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Partaking of the Lord's Memorial

"This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me" (Luke 22:19).

On the evening that Jesus was betrayed and on the same day in which he died, he sat in the upper room with his twelve disciples eating the lamb, which represented himself and his sacrifice. All four Gospel accounts make manifest the fact that the immediate purpose for the gathering of Jesus and his twelve specially chosen disciples in the upper room was that they might eat together the Jewish Passover meal (Matthew 26:19,20, Mark 14:16,17, Luke 22:13-15, John 13:1-4). It was a requirement under the Mosaic Law for all Jews to keep the Passover observance each year. Doing so was to serve as a remembrance of their deliverance out of the bondage of Egypt many centuries earlier (Exodus 12:14, 25-27).

Jesus and his twelve disciples were Jews and, therefore, obligated to observe this annual ceremony. He knew that he was about to be put to death as the "Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29). He was the "true bread from heaven," the bread of God which came down to give life to the world (John 6:31-33).

In a few hours, Jesus would be lifted up on the cross to die for the sins of the world, and to fulfill the Father's mission which he had come to do. The Father had determined the exact time for his sacrifice to be offered. Previously, when the Jews had come to lay hands upon him and put him to death they could not, because his hour was not yet come. He now willingly said, "My time is at hand" (Matthew 26:18).

When our Lord instituted his Memorial Supper, it was the beginning of a new symbol. It was built upon and related to the old Passover celebration observed by the Jewish people, although not a part of it. It was intended to be a commemoration, or memorial, of his death, and he wanted to demonstrate to his disciples the benefits of that sacrifice to them, and to all the true believers during the present Gospel Age.

This is My Body

When the Passover supper was finished, Jesus took the bread and instituted a memorial of his own death as a substitute for the Passover lamb. It was a simple ceremony which would help to remind his followers of what he had done for them, and for the world. It also showed them that they would have the privilege of participating with him in the Divine program of salvation. As they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed it, broke it, and gave it to his disciples. It represented his flesh — his humanity — which was broken, or sacrificed, for us. Unless he had sacrificed himself for us, we could never have a resurrection from death to any future life.

"When he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me" (Luke 22:19). "After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come" (1 Corinthians 11:24-26).

Jesus was pointing out to his disciples that this Memorial to his death should continue until the last member of his spiritual body is gathered together with him in heaven. Therefore, "Let a man examine

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himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup” (verse 28).

We do not partake of the bread and the cup from fear, but from knowledge and love, gratefully and intelligently, for blessed are your enlightened minds through the Holy Spirit. We believe that this is now a new institution that should take the place of the former typical sacrifices that became obsolete when they were fulfilled. We are to examine our hearts, and motives, for none are worthy. We have this blessed privilege of partaking of these Memorial emblems by and through the love and grace of our Heavenly Father.

This celebration with his disciples on the 14th day of Nisan had a new meaning, the loaf representing his flesh and the cup his blood. We trust in him and appreciate his sacrifice and should gladly partake of the Memorial as he instructed. It is appropriate to remember at what great cost redemption from sin and death was provided. Consider also, the Heavenly Father’s love in giving his only begotten Son to suffer and to die. We also remember the great compassion that our Lord demonstrated during his earthly ministry.

The Fruit of the Vine

Let us look further into the meaning of these words: “He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father’s kingdom” (Matthew 26:27-29). He took the cup and invited his disciples and followers to partake of the fruit of the vine, of his blood, the cup representing death.

The crushing of the grapes, the wine, or the juice of grapes, represents his blood. His life was willingly poured out, and in turn he was inviting them to also partake with him. It represents a cup of shame, sorrow, and self-denial on behalf of others, and implies the giving of all there is to give. It is a cup of sacrifice even unto death and symbolizes our Lord’s death and sacrifice of his earthly rights (Hebrews 9:22). He gave thanks, which showed the joy that he had in giving his life, and that he accepted all the sufferings which the breaking of the bread and the crushing of the grapes implied. He gave it to them, which shows that only his called ones — the little flock — are invited to participate with him (Luke 12:32). Christ symbolically gave them the privilege of sharing in his sufferings.

Our Lord told them, “Drink ye all of it,” which was his invitation to the disciples to share with him in the cup. Jesus’ shed blood was the ransom price for all, but the act of handing the cup to his disciples and asking them to drink was an invitation to them. It was the invitation to participate with him in the sacrifice of earthly life, interests, hopes, aims, and ambitions. It would eventually require the giving of



Jesus washing the feet of Peter at the last supper

everything that they had to give. All who would sit with him in his throne must drink of this same cup of self-denial, self-sacrifice, and must be immersed into his death — be willing to give their all in laying down their lives. “The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together” (Romans 8:16,17).

Cup of Blessing

“The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?” (1 Corinthians 10:16). The “cup” represents the sacrificed life of our Lord, and the “bread” represents his body. This is pointing out to us that we being many members are one loaf, and have communion, or a common union, with our Lord, and with one another. We are all partakers of that one body, as expressed by Paul. “Christ in you, the hope of glory” (Colossians 1:27).

This emphasizes the thought of unity, the oneness of the church with each other and with their Lord. We should be very thankful for the wonderful opportunity that we have been given to share in his cup, and to be “baptized into his death” (Romans 6:3). It should inspire each one to complete their vows of consecration and strive to be faithful to their calling. All the members of the one loaf have pledged to be broken, that they may share the life-giving power and influence to others. This will ultimately lead to the opportunity for the world of mankind to live on a restored and perfect earth forever. They will feed on the bread of life, and drink of the water of Truth freely.

To partake of these emblems — the bread and the cup — is a way of reaffirming our vow of consecration when we responded to the call, “My son, give me thine heart” (Proverbs 23:26). It is the desire of his footstep followers to remember him, to be broken with him, and with all the fellow members of the body of Christ. They love their Master and are willing to show their devotion to him in following his words. “As often as

ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come" (1 Corinthians 11:26).

May we all continue to remember our Lord's sacrifice in the days ahead, remembering that he has "called you out of darkness into his marvelous light" (1 Peter 2:9). He called you out from the world and invited you to be "taught of God" (John 6:45). He desires you to be faithful in matters great and small and wants you to continue to keep your thoughts and motives pure, "Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith" (Hebrews 12:2).

Importance of the Order

During the Memorial, as it was on that night with his disciples in the upper room, bread was first broken. The order or appropriateness of having the bread broken and passed to the disciples teaches us that only those who are now justified from sin by faith in the merit and sacrifice of the true and antitypical Lamb of God are invited to give up their justified humanity and share in the afflictions of Christ during the present age, and the glories which will follow. Only those who symbolically eat his flesh, and drink his blood, dwell in him and he in them as members of his body. "My flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him" (John 6:55,56).

