable divine promises give us a confidence, a faith in the Lord which brings with it strong consolation for every trial, every difficulty, every disappointment of this present time? It assures us that all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose; and not only for our glory, honour and immortality, but also for the blessing of the whole world of mankind. Ephesians 3:20, 21, “Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, to him be Glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen.”

Zion Heard — and Was Glad

“Zion heard this and was glad, And the daughters of Judah have rejoiced Because of Your judgments, O LORD” (Psalms 97:8 NASB).

Jesus warned His disciples, “For then there will be a great tribulation, such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world until now, nor ever will. Unless those days had been cut short, no life would have been saved; but for the sake of the elect those days will be cut short” (Matthew 24:21-22 NASB). In the midst of all this trouble and tumult in the world, what should be the attitude of the Lord’s truly consecrated and faithful people? Are they, too, afraid? As the judgments of the Lord fall heavily upon the wayward and disobedient. “They reeled and staggered like a drunken man And were at their wits’ end” (Psalms 107:27 NASB). Are the saints to be dismayed and distressed?

The Psalmist wrote the following encouraging words. “He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will abide in the shadow of the Almighty. I will say to the LORD, “My refuge and my fortress, My God, in whom I trust!” For it is He who delivers you from the snare of the trapper and from the deadly pestilence. He will cover you with His pinions, and under His wings you may seek refuge; His faithfulness is a shield and bulwark. You will not be afraid of the terror by night, or of the arrow that flies by day” (Psalms 91:1-5 NASB).

The believers are hidden from much of the trouble because they “dwell in the secret place of the Most High [represented by the Holy of the typical Tabernacle] and abide under the shadow of the Almighty [as the typical Tabernacle was covered by a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night].” It is because God is their “Refuge and Strength. A very present help in trouble” (Psalms 46:1 NASB).

What gives the believer strength during these trying times? They are privileged to have the following promise. “The secret of the LORD is for those who



Jesus, in Gethsemane

fear Him, And He will make them know His covenant” (Psalms 25:14 NASB).

These dwellers in the secret place of the Most High are provided in these perilous times with a clear knowledge of the Divine Plan, with its times and seasons, which enables them to see both the necessity for the present method of Divine discipline upon the world and also the peaceable fruits of righteousness which shall result therefrom. In the midst of the storm and battle of this great Day of the Lord, they hear the commanding voice of the Lord of Armies, and their hearts rejoice; for they have full confidence in His ability to bring order out of all the confusion. They realise that in the judgment of this day it is the Lord that speaks from Heaven — from the high place of authority and control; therefore, they give thanks at the remembrance of His holiness.

“Sing praise to the LORD, you His godly ones, and give thanks to His holy name. For His anger is but for a moment, His favour is for a lifetime; Weeping may last for the night, but a shout of joy comes in the morning” (Psalms 30:4-5 NASB).

Wholesome Counsel (Proverbs 16:22, 23)

*“There is a way which seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death”
(Proverbs 16:25 NASB).*

It is a solemn warning against self-deception — against pursuing a course of conduct which is radically wrong, being opposed to the spirit and intent of the divine law, and yet which may be made to seem right by a line of false reasoning, suggested by the will of the flesh, and apparently founded upon the Word of God, yet denying its fundamental principles

of righteousness. The delusions of Satan also greatly help along such deceptions, and thus the blinded one is urged along in a course which seems to him to be right, but the end of which is death.

Solomon in previous verse gave the antidote to this self-deception, “Understanding is a fountain of life to one who has it, But the discipline of fools is

folly. The heart of the wise instructs his mouth and adds persuasiveness to his lips” (Proverbs 16:22-23 NASB). These words no doubt came from Solomon’s own experiences thus giving wise advice to his subjects.

Application to Christians

Christians should above all things guard themselves against the folly of this way. To do this, let us ever remember that, even though through Christ we have a reckoned standing of justification before God, the human heart which we still have is “deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked” (Jeremiah 17:9), and that it requires constant watching and purging to enable us to put into practice the Apostle Paul’s rule, “For our proud confidence is this: the testimony of our conscience, that in holiness and godly sincerity, not in fleshly wisdom but in the grace of God, we have conducted ourselves in the world, and especially toward you” (2 Corinthians 1:12 NASB). To do this requires humility, sobriety, godliness. If the heart be puffed up with pride, or is ambitious for vain glory, or if it be selfish, or in any measure intoxicated with the spirit of the world, then beware, for there is great danger of getting into that way that seems right to a man, blinded by his own perverse will or fleshly mind.

The best safeguard which a Christian can have against the snares of Satan, is that understanding which is here advised. “Watch over your heart with all diligence, For from it flow the springs of life” (Proverbs 4:23 NASB). Such understanding is not merely that of the head, but of the heart. specially, “For with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation” (Romans 10:10 NASB). If the heart be wrong, the head will seek to justify it, and in so doing will pervert judgment and truth. Therefore, take heed, and “keep thy heart with all diligence.”

