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Nine Steps to the Kingdom

Any time you set out for a destination, you need to have directions or a road map. Ours will begin in the book of Matthew chapter five and is commonly known as the Beatitudes.

First Step

Our first step on this journey to the Kingdom is written in Matthew 5:3 “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” What does it mean to be poor in spirit? It is worthwhile to examine some thoughts found in the following scriptures:

Let us begin with Matthew 19:13-14. “Then some children were brought to Him so that He might lay His hands on them and pray; and the disciples rebuked them. But Jesus said, Let the children alone, and do not hinder them from coming to me; for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.”

You might ask yourself, what would these children have to do with me being poor in the spirit? Well let us look at it from this angle. Much more than happy, happiness usually proceeds from outward causes. Attitude is necessary to receive the Father’s blessings. In this case the Greek word signifies extremely poor, humble minded, therefore more teachable. The lesson is that Christians should emulate the good qualities of a child: humility, obedience, trust, compliance, teachableness. We should minimize our faults as much as possible by overcoming them and maximize our good character points by developing them. God will not accept one possessed of the spirit of pride and selfish ambition! Not necessarily poor in pocket, or in intellectual gifts, are the very proud in spirit. This trait is essentially the doorway to other blessings.

The Apostle Peter was a poor uneducated fisherman who had no ambitions but was rich in hope of the coming Messiah. We look to the account found in John 1:37-39 concerning Peter’s introduction to Jesus. Starting with verse 37, “And the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus. And Jesus turned, and beheld them following, and said to them,

What do you seek? And they said to Him, Rabbi (which translated means teacher), where are you staying? He said to them **Come and you will see.** They came therefore and saw where He was staying; and they stayed with him that day, for it was about the tenth hour.”

One of the two who heard Jesus speak and followed Him was Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother. He first found his own brother Simon and said to him, “We have found the Messiah (which translated means Christ). He brought him to Jesus, Jesus looked at him, and said, You are Simon the son of Jona you shall be called Cephas (which is translated Peter)” (John 1: 40-42).

It’s clear that at this point Jesus had made His selection of Peter to be a disciple, and eventually to be an Apostle. Was he selected because he was educated, or important, or that he was influential? No, he was selected because of his faith. This does not say that those who possess these afore mentioned qualities could not have a place in the church class, but that it would be much harder! We refer you to Jesus words found in Matthew 19:23-26. This was right after Jesus had the talk with the rich young ruler, “And Jesus said to His disciples, Truly I say to you, it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. And again I say to you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God” and when the disciples heard this, they were very astonished and said, then who can be saved?

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Jesus said to them, “With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.” So, the essence of this first step is to be rich in faith so that you may please God.

Step Two

The next essential quality mentioned by our lord is related to the first one. In Matthew 5:4; “Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.”

Does this mean to be sorrowful for oneself? Of course not! Again, this is deferring to others who either have lost a loved one or undergoing severe trials in their own life.

Let us refer to a couple of scriptures to get a better understanding of mourning. Isaiah 61:2-3, This chapter is based on the exaltation of the afflicted. Starting with verse 2, “To proclaim the favorable year of the Lord. And the day of vengeance of our God. To comfort all who mourn, to grant those who mourn in Zion, giving them a garland instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the mantle of praise instead of a spirit of fainting.” At the First Advent, Jesus omitted the last half of verse 2 about the day of God’s vengeance.

He was directing his comments and comforting message at that time, and ever since, to his followers, to the Church. But this prophecy will continue, for it also extends to the world of mankind in the future as they come out of the prison house of death (Luke 4: 18, 19). Jesus’ message was an uplifting, exhilarating prophecy for those who recognized they were being oppressed with sin and sickness (physically, mentally, and morally) and who were looking for rescue. We should reach out to those who are undergoing present trials, and comfort them! Those who are sympathetic, who realize their own imperfections should have great pity on the less fortunate.

We can cultivate this type of grace by frequently comforting those who are in desperate need of consoling. Remember “Beauty for ashes and the oil of joy for mourning” (Psalms 30:5).

Jesus teaches us this principal of consoling one another in John 16:20-21. In His lesson He uses the picture of anguish turning into joy. Verse 20 “Truly, truly I say to you, that you will weep and lament, but the world will rejoice; you will be sorrowful, but your sorrow will be turned to joy. Whenever a woman is in travail she has sorrow, because her hour has come; but when she gives birth to the child, she remembers the anguish no more, for the joy that a child has been born into the world. Therefore, you to now have sorrow, but I will see you again, and your heart will rejoice, and no one takes your joy away from you.”

We should cultivate the sympathetic spirit. Frequently thinking of others, their interests, trials and difficulties to seek to give a lending hand and to do good unto all men as we have opportunity, especially to the household of faith (Galatians 6:10).



Jesus, presenting the Sermon on the Mount

Step Three

Jesus places great emphasis on this next instruction in Matthew 5:5, “Blessed are the gentle, for they shall inherit the earth.” Webster’s dictionary defines meekness as “submission to the divine will, patience and gentleness from moral and religious motives.” Patient submission to the divine will is impossible without the first step of humility. Patient submission can only be developed by those who mourn. How many times in your life have you been given a sharp rebuke when a gentle reply or a soft touch on the arm would have accomplished so much more in response? To be gentle and kind is worth far more than gold or silver. This characteristic of being gentle is one that is absolutely necessary to become a teacher for mankind in the kingdom, and now for that matter!

A profound statement is made by Jesus in Matthew 11:29, 30. “Take my yoke upon you, and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart; and you shall find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and My load is light.” This invitation followed Jesus’ prayer in verses 25 and 26, where he thanked the Father for hiding these things from the worldly wise and revealing them to “babes.” Those with humble dispositions make good disciples, just as Jesus’ humble disposition made him do the Father’s will. We must become gentle in order to make our calling and election sure! In Revelation 2:10 Jesus says; “Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.” He does not say its guaranteed, but He says be faithful until death! You have to do your part in this walk. This is not once saved always saved! You must be faithful until your last cognizant breath! And being gentle is a big part of this requirement!

Step Four

“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied” (Matthew 5:6). There are two sub-steps in this statement. First there is hunger, and then there is thirst for what? Righteousness. When you hunger it applies not only to your physical but also to spiritual life. No one can

have this hunger unless they have had to a certain extent the previous four characteristics.

You have cravings for sympathy and fellowship; cravings for ease and comfort; cravings for name and fame; and cravings for pleasure. This hungering if applied wrongly can lead to a path that cannot find the fellowship with the Lord! God allows us to become very hungry before He gives us the truth. Unfortunately, many of the Lord's people reach for His table without first having a keen appetite and therefore are only satisfied with the basic things of the truth. They stay at the milk level of the word without progressing on to the strong meat stage. This can be due to a lack of proper fellowship, and little or no personal study!

You have to approach the throne of grace with a ravishing appetite! There is an excellent article in Reprint 5218 concerning and explaining this matter, and we quote, "Those who hunger and thirst after righteousness shall have afflictions" (and you may ask why), the scriptures tell us that all who will live godly lives shall suffer (Acts 14:22, Timothy 3:12, Romans 5:3-5). The reason why this is true is that the world is traveling in the opposite direction to righteousness — in the way of selfishness and gratification of the flesh. "If any man loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him" (1 John 2:15). This is especially true of this gospel age, when few are following in the footsteps of the Master.

It was also true of the Jewish age when some were seeking to walk in the way of righteousness. The Lord delivered them out of their afflictions, not in the sense of shielding them from trials, but in not permitting them to be overcome by their difficulties.