Partaking of the bread is a symbol representing the real love of God, and points to a more important feast. This is the appropriation of the merit of Christ that secures to the faithful eternal life through his shed blood. Thus, by faith, accepting his finished sacrifice, and by a similar faith as instructed by him, we appropriate to ourselves all the merits and perfections and rights which the man Christ Jesus possessed and laid down in death for us. In this way, we feed our hearts upon the bread of everlasting life. The bread, which God sent from heaven, is the true bread of which men will eat, and never die. "I am the living bread which came down from heaven" (John 6:51). It was necessary not only for our Lord to come down from heaven as "bread," but also necessary that he lay down his life in death. He sacrificed or gave his flesh for the life of the world, that all the dead and dying race could have life.

Leaven Pictures Sin

The bread which our Lord broke on that night was unleavened. Leaven represents corruption and sin because it is an element of decay, therefore it is a type, or picture, for sin. It also represents the decay and death which sin works in mankind. The unleavened bread shows that our Lord was free from sin, as a lamb without blemish and without spot. "Such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens" (Hebrews 7:26). He was a perfect and willing sacrifice and was brought as a lamb to the slaughter and he opened not his mouth (Isaiah 53:7).



Passing the bread at the last supper

In our own lives, we must "Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us" (1 Corinthians 5:7). We must strive to rid ourselves of malice, anger, hatred, and anything that would take us away from service to God. We are to understand what it cost our Lord Jesus, as far as his physical and mental suffering are concerned, to be the Redeemer of the world of mankind. We should also recall the example of Divine love and compassion for the sin-cursed race that has been shown to us. We should have a renewed determination to be faithful in carrying out the terms of our own consecration to do God's will. Paul wrote, "Consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds" (Hebrews 12:3).

Our mind can be a battleground, and our fight a difficult one. We fight against the old mind, and the ways of the old man, including the flesh's resistance to sacrifice (Galatians 5:16,17, 1 Timothy 6:12). If we continue to trust in the true and living God, we have a complete renewing of our minds, a strengthening to prepare us to go on each day and to know and do the will of God. "The trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 1:7).

Bitter Herbs

On the night of the Passover celebration, the children of Israel were instructed to eat "bitter herbs" (Exodus 12:8). This represents the bitter experiences and trials that the Heavenly Father permits to come upon his consecrated people during the present Gospel Age. These experiences help to wean us from fleshly interests and provide us with increased appetite to further feed upon the lamb and the unleavened bread of Truth. The entire household of faith during the present Gospel Age feeds on the unleavened bread of Truth, mingled with the bitter herbs of trial and testing. Our Lord's followers partake of the bitter herbs of persecution in accord with the Master's own words, that the servant is not above

his master. “Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution” (2 Timothy 3:12).

We are told to have the mind of Christ, for, if we do this, we will gain strength to follow in his footsteps. We read, “Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously” (1 Peter 2:23). He gave his all, in service to his Father, and to his sheep, his followers. He lived his life by example, helping, and encouraging his disciples. He should strive to have this same desire in our hearts and minds. “Greater love hath no man than this, that he lay down his life for his friends” (John 15:13).

Examine Yourself

As we have already mentioned, the Memorial season is an appropriate time to reexamine our commitment to our loving Heavenly Father. Are we living up to our privileges of sacrifice as faithfully as we first intended when we began the journey on the narrow way, or are we unwittingly taking an easier way? As we consider Jesus at this special time of the year and throughout the following year, we will all want to make sure that we are among those who continue to voluntarily keep their sacrifice on the altar. This should be done regardless of the cost to us in terms of inconvenience, weariness, misunderstanding, or suffering. “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service” (Romans 12:1).

We must endure to the end, and only then will we receive the great salvation. It will take a lifetime of dedication to God to complete. “Ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise” (Hebrews 10:36). “Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him” (James 1:12).



Teaching at the Last Supper

Those who participate in this Memorial of our Lord’s death should be as those expressed in the Apostle’s words, “If so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together. For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us” (Romans 8:17,18).

Those who assemble themselves together should be guided by these terms and conditions: (1) Faith in the blood; and (2) Consecration to the Lord, and to his service, even unto death. This is a serious matter and one that should not be taken lightly. We have a warning about avoiding a careless celebration, for it is not a feast, it is a solemn memorial (1 Corinthians 11:27,28).

Each one of us should desire as his followers, to be conformed to the image of God’s Son. Those whom he calls he then justifies, and those he will also glorify (Romans 8:30). They are, “the elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ” (1 Peter 1:2). He has set us apart and has called us to a heavenly calling. We must strive to fulfill our vows of consecration and complete the giving of our own living sacrifice.

Pentecost

“And suddenly there came from heaven a noise like a violent rushing wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. And there appeared to them tongues as of fire distributing themselves, and they rested on each one of them” (Acts 2:2-3 NASB).

Just before Christ’s ascension into Heaven, he gave the following instructions to the disciples. “Gathering them together, He commanded them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait for what the Father had promised, “Which,” He said, “you heard of from Me; for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now” (Acts 1:4-5 NASB).

The disciples were familiar with John’s Baptism

calling for the Jews to repent and to come back into harmony with God. This baptism did not grant them the powers that the Holy Spirit would bring to the believers. When Paul came to Ephesus he found brethren there, and asked “Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?” They replied “No, we have not even heard whether there is a Holy Spirit.” They had been baptized with John’s baptism to repentance. Paul explained that John was the forerunner to Jesus.

Once they heard the message they were baptized into the name of Jesus. Only then did they receive the Holy Spirit and the gifts that were promised.

The Promises

“I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever; that is the **Spirit of truth**, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not see Him or know Him, but you know Him because He abides with you and will be in you (John 14:16-17 NASB).

“But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will **teach you** all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you (John 14:26 NASB).

“When they arrest you and hand you over, do not worry beforehand about what you are to say, but say whatever is given you in that hour; for it is **not you** who speak, but it is the **Holy Spirit** (Mark 13:11 NASB).

“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be **My witnesses** both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth” (Acts 1:8 NASB).

On the Day of Pentecost, the disciples were all together when the sound of a mighty wind comes down from heaven, with tongues of fire resting on them. “And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit was giving them utterance” (Acts 2:4 NASB). The crowds observing this event were amazed and astonished, saying, “Why, are not all these who are speaking Galileans? And how is it that we each hear them in our own language to which we were born?” (Acts 2:7-8 NASB).

The speaking in various languages occurred as

a crowd of people from many nations gathered in Jerusalem, with each visitor hearing the speech of the disciples in his own native tongue (Acts 2:6-11). These astounding events demonstrated the presence of the Holy Spirit. It certainly drew the attention of those who had come to Jerusalem for the Passover and had stayed through to Pentecost. The crowd surmised that the disciples were drunk even though it was only 9:00 am.

The apostle Peter, now filled with the Holy Spirit, boldly explained the event to the crowd as a fulfillment of Joel’s prophecy: “And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God, that I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh” (Acts 2:17, Joel 2:28). Peter went on to explain the purpose of Jesus coming to earth, the miracles, wonders and signs performed through God by Him. That with the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God had died on the cross and was raised on the third day.

