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The Test of Endurance

“Tell him, ‘Let not him who girds on his armour boast like him who takes it off’” (1 Kings 20:11 NASB).

The test of endurance is certainly one of the severest tests of faithfulness to which the elect Church, the Body of Christ, is subjected. It is the test which gauges and registers the strength of every other virtue and grace. No soldier of the cross will be crowned with the laurels of victory who has not stood this test. The Christian life is a warfare, and the above words of one of the kings of Israel to a boastful enemy of the Lord’s people are applicable, not only to every new recruit in the Lord’s army, but, similarly, to all who have not yet finished the good fight of faith.

The first gush of enthusiasm in the Lord’s service, much as we may and do appreciate it, may be but the hasty production of the shallow soil of a heart which immediately receives the truth with gladness, but, having no root in itself, endures but for a time, afterward, when affliction and persecution arise, immediately is offended. “In a similar way these are the ones on whom seed was sown on the rocky places, who, when they hear the word, immediately receive it with joy; and they have no firm root in themselves, but are only temporary; then, when affliction or persecution arises because of the word, immediately they fall away” (Mark 4:16-17 NASB). Such characters cannot stand the fiery tests of this “evil day,” it is written: “each man’s work will become evident; for the day will show it because it is to be revealed with fire, and the fire itself will test the quality of each man’s work” (1 Corinthians 3:13 NASB).

Therefore, the Apostle Peter says, “Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though some strange thing were happening to you” (1 Peter 4:12 NASB). All of the elect Church must be so tried; and blessed is he that shall endure unto the end. The sure Word of prophecy points to severe conflicts and great trials in the closing scenes of the Church’s history. Elijah, a type of the Body of Christ, finished his earthly course and went up by a whirlwind in a chariot of fire

— strong symbols of storms and great afflictions. John the Baptist another type of the Church, was cast into prison and then beheaded. We are forewarned of the great necessity of the whole armour of God, if we would stand in this “evil day.”

Everyone who aspires to the prize of our high calling must brace himself for the severer conflicts and trials of faith and patience that may suddenly and without a moment’s warning be sprung upon him. In the battle of this day, as in all other battles, the effort of the enemy is to surprise and suddenly attack and overwhelm the Lord’s people; and the only preparation, therefore, that can be made for such emergencies is constant vigilance, prayer and the putting on of the whole armour of God — the Truth and the spirit of the Truth.

“By your endurance you will gain your lives” (Luke 21:19 NASB). No other grace will be more needed than this in the fiery ordeals of this “evil day”; for without endurance no one can abide to the end. All along the Christian’s pathway the believer will come to new crises, perhaps these often seem of trivial importance, yet they realise that they may be turning points in their Christian course. Who has not realised that they can come upon us at any time? There comes a temptation in weariness in well-doing, together with

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the suggestion of an easier way; or there springs up a little root of pride or ambition with suggestions of ways and means for feeding and gratifying it. Then there comes, by and by, the decisive moment when you must choose this course or that course; and lo, you have reached a crisis!

Which way will you turn? Most likely you will turn in the direction to which the sentiments you have cultivated have been tending, whether that be the right way or the wrong way. If it be the wrong way, most likely you will be unable to discern it clearly; for your long-cultivated sentiments will sway your judgment. "There is a way which seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death" (Proverbs 14:12 NASB). How necessary, therefore, is prayer, that in every crisis we may pass the test successfully! Nor can we safely delay watching and praying until the crisis is upon us; but such should be our constant attitude.

The life of a soldier, ever on the alert and on duty, is by no means an easy life; nor do the Scriptures warrant any such expectation. On the contrary, they say, "Endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ;" "Fight the good fight of faith," etc. Yet many Christians seem to have the very opposite idea. Their ideal Christian life is one without a breeze or a storm; it must be one continuously calm. Such a life was indeed more possible in former days than now, though the world, the flesh and the Devil always have opposed them, and always have had to be resisted by every loyal soldier of the cross. But now the opposition is



The Apostle Paul, a Soldier of Jesus Christ

daily becoming more and more intense; for Satan realises that his time is short, and he is determined by any and every means to exert his power against the consummation of the Lord's plan for the exaltation of the Church.

Consequently, we have had within this Harvest period many severe storms of opposition; and still there are, doubtless, more severe trials to follow. But those who, with overcoming faith, outlive them all — who patiently endure, who cultivate the spirit of Christ with its fruits and graces, and who valiantly fight the good fight of faith, rather than withdraw from the field — such will be the "overcomers" to whom the laurels of victory will be given when the crowning day has come.

For Unto Us a Child is born, a Son is Given

"The Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, a virgin will be with child and bear a son, and she will call His name Immanuel" (Isaiah 7:14 NASB).

The Virgin Birth

This verse in Isaiah is confirmed by Matthew as referring to Jesus. "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife; for the Child who has been conceived in her is of the holy Spirit. She will bear a Son; and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.' Now all this took place to fulfill what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet: 'BEHOLD, THE VIRGIN SHALL BE WITH CHILD AND SHALL BEAR A SON, AND THEY SHALL CALL HIS NAME IMMANUEL,' which translated means, 'GOD WITH US'" (Matthew 1:20-23 NASB).