A just man will not fall into sin. The very most that could happen to him would be to stumble. There are various causes for stumbling. But if the heart is right, the man will rise again; for the Lord will show him that he has made a mistake and will point out the way to him to enable him to recover.

Fifth Step

"Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy" (Matthew 5:7 NASB). The Lord lays great stress upon this quality of mercy upon others neither will our Heavenly Father have mercy upon us. But it must be a genuine mercy. True mercy shows forgiveness, benevolence. Mercy shows the heart condition which sympathises with others in their failures and imperfections.

We should be merciful as God is merciful. 'Mercy rejoiceth against justice' James 2:13. Divine mercy satisfied divine justice and therefore prepared the way for the rescue of our race from the sentence of justice, so those who partake of the Divine Spirit to a reasonable extent will permit their mercy to triumph over their conceptions of justice.

What does it mean to you to be merciful? In different languages it takes on a slightly different meaning. In



Blessed are the pure in heart.

Latin it is *merced*, meaning reward, in old French it is *merci*, which equals "pity," in middle English it can be translated "heavenly reward." But what about other scripture application? We will quote a few.

- 2 Samuel 24:14, David said to Gad, "I am in deep distress. Let us fall into the hands of the Lord, for His mercy is great; but do not let me fall into human hands."

- Psalms 145:9, "The Lord is good to all; he has compassion on all He has made."

- Titus 3:5, "He has saved us not because of righteousness things we have done, but because of His mercy. He saved us through the washing rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit."

- Hebrews 4:16, "Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need."

- 1 Peter 1:3, "Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus from the dead."

Now what does mercy mean to you? Can you relate to these scriptures in your life?

Sixth Step

"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God" (Matthew 5:8 NASB).

The chemist or those who have taken chemistry will probably relate to this next word in our search for true meaning, as it applies to our walk in the narrow way, and that word is "pure. Purity of heart is purity of motive, intention effort, will and truthfulness. See God is a profound statement." Can our finite minds even comprehend this statement? We don't even know the lowest form of spirit being, the angels, let alone see God! What does Jesus mean by His statement? Well to begin with He said you can see God if you are pure in heart! Let's examine!

In the British Dictionary definitions for pure are as follows:

1. Not mixed with any extraneous or dissimilar material, elements.
2. Free from tainting or polluting matter, clean.
3. Free from moral taint or defilement (pure love).

● Let's take number 1. (Not mixing with dissimilar.) One of the first steps we are to follow is to remove ourselves from positions in the world that would harm the new creature. Limit the association with those who are not walking in like manner as yourself. This limits contamination!

● Number 2. (Free from polluting matter.) Often, we get wrapped up in television programs that seem harmless on the surface but turn out to have negative moral substance which would be harmful to the new creature!

● Number 3. (Free from moral taint.) Often times we find intriguing reading material which ultimately evolves into tainting the mind, and critically stumbling the new creature.

So, what does all this say? Do we have to live in a cocoon in order to please God? The scriptures give the answer to these life-long questions. It seems in all of the scriptures moderation and thoughtfulness take a prominent place. Apostle Paul states in 1 Corinthians 6:12. "All things are lawful for me, but not all things are helpful. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be enslaved by anything."

The Christian should in all respects be a model of good works, and in teaching show integrity and dignity. You were called to freedom don't use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another! Christ states "Therefore you are to be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect" (Matthew 5:48 NASB). God's standards are not set lower for us, but he has provided for us by grace, mercy and peace through Christ, if we walk in his footsteps this purity of heart being so essential in the narrow way.

This walk we are in is a very narrow way as Apostle Paul states "Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, will inherit the kingdom of God" (1 Corinthians 6:9-10 NASB). As the beatitude states, you must be pure in heart if you wish to see God!

Seventh Step

"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God (Matthew 5:9 NASB). This is an outward manifestation of the sixth step. In this world today there are hardly any who could be called peacemakers. In the game of finance or business the idea is always to outmaneuver or get the upper hand. There is no room for those who are truly honest who look out for your highest welfare. It's always who has the gold rules! Arguments abound in business, sports, religion, and yes even in medicine.



Paul, a prisoner for his faith, advising the churches

Let us look at the definition of a peacemaker. "A person who brings about peace, especially by reconciling adversaries" This is tried by politics but fails miserably! If you are successful in your walk then this will be one of the traits you will exercise in the kingdom, to the glory of our Father. So only those with a pure heart will be able to accomplish this. Today we have wars, strife, murder, and slander in abundance, because of lack of this trait, peacemaker! Only the sons of God will be able to exercise this trait!

Combativeness exercised toward our fellow humans, must be modified by mercy: it must be trained to fight for truth and against error, but not against the ignorant servants of error. There's a wonderful article in Reprint 2588 on this subject of peacemaking we quote, "Some of the Lord's people find in themselves naturally considerable of a spirit of combativeness, unfavorable to peace. Indeed, it requires something of the spirit of combativeness to fight a good fight against the world, the flesh, and the adversary, and to contend earnestly for the faith: so those who have combativeness naturally find themselves in antagonism with others along some line continually. However, they should not be discouraged by this but should remember that combativeness is a valuable servant and soldier, if turned and exercised in the right direction. It's exercise towards fellow creatures must be modified by mercy, by a realization of our own imperfections and the imperfections of all. Combativeness must be trained to fight along the lines of love and mercy — to fight for the truth and for all the servants and agencies of the truth and against the error, but not against the blinded and ignorant servants of error!"

Again, regarding this trait of peacemaking, "Very evidently but a small number of the Lord's people have progressed so far as to have this trait markedly developed and exemplified in their lives. The great majority even of those who have named the name of Christ, seemed to pursue a reverse course which indicates that even if their hearts are pure and their sympathies large, they have still much to learn in the school of Christ; for instead of being peace promoters they are strife promoters. Yet this is not of evil intent, but rather of habit, and of ignorance and of failure to discern the wide difference between the Divine course of love, and the opposite

course of selfishness which prevails in the world. Strife making is chiefly stirred up with the tongue, though it may be aroused by a gesture or a glance. Likewise, peacemaking is chiefly done with the tongue, though it may also operate through the eye. How many Christian people we all know, who have tongues which are continually stirring up strife! The adversary controls many in this manner long after they have escaped from his control in many other aspects; and this is largely because they do not detect that in this way, they are doing Satan service — do not even detect that they are stirrers up of strife, hatred, envy, malice, and planters of roots of bitterness by which many are defiled” (Reprint 2588).

When will Christians learn the length and breadth and depth of these injunctions, “malign no one, to be peaceable, gentle, showing every consideration for all men” (Titus 3:2 NASB). “Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such a word as is good for edification according to the need of the moment, so that it will give grace to those who hear” (Ephesians 4:29 NASB). How many lessons line upon line, must they have to convince them that they are not only to avoid gossip about other people’s business, and fault finding, and cynicism, but that these are all evidences of their deficiency in Christ’s likeness, and their lack of the qualities of a peacemaker; and these deficiencies need to be striven against earnestly, if they are to make their calling and election sure to a place in the heavenly kingdom?” This is a very serious matter as we are all observed every day by our Father and His Son.

Step Eight

“Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 5:10 NASB).

There is a critical point here. It is dealing with those who are persecuted not for their own wrong doings but for those that suffer from doing right. “For it is better, if God should will it so, that you suffer for doing what is right rather than for doing what is wrong” (1 Peter 3:17 NASB).

The integrity of those who are persecuted for righteousness condemns the ungodly world and can invoke hostility. The world hates a righteous life because it exposes their own unrighteousness. Christ was persecuted because He showed the hypocrisy of the Pharisees through His good works such as healing on the Sabbath. These were trials for Him but there is a promise “Blessed is a man who perseveres under trial; for once he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him” (James 1:12 NASB).