Peter said to them, “Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off, as many as the Lord our God will call to Himself” (Acts 2:38-39 NASB). God used these miracles and Peter’s preaching to add 3,000 people to His Church in one day.

The Holy Spirit at Work

The coming of the Holy Spirit dramatically changed the lives of early Christians. The book of Acts is filled with accounts of the early Church’s remarkable spiritual impact on the surrounding society. A transformation was so evident that nonbelievers accused the Christians in Thessalonica claiming “These men who have upset the world have come here also” (Acts 17:6). The Good News being preached was affecting the livelihoods of those that made money through the sale of idols for the pagan gods and also those of the Jewish faith who wanted to remain under the law.

What a privilege was granted to the believers “For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God (Romans 8:14 NASB). It was this same power that transformed the lives of the early Christians and is at work in the Church today. Paul told Timothy that God’s Spirit is a “spirit of ... power and of love and of a sound mind” (2 Timothy 1:7).

Pentecost serves as an annual reminder that our Heavenly Father is still working with us in miraculous ways through His Holy Spirit. Paul states, “for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure” (Philippians 2:13 NASB).



Day of Pentecost

Shepherd the Flock of God

*“Therefore, I exhort the elders among you, as your fellow elder and witness of the sufferings of Christ, and a partaker also of the glory that is to be revealed, shepherd the flock of God”
(1 Peter 5:1-2 NASB).*

The Apostle Peter uses the picture of a shepherd tending to the flock of God. This illustrates the tenderness that was required in dealing with God’s children. Peter no doubt remembered the words of Jesus “What do you think? If any man has a hundred sheep, and one of them has gone astray, does he not leave the ninety-nine on the mountains and go and search for the one that is straying?” (Matthew 18:12 NASB). Showing that the care for one child of God is as important as the ninety-nine, especially when the problems of the world may affect their faith.

Peter by example shows that they were not to lord over the flock. Peter was an Apostle who had been with Jesus for the three and a half years of his ministry and yet here refers to himself “as your fellow elder.” By putting the elders on an equal footing to himself, his words held more weight. He no doubt remembered the commission that he was given recorded in John 21:15-17, “Feed my Lambs, shepherd my sheep, tend my sheep.” Peter had previously denied Christ. He realised that Christ so loved the world that he gave his life for them, even those who denied him, and that he must follow this example and love the brethren as Christ did him.

Reward

Peter reminds them of the heart condition that they would need to lead the flock of God. “Take care of it willingly, as God wants you to, and not unwillingly. Do your work, not for mere pay, but from a real desire to serve” (1 Peter 5:2 GNB). Jesus gives the comparison of a true shepherd and one that is in it for the money. “I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd lays down His life for the sheep. He who is a hired hand, and not

a shepherd, who is not the owner of the sheep, sees the wolf coming, and leaves the sheep and flees, and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. He flees because he is a hired hand and is not concerned about the sheep” (John 10:11-13 NASB).

If the elder takes the position for monetary reward or for the accolades from the flock, he will fail the flock when they most need his help. If he serves with eagerness, with the desire to feed and tend to the flock then he will succeed and is promised an “unfading crown of glory.” Peter reminds them “GOD IS OPPOSED TO THE PROUD BUT GIVES GRACE TO THE HUMBLE” (1 Peter 5:5). The reward is not for now, but to be given at the proper time, to those who prove faithful until death.

Cast Your Anxiety on Him

This is not aimed only at those serving as elders, but also for the sheep in their care. The letter had been written “To those who reside as aliens, scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, who are chosen” by God (1 Peter 1:1 NASB). Being aliens, foreigners, in these countries would cause anxiety. All these areas were under Roman rule and so restrictions would have been placed on the brethren. Some would have been Jews converted to Christianity, others would have been Gentiles converted from paganism. The journeys of Apostle Paul certainly highlighted the trials brought on by Jews trying to convert the Christians back to some form of Judaism through the law. Demanding that circumcision is required, that certain feast days must be observed, and certain food must not be eaten.

At the Jerusalem council this matter was discussed by the Apostles and elders. “After there had been much debate, Peter stood up and said to them, “Brethren, you know that in the early days God made a choice among you, that by my mouth the Gentiles would hear the word of the gospel and believe. And God, who knows the heart, testified to them giving them the Holy Spirit, just as He also did to us; and He made no distinction between us and them, cleansing their hearts by faith. Now therefore why do you put God to the test by placing upon the neck of the disciples a yoke which neither our fathers nor we have been able to bear?” (Acts 15:7-10 NASB).

The Gentile Christians came also under other difficulties as well, they had turned from idol worship and were encouraging others to join them. This had a flow on effect to those making idols as recorded. “For a man named Demetrius, a silversmith, who made silver



Jesus is our shepherd.



Reverence for God is vital.

shrines of Artemis, was bringing no little business to the craftsmen; these he gathered together with the workmen of similar trades, and said, ‘Men, you know that our prosperity depends upon this business. You see and hear that not only in Ephesus, but in almost all of Asia, this Paul has persuaded and turned away a considerable number of people, saying that gods made with hands are no gods at all. Not only is there danger that this trade of ours fall into disrepute, but also that the temple of the great goddess Artemis be regarded as worthless and that she whom all of Asia and the world worship will even be dethroned from her magnificence’” (Acts 19:24-27 NASB).

Lessons for Christians Today

Apostle Peter wrote about the situation that Christians find themselves in today. “Know this first of all, that in the last days mockers will come with their mocking, following after their own lusts, and saying, ‘Where is the promise of His coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all continues just as it was from the beginning of creation’” (2 Peter 3:3-4 NASB). This warning was not new, as Peter explained, the holy prophets and Christ had given the message which the apostles now passed on through letters and sermons.

There would be scoffers, those that follow their own passions, rejecting the knowledge of God, fearlessly indulging in the wickedness of the world. Their total disregard for God’s laws and advocating the permissiveness that is prevalent through the world. Followers of Christ should not be bowled over by this arrogance and blasphemous denial of the Creator but rather see them as a definite indication that the end of the age is near.

A world without moral boundaries produces scoffers instead of thinkers. Many try to use scientific training to say that, since the reality of the Creator God cannot be proved by man’s understanding, God must not exist. By rejecting Scripture, mankind has lost its moral compass, leaving them with no way to determine right or wrong, good or bad, truth or lie. In this climate, anyone who claims to know the truth of God’s word is a prime target for scoffers.

Christian Values Rejected by the World

Once the reverence of God as a supreme being is removed from consideration, then anything is acceptable. Scoffers redefine marriage as no longer between a man and a woman but between those of the same sex. Other laws of God have been put aside, creating a fantasy world that replaces reality. “For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse. For even though they knew God, they did not honour Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing to be wise, they became fools” (Romans 1:20-22 NASB).