In the Heart

Not only will the “wise and understanding heart” keep the feet in the paths of righteousness, “The mouth of the righteous utters wisdom, and his tongue speaks justice. The law of his God is in his heart; His steps do not slip” (Psalms 37:30-31 NASB). The Apostle Paul answered Festus with the following statement. “I am not out of my mind, most excellent Festus, but I utter words of sober truth” (Acts 26:25 NASB). He had spoken words of wisdom, of kindness, and of love.

How important that the fountain of words should be sweet, refreshing to all within the range of its current! Truly, pleasant words of wisdom, of counsel, and of loving kindness are as a honeycomb, sweet to the soul, and health to the bones in that they refresh and comfort and stimulate courage, and thus fortify the soul and strengthen it to noble deeds.

How different is the picture of the ungodly man! “A worthless man digs up evil, while his words are



Isaiah, the Prophet

like scorching fire. A perverse man spreads strife, and a slanderer separates intimate friends. A man of violence entices his neighbour and leads him in a way that is not good” (Proverbs 16:27-29 NASB). Thus, as Isaiah says, “But the wicked are like the tossing sea, for it cannot be quiet, and its waters toss up refuse and mud. There is no peace, says my God, for the wicked” (Isaiah 57:20-21 NASB).

The Blessings

But blessed is the man that hath learned the right ways of the Lord, and walketh therein with a perfect heart. Such a one, unlike the wicked, who go about digging up evil, delights himself in doing good, and in speaking forth the words of truth and soberness. He is slow to anger, and studies carefully how to rule his own spirit, which is surely a great work and worthy of the ambition and effort of every Christian (Proverbs 16:32). How blessed are the closing years of a long life, devoted to this most worthy end of ruling one’s own spirit in harmony with the principles and precepts of the Word of God.

The hallowed influences of ripened Christian graces are manifest to every beholder. Truly “A grey head is a crown of glory; It is found in the way of righteousness” (Proverbs 16:31 NASB). But if not, it is but a monument of folly and its ripened evil fruitage is most undesirable.

The statement of Proverbs 16:33, “The lot is cast into the lap, but its every decision is from the LORD.” This is to the effect that God’s overruling power takes cognizance of even those things which men may regard as mere chance, and that nothing can come to pass without His knowledge and permission, and that eventually all things will be overruled to the accomplishment of His purposes.

The Value of Knowledge

“Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may know the things freely given to us by God” (1 Corinthians 2:12 NASB).

The desire for knowledge was awakened very early in the mind of man, but the cost of obtaining this from unauthorized channels has been heavy. Solomon wrote — “Because in much wisdom there is much grief and increasing knowledge results in increasing pain” (Ecclesiastes 1:18 NASB).

This was experienced by Eve in the Garden of Eden. The tree of knowledge of good and evil (Genesis 2:17), in the midst of the garden, was observed by Eve as possessing a quality to make one wise. There are right and wrong channels for learning wisdom and knowledge, and our first parents learned this early in the experience of life; the Lord permitting this in order to teach valuable lessons.

The First Lesson

Taking the Biblical account of the early history of man, it is stated that Satan enticed and deceived Eve to obtain knowledge the forbidden way. God had said, “Ye shall surely die” if disobedient (Genesis 2:9), but the serpent (Satan) said, “Ye shall not surely die.” Whereby it has since been proved that by hearkening to the commands of God is the beginning of knowledge and wisdom, as expressed in later times by the sages of the past. “The fear [reverence] of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge” (Proverbs 1:7); a knowledge that will lift out of disaster to eternal life, through the way God has appointed.

But man from earliest times sought out many inventions, as Solomon observed. “Behold, this is the only [reason for it that] I have found: God made man upright, but they [men and women] have sought out many devices [for evil]” (Ecclesiastes 7:29 AMPC). Now we live at a time in the history of mankind when these inventions and devices are increasing at an alarming rate, filling the hearts of those who invent them with fear and apprehension.

Increase in Knowledge

“Volume of knowledge is doubling every 12 hours, the doubling rate used to be 25 years in 1945. Speed with which technology is progressing is the driver which is upending our careers, transforming lives, and disrupting economies” (Amitabh Ray, October 22, 2020).

Another great man — a sage and prophet — foretold this of our time and tells us also when this would happen in the history of mankind, and the effect of it upon the world (Daniel 12:1-4). The prophet Daniel, after having in previous chapters traced the prophetic history of mankind through the power of inspiration, was instructed, “But as for you, Daniel, conceal these

words and seal up the book until the end of time; many will go back and forth, and knowledge will increase” (Daniel 12:4 NASB). The messenger continues, “Go your way, Daniel, for these words are concealed and sealed up until the end time. Many will be purged, purified and refined, but the wicked will act wickedly; and none of the wicked will understand, but those who have insight will understand” (Daniel 12:9-10 NASB).