Step Nine

“Blessed are you when people insult you and persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me” (Matthew 5:11 NASB).

In the previous step Jesus had said “for righteousness’ sake.” Here He identifies Himself and His cause with that of righteousness, binding up the cause of righteousness in the world with the reception of Himself. Jesus also warned the disciples that toward the end of this Gospel Age that things could be worse “Then they will deliver you to tribulation, and will kill you, and you will be hated by all nations because of My name” (Matthew 24:9 NASB). Being imitators of Christ would bring persecution because it will be contrary to the way of the world.

There is a powerful account in Acts that illustrates these acts of persecution and standing up for the Lord. “As they were speaking to the people, the priests and the captain of the temple guard and the Sadducees came up to them, being greatly disturbed because they were teaching the people and proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection from the dead. And they laid hands on them and put them in jail until the next day, for it was already evening” (Acts 4:1-3). Witnessing to the world whether by preaching or passing out literature may bring harassment or being ridiculed, but at all times a Christ like character must be shown as the Apostle Peter states “Keep your behavior excellent among the Gentiles, so that in the thing in which they slander you as evildoers, they may because of your good deeds, as they observe them, glorify God in the day of visitation” (1 Peter 2:12 NASB).

In Conclusion

The total sum of all these steps is in essence the development of love and those who have these steps or traits are therefore loveable. We so much need to attain these blessed conditions stipulated by our Lord Jesus in the Beatitudes. These are a requirement for the Little Flock in the kingdom. As God is love and love will continue on for all ages to come. The Apostle Peter gives similar instructions concluding with “Therefore, brethren, be all the more diligent to make certain about His calling and choosing you; for as long as you practice these things, you will never stumble; for in this way the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be abundantly supplied to you” (2 Peter 1:10-11).



The Resurrection of the dead is a wonderful hope.

Comments on Hebrews

“God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world” (Hebrews 1:1-2 NASB).

The general design and purpose of the Epistle to the Hebrews is to preserve those to whom it was sent from the danger of apostasy. Their danger on this subject did not arise so much from persecution, as from the circumstances which were fitted to attract them again to the Jewish religion. The temple was still standing. The morning and evening sacrifice was still being offered. The splendid rites of that imposing religion were yet observed. The authority of the law was undisputed. Moses was a lawgiver, sent from God, and no one doubted that the Jewish form of religion had been instituted by their forefathers in conformity with the divine direction. Their religion had been founded amidst remarkable manifestations of God — in flames, smoke and thunder; it had been communicated by the ministration of angels; it had on its side and in its favour all the venerableness and sanction of a remote antiquity; it commended itself by the pomp of its ritual and by the splendour of its ceremonies.

On the other hand, the new form of religion had little or nothing of this to commend it. It was of recent origin. It was founded by the Man of Nazareth, who had been trained up in their own land, had been a carpenter, who had had no extraordinary advantages of education. Its rites were few and simple. It had no splendid temple service; it had none of the pomp and pageantry, the music and the magnificence of the ancient religion. It had no splendid array of priests in gorgeous vestments, and it had not been imparted by the ministry of angels. Fishermen were its ministers; and by the majority of the nation, it was regarded as a schism, or heresy, that enlisted in its favour only the most humble and lowly of the people.

In these circumstances, how natural was it for the enemies of the gospel in Judea to contrast the two forms of religion, and how keenly would Christians there feel it! Of all that was said of the antiquity and the divine origin of the Jewish religion, they knew and admitted. All that was said of its splendour and magnificence they saw, and all that was said of the humble origin of their own religion they were constrained to admit also. Their danger was not mainly that which arises from persecution. It was that of being affected by considerations like these, of relapsing again into the religion of their fathers, and of apostatizing from the gospel; and it was a danger which beset no other part of the Christian world.

To meet and counteract this danger was the very design of this epistle. Accordingly, the writer contrasts the two religions in all the great points on

which the minds of the Christians in Judea would be likely to be affected and shows the superiority of the Christian religion over the Jewish in every respect. Especially in the points that had so much attracted their attention and affected their hearts.

Apostle Paul begins by showing that the Author of the Christian religion was superior in rank to any and all who had ever delivered the Word of God to man. He was superior to the prophets, and even to the angels. He was over all things, and all things were subject to Him. There was, therefore, a special reason why they should listen to Him, and obey His commands, chapters 1 and 2. The purpose of the book is to show that Jesus was sent of God as the Messiah, and the rest of the book will prove this point. Therefore, Paul opened his epistle by showing that God used the same method with Jesus that

He had used with the prophets in the past. He had spoken before through an individual, and He was doing the same thing now. And Jesus was greater than the Old Testament prophets — he was God’s Son. Jesus was superior to Moses, the great Jewish lawgiver, whom they venerated so much, and on whom they so much prided themselves, chapter 3. Having shown that the Great Founder of the Christian religion was superior to the prophets, to Moses, and to the angels, the writer proceeds to show that the Christian religion was characterized by having a High Priest superior to that of the Jews, and of whom the Jewish high priest was but a type and emblem. He shows that all the rites of the ancient religion, splendid as they were, were also but types, and were to vanish away — for they had had their fulfilment in the realities of the Christian faith. He shows that the Christian’s High Priest derived His origin and His rank from a more venerable antiquity than the Jewish high priest did



Melchizedek, a picture of Christ

— He was typified by Melchizedek who was both a priest and a king who lived long before Aaron; and that He had far superior dignity, from the fact that He had entered into the Holy of Holies in heaven.

The Jewish high priest entered once a year into the most holy place in the temple; the Great High Priest of the Christian faith had entered into the Most Holy place — of which the former was but the type and emblem — into heaven. In short, whatever there was of dignity and honour in the Jewish faith there was so much superiority in the Christian religion. While the Christian religion was permanent the Jewish one that was fading. The rites of the Jewish system, magnificent as they were, were designed to be only temporary.

They were mere types and shadows of better things to come. They had their fulfilment in Christianity. In Paul's day, a dispensational change was taking place, and some of the Israelites sensed it. Christianity was the substance of what in the temple service was a type and shadow. By considerations such as these the author of this epistle endeavours to preserve them from apostasy. Why should they go back? Why go back from the substance to the shadow? Why turn away from the true sacrifice to the type and emblem? Why linger around the earthly tabernacle, and contemplate the high priest there when they had a perfect and glorious High Priest, who had entered into the

heavens? And why should they turn away from the only perfect sacrifice — the great offering made for transgression made by Jesus¹ and go back to the typical sacrifices. And why forsake the system that was to endure for ever — in contrast to that which was soon to vanish away? The author of this epistle is very careful to assure them that if they now rejected the sacrifice of the Son of God, there was no other sacrifice for sin. It was God's great provision for the satisfaction and cancellation of the sin of mankind. It was never ever to be repeated. If that were rejected there was no other.

The Jewish rites were soon to pass away; they could not cleanse the conscience from sin. Persecuted, then, though they might be — reviled, ridiculed, opposed — yet they should not abandon their Christian hope, for it was their all; they should not neglect Him who spoke from heaven, for in dignity, rank, and authority He far surpassed all who in former times had made known the will of God to man.

(1) Jesus had to be made flesh in order to take Adam's place and provide the ransom price of redemption. Adam was a king, and all of his children would have been kings if he had not failed. Jesus came as a King to take Adam's place. However, he had to partake of the same human nature and the same glory; that is, Jesus had to be exactly like Adam (a perfect human being) in order to be a substitute for him and to redeem the promises made to him in Psalm 8.