The increase of scoffers is a sign of the last days of the Gospel Age. They profess themselves to be wise, but they are really fools. “The fool has said in his heart, “There is no God” (Psalms 14:1). It is critically important that every Christian take seriously the command “Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth” (2 Timothy 2:15 NASB). The Heavenly Father has given followers of Christ all the tools that are needed “for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ. As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, **by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming**” (Ephesians 4:12-14 NASB).

Gullibility

The most dangerous part is the trickery and the deceitful scheming of men. This is especially so for newcomers to the word of God, or to those who are dull of hearing, not learning and progressing past the elementary principles or the oracles of God. “For everyone who partakes only of milk is not accustomed to the word of righteousness, for he is an infant. But solid food is for the mature, who because of practice have their senses trained to discern good and evil” (Hebrews 5:13-14 NASB). They will inevitably meet some false teacher who impresses them by his enthusiasm and apparent sincerity. He uses religious words, and so they think he is a true Christian. If they had studied the word of God for themselves, they would be able to see through the deceitful manipulating of God’s words. But now they are **carried about** by his **wind of doctrine** and led by unprincipled **cunning** into a form of organised error.

Wolves in Sheep’s Clothing

Jesus warned the disciples “Beware of the false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but

inwardly are ravenous wolves” (Matthew 7:15 NASB). These are teachers who claim to be authorised instructors of God’s word. They often appear unappealing, gentle, showing a believable outward appearance. They use plausible words to lead the flock away from the straight and narrow way. The Apostle Paul also warned, “I know that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; and from among your own selves’ men will arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them” (Acts 20:29-30 NASB).

The risk with the wolves in sheep’s clothing can especially be prevalent at this end of the age. In Matthew 24 the following warning is given “Then if

anyone says to you, ‘Behold, here is the Christ,’ or ‘There He is,’ do not believe him. For false Christs and false prophets will arise and will show great signs and wonders, so as to mislead, if possible, even the elect” (Matthew 24:23-24 NASB). This can only happen if they start to rely on their own wisdom or superiority, instead of putting their trust in the Heavenly Father.

Like the Psalmist, the followers of Christ can say “You are my defender and protector. You are my God; in you I trust.” He will keep you safe from all hidden dangers and from all deadly diseases. He will cover you with his wings; you will be safe in his care; his faithfulness will protect and defend you” (Psalms 91:2-4 GNB).

Things That Alone Count

“Therefore I, the prisoner of the Lord, implore you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called” (Ephesians 4:1 NASB).

What are the “things that alone count,” or the “things that belong to our peace?”

Paul in Ephesians 4:2-3 gives the answer to this pertinent and reasonable question. Addressing the faithful in Christ Jesus, He said, “with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing tolerance for one another in love, being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” (Ephesians 4:2-3 NASB). Paul is revealing those “things that alone count” in the character of our Christian walk, which lead to the peace of a good conscience, rich with the fruits of a Christian life, rich in faith, hope, and love.

If these things that accompany salvation are not present then we need to heed the warning to the Laodicean Church, “Because you say, ‘I am rich, and have become wealthy, and have need of nothing,’ and you do not know that you are wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked” (Revelation 3:17 NASB).

The well-known hymn, “Prayer is the soul’s sincere desire, uttered or unexpressed,” shows the offering of our desires to our Heavenly Father, who can and does hear us and is able to respond and make full provision for all our needs. So, in that surrender of self, in consecration to His will, in childlike confidence and faith in infinite love and goodness, to tell God our innermost desires. Martin Luther wrote “Prayer is not overcoming God’s reluctance; it is laying hold of His highest willingness.”

Paul, when speaking of gifts from the Heavenly Father, wrote “Set your hearts, then, on the more important gifts. Best of all, however, is the following way” (1 Corinthians 12:31 GNB). In the next chapter he speaks of the way and the gifts that might be received but states what desires will last “Meanwhile these three remain: faith, hope, and love; and the greatest

of these is love (1 Corinthians 13:13 GNB). Thus, he reveals that gifts are good, but only if ministered in love; benevolence is good, but not apart from love. Yea, there are other values, but this one is supreme, and the fountain of all perfection and excellency.

It is noteworthy that love is better than our present incomplete knowledge, and greater than even faith and hope. Why? Because it is the end design of the Almighty God and Creator of all things. Love is His brightest glory, the revelation of it leads to the desire for a fuller fellowship, with a deeper love and appreciation toward all those who are seeking the “things that alone count.” In the Christian walk and experience—a moving on to a richer unfolding of the things of the spirit. A life so lived here and now will be the “earnest” of that to come.

Apostle Peter wrote, “These are the qualities you need, and if you have them in abundance, they will make you active and effective in your knowledge of



Peter advised us to develop Christian character.

our Lord Jesus Christ” (2 Peter 1:8 GNB). He goes on to list the various qualities in verses five through seven and then states, “For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they render you neither useless nor unfruitful in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ” (2 Peter 1:8 NASB).

What is the solution if Christians feel that they are lacking in knowledge, wisdom, self-control etc. The answer is prayer. “This is the confidence which we have before Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us” (1 John 5:14 NASB). The access to the Father is through Christ Jesus: “I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me” (John 14:6 NASB).

With the Church at Philippi, Paul had a special connection. He wrote “I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, always offering prayer with joy in my every prayer for you all, in view of your participation in the gospel from the first day until now” (Philippians 1:3-5 NASB). He tells them “How I long for you all with the affection of Christ Jesus.” He saw their love grow not only through words but by action. He wrote “You yourselves also know, Philippians, that at the first preaching of the gospel, after I left Macedonia, no church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving but you, alone; for even in Thessalonica, you sent a gift more than once for my needs” (Philippians 4:15-16 NASB). When Paul was a prisoner in Rome, they sent provisions, but also Epaphroditus to deliver them and assist him, thus showing their love.

Our Christian fellowship must be based on love, the love that the Heavenly Father and Christ has shown to us. “God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us” (Romans 5:8 NASB). The fellowship cannot be based on our favourite doctrines or on our favourite theories or dogma. It is not that these doctrines are not important but rather the spirit by which we accept those who may have a slightly different opinion. Remember that true Christian fellowship can only be enjoyed in the light, and communion shown by Christ. Remember, Christ is the Touchstone by which all is to be tested, and according to our attitude to Him, we judge and condemn ourselves.

Paul, speaking words of caution to his Philippian brethren, said “Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others” (Philippians 2:3-4 NASB). If we are to be members of the Body of Christ, we have the duty to proclaim the glad tidings of the Messiah with a spirit of love. This may not be easy Christ proclaimed, “And He summoned the crowd with His disciples, and said to them, ‘If anyone wishes to come



Some of the ruins of Philippi, where Paul formed a Christian group

after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me” (Mark 8:34 NASB). The world with its tinsel and glitter, the false pretensions of countless things of no value. Compare them with the things that alone count, things that make for eternal peace and happiness, and we shall clearly see that outside of Christ all is dross.