Daniel foretold, more than 2,000 years ago, the present, sudden increase of knowledge, quick travel and invention; and with it will come (and has come — is now present) trouble, distress, sorrows. Truly Solomon was correct when reading from the Amplified Version, “For in much [human] wisdom is much vexation, and he who increases knowledge increases sorrow” (Ecclesiastes 1:18 AMPC).

Jesus’ Warning

Approximately 500 years later Jesus also foretold that this increase of knowledge would bring with it a time of trouble and distress. “There will be signs in sun and moon and stars, and on the earth dismay among nations, in perplexity at the roaring of the sea and the waves, men fainting from fear and the expectation of the things which are coming upon the world; for the powers of the heavens will be shaken” (Luke 21:25-26 NASB).

The prophet Jeremiah was given a wonderful assurance by God that we can share. “‘For I know the plans that I have for you,’ declares the LORD, ‘plans for welfare and not for calamity to give you a future and a hope’” (Jeremiah 29:11 NASB). But happy are those who know that beyond this acute distress of nations, the power of the Lord will intervene and bring deliverance to distressed and despairing mankind. He will bring peace and security to all who submit to His righteous control; His kingdom shall



The Prophet Daniel

rise upon the ruin of the old order, and shall increase to the uttermost parts of the earth, and His will shall be done on earth as it is done in heaven.

The prophet Daniel said, “At the time of the end” of the age “the wise shall understand.” These know and appreciate the revealed plan of God, and the glorious things reserved in heaven for the followers of the Lord, and the happiness and harmony which will be established on a perfected earth among mankind, when national boundaries cease to exist, and when love, justice, and truth shall prosper.

The Lord Gives Wisdom

Solomon tells of the source of our wisdom. “For the LORD gives wisdom; From His mouth come knowledge and understanding” (Proverbs 2:6 NASB). God gives the following promise, “He preserves the way of His godly ones. Then you will discern righteousness and justice and equity and every good course. For wisdom will enter your heart and knowledge will be pleasant to your soul” (Proverbs 2:8-10 NASB). All faithful Christians want to know of this knowledge and instruction which brings comfort and joy into many lives, as the proverb says, “Wise men lay up knowledge.” Wisdom also declares, “Receive my instruction, and not silver; and knowledge rather than choice gold” (Proverbs 10:14, 8:10 KJV).

The knowledge of God and His Word is of primary importance; it is the basis of faith and obedience. A living faith must have a foundation in the Divine revelation, the Bible. It alone shows what righteousness is and that there is none righteous, no, not one. It alone shows how sin came into the world, and that personal faith in a personal Saviour is the only ground for a hope of a personal salvation.

Knowledge is the lamp which guides the way and shows the will of God. As the Apostle Paul says, “We have not ceased to pray for you and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so that you will walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; strengthened with all power, according to His glorious might, for the attaining of all steadfastness and patience; joyously” (Colossians 1:9-11 NASB). Here the Apostle Paul twice emphasizes the importance of an exact knowledge of God’s will.

Filled with an Exact Knowledge

It is important to increase and be filled with an exact knowledge of the Lord’s will, accompanied by thorough wisdom and discernment in spiritual things. Although the apostle says in verses 4 and 5 that the Colossian Christians had faith and love, and hope, these things were not the burden of his prayer, but the increase of exact knowledge, wisdom, understanding, patience and endurance. This evidently gives proper balance to the exercise of faith, love and hope. Much wisdom



King Solomon

and spiritual discernment is necessary after we have received knowledge, for there are many mixtures of truth and error presented in large and small parcels. Even love needs directing by knowledge. Hence the Apostle Paul prays for the Philippian Christians, “And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in real knowledge and all discernment, so that you may approve the things that are excellent, in order to be sincere and blameless until the day of Christ” (Philippians 1:9-10 NASB).

A knowledge of God’s will requires more than the knowledge that God has a will. It means a knowledge, an acquaintance, and fellowship with the Spirit and character of God, which invigorates us and causes us to do the things God does, in the measure that lies within our power or position. The influence of this tends to perfect the New Creature into closer and closer conformity to the pattern of Christ Jesus. The apostle gives this thought of intimate association and fellowship with Christ when he says, “That I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death; in order that I may attain to the resurrection from the dead” (Philippians 3:10-11 NASB).

In Colossians 3:10, the Apostle Paul again shows the importance of knowledge. “And have put on the new self who is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him.” The New Creature, or “new man” is refreshed, renewed, invigorated by knowledge after the image of God who created Christ. The apostle tells in this third chapter what things to put off, and what things to put on. The former customs and works of the old, natural man are put off and new characteristics put on, which begins at consecration, when we yielded to God and righteousness and the supreme aim of development we see to be love. Without knowledge we could accomplish nothing, knowledge shows us the will of God on the one hand, and the selfishness and vanity of our fallen human nature on the other. It shows us what things to put on; it shows us the Lord’s characteristics and principles, what His spirit or disposition is which we are to imitate — renewed

by knowledge after the image of God who created it. A New Creature is being created, not a renewing of the old nature.