The Shepherd's Goodness and Mercy

"Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life" (Psalms 23:6).

David in his meditations on the Lord's tender watch and care over all his interests became so impressed with the reality of his heavenly Shepherd's love that he left no room for even the shadow of a doubt concerning it. Therefore he wrote, "Surely [unquestionably], goodness and mercy shall follow me." This reminds us also of Apostle Paul's assurance of divine care as expressed in the well known verse, "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose" (Romans 8:28).

The certainty of the Good Shepherd's care is further emphasized in the expression, "shall follow me." The Hebrew text gives the thought of to pursue goodness and mercy shall "pursue" me. This suggests that divine care is aggressively manifested toward us, in that the Lord anticipates our needs and is ready to provide them even before we ask. When we think of how energetic the various forces of evil are in their opposition to the Lord's people, of how we are pursued by evil, it is indeed comforting to realize that we are also being pursued by God's goodness and

mercy. Knowing that greater is he who is for us than all that be against us, 1 John 4:4, so therefore we can with confidence entrust ourselves to the care of the Good Shepherd "all the days" of our lives.

Both the "goodness" and the "mercy" of the Lord manifest his love toward us; and while these two principles are closely related, their operation is along different lines. In the use of the two expressions David's mind is evidently reflecting upon the various ways the shepherd's care for his sheep illustrate God's goodness and mercy, the various ways which he had just enumerated in the preceding verses of this psalm. It is a summing up as it were, of all those manifestations of divine grace which the Psalmist saw so beautifully portrayed in the shepherd's care of his sheep.

"I Shall Not Want"

"The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want," wrote the Psalmist. David knew that it was because of the goodness of the Lord that all his needs were sure to be supplied. He lived under the terms of the Law covenant given to the children of Israel at Sinai, and

through that covenant God obligated himself to supply all the needs of those who obey his Law. David knew that the Lord was faithful to this arrangement. As in another psalm he wrote, "I have been young, and now am, old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread" (Psalms 37:25).

Therefore David could clearly write, "I shall not want," because in his own experience as a servant of God, and in his observation of the manner in which divine care had been manifested toward others, there was no indication that God ever failed to carry out that which he had promised. So what was true in the life of David is equally true in our experience today. The goodness of God in providing all the needs of his people during the Gospel age is manifested more particularly along spiritual lines, but to those who live by faith, and who are setting their affections on things above rather than on the things of the earth, this goodness is very real, very satisfying.

With David we too can say that because of God's goodness "we shall not want." We may not always have all the material good things of life that we deem as necessary, but we will not want for any of the spiritual blessings which are so important to us as new creatures in Christ Jesus. No one in the church has been more faithful in following the Good Shepherd than was the Apostle Paul, yet he wrote, "I have learned both to abound and to suffer need" (Philippians 4:11, 12). This is a reference to material needs, and indicates that the apostle did not always have sufficient food and raiment, possibly like Jesus, he too did not always have a place to lay his head. From this standpoint Paul could not say, "I shall not want," but from the standpoint of the new creature he could affirm that all his needs were more than abundantly supplied.

To the apostle it was consistent with the terms of his consecration that the outward man should perish, so it made little difference to him whether it perished as a result of insufficient food, or for other reasons. The important thing to Paul was that the inward man, the new life begotten in him by the Holy Spirit through the Word of God, was being renewed and nourished and built up by the spiritual food so abundantly supplied to him by the Good Shepherd (2 Corinthians 4:16).

"Green Pastures"

Following his general affirmation of God's goodness and mercy, by the words "I shall not want", David from verse one then begins to itemize, from the shepherd's standpoint, the various ways in which the Lord's care is manifested. "He maketh me to lie down in green pastures." Here we are reminded of God's abundant provision of spiritual food. The pastures of truth are indeed green for all those who are faithful in following the Good Shepherd whithersoever he leads. This has been true of the entire church of the Gospel age, and it is more than ever true now in the end of the age,

when in fulfillment of his promise, the returned Lord has girded himself and has served his people with that "meat in due season" (Matthew 24:45). How wonderfully green and refreshing, luscious delicate, toothsome and satisfying are the pastures of present truth! Truly our longings are satisfied by these green pastures as nothing else could do!

Surely it is a wonderful manifestation of God's goodness to be blessed by a knowledge of the present truth in these dark days of world distress and chaos. One of the great blessings of the truth, especially in this "time of trouble," is the confidence it gives us, the peace of heart and mind (Daniel 12:1). Truly we can "lie down" in these green pastures, and rest contentedly as we partake of the nourishing spiritual food to which the Good Shepherd, now present to set up his kingdom, has led us.

"Still Waters"

As if the green pastures were not sufficient evidence of the Good Shepherd's loving care, in order to reassure us that we shall not want, the Psalmist further adds, "He leadeth me beside the still waters" the margin gives, "waters of quietness." It is not just enough merely that we should be led where there are waters of truth to drink, but that they are "still waters," or "waters of quietness." This water is not only refreshing, but set out before us in a way that we can drink of it with ease, and generously.

So how true this is of the waters of truth of which the Lord's sheep are privileged to drink during this harvest period at the end of the age! Beginning with the return of our Lord, these waters were cleared of the muddy traditions of the past and caused to flow in a deep and inexhaustible stream of refreshment, a stream which has been readily available for all who have had the ears to hear and recognize the Good Shepherd's voice calling them to follow him. John 10:11 Because of this wonderful provision, all who have had their spiritual thirst quenched by the waters of present truth can truly say with the Psalmist, "I shall not want." They know that in their thirsting after righteousness they have been filled to overflowing, that their thirst has been quenched.

"He Restoreth My Soul"

In outlining the various ways in which he assures us that we shall not want, David draws illustrations from the life of the shepherd which remind us not only of God's goodness, but also of his abundant mercy. This is why in summing up his meditation, he said so appropriately and so eloquently presents, "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life." God's mercy is of course a manifestation of his goodness, but it is a goodness which operates under different circumstances. God supplies our needs of spiritual food and drink, but this is not the end of his goodness. There are times when in addition to these blessings we are in such sore need of his mercy.



Young David, who would later write many psalms

It is this that the Psalmist spoke of when he wrote of the Good Shepherd, “He restoreth my soul” literally saying, “He saveth my life.” It required an exercise of God’s mercy, operating through the saving grace which is in Christ Jesus our Good Shepherd, in order for us to become his sheep in the first place. Then, all along the way we need his mercy. We fail, at times to give proper heed to the Shepherd’s voice and find ourselves straying away from him and from the remainder of the flock. In this unhappy position we are exposed to the various enemies of the sheep. There are wolves in sheep’s clothing, ready to devour us. But worst of all, our great adversary, the devil, goeth about as a “roaring lion” seeking whom he may devour. 1 Peter 5:8 Because of these and other enemies, our lives are in constant danger, particularly if we do not keep close to the Good Shepherd. But he is merciful, as we are “pursued” by his mercy, and when we find ourselves in these positions of special danger, threatened by enemies too cunning and too powerful for us to resist, he comes to our rescue and in his great mercy he restores our souls.

There are no enemies of the Lord’s sheep who are able to pluck them away from the protecting care of the Good Shepherd. Because of our imperfections we may inadvertently expose ourselves to danger, but even then divine mercy pursues us and we are restored to safety. It is only if we willfully walk away from the Shepherd, by deliberately turning our backs upon him and upon his goodness and mercy, that he gives us up to our enemies and we fall helpless into their clutches.