The privilege of following Christ and becoming part of His body is only available during the Gospel Age which is drawing to a close. Jesus tells us, “If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our abode with him” (John 14:23 NASB). What a wonderful promise that they will make their abode with those who commit their lives to Christ. Proverbs gives another insight into this privilege. “But he who listens to me shall live securely and will be at ease from the dread of evil” (Proverbs 1:33 NASB). How different from the world around us that lives in fear because of their disintegrating principles, not looking after the needy, not acknowledging God, lacking in love being led astray by Satan. The message to the Christian is “And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect” (Romans 12:2 NASB).

We know that strife and love cannot mix. No body of men can be bound together permanently on the principles of strife and vainglory. Why? Because they are disintegrating principles. They have no place or value, and when viewed in the light of eternity, they cannot be among those things that belong to our peace. Therefore, if we are Christ’s, we must have Christ formed in us; we must have the mind of Christ in us, and we must rule our lives by the new motive, “Love one another.” Only in that way lies peace; only in that way lies the purest joy in all its excellence; only in that way can we be pleasing to God and enjoy spiritual kinship with the Lord Jesus Christ and the members of His body.



"Love your enemies."

God summons us to a new way of life, and our hearts tell us that the things that belong to our peace are not the things that the world is striving for. Rather, let us keep in mind that between the Christ-life and the world-life there can be no compromise. "We cannot serve God and Mammon" at the same time. If we would find rest, we must learn of Him who was meek and lowly in heart (Matthew 11:29).

Christ points out that the Christian life consists of being poor in spirit, in mourning, being meek, hungering and thirsting after righteousness, being merciful, pure in heart, and being peace makers. The difficulty would be the attitude of the world. Christ stated "Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when people insult you and persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me" (Matthew 5:10-11 NASB).

Jesus emphasises "because of me" and proceeds to describe the effect of such living upon the world, saying, "You are the salt of the earth ... You are the light of the world" (Matthew 5:13-14 NASB). The Christian believer by his new life in Christ Jesus is light, and as such he must order his life, for the fruit of light appears in every form of goodness, righteousness, and truth. They are instructed "Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in heaven" (Matthew 5:16). The Son of God does not speak of honouring him but giving all honour to the Father.

Jesus, speaking of the persecutions that would come, warns his followers "You will be hated by all because of My name, but it is the one who has endured to the end who will be saved" (Matthew 10:22 NASB). They would receive their appropriate reward, if they followed His advice "For I say to you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 5:20 NASB).

The Master points to the fact that entrance into the kingdom of heaven will not be upon the basis of legal righteousness, but upon that which far exceeds it — a love of righteousness. We must go beyond the outward form, or we will not enter that kingdom. The requirement is "love our enemies and do good to them that spitefully use us." God has called His people through Christ to wage a new warfare, on a new plane, and with new weapons. He calls us to the overcome the evil, and hatred of the world, and the only way this is possible is by using the higher weapons of love, restraint, good will, and the spirit of forgiveness. If we fail here in the things that alone count, we fail as followers of Christ.

One of the most important aspects of the Christian's life is the relationship with the Heavenly Father. Christ stated, "But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you" (Matthew 5:44 NASB). This is the level of love that we are to show to one another and to the world. "Therefore, you are to be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect" (Matthew 5:48 NASB).

This word perfect implies full development, growth into maturity of godliness. Paul expressed it in these words: "until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ" (Ephesians 4:13 NASB). That work will not be complete until the image of Christ is engraved upon the heart, and changed by the work of the spirit, transformed into the image of His Son.

What we are in ourselves, what we are to the world, and what we are in our relationship to God, determines life for us, determining what we are to be in the future. Unless we seek and strive after the things that alone count, we shall not hear that "Well done, good and faithful slave. You were faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master" (Matthew 25:21 NASB). Let us, therefore, regard each passing moment as having a specific character and definite purpose. Let us realise to the utmost, the solemnity of each moment of our Christian life, for we are to utilize the time because "the days are evil." Let us bring intellect and conscience to bear upon all our ways seeking to know God's will, and willing to make the sacrifices required.

It is true there are many minor purposes, but the great end is to form ourselves, with the help of God, "according to the pattern showed" to us in the Sermon on the Mount, in order that it may lead us on to the higher purpose of being changed from the image of the earthly into the image of the heavenly.

The first three beatitudes uncover the aggressive attitudes of life. They show God's invasion of us, taking away our self-sufficiency, our very self-life, getting us ready for the most amazing offensive of love that the world has ever seen. For we read, "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only



Jesus, walking among the candlesticks

begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life” (John 3:16 NASB). God’s tender love for mankind is timeless, lifted above the distinctions of tenses, such as past, present, or future, having no beginning and therefore no end, no growth and therefore no decay.

As surely as the magnet when applied to a dish of sand into which some metal filings have been thrown will draw every little bit of these filings out, so surely will the magnet of His love draw out of earth’s humanity the ones who feel its impulse and its preciousness. It first means we must be knit to God by the Son of His love, separated from evil-separated by the power of His received love; for the root idea of holiness is not moral character, goodness and of action, but it is separation from the world and consecration to God. Yielding to and answering that love, so that it separates us for Himself, is that which alone counts, peace of mind, security and leads to happy submission and He assures us that never will He “forget” any of our works.

The Gospel of Jesus Christ begins with the demand of self-renunciation — “poor in spirit” and ends in the fulness of the “new life.” He who walks amidst the candlesticks will see that each little lamp is fed according to its capacity and need. We must hold up our emptiness and nothingness to Him, and He will fill it with His fulness. Thus, by His grace, out of this nothingness we will grow strong in faith, giving God all the praise and glory. But let us remember while the highest glory of the creature is in being only a vessel to receive, enjoy and show forth the glory of God, by a simple reliance upon Christ, conscious of our deep need, and believingly waiting upon Him. Yes, it is the displacement of self by the enthronement of God. Where God is all, self becomes nothing.

This fact is revealed by the very first words of the Sermon on the Mount. The Lord Jesus therein revealed to His early disciples and to us the open gate through which alone we enter the kingdom of heaven, saying, “Blessed are the poor in spirit.”

Moffatt says, “Blessed are those who feel poor in spirit” — not in material things, but rather, recognising that we have nothing in ourselves and being conscious of our spiritual need. It is simply the sense of entire nothingness which comes when we see how truly God is all in all. It is not something which we bring to Him, but the nothingness that makes room for God to work in us His good pleasure.

It was God’s good pleasure to give a set of new commands (laws) unto the children of Israel, “for the law came by Moses.” To them it contained the things that alone counted to them — things which made for peace, happiness, and life. Love of ease and un-

belief kept them from marching on and obtaining the heights of the fulness of God’s promised blessings. Israel failed sadly — failed under law and government — hence, instead of life and blessing, there has been judgment and dispersion. Thanks to God, in spite of Israel’s unfaithfulness, all Israel shall be saved and restored and blessed on the ground of God’s oath-bound covenant to Abraham and his seed.