Our New Will

We have the new will from the beginning, but it requires some time to transform our minds, for our minds tend to continue to bend earthward; gradually we see things more and more from the Divine standpoint, and faith and obedience increases. The new man is God's workmanship. Although this creative work is not yet completed, nevertheless we are assured that God is able and will complete this by various means and experiences of His own choosing to suit each individual. It is for us to respond, "Thy will be done," and grow in grace and knowledge.

"For if, after they have escaped the defilements of the world by the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and are overcome, the last state has become worse for them than the first" (2 Peter 2:20 NASB). Furthermore, it is the power of this knowledge of God and the application of it that enables us to escape the pollutions of the world and strengthens the determination to walk worthily in the Christian way which is pleasing to God, and we are thus able to bring forth fruit by every good work. In other words, the right use of this knowledge encourages us in the work of character development, leading to praise and giving of thanks to God, our Father, for His glorious power through this knowledge, which stimulates us in every direction. The strong conviction of this strengthens us to endure cheerfully all things that God permits to come into or touch our lives, thus producing also patience and longsuffering, endurance. So great is this change in our lives, and in its pursuits, hopes and aims, etc., that it is referred to as a deliverance from darkness to light; indeed, the truth of God is always represented as light, and His people as children of light.

The Apostle Peter says, "Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord; seeing that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own

glory and excellence" (2 Peter 1:2-3 NASB). If we had no knowledge of these "all things" they would be valueless to us; likewise, the precious promises which are another means to an end — the attainment of the divine nature — would not accomplish their purpose if we had no knowledge of them, for no knowledge means no faith in them.

The Fear of God

The Apostle Paul also says that a knowledge of the promises cleanses us "from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God" (2 Corinthians 7:1). What would be our position and character if we had no knowledge of these? God gives knowledge for a purpose; He establishes our faith by granting us knowledge, and then faith takes hold upon things eternal and invisible. Jesus states "you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free" (John 8:32 NASB). This knowledge of the truth also gives freedom, liberty.

The increase of general knowledge is greatly stirring the world, filling many hearts with fear and foreboding. Knowledge, enlightenment, is causing especially the backward nations to throw off the shackles of oppression, bondage and ignorance, and to claim the liberty which is theirs by right — the liberty to live decent lives and receive a share of the common bounties and blessings enjoyed now by more advanced nations. This diffusion of knowledge is symbolically referred to as lightning flashes. "His [God's] lightnings enlightened the world; the earth [society] saw, and trembled" (Psalm 97:4 KJV).

It has been truthfully said that knowledge is a means to an end, and the ultimate end is eternal life. Jesus said, "In this consists the life of the ages, in knowing Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent" (John 17:3, Weymouth). Increasing in the knowledge of God is another way of pleasing Him; He is pleased with those who desire to understand what He is, what He does, and what He purposes and commands.

We Only Partially See

God does not always give us complete understanding of all details of a given instruction or experience, but the outline merely, at times as in the case of Abraham. God told Abraham of His purpose to bless all nations through him and his offspring, but many details were omitted, and thus in Abraham's experience much room was left for the exercise of faith, and gradually his faith was strengthened and perfected by experience and contact with God. It was a developed faith, and earned for him three titles — "Friend of God," "the father of the faithful," and "heir of the world" — because he showed his faith by his works.

The opposite of knowledge is ignorance and foolishness. Proverbs 15:14 states, "The mind of the intelligent seeks knowledge, But the mouth of fools feeds on folly." Psalm 32:9 reads, "Be not so as the



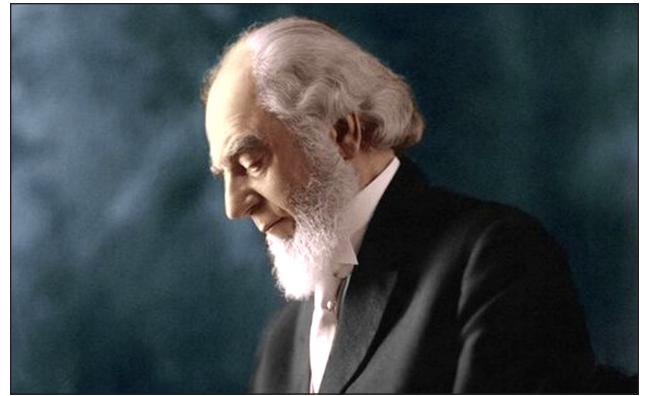
The Apostle Peter

horse, or as the mule, which have no understanding,” and Isaiah said, speaking for God, “My people are gone into captivity because they have no knowledge” (Isaiah 5:13 KJV). Jesus also accused the scribes and Pharisees, “Woe to you lawyers! For you have taken away the key of knowledge; you yourselves did not enter, and you hindered those who were entering” (Luke 11:52 NASB). The people were famished for a proper knowledge of God and correct interpretations of His requirements. The religious leaders had plans and theories of their own which they considered better and wiser than the dispensational truths proclaimed by Jesus and the apostles. Even so, now, as then, ignorance, rather than enmity, is the cause of opposition to the Present Truth of God’s Word and advancing purposes. It was in ignorance that the Jewish leaders crucified the Lord of glory.