“Paths of Righteousness”

Divine goodness is further manifested in the fact that the Good Shepherd leads us “in the paths of righteousness”, or the right paths. We need divine wisdom in order to walk in the right way, and this is promised to us if we ask in faith, doubting nothing (James 1:6, 7). But we must be willing to obtain divine wisdom through God’s appointed channel which is his inspired Word. It is through the Word that the Good Shepherd leads us; it is through the Word that we hear his voice calling us to follow him.

The path of righteousness is not an easy one in which to walk, yet there is a joy in walking in that path,

although the path itself is often rugged and difficult. It is the narrow way of sacrifice (Matthew 7:4). If we walk in this path of righteousness to its very end, we will find that it leads to death. But the goodness of God is manifested toward us in this connection by the fact that those who are led by the Good Shepherd to the end of the path of righteousness, along the narrow way, and are faithful all the way to the end, will have the privilege of living and reigning with Christ a thousand years (Revelation 20:4). They suffer with him, but through faithfulness in suffering, they will share his glory and be with him on his throne.

In a most wonderful manner then, divine goodness is demonstrated in that the Good Shepherd leads us in the paths of righteousness. It would be impossible for us to walk in this way unless he did lead us. In leading us he not only shows us the way, but he gives us strength to walk in it, a strength for every time of need. Truly we need that strength else we would soon become weary in well doing and would faint by the wayside. But his goodness does not permit this. It pursues us, safeguarding our every interest so that we can truly say, “I shall not want.”

This Valley of Death

David cites an extreme condition of danger and hardship through which a shepherd sometimes finds it necessary to lead his sheep, and he declares that even under these most difficult conditions in the lives of the people of God thus illustrated they do not need to fear evil, for the Good Shepherd is with them always, that his rod and staff comfort them. “Yea,” he writes, as if some might doubt such an outstanding example of divine goodness and mercy, “though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil.”

When the Lord found us, before we actually became his sheep, we were just wandering about, in fact dying, in the valley of the shadow of Adamic death. All mankind is walking through that valley, and the only way out of it during this Gospel age is to follow the voice of the Good Shepherd. How truly good the Lord is that we should be permitted to hear that voice saying to us, “Follow me” (Matthew 16:24). We respond, and while the way in which he leads is difficult and fraught with danger on every hand, leading in the end to sacrificial death, we know that by following it we will escape from the valley of the shadow of death to glory, honour, and immortality in the “first resurrection.”

The Good Shepherd’s wise use of both the rod and the staff is a further manifestation of divine goodness and mercy, a further assurance that we shall not want. Through their use he guides and corrects his sheep, and thus manifests a love that otherwise could not be so fully appreciated by his followers. Paul wrote, “Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth” (Hebrews 12:6). How glad we are, then, to realize that the divine goodness and love is pursuing us even when it requires the use of the chastening rod.

The Lord's Table

Who can question the goodness and mercy of the Good Shepherd as evidenced by the table of rich abundant spiritual food which he prepares for us in the presence of our enemies? There is a special sweetness attached to this thought, now that we are living in the days of the presence of the Good Shepherd. The green pastures and the still waters might be thought of as the Lord's most abundant provision for his sheep throughout the entire age, and truly he has cared for them in their every time of need. But now, more than ever before, he is feeding his sheep, having prepared a table of the choicest spiritual food, the essential food that is designed to give them strength to overcome all the enemies which surround them in this "evil day." How truly wonderful is his goodness and mercy when viewed from the standpoint of the special provision he has made for us at this time! Let us appreciate this specially prepared table, let us partake of the "meat in due season" which is spread out so abundantly before us, and thereby be strengthened to follow the Good Shepherd in this time when so many are falling by the wayside.

The Holy Spirit

"Thou anointest my head with oil." Here is another manifestation of God's goodness. There is no greater evidence of God's love than his gift of the Holy Spirit, as symbolized by the oil of anointing. Jesus spoke of this explaining that just as earthly parents are pleased to give good gifts to their children, so the Heavenly Father will give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him. Oh yes, God is so good, and he not only manifests his goodness by the outpouring of his Holy Spirit, but as we are filled with that Spirit and yield ourselves to its sweet influence, we partake of divine goodness, and are transformed into the image of God.

Just think of what the "oil" of the Holy Spirit means to the consecrated! It gives enlightenment, spiritual strength and comfort. By it we are commissioned to be co-workers with God, and by it also we are begotten to a new life and become new creatures in Christ Jesus (2 Corinthians 5:17). It fills us with love and gives us power and the spirit of a sound mind. It bears witness with our spirits that we are the children of God (Romans 8:16). We can call our heavenly father "abba father" (Matthew 14:36). Our relationship to God is sealed by the Holy Spirit; and by the influence of the Holy Spirit in our lives, its fruits of love, joy, and peace become manifested, enriching our own lives and blessing others. Truly the goodness of the Lord is demonstrated by his gift of the Holy Spirit.

The Overflowing Cup

In view of all these most wonderful ways in which the Psalmist has indicated that the goodness and mercy of the Lord are pursuing us, what could otherwise be the experience of life except that suggested by the assertion that our cup runneth over? This is true of



The Lord's table

each individual "sheep" that is following the Good Shepherd. Not only is the Shepherd's goodness and mercy revealed in the wonderful provisions which have been made alike for all his sheep, but he takes a personal and individual interest in them, providing each one with a "cup" peculiarly adapted to their special needs. How that cup runs over, being a full provision for our every time of need. Truly, each one of us can say, "I shall not want!"

One of the very marked tendencies of fallen human nature is the lack of constancy. Millions of the race start out zealously along some line of endeavor, but soon weary of their attempt and turn to something else. Even among the consecrated people of God this inclination to become weary in well doing must be guarded against (Galatians 6:9). How often we make a feeble effort to bear witness to the truth, through distribution of truth literature, or otherwise, and after a week or two, give it up and seek an easier way to serve the Lord. But God is not changeable (Malachi 3:6). He is constant in the fulfillment of his promises.

We need not fear that the green pastures will continue only but for a few days, or that the still waters of truth will just dry up and leave us thirsting in vain for the refreshment which they give. There is no danger that the Good Shepherd will not be on hand to restore our souls, just when our soul restoration is needed; or that he will ever fail to lead us in the paths of righteousness. Evil will never befall us as we walk through the valley of the shadow of death, for the Good Shepherd will continue to lead; and his rod and staff will continue to be used until we reach the very end of the narrow way.

Nor will there ever be a lack of food on the table which the Lord prepares for us in the presence of our enemies. It will not be a case of having spiritual food just for today, and not having it tomorrow; nor will there be any stinting in the outpouring of the Holy Spirit to guide and enrich our lives. Ever and continuously the cup which the Lord provides will overflow. There will never be a time when it is not full. It is this constancy of the Good Shepherd's care, the never failing aspect of his goodness and mercy, that David affirms when he says that they will pursue us "all the days" of our lives. We can be rest assured of divine goodness and mercy, not merely for today, or tomorrow, but for every day and even for all our days, until we reach the very end of the way.

The Prayer Life of Jesus

“In the early morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house, and went away to a secluded place, and was praying there” (Mark 1:35 NASB).

This verse brings out important details of Jesus’ prayer life and give us examples of how our prayer life should be planned.