Through their failure, “grace and truth came by Jesus” to us Gentiles. So let us cherish our opportunities and seek the things of the spirit. It is for us to determine that we shall make our trials, whether little or great, a means to draw us nearer to God. We must let Christ, “the wisdom of God,” choose our path, and at last we shall lift our praises to “Him that is able to keep us from stumbling and to present us faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy.”

Prayer (BSH323)

Prayer is the soul’s sincere desire,
Uttered or unexpressed.
The motion of a hidden fire
That trembles in the breast.

Prayer is the burden of a sigh,
The falling of a tear,
The upward glancing of an eye
When none but God is near.

Prayer is the simplest form of speech
That infant lips can try;
Prayer the sublimest strains that reach
The majesty on high.

Prayer is the Christian’s vital breath,
The Christian’s native air,
His watchword at the gates of death;
He enters Heaven with prayer.

James Montgomery 1771-1854

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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 in the 1970's, setting out the Bible teachings on topics eluding many in the Christian world. The insert in this edition of the Peoples Paper is the next part of this 274-page book. Brethren may read more of the content through the Berean Bible Institute's official webpage.

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

Memorial — When He had given thanks, He broke it and said, "This is My body, which is for you; **do this** in remembrance of Me" (1 Corinth. 11:24). **Tuesday, April 4, 2023, after 6:00 pm.**
Information: australianbiblestudents@gmail.com

Class Project: Smile!

The last class I took for my college degree was Sociology. The teacher was inspiring, with qualities I wish every human being had been graced with. Her last project of the term was called "Smile." The class was asked to go out and smile at three people and document their reactions. I am a very friendly person and always smile at everyone anyway, so I thought this would be a piece of cake.

Soon after, my husband, youngest son, and I went out to a fast-food restaurant one crisp March morning. It was our way of sharing special time together. We stood in line, waiting to be served, when suddenly everyone around us began to back away, and then, even my husband.

I did not move an inch. A feeling of panic welled up inside of me as I turned to see why they had moved. As I turned around, I smelled a horrible "dirty body" odour, and there standing behind me were two poor homeless men.

As I looked down at the short gentleman close to me, he was "smiling." His beautiful sky-blue eyes were full of God's Light as he searched for acceptance. He said, "Good day," as he counted the few coins he had been clutching.

The second man fumbled with his hands as he stood behind his friend. I realized the second man was mentally challenged and the blue-eyed gentleman was his guardian. I held back my tears as I stood there with them. The young lady at the counter asked him what they wanted.

He said, "Coffee is all, Miss," because that was all they could afford. If they wanted to sit in the restaurant and warm up, they had to buy something. He just wanted to be warm. Then I really felt it — compulsion so great I almost reached out and embraced the little man with the blue eyes. That is when I noticed all eyes in the restaurant were set on me, judging my every action. I smiled and asked the young lady behind the counter to give me two more breakfast meals on a separate tray.

I then walked around the corner to the table the men had chosen. I put the tray on the table and laid my hand on the blue-eyed gentleman's cold hand. He looked up at me with tears, and said, "Thank you."

I leaned over, began to pat his hand, and said, "I did not do this for you. God is working through me to give you hope."

I started to cry as I walked away to join my husband and son. When I sat down, my husband smiled at me and said, "That is why God gave you to me, Honey. To give me hope."

We held hands for a moment, and we knew that only because of the Grace that we had been given were we able to give. That day showed me the pure Light of God's sweet love.

In my own way I had touched the people at the restaurant, my husband, son, instructor, and every soul that shared the classroom on the last night I spent as a college student. I graduated with one of the greatest lessons I would ever learn: **unconditional love.**

"We know love by this, that He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. But whoever has the world's goods, and sees his brother in need and closes his heart against him, how does the love of God abide in him?" (1 John 3:16-17 NASB)

The Bible Teachings (Part Fifteen)

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

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Pentecostal Blessing

When the high priest had finished the first sacrifice and the offering of His blood He came forth. He manifested Himself at Pentecost and symbolically laid His hands upon the Church in the Pentecostal blessing, by which sacrifice His followers were enabled to be conformed to the terms and conditions of His sacrifice. But after offering the blood of the goat the high priest is represented as having finished his work, he puts off his sacrificial garments and puts on his garments of glory and beauty, typical of the glorious qualities of Christ's character and the honourable mission to which He had been anointed as the world's Prophet, Priest, King, Judge and Mediator. Thus coming forth he represents our Lord's Second Advent and assumption of divine power, at which time the Church will be with Him as members of His Body, to co-operate in the dispensing of the blessings of the New Covenant to Israel and to all the families of the earth. As on the Day of Atonement the people of Israel put on sackcloth and ate no pleasant food but fasted and waited for the coming out of the high priest in his garments of glory and beauty, so it has been throughout the Gospel Age.

The whole world lieth in the wicked one, overwhelmed in sin and death and corruption. Of them St. Paul declares, "For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. For the earnest expectation of the creation waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God" (Romans 8:22,19) — waiting for the High Priest, Head and Body, typified by the glorious garments of the Jewish high priest. Following the picture, a little further we see that the high priest in his glorious garments went to the Altar and lifted up his hands and gave his blessing to the people — the blessing of the New Covenant, the blessing of the forgiveness of sins, the blessing of pouring out of the holy spirit upon all flesh. If in the type a blessing is portrayed, how much greater will be the blessing in reality. As in the type the people arose, threw off their sackcloth and fasting and rejoiced in their forgiveness, so in the Millennial morning the world, coming to an appreciation of the great High Priest and the sacrifices of Atonement, will arise from sin and degradation and death and rejoice in divine favor and in the realisation of the many blessings of restitution set before Israel, as declared by the mouth of all the holy prophets since the world began (Acts 5:20).

With His Own Blood

In the context the Apostle says, "Wherefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered without the gate" (Hebrew 15:12). Are we asked what people Jesus would sanctify with His own blood? We answer, in the broader sense of the word, "All people"

— all who ever will accept sanctification, cleansing, reconciliation — through Him. We read that He gave Himself a ransom for all. It matters not that He did not apply it at once for all, but merely for us, the Church, the "household of faith." The intention of His sacrifice was for all. This does not alter the fact that thus far the merit of Jesus' sacrifice extends not beyond the "household of faith." In due time through the Church His merit will extend to every creature. Thus, it is written, "They shall obtain mercy through your mercy," and we obtain our mercy through Jesus' death, as He by divine grace, tasted death for every man.

The Scapegoat's Part

Some, without mature thinking, have remarked that the scapegoat cannot represent a spirit being class, because it never went into the Holy nor Most Holy. We reply that neither did the bullock nor the Lord's goat go into the Holy nor Most Holy. It was merely the blood of these that was taken into the Most Holy, and the blood represents the surrender of earthly rights and privileges and life willingly, in pursuance of the divine will or arrangement. The scapegoat, or "great company" class, consists of those who made an offering of themselves and were accepted, but who failed to fulfil the conditions of their sacrifice. Failing to become members of the High Priest's Body and sharers of His glory on the divine plane, these would have had nothing, had the Lord not specially provided for them an experience of tribulation for the destruction of their flesh, that the spirit might be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.