Ignorance is the excuse of much of the wrong that had been done in the world amongst the Lord’s followers all down the age. For instance, the Apostle Paul said, even though I was formerly a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent aggressor. Yet I was shown mercy because I acted ignorantly in unbelief (1 Timothy 1:13 NASB). Millions of people are in bondage to Great Babylon for the want of knowledge. “My people are gone into captivity because they have no knowledge,” is still true, as it was in the days of Israel. Truly, spiritual life is quenched because of fear of men and their organisations. “Where there is no vision, the people perish” (Proverbs 29:18 KJV).

Present Truth

What would be our position today except for the “vision” of Present Truth? The knowledge of this has delivered us from the bondage of Babylon the Great. The truth has made us free, giving freedom and liberty in Christ, freedom from fear, freedom from formalism and sectarianism, freedom to think for ourselves, freedom to believe that truth is revealed to all faithful Christians without the medium of a clergy class, or self-appointed priesthood organisations. Only as each



Present Truth is a great privilege.

member enters into the freedom of the truth and is separated from every other head but Christ can there be unity of one faith and one hope, for “One is your Master, and all ye are brethren.” This unity is characterized by one eternal spirit, the spirit of love, which dwells in God and Christ and is being created in every member of the Body of Christ.

What would we be doing today without Present Truth? Where would we be if we had no knowledge of the light for the last days — dispensational truth? Even the best and most enthusiastic work that is being done apart from the Present Truth movement must and does fall far short of that full satisfaction and spiritual discernment and transforming power in the life, which only truth can accomplish, and which can be seen now in the revelation of the harmony of the Bible. But one missing this great boon and continuing to embrace the mixture of truth and error must still have a certain amount of perplexity, uncertainty, and dissatisfaction in the mind and outlook concerning the destiny of mankind as a whole. But knowledge of Present Truth has given us freedom from this — the freedom of sonship. As Jesus said, “No longer do I call you slaves, for the slave does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I have heard from My Father I have made known to you” (John 15:15 NASB).

Church’s Justification

The Bible Teachings (Part Twenty-Three) – Covenants, Mediator, Ransom, Sin Offering, Atonement

Church’s Justification Solely on Ground of Jesus’ Merit

We are accustomed to say that we are saved from wrath and made the children of God, not for any work or merit or righteousness on our part, but purely, solely, by the grace, the favour, of God; and that any attempt on our part to proffer to the lord good works, would be rejected by Him because as “children of wrath” we can do no work that God could accept, being sinners and under just condemnation. Hence

the forgiveness of our sins, our reconciliation to the Father, must be purely and solely upon the grounds of Jesus’ merit and sacrifice — His ransom sacrifice.

This is all exactly true and just as we have presented it for years, and as we still hold and present it. This grace this forgiveness, this reconciliation, is what we Scripturally term “justification by faith” — not by works! However, after being justified by faith, after being reckoned of God as freed from Adamic imperfection, through the applied merit of our



Jesus, our Redeemer

Redeemer, we are on a new footing entirely, where we may do works acceptable to God, and, more than this, where we are required to do those works. Cancellation of sin, the legal covering of our blemishes, is made operative to us only when (acting upon our faith justification) we become followers of our Redeemer and covenant to walk in His steps. Then we received the begetting of the holy spirit and started as embryo New Creatures, as prospective members of the Body of Christ, the Royal Priesthood. “No man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron” (Hebrews 5:4). But when we responded to the Divine and entered into a covenant of sacrifice with Christ (Psalm 50:5) to be dead with Him, to suffer with Him, and when the holy spirit was received as God’s acceptance of this contract, thenceforth works, self-denials, sufferings, faithful endurance, were expected, yea, were required.

Works Required After Justification

Everyone who thus becomes a branch in the True Vine obtains a possession without works, without merits of his own but, having become a branch, it is required of him that he should bring forth fruit. Did not our Lord explain this matter, saying, “I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit He taketh away (cuts it off from fellowship in the Vine); and every branch that beareth fruit, He purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit” (John 15:1, 2). So, our justification was through faith a free gift from God through Christ Jesus our Lord; but from the moment of our sanctification, it has been our privilege to bring forth fruit and to labour while it is called today and to be servants and ambassadors of God. We are God’s servants doing a preparatory work in the interest of the New Covenant which God hath promised from long ago, and of which our Lord Jesus, at His death, became a surety or guarantor (Hebrews 7:22), and which is soon to be sealed with the merit of His sacrifice, “His blood,” after it shall have served its present purposes of justifying the household of faith and thus giving them the opportunity of suffering with Christ and of entering into His glory. In a word,

those justified by faith and sanctified in Christ Jesus are required to work out their own salvation with fear and trembling, while God works in them by His holy spirit, the promises of His Word and His providences.