Jesus Prayed Early

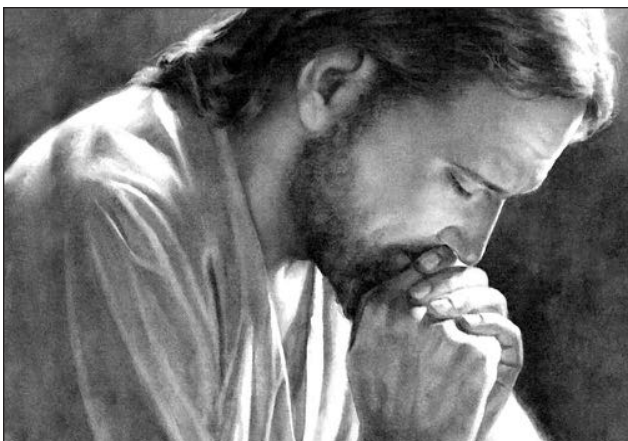
His day was going to be busy and so He set aside time early to commune with His Father. This was a priority in His life of service. Talking with our Heavenly Father should also be a priority, otherwise the cares and needs of the day can overwhelm us. We need direction from the Heavenly Father to prepare us to accomplish His will. “rejoicing in hope, persevering in tribulation, **devoted to prayer**” (Romans 12:12 NASB).

Jesus Went to a Secluded Place

Jesus knew that during the day he would be surrounded by people who wanted to hear what he was preaching or coming to be healed. He needed a quiet place where he would not be disturbed to commune with His Father. Whenever possible we should try to find a secluded place to communicate with our Heavenly Father. There is a place for public prayer as long as it is not just to “be seen of men.” Jesus suggested “When you pray, go into your inner room, close your door and pray to your Father who is in secret, and your Father who sees what is done in secret will reward you (Matthew 6:6 NASB).

Jesus Prayed to Know the Father’s Will

Jesus told his disciples “For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me” (John 6:38 NASB). To know the will of the Heavenly Father requires communication, otherwise, how can we surrender ourselves to the will of God if we do not know what He desires of us. Through prayer we gain a more intimate relationship with God.



Jesus, in prayer

Jesus Spent the Whole Night in Prayer

When it came to the choosing of His apostles Jesus requested his Father guidance. “It was at this time that He went off to the mountain to pray, and He spent the whole night in prayer to God” (Luke 6:12 NASB). There are times when circumstance occur that require patience while we wait on the Heavenly Father to answer our petitions. We can be assured that they will be answered in His perfect time and according to His will in our life.

Jesus Prayed for His Followers and Those That Persecuted Him

In John’s Gospel, the whole chapter is devoted to Jesus’ priestly prayer for His Heavenly Father’s protection over the disciples as he knew he was about to leave them. He prayed “I do not ask You to take them out of the world, but to keep them from the evil one” (John 17:15 NASB). His prayer also looked forward to our day. “I do not ask on behalf of these alone, but for those also who believe in Me through their word; that they may all be one; even as You, Father, are in Me and I in You, that they also may be in Us, so that the world may believe that You sent Me” (John 17:20-21 NASB). Paul told Timothy “I urge that entreaties and prayers, petitions and thanksgivings, be made on behalf of all men” (1 Timothy 2:1 NASB). Following Jesus example we have a duty to pray for others both believers and unbeliever “pray for those who persecute you” (Matthew 5:44 NASB).

Jesus Prayed Alone

After a busy day of preaching and healing the people Jesus took time out, away from the crowd to commune with His Father. “After He had sent the crowds away, He went up on the mountain by Himself to pray; and when it was evening, He was there alone” (Matthew 14:23 NASB). This sets out the appropriate disposition and circumstances for our prayers, Jesus retired from the world around him, went up to place of solitude, with the silence and the quiet of the night. We too should try to the best of our ability to shut out the world and its distractions when we converse with our Heavenly Father.

In Conclusion

The Heavenly Father is always ready and waiting for His children to approach Him in prayer. We are promised “Every good thing given, and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights (James 1:17 NASB). He delights to hear our requests.

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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 through the Berean Bible Institute's official webpage.

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

The Hospital Room

TWO men, both seriously ill, occupied the same hospital room. One man was allowed to sit up in his bed for an hour each afternoon to help drain the fluid from his lungs. His bed was next to the room's only window. The other man had to spend all his time flat on his back.

The men talked for hours on end. They spoke of their wives and families, their homes and jobs, their military service, and their travels. And every afternoon when the man in the bed by the window could sit up, he would pass the time by describing to his roommate all the things he could see outside the window.

The man in the other bed began to live for those one-hour periods when his world would be broadened and enlivened by all the activity and colour of the world outside. The window overlooked a park with a lovely lake. Ducks and swans played on the water while children sailed their model boats. Young lovers walked arm in arm amidst flowers of every colour. Grand old trees graced the landscape, and a fine view of the city skyline could be seen in the distance.

As the man by the window described all this in exquisite detail, the man on the other side of the room would close his eyes and imagine the picturesque scene. With this pleasant daily interlude, days and weeks passed.

One morning, when the day nurse arrived, she found the lifeless body of the man by the window. He had died peacefully in his sleep. She was saddened and called the hospital attendant to take the body away.

When it seemed appropriate, the other man asked if he could be moved next to the window. The nurse was happy to do so, and after making sure he was comfortable, she left him alone.

Slowly, painfully, he propped himself up on one elbow to take his first look at the world outside. Finally, he would have the joy of seeing it for himself. He strained to look out the window.

It faced a blank wall. The man asked the nurse why his deceased roommate had described such wonderful things outside this window. The nurse replied, "Why, that man was blind. He couldn't even see the wall! **Perhaps he just wanted to encourage you.**"

"Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor has it entered into the heart of man, the things which God has prepared for those who love Him. But God has revealed them to us by His Spirit; for the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God" (1 Corinthians 2:9-10 NKJV).

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RANSOMER, REDEEMER, SIN-OFFERING, ATONER, ADVOCATE, and MEDIATOR

Blessings Lost Through Quarrelling

Admitting that we are not justified by the degree of our knowledge of the Divine Plan, but by the fulness of our faith, we are, nevertheless, deeply interested in every expression of the Scriptures bearing upon the philosophy of the great fact which the arms of our faith have grasped as a whole. The fact was as large when first we laid hold upon it as it is today, but we did not see its details as we now see them. Quite possibly there may be certain features which will yet more fully open our eyes of understanding in the future. Our proper attitude is one of gratitude to God for knowledge of the blessed fact that His forgiveness of sins is somehow or other made possible to us through the death of Jesus. It was the appreciation of that fact which justified us and drew to the Lord in consecration, saying, "The love of Christ constraineth us" (1 Corinthians 5:14). Since that blessed moment, it has been our privilege to go on and on, growing in grace, in knowledge and appreciation, in love and self-sacrificing obedience.

Let us continue in this way and permit no amount of philosophising to rob us of the blessings and privileges already secured. Some seem in danger of so doing — in danger of quarrelling over philosophies which they cannot see; and, by the wrong spirit fostered through the quarrelling, they seem in danger of losing all the blessings ever enjoyed, let us not follow such a course, but, while maintaining our justifying faith and spirit of devotion, let us seek to appreciate every feature of Divine Truth presented to us in the Divine Word.

The Ransomer and the Ransom

The Gospel message is the good tidings respecting a Ransom sacrifice, on account of which God may be just and yet be the justifier of the believer. Of the Ransomer God gave

the first intimation to Father Abraham, yet without explaining the particulars. He merely intimated that in some manner Divine Justice would be satisfied by Abraham's offspring, the Messiah, and that in consequence a blessing would go through his Seed to all the families of the earth. When our Lord was introduced as the Seed of Abraham He made the first statement of the philosophy of the Divine Plan by which, as Abraham's Seed, He was to bring the promised blessing. He declared, "The Son of man came to give His life a ransom for many" (Matthew 20:28). This comprehensive statement of the Ransom was not elaborated — no details were given. However,

in the law to Israel, God prefigured and elaborated the Ransom, not in such a manner that all would understand it, but in types and shadows, which in His "due time" He proposed should be made clear and plain to such as would have the proper eye of understanding, enlightened by the holy spirit.