They had been accepted of the Lord because of their faith and their consecration unto death. Failing to make good their consecration and holding on to the present earthly life, they would lose all, were it not for the arrangement thus made on their behalf for the destruction of their flesh. Nor are we to think of these as a dishonourable class, an unfaithful class, an undeveloped class. None can gain eternal life -under the divine arrangements on any plane of being except as he shall be transformed and be brought to the condition of perfect loyalty to God and His righteousness. Any who do not come up to the highest standard of obedience to God would not be accounted worthy of eternal life in the "great company," or in any other. Having been begotten of the holy spirit they could not reassume their earthly rights and restitution blessings. Those once consecrated and sacrificed are gone forever. If the spirit life be not attained the implication would be the Second Death.

Great Company re Sin Atonement

This "great company" class has nothing- whatever to do with sin atonement, for the scapegoat was neither



The Scapegoat

burned outside the camp, nor was its blood brought into the Most Holy. What, then, is signified by the statement (Leviticus 16:21) that Aaron laid his hands upon the head of the scapegoat and confessed over it all the iniquities of the children of Israel and all their transgressions in all their sins, putting them upon the head of the goat?

Sins Confessed Upon Head of Scapegoat

The sin atonement effected by the blood of the bullock and the blood of the Lord's goat represented the atonement for original Adamic sin and all the weaknesses and imperfections traceable directly thereto. Since the blood of these two animals made satisfaction for all such sins of all the people, it is manifest that none retrained to be confessed upon the head of the scapegoat. What sins, then, were those which Aaron confessed upon the scapegoat's head? We reply that they were such trespasses as those our Lord taught us to pray for, saying, "Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us." If we freely forgive those who trespass against us, God will freely forgive us our trespasses. But He did not forgive original sin, but instead, sentenced us to death on account of it and provided His Son as our Redeemer. These trespasses are shortcomings, imperfections, etc., as represented in carelessness or indifference or wilfulness or any other failure to do the Lord's will the very best, we know how. The Lord represents that He keeps a very strict account of all the world's affairs. He explains that the severe tribulation which came upon the Jewish nation in the close of its harvest time was a retributive experience. In that awful trouble with which their age ended, as our Lord foretold, the Lord required all the righteous blood shed from the time of righteous Abel down to about that time. In a word, every injustice cries out for vengeance, for retribution, for penalty. The great original sin, whose penalty is death, our Lord Jesus has paid, dying, the just for the unjust.

But there are many sins, many injustices of the past, as well as of the present which are still unaccounted for to justice. For instance, in Revelation we read that the

souls under the altar cried, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?" (Revelation 6:10). Justice is merely waiting for the full number of those persecuted for righteousness' sake to be completed and then the punishment will come. The great time of trouble, with which this age will end will, like the time of trouble which closed the lavish Age, signify a time of settlement of the claims of Justice. The "great company," failing to sacrifice during the acceptable time, will be permitted to share a considerable measure of that trouble coming upon the world — to cancel, if you please, a measure of the troubles due to come upon humanity in general. When that time shall come these dear friends, represented in the "great company," will rejoice in their share of suffering and destruction of the flesh, that they may be saved as spirit beings in the day of the Lord Jesus. And what they shall suffer of the iniquities of the world will mean that much less for others in that day of trouble.

"Fellowship in His Sufferings"

That our Lord suffered, the Just for the unjust, the Scriptures clearly set forth — not merely the amount of pain which He experienced, or, in old English suffered: He suffered death on account of sin. We suffer with Him. We are partakers of His sufferings. Our Lord's most severe sufferings were probably in Gethsemane, where, we read, that He was in a great agony and that "Of the people there were none with Him;" even the faithful, beloved eleven Apostles were drowsy and could not watch with Him at that hour. But they could not comprehend His trouble — that the programme of the next few hours meant so much to Him. He knew that in His covenant made at Jordan He had given up His earthly rights and privileges. He knew that now His entire dependence as respects a future life rested upon a resurrection from the dead and He knew, too, that if He had not performed the divine will perfectly, completely, that He could not be granted the glorious resurrection change and the eternal glory on the spirit plane. Thus, we read that He offered up strong crying and tears unto Him who was able to save Him out of death and that He was heard in that thing which He feared. He feared death — not that He doubted the heavenly Father's promise that if His sacrifice was faithfully performed, He would tie granted a glorious resurrection. He feared that unintentionally He might have made some error, might have failed to perform some portion of His consecration vow. He feared, therefore, lest there had not gone the full measure of the cloud of incense into the Most Holy to cover the mercy-seat and to indicate that He had been faithful to the last degree in His sacrificing. Then it was that the angel appeared to strengthen Him. What the strengthening was is not revealed, but most evidently it pertained to the things, which He feared. Undoubtedly the angel, as the Father's representative, assured Him about His faithfulness; that His sacrificing had been acceptable in the Father's sight. At once a great calm came, in which the great storm of anguish, which had threatened but a moment before to wreck His mortal body subsided. Thenceforth we behold Him the calmest of the calm — before the high priests

enduring the contradiction of sinners against Himself in the presence of Pilate and the rabbis, led to the cross He was the most self-possessed of all of whom we have any knowledge on the occasion. When His disciples forsook Him, it was He who interposed that they be not pursued but let go their way. When Peter denied Him, it was He who calmly looked towards Peter, reminding Him of the prophecy. On the way to Calvary, it was He who spoke words of peace to the weeping women, saying, “Weep not for me, but rather for yourselves.” How different are the experiences of Christ’s followers! We have Him not only as an example and as a teacher, but as our Protector and as our Advocate. We may indeed have strong consolation because He has assured us that He has not only appeared for us, but that He is able to succour us in every time of need. He is still Head of the Church, which is His Body. He is well supervising the interests of all His members. He is still saying to us, as He did to His disciples of old,

“This Is My Blood — Drink Ye All of It”

Whoever fails to clearly see that the Church at the present time is the members of the Body of Christ can never understand how the Church is to share her lord’s sacrifice, as represented in His cup. After our Lord at the last Supper had Himself partaken of the fruit of the vine, He handed the cup to His disciples, saying, “This is my blood of the New Covenant, shed for many for the remission of sins. Drink ye all of it.” Not only did our lord drink of the symbolical cup before giving it to His disciples, but He drank of the same actual cup, the partaking of which He requires of us as evidence of our loyalty as His disciples. This is the cup of shame, of sorrow, of indignity, of self-denial on behalf of others. The Master spoke of it as the cup which the Father had prepared for Him. He left some of it for us, that we might have the privilege of sharing in His sufferings and of the glory that shall follow as soon as the last member of His mystical Body shall have been glorified. When He passed the cup to His disciples at the Memorial Supper, His words, “Drink ye all of it,” not only meant that all who would be His disciples must drink of that cup, but also meant that His followers must drink all of it, must leave none of it. In other words, the sufferings of Christ belong exclusively to this Gospel Age, marked by His own sufferings at its beginning and terminating with the revelation of His glory in the Kingdom.