Bodies Prepared for Sacrifice

There is, therefore, according to the Scriptures, in God’s sight a labour, a work, a sacrifice, possible for the Church and a merit in the faithful performance thereof. Of our Lord Jesus it is written, “A body hast thou prepared me” “for the suffering of death” (Hebrews 10:5). The bodies of believers born in imperfection, by reason of the fall, are not fit for sacrifice. With our minds we desire to do the will of God, but our bodies are imperfect. Instead of preparing for us special bodies for sacrifice the Lord provides through Jesus’ sacrifice a justifying merit which covers, in His sight, all the blemishes and imperfections of those who have the spirit of loyalty and obedience and who undertake the consecration vow as members of the Body of Christ. The Body of Jesus, specially prepared for the sacrifice, was holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners. Our bodies are made holy and acceptable to God, not actually, nor by a covenant, nor by a mediator, but by a Redeemer, “through faith in His blood.”

Jesus’ Merit a Willing Mind

The merit in our Lord was that of the willing mind, the obedient heart which delighted to do the Father’s will, in the perfect body in which it was tested to “obedience even unto death, even to the death of the cross.” With us also, the thing that is meritorious in the sight of the Father is the willing mind, the obedient heart, though in an imperfect body, reckoned perfect through faith in the precious blood. We are assured that our trial, our testing, will not be according to our flesh, but according to our renewed wills, minds, hearts. The various members of the Body of Christ vary greatly as respects physical conditions, blemishes, heredity, environment, etc. In every case the Divine tests are not to prove our flesh, which is conceded to be actually imperfect and unworthy, but which is ignored in this testing and counted dead. It is thus as New Creatures that God is testing us, and to us He says, “Ye are (reckoned) not in the flesh, but in the spirit, if so be that the spirit of God dwell in you” (Romans 8:9). And again, “Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh” (2 Corinthians 5:16). God knows US according to the spirit, the will, the heart, the intent.

The New Creature Only Does Acceptable Works

It is the New Creature which does acceptable works which will be rewarded in the Kingdom. And the rewards will vary as shown by our Lord’s parables of the Pounds and the Talents; and as shown in the Apostle’s words, “As star differeth from star in glory, so also will be The Resurrection, the Church Resurrection. In conclusion then — as men we cannot

commend ourselves to God by any works possible to us, because we are all imperfect and our works would be imperfect. But as New Creatures our willing services and sacrifices are “holy and acceptable to God” and our reasonable service.

Our Merit Not Demanded by Justice

If, then, it be true that the Church has a merit as a New Creation; that her sacrifice is holy and acceptable in the sight of God, why should we declare that all the merit of the redemptive plan is the merit of Jesus, and that no portion of that merit which secures the cancellation of the world’s sin is from the Church?

Jesus’ Sacrifice Sufficient

It is not because the sacrifice of the Church has no merit but because that merit is not needed, and therefore not called for, in Divine arrangement, that it is not thus acceptable.

Our Lord’s sacrifice was a sufficient price for the sins of the whole world; and it pleased the Father to allow that one sacrifice to be efficacious for the sins of the whole world, instead of allowing merit of ours to commingle with it. The commingling of the merit of the Church with the merit of the Lord might be misunderstood by angels or men to signify that the merit of Jesus was insufficient and needed to be supplemented with the merit of the sacrifice of the Church. It was not needed, because, in the Divine arrangement, only the one man, Adam, was on trial — only he was directly sentenced to death. None of his race was so sentenced. We all merely share in the effects of his death sentence.

Use of Jesus’ Blood Before Sealing New Covenant

When in due time God sent forth His Son with a specially prepared body to be Adam’s Redeemer, the merit of His sacrifice was sufficient as an offset for Adam’s sin, and hence sufficient to cover all the effects of that sin in Adam’s race. There was, therefore, in our Lord’s sacrifice a sufficiency of merit for the sins of the whole world. Before using it for the world, before applying it for the sealing of the New Covenant, with Israel and all nations through Israel, our Lord Jesus, in harmony with the Divine program from before the foundation of the world, used this merit upon the household of faith, “Even as many as the Lord our God shall call” (Acts 2:39). After giving us the benefit of it and requiring it of us again He (and we associated with Him) will apply His merit on behalf of “all the people.” We with Him, and under Him as our Head, will be the great Mediator between God and men — the world — the Mediator of the New Covenant of which we are now, with Him, ministers and servants engaged in the preparatory operations. It pleased the Father and therefore pleases all who are in harmony with Him that in our Lord Jesus all fulness should dwell — that the full credit of the redemptive work should