Sin-Offering of Atonement

The word Ransom, as we have already pointed out, signifies a price to correspond. Adam, disobedient and a sinner, was condemned to death and needed to be Ransomed or Redeemed or Purchased back from death and from the condemnation of Justice. As he was but one man, so it needed but one man to Redeem him, to Ransom him. But it needed a perfect man, and there was none such. So, God sent Jesus, holy, harmless, and undefiled, to be the Ransom of Adam and incidentally of his race, because all were involved through his disobedience. When, therefore, Jesus "died, the just for the unjust," on Calvary, a price sufficient had been laid down to redeem Adam and his race.

But this merit has not yet been placed in the hands of Justice. Merely the merit of the sacrifice of a perfect human was laid down in death, and it belonged to our Lord Jesus when the Father raised Him from the dead by His own power.

Jesus Appears for Church

What did the risen Jesus do with the merit of His own sacrifice? We answer that forty days later He ascended on high, there to appear in the presence of God for us — believers, the "household of faith." This was pictured in the Law. As Jesus said, "Moses wrote of me." (John 5:46.) In the type, Aaron the high priest, typified the consecrated Jesus anointed with the holy spirit, the High Priest of our profession. As Aaron took the blood of the bullock, which represented His own blood or life or sacrifice, and went with it into the Most Holy and sprinkled it upon the mercy-seat to make for himself (and the under-priests) and for his house (the tribe of Levi) atonement for sins, so did our Lord Jesus do in the antitype. He took not the blood of the bullock, but "His own blood," the merit of His own sacrifice. He sprinkled it not for the literal priests and Levites, the typical people, but for the antitypical Royal Priesthood, and Levites (or servants) of the "household of faith "

Divine Philosophy of Ransom

What has this to do with the Ransom? We answer, this is the philosophy of it, as set before us in the Scriptures. It is not God's intention nor our expectation that all or many will be able to understand this Divine

philosophy. As our Lord says, it is “given” to some to understand and not “given” to others (Matthew 13:11-17).

Merit Passes Through Body

So, then, our Ransom sacrifice was presented before the Father when Jesus ascended upon high after His resurrection; and, according to the God-given type, it was presented, not for all the people, but merely for the antitypical “household of faith.” The Sin-Offering, the offering which Christ made to Divine Justice in offset to man’s sin, was the Ransom. None but He could have given it, as we have shown, and He could have given it for one of the race only, or for all of the race of Adam, as He might choose to apply it. As a price it was sufficient for all, but for how many of the all He would choose to apply it rested entirely upon Himself and the Divine Plan, which He was following, although, as the type shows, He did not apply it for all, but for merely the “Household of faith” — “for us.” nevertheless it is ultimately to apply for all, “a ransom for all,” not only in the sense that it was sufficient to meet the penalty for all, but additionally in the sense that it will yet be made available to all — indirectly — by passing the merit through the “household of faith,” through the “members of His Body.”

Illustration, Springs, and Pipes

The waters of a great spring are set apart for the supply of a great city. To serve the intended purposes it is passed through numerous pipes and spigots. It is the same water in each spigot because from the same spring. In partaking of its refreshment, we might indeed refer to the spigot from which we drew it, or we might refer to the spring itself or sometimes to the one and sometimes to the other. So, in thinking of the merit of our Lord Jesus’ sacrifice we should remember that all sin-atonement merit sprang from our Lord’s sacrificial death — whenever applied and, however, He is the Ransomer. His blood is the blood of Atonement for the sin of Adam, which brought the death sentence upon him and his race. No one adds to that Ransom, and no one takes away from it. In the divine plan it is appropriated to the Church, “the elect,” in order to let us have the privilege of joining our Lord as His “members” and by dying with Him as sharers of His sacrifice we merely pass His merit on to natural Israel and the world through the New Covenant. He is the spring; we are the pipes.

Father Draws During Gospel Age, Son During Millennium

In “Tabernacle Shadows of the Better Sacrifices” (published in 1880) we have already elaborated this subject. We therein show that Christ, instead of applying the merit of His sacrifice directly to the whole world, eventually effects the same thing by applying His merit to the comparatively small class drawn of the Father during this age. The Father draws (John 6:42) to the Son for “justification by faith in His blood” those who love righteousness and hate iniquity, and



The Mediatorial Kingdom is soon to be established.

who are feeling after God, if haply they might find Him. The Son receives these and acquaints them with the fact that He has already made atonement for sin and presented it on behalf of “everyone that believeth.” And then He guides them to the further privilege of this Gospel Age — that they may become joint-sacrificers with Him and thus become His Bride and Joint-Heir in His Mediatorial Kingdom, which is soon to be established for the blessing of the unbelieving world — yet undrawn, unjustified, unblessed. The Son will draw them during the Millennium. — John 12:32.

The “Mystery”

Why should the merit of Christ Jesus be thus placed upon the “household of faith” and not upon the world of mankind in general?

We answer that this feature of the Divine Plan of the Ages is, as yet, a “mystery” to all except the “saints.” To the latter God reveals this great privilege — that by it He will “bring many sons to glory,” under the Captaincy of Jesus, and that these will be called “His brethren,” “His members,” “His Bride,” according to the various standpoints of observation. In order that they may share His nature and His glory they must share His sufferings, “His death”; thus, since He must suffer, the just for the unjust, so these, being

justified through faith in His blood, must similarly suffer, the just for the unjust, as His “members,” and as “filling up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ”; not afflictions left behind in the sense of the Redeemer’s incompetency to make the full Atonement for the sins of the whole world, but sins left behind in the sense that our lord did not apply His own merit directly to the world of unbelievers. “Their sins are left behind that the merit of Christ, passing through the elect Church, might benefit them just as much in the end, and additionally might give the “elect” of this age the opportunity of suffering with their Lord and Head, in order that in due time they might be glorified with Him (Colossians 1:24).

Bullock and Goat Treated Alike

This is all clearly shown in the type of Leviticus 16. As the High Priest's own personal sacrifice is represented in the bullock, so the sacrifice of His adopted members, justified by His blood, is shown in the secondary or supplemental sacrifice of the goat. All who have studied the subject remember well that everything that was done to the bullock was done to the goat, and that thus our lord in advance foretold and illustrated that all who will be members of the "elect," the Royal Priesthood, must be copies of God's dear Son, the great High Priest, by whose sacrifice they were justified. Again, these are they who are called to walk in the footsteps of Jesus, in the "narrow-way" — the way of self-sacrifice, self-denial, the way of the cross.

We have repeatedly called attention to the fact that these highly honoured ones were originally "children of wrath even as others," and many of them "strangers and aliens from God," but brought nigh unto Him "by the blood of the cross" and still closer through the sufferings of this Gospel Age, this antitypical Atonement Day of Sin-offerings.

Two Sin-Offerings in type and Antitype

Who cannot see that our Lord offered Himself once for all, a sin-offering? and that Christ died no more than "once for all"? Who cannot see that there were two distinct sin-offerings in the type — the bullock and the goat? Who cannot see that there are two sin-offerings during this Gospel Age, our Lord, our Redeemer, the centre of all the merit, and the sacrifice of His Church, His Body, to whom His merit is applied? Who cannot see that these two offerings, the bullock (Jesus) and the goat (the members of His Body), are the "better sacrifices" mentioned by the Apostle Paul? (Hebrews 9: 23). Who cannot see that these are the sin-offerings which alone were burned outside the camp? (Leviticus 16:27). Who cannot see that the Apostle urges us to present our bodies living sacrifices and to "Go forth unto Him without the camp, bearing His reproach"? (Hebrews 13:13). So surely as two and two make four, we who go without the camp with our lord, are therefore participants in the sin-offerings, exactly as the Apostle declares.