There will be none of the sufferings of Christ for the world to drink of during the Millennial Age and there will be no opportunity for any of them to become joint heirs with the Redeemer. The Master said that this cup was the blood of the New Testament — the new will, His will or Testament, by which He is bequeathing His earthly rights and earthly honours to the earthly seed of Abraham and to the world of mankind through them. It is His blood that was necessary for the sealing of the New Covenant, and we were invited to share His cup, to share the sealing, and to share the dispensing of the New Covenant blessings to Israel and the world. Whoever does not drink of this cup, whoever does not share in the sufferings of Christ — the same sufferings which He experienced, as members

of His Body — cannot share with Him His Millennial throne of glory, by means of which the New Covenant blessings will be established with the world.

Drinking His “Cup”

Mark this intimation that His followers must be sharers with Him in His sufferings and mark the declaration that the same must -participate in the same sufferings if they would sit with Him in His throne. Harken to the two disciples as they inquired of Him just before His death if they might sit, the one on the right hand and the other on the left in His Kingdom. Jesus replied, “Ye know not what ye ask, Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptised with the baptism that I am baptised with? They say unto Him, we are able” (Matthew 20:22). When they asserted their willingness to die with Him He assured them that they would indeed share with Him His throne and indeed drink of His cup and share His baptism of death and have place in His Kingdom.

Holding Fast the promises

Let us hold fast to these precious promises. If others lose their hold and claim that they can no longer thus see with us, our pity should be for them that the light that they had has gone from them. Let us not smite the blind, but rather be kind and generous toward all. The greater the number of the blind, the greater is the blessing and privilege of those who do see. Let us rejoice in our privileges and use them, let us remember the Master’s words, “If the light that is in thee become darkness, how great is that darkness .” Such are in a more pitiable condition than the world who never saw. Let us remember, too, that all kinds of blindness are more or less contagious and let us guard our spiritual sight as one of the most precious boons given of the Lord (Z1909, 201).

RANSOM POINTS TO BE REMEMBERED

Ransom Used in Scriptures

Whenever the word Ransom is used in the Scriptures it has the sense of ransom-price according to the Greek — a corresponding price, a sufficient price.



Jesus provided our Ransom

Meaning of Ransoming

Ransoming signifies the application of the ransom-price. Thus, when we read that our lord Jesus gave Himself a ransom-price for all, the meaning is that His sacrifice, finished at Calvary, is a sufficient price to effect the ransoming of all mankind, if so applied or when so applied.

Providing and Applying Ransom-Price

Our lord laid down His life; He died on our behalf; He gave our ransom-price into the Father's hands when He offered Himself without spot to God. But the putting of that meritorious sacrifice into God's hands and the application of that merit to mankind are two different matters.

Laying Down the Ransom-Price

The laying down of the ransom-price was finished at Calvary; but the application of it was not even begun for fifty days. Three days our Redeemer was dead — arising on the third day. Then for forty days He was with the disciples, appearing occasionally for their instruction. Then He ascended upon high, there "to appear in the presence of God for us," and promptly on the fiftieth day, Pentecost, the outpouring of the holy spirit upon God's believing, and consecrated servants and handmaidens began.

Proof that the Church Had Been Ransomed

Pentecost was the proof that our glorified lord had applied the merit of His sacrifice, had applied His blood as our ransom-price. Pentecost was therefore a proof that the Church had been ransomed — that the antitypical sprinkling of His blood by our great High Priest on the Mercy-Seat, or Propitiatory, "for us" had been accomplished, and that it was satisfactory to Justice, and that our sins were cancelled. Thereupon the High Priest began at once His secondary offering of His "members" — "living sacrifices, holy and acceptable unto God" (Romans 12:1). This in the type was represented by the killing of "the lord's goat" — "the goat of the sin-offering that is for the people" (Leviticus 16:15).

Ransom-Price All Necessary for the Church

The ransom-price all went for the atonement of our sins when the great High Priest appeared "for us." That ransom-price bought us (1 Corinthians 6:20); but was applied for no others and blessings came upon no others. It is "for all" (1 Timothy 2: 6) but has not yet been so applied.

Philosophy of Applying Ransom-Price

It took all of that merit or ransom-price to make atonement for our sins — because it was so applied. It would have required all of it for even one man's release. It is because the penalty or sentence of death passed "upon all men to condemnation," through one man's



Jesus is our heavenly shepherd

offense or sin, that the one man's death can be applied for more than one man's release from condemnation. But whatever the number it is applied for, it takes it all to effect the release from condemnation.

High Priest Now Has No Merit to Apply

So, then, the High Priest, having applied the entire ransom-price "for us," "on our behalf" (Hebrews 9:24), for the blemishes or condemnation of those now accepted as His members and His house — the household of faith — it follows that He has no merit

now remaining to apply for the world. The ransom-price which was sufficient for one man or for all men was applied only "for us," "for our sins."

The Hope of the World

Ah, it has not been forgotten in the divine purpose, and in due time it will be ransomed — "the precious blood," the ransom-price, will be applied on the Mercy-Seat for the sins of all the people! The holy spirit will be poured out upon all flesh.

Re Church Paying World's Ransom-Price

What! Will the Church pay the world's ransom-price? Not so! It is the Divine arrangement that in all things He (Jesus) should have the pre-eminence. Jesus' merit, as we have seen, is now fully in use — accredited to us who are of the household of faith, for our justification by faith. We are counted, or reckoned, as possessing the earthly rights and life forfeited by Adam and redeemed by Jesus.

But this reckoning or justification is confirmed to us of God by the holy spirit's begetting to a new nature only because of our consecration vow to the lord that we would lay down our lives, sacrificing all those earthly interests and rights as He did — walking in His steps, being baptised into His death, drinking of His cup of ignominy — partaking with our Head of "The blood of the New Covenant," by which as a legacy or Testament the ransom-price blessing shall in due time be bequeathed to natural Israel — with the proviso that all mankind may be blessed by becoming Israelites indeed on the human plane of restitution — Abraham's earthly seed — as the sands of the sea for multitude.

Re Returning Ransom-Price to High Priest

Note, then, that the one ransom-price, laid down by our Lord at Calvary, was all paid over to Justice "on our behalf," "for us," as was acknowledged at Pentecost and since, by the holy spirit upon the lord's servants and handmaidens. Note also that the restitution rights which we are now using as sharers in our lord's sacrifice must all be surrendered back to Justice before the Great High Priest can present that same ransom-price again on behalf of the world, under the New Covenant conditions.