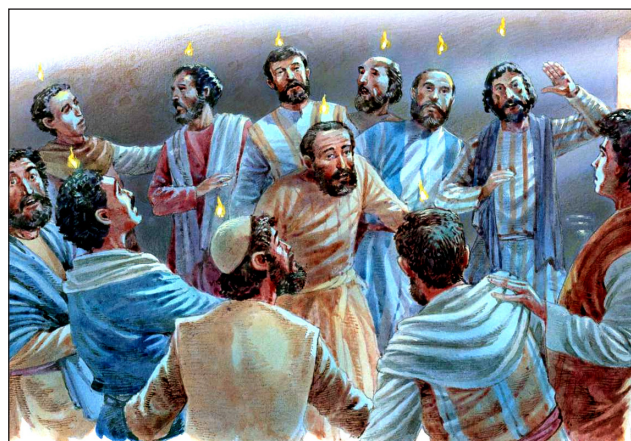
thus be in Him, and that the merit of our sacrificing should not be counted in, as it is not necessary. As all things are of the Father, so, according to His purpose, all things shall be of the Son, and we by Him, and the world by Him.

“Jesus’ Blood” and “the Blood of the New Covenant”

The Scriptures repeatedly mention the fact that we are justified by faith in His blood — in the blood of Jesus. They also speak of the blood of the Covenant wherewith we were sanctified (Hebrews 10:29). And again, in Hebrews 13:20, 21 we read, “Through the blood of the everlasting Covenant make you perfect.” How shall we understand this? Do these Scriptures all three refer to the same thing?

No, these Scriptures do not refer to the same thing. The first one relates to us as natural men, sinners, before we made our consecration to the Lord and became New Creatures. We, as members of the fallen race, were first justified by faith through the merit of Christ’s blood. This justification lifted us from the plane of sin and death condemnation, to a standing with God of life and harmony. From this standpoint we were invited to become joint-sacrificers with Jesus Christ our Lord- sharers with Him in His great work for mankind, namely, the sealing of the New Covenant with His blood, and ultimately the blessing of the world during the Millennium under the conditions of that New Covenant.

So, then, it was after we had been justified by faith in the blood of Jesus that we were sanctified, set apart, consecrated through or in connection with “the blood of the New Covenant” — by our consecration to be dead with Christ, to be buried with Him by baptism into His sacrificial death — to drink of His cup of suffering, ignominy, shame, death — to partake of or share His blood — set apart or devoted to the serving of the New Covenant for Israel and the world. It was on account of our entering into this great engagement that the Heavenly Father sanctified us or set us apart, separated us from the world by begetting us to a new nature through His holy spirit. “Ye are not of the world, even as I am not of the world” (John 17:16).



Pentecost, when the offering of Jesus was applied to the Church.

Blood of Everlasting Covenant

The text cited in the last question, “The blood of the everlasting Covenant make you perfect,” refers not to a perfecting of the flesh — not to anything which refers to us as natural men. It refers to us as New Creatures who have been begotten of the holy spirit because, after we were justified through faith in the blood of Jesus, we presented our bodies living sacrifices, holy and acceptable to God as part and parcel of our Lord Jesus’ sacrifice and, under His Headship, to be associated with Him in His sacrifice for the sealing of the New Covenant; and by and by to be associated with Him in the glorious work of establishing that New Covenant, after it shall have been sealed for the blessing of Israel and the world. It is through our obedience to our Sacrificial Vow to “be dead with Christ” as joint-sacrificers in connection with the sealing of the New Covenant that we may become members of His Body, the Vine.

It is this sacrificing with Him which will make us perfect as New Creatures and give us a share with our lord in His glory, honour and immortality. Thus, we see that justification by faith in the blood of Jesus is the first step, by which believers separate themselves from the world according to the will of God”; and that participation with our Lord in His sacrifice is the second step of sanctification. There could be no such step of sanctification, no perfecting as New Creatures of the “divine nature” had it not been that God granted us the privilege of sharing with our lord in His sacrificial death, in His work of sealing the New Covenant with His blood.

Majority of Christians Fail to Consecrate

The majority of Christians, of course, have gone no further than the first step of justification through faith in the blood of Jesus. Failing to go on, to “present their bodies living’ sacrifices” and to thus share with Christ in His sacrificial death, they are not privileged to understand “the mystery of God” (Revelation 10:7), which is “Christ in you the hope of glory” (Colossians 1:27) — your membership in the Body of Christ, your share with Him in present sufferings and future glory.

Sitting at Jesus’ Side

When the disciples James and John said to the Master, “Lord, grant that we may sit, one on Thy right hand, and the other on Thy left hand, in Thy Kingdom,” they were already consecrated, in the sense of agreeing to take up the cross, to follow Jesus in the narrow way. But the Father had not yet accepted their consecration, and set them apart, and did not do so until Pentecost. Our lord Jesus, therefore, addressed them not as New Creatures, but as justified men, when He answered their request, saying, “Ye know not what ye ask! Can ye drink of the cup that I drink of and be baptised with the baptism (into sacrificial death) that I am baptised with?” (Mark 10:37, 38).