Church, Not World, Have Advocate

We have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ, the Righteous. The world has no advocate with the Father, because they do not believe and have not accepted Jesus as their Redeemer and Advocate: He has not "appeared" for them, but "for us." When He appeared in the presence of God for us, just after His ascension on high, He presented His merit for believer's "sins that are past by the forbearance of God." He did not apply His merit for our future sins, transgressions, trespasses, weaknesses, ignorance, etc. As the basis of His work as our Advocate, our lord retained a measure of His abundant merit for this purpose, with a view to having us come daily to the

throne of the heavenly grace to obtain mercy — not for the original sin, which for believers is past, through the forbearance of God, but for our daily trespasses of ignorance or weakness. He encourages us to remember that the imperfections of our earthen vessel need be no hindrance as Hew Creatures, spirit-begotten, because for all these human weaknesses "we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous." Thus, we are exhorted to keep our garments unspotted from the world, because if we are in the right condition of heart we may appreciate the privileges of going to the throne of grace and having every trespass of weakness and ignorance blotted out, washed away.

Justice Satisfied for Church's Sins Only

Thus, our lord is the Atoner, "for our sins and also for the sins of the whole world." But there is a difference. Our sins are represented in one part of the sin-offering, the bullock, and the sins of the whole world are represented in the other part, the goat (Hebrews 13). He has already made satisfaction for our sins. Now He is offering His "members" in sacrifice that we may share His sufferings and glory. He is passing His merit through us that He may apply it "in due time" "for the sins of the whole world." Surely the merit of the Atoner is not decreased in any wise by reason of the passing through those whom He accepts and whom the Father accepts as His "members" on the larger scale!

Illustration of Wheat and Corn

This is the thought which our Lord suggested, saying "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it dies, it bringeth forth much fruit" (John 12:24). The immediate fruitage of our Lord's death was the bringing forth of the Church and the "household of faith." The dying in turn of those grains accepted as part and parcel with the original is to bring forth in the lord's due time the appointed crop suggested by the Prophet, saying, "There shall be an handful of corn in the earth upon the top of the mountains; the fruit thereof shall shake like Lebanon" (Psalms 72:16).



Grains of wheat fallen into the ground bring forth much fruit.

Ransom, Redeemer, Mediator Not Synonymous

The word “Mediator” is not synonymous with the words “Ransomer,” “Redeemer,” etc. On the contrary there could be no use for a Mediator until first a Redeemer had ransomed mankind. The word “mediator” is Scripturally used in connection with the establishment of the Covenants, and never otherwise. For instance, “Moses, the mediator of the law Covenant,” and Christ, “the Mediator of the New Covenant.” Notice, however, that Aaron, the priest, did not mediate any Covenant; neither does Jesus, as the antitypical Priest, mediate a Covenant. It was the work of the priest to offer sacrifices for sins, and this our lord has been doing for nearly nineteen centuries, as the antitypical High Priest. All of the antitypical priesthood must offer up “sacrifices holy and acceptable to God,” else they cannot be of the “Royal Priesthood” (Romans 12:1).

Moses Typified Greater Christ as Mediator, Not as Priest

But notice further that Moses typified the greater Christ — Jesus the Head and the Church His “members.” As, for instance, in Acts 3:22 St. Peter says, “For Moses verily said unto the fathers, a Prophet (Teacher and Mediator) shall the Lord your God raise up unto you from amongst your brethren, like unto me; Him shall ye obey in all things, whatsoever He shall say unto you; and it shall come to pass, that every soul, which will not obey that Prophet, shall be destroyed from amongst the people.” The antitypical Moses here pictured was undoubtedly the glorified Christ, Head and Body, in His instruction of the world during the Millennium. It is certainly not true that all are destroyed who disobey the lord at the present time. It is this antitypical Moses taken from amongst the brethren that God has been raising up during this Gospel Age. Our Redeemer and lord was raised up first to be “Head over the Church which is His Body.” Since then, the members are being raised up from the world, separated from the world to the Lord and the Millennial work. Ephesians 1:23, 4:4,12,16, 5:30, Colossians 1:18, 3:15.

Moses was not the typical priest and made not the typical atonement for sin; that was the work of the priest — Aaron. Moses as the mediator of the law Covenant typified The Christ, Head and Body, Mediator of the New Covenant.

However, that it might be seen that the work of the Mediator of the future in the sealing of the New Covenant will be vitally identified with the Atonement work, we have the declaration of the type that Moses used in sealing the Law Covenant, the typical blood of both bulls and goats. The lesson of this most distinctly is that the greater Mediator, Jesus the Head of the Church, His “Members,” will seal or sprinkle the New Covenant with the blood of both of the sacrifices, the meritorious blood of the antitypical bullock (our lord, our Redeemer), and also the blood of His “members” (the Church), the antitype of the goat.

Gradual Development of Divine Plan

Looking back at the original Covenant made with Abraham, it is like a closed-up telescope. For hundreds of years natural Israel seemed to be the Seed of Abraham, to whom the promises were made and through whom all the nations of the world would be blessed. Yet after more than sixteen centuries the telescope was slipped out a notch and matters so completely changed that the Jew does not know what happened unto this day. The thing which did happen was that Christ Jesus came and personally became the Seed of Abraham, by obeying the law. Then, by dying for Adam’s race, He was exalted to be the Spiritual Seed of Abraham. Then He was ready to give the earthly part of Israel’s blessings to as many as would receive them — by justification by faith.

Bewildered Israel held off and the favour went to the few of that nation and to thousands of others previously in darkness — Gentiles. These, after accepting the blessed privilege of human justification, were invited to surrender it, to sacrifice it, as their Redeemer had done.

This work of sacrificing has been going on for more than eighteen centuries, and soon will be finished. When the sacrificing finishes, to whom will the blessed privileges of fellowship with God and Covenant privileges then be given? We answer that the Apostle, and the prophets declare that it will be given to Israel again, but not by their own Law Covenant, but by a Law Covenant which the Lord will make with them at that time. The Redeemer and His sacrificing associates, His “members” or “Bride,” will act as Mediator of the New Covenant between God and Israel (Ezekiel 16:60,61, Romans 11:27-32).

New Covenant not Confined to Those of Jewish Birth

Furthermore, the blessed privileges of that New Covenant will not be confined to those of Jewish Birth, but all the nations of the earth will be privileged to become “Israelites indeed,” without guile, and to come under the terms, conditions and blessings of that New Covenant. Thus, eventually the blood of Christ shall extend in its efficacy and blessing, not only to the “household of faith” of this present time, but to the Jews in the next age and through them to all nations. It will be nonetheless the blood of Christ that will bless and whose efficacy will restore all nations to fellowship with God because (1) Spiritual Israel and (2) Natural Israel shall have been associated in conveying the blessing- to all nations.

Priest and Mediator Always Separate

Have in mind, then, that a priest never is a mediator of a Covenant and that a mediator of a Covenant is never a priest to offer sin-offering and make atonement. What God has thus distinctly separated in His Word, we do well to keep separate in our thoughts and words, else our poor heads will become confused over terms, even while holding fast to certain facts (Z. 1909 — 87).