The Cup (Jesus’ blood) and bread (Jesus’ body).

Drinking of “Cup” vs. Justification vs Faith

Here we see that drinking of the cup — drinking and partaking of the blood of the New Covenant shed for us and for all for the remission of sins and being baptised into Christ’s baptism into a sacrificial death — was a wholly different matter from justification by faith. They were already justified by faith, but could not sit on the throne unless they would be sanctified by participation in Christ’s death.

One Mediator, Jesus

St. Paul declares that there is “one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself a ransom for all” (1 Timothy 2:5, 6). Should we understand this one Mediator, the man Christ Jesus, to refer to the complete Christ, Head and Body, as when the Apostle declares that the Church shall ultimately “come unto the full stature of a man in Christ” (Ephesians 4:13)? And again, He declares that God is selecting some from amongst the Jews and some from amongst the Gentiles, “that of the twain He might make one new man” (Ephesians 2:15).

God Foreknew Church as Part of Mediator

We admit that such an interpretation as the question suggests has considerable force, and that much could be said in its favour, inasmuch as the Apostle tells us that God, who foreknew our lord Jesus, foreknew us also, and hence, foreknew the share He had provided for the Church in the “filling up of that which is behind of the afflictions of The Christ.”

“Man Christ Jesus” Refers to Jesus Only

However, this is not the interpretation of this text which appeals to us as being probably the Apostle’s thought. While the matter is concededly an open question, we prefer the thought that the Apostle by the words, “The man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself,” refers to our Lord Jesus personally and not at all to the Church, His Body.

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On the Covenants, Mediator, Ransom,
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This book was published by the Berean Bible Institute in the 1970's and sets out the teachings from the Bible on topics which so eluded many in the Christian world. 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

Australian General Convention

A hybrid convention is being conducted at
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<https://meetings.diapad.com/room/australianconvention>

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Choosing Happiness

It was a rainy, humid day: the mother of all bad hair days. I was riding on a bus downtown to go to work. The windows on the bus were covered in condensation so thick you couldn't see outside. Everyone was wilting. I was sitting next to a man in a business suit and didn't pay much attention until we both got off at the same stop and walked to the same newsstand to get a morning paper.

The man running the stand was obviously having a bad day. He was rude, abrupt and unsmiling as we purchased our papers, which served only to add more gloom to my day. The businessman caught my eye and smiled. He then proceeded to smile brightly, thank the newsstand proprietor for the paper and for being open on such a morning to make sure we were able to get our papers. In short, he expressed his appreciation for something most of us would take for granted.

The man running the newsstand responded only with a grunt and a sour expression. The businessman then pleasantly wished him a good day. As we turned away, I asked this man why he had continued to be pleasant to the newsman when he obviously didn't care about and didn't respond to his expression of appreciation and friendliness. The businessman grinned at me and said, "Why would I let someone else control what I say and what I feel or what kind of day I'm going to have?"

We then separated to go to our respective workplaces. To this day, I don't know who that businessman was, where he worked, or anything else about him. I never saw him again, even though I looked for him on the bus on other days. He appeared briefly in my life and disappeared just as quickly. I don't even remember what he looked like. But I've never forgotten the words he said or the way his smile seemed like a shaft of sunlight on a gloomy day. That was a good 25 years ago, but the impact it had on my life has endured. I never had a chance to thank him personally, but the way I choose to look at life because of those words is his legacy to me and my thanks to him.

We cannot control people and situations that comes to us, but we can always control our response to them.

Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you (Ephesians 4:32 NASB).

O How He Loves

One there is above all others:
O how He loves!
His is love beyond a brother's:
O how He loves!
Earthly friends may fail or leave us,
One day soothe, the next day grieve us;
But this Friend will ne'er deceive us:
O how He loves.

'Tis eternal life to know Him:
O how He loves!
Think, O think how much we owe Him:
O how He loves!
With His precious blood He bought us,
In the wilderness He sought us,
To His fold He safely brought us:
O how He loves!

We have found a Friend in Jesus:
O how He loves!
'Tis His great delight to bless us:
O how He loves!
How our hearts delight to hear Him
Bid us dwell in safety near Him!
Why should we distrust or fear Him?
O how He loves!

Through His name we are forgiven:
O how He loves!
Backward shall our foes be driven:
O how He loves!
Best of blessings He'll provide us,
Naught but good shall e'er betide us,
Safe to glory He will guide us:
O how He loves!

Lyrics: Marianne Nunn (1778-1847)

Music: Hubert Platt Main (1839-1925)



**"For God so loved the world, that He gave His
only begotten Son, that whoever believes in
Him shall not perish, but have eternal life"
(John 3:16 NASB).**