In Luke's gospel more information is given about the birth of Jesus. The angel Gabriel was sent from God to speak to a virgin named Mary. "And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and

you shall name him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give him the throne of his father David; and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and his kingdom will have no end.' Mary said to the angel, 'How can this be, since I am a virgin?' The angel answered and said to her, 'The holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; and for that reason, the holy Child shall be called the Son of God'" (Luke 1:31-35 NASB).

The question may be asked, what was the need for a virgin to conceive and give birth to Jesus? The problem goes back to the first man, Adam. He had been created perfect and would have everlasting life if he had remained true to God's requirements and not eaten of the forbidden fruit. He failed the test and so the Apostle Paul tells us: "Therefore, just as

through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned" (Romans 5:12 NASB).

God's justice required a perfect human being to provide a sacrifice to pay the price for Adam's sin. As the verse in Romans states that "death spread to all men, because all sinned" none of Adam's progeny could provide the satisfactory price to redeem all of mankind. Peter confirms that Christ was the only one "WHO COMMITTED NO SIN, NOR WAS ANY DECEIT FOUND IN HIS MOUTH" (1 Peter 2:22 NASB).

To have Jesus born as a perfect human being had a problem. As all mankind had fallen into sin through Father Adam, the life force could not come from man. The egg could be provided by Mary, but the sperm could not be provided by Joseph, no matter how righteous he might be. "Therefore, that which was born of the "virgin" was separate and distinct from all humanity. His life came not from an **earthly** father, but from His **Heavenly** Father" (R4964).

The Birthplace

"As for you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, too little to be among the clans of Judah, From you One will go forth for Me to be ruler in Israel. His goings forth are from long ago, From the days of eternity" (Micah 5:2 NASB).

Micah foretold of the birthplace of Christ, and yet Joseph and Mary were from the town of Nazareth in Galilee. This would seem to be the logical place for Jesus to be born. But God's foreknowledge meant that He knew that Caesar Augustus would decree that a census was to be taken, each in his own city. "Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the city of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and family of David, in order to register along with Mary, who was engaged to him, and was with child. While they were there, the days were completed for her to give birth" (Luke 2:4-6 NASB).

This birth was to be of the future King of Kings, Lord of Lords, the savior of the world, surely worthy of a royal birth in the palace with all the trappings of his position, the arrival to be announced to the world and yet this was not to be. Luke records, "And she gave birth to her firstborn son; and she wrapped him in cloths, and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn" (Luke 2:7 NASB). There was no announcement of his arrival to the nation only to lowly shepherds in the fields by a multitude of angels praising God and saying "Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace among men with whom He is pleased" (Luke 2:14 NASB).

It is interesting that the angels did not give this announcement in Mary's presence but through the lowly shepherds. From verse 18 there were others that heard the story from the shepherds who returned to their fields glorifying and praising God for all that they had heard and seen.

The Requirements of the Law

Eighth Day: Paul states "But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law" (Galatians 4:4 NASB). Joseph and Mary knew the law of Moses and following the instructions in Genesis 17:12, Jesus was circumcised on the eighth day.

Fortieth Day: When Mary had completed her purification as set out in the Law (Leviticus 12:1-4), Jesus was brought to the temple to be presented to Jehovah. From the description of the offering of a pair of turtle doves or two young pigeons shows that Joseph and Mary were in a poor position unable to provide a one-year old lamb. "But if she cannot afford a lamb, then she shall take two turtledoves or two young pigeons, the one for a burnt offering and the other for a sin offering; and the priest shall make atonement for her, and she will be clean" (Leviticus 12:8 NASB).

The Magi

There is little information about the Magi other than they had come from the east to worship the King of the Jews. They had been on this journey for two years. The arrival of the Magi into Jerusalem greatly troubled Herod the King. He summoned the chief priest and the scribes to inquire about the location of the birth of the Messiah. Being told that the site was Bethlehem he secretly called the Magi to inquire the exact time of the appearance of the star. The statement "and lo, the star, which they had seen in the east, went on before them" indicates that the star had become stationary over Jerusalem where they inquired "Where is He who has been born King of the Jews?"

The Magi continued their journey east till it stood over the place where Jesus was. "After coming into the house, they saw the Child with Mary His mother; and they fell to the ground and worshiped him. Then, opening their treasures, they presented to him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. And having been warned by God in a dream not to return to Herod, the magi left for their own country by another way" (Matthew 2:11-12 NASB). Jesus was no longer a babe but somewhere between one and two



Visit of the Magi

years of age. This is confirmed in Matthew 2:16, where Herod slew all the male children two years old and under.

The Flight to Egypt

The flight to Egypt was under the direction of Jehovah delivered to Joseph by an angel. "Get up! Take the Child and his mother and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you; for Herod is going to search for the Child to destroy him." The urgency of this flight is shown by the fact that they left during the night, a dangerous time to travel. This journey to Egypt fulfilled the word of the prophet "OUT OF EGYPT I CALLED MY SON."

They remained in Egypt for approximately eighteen months before the angel of the Lord again appeared, stating "Get up, take the Child and his mother, and go into the land of Israel; for those who sought the Child's life are dead." So, Joseph got up, took the Child and his mother, and came into the land of Israel" (Matthew 2:20-21 NASB).

Matthew's account indicated when the Magi saw Jesus that the family was still in Bethlehem and it was not until the return from Egypt and the warning from Jehovah in a dream that Joseph "left for the regions of Galilee, and came and lived in a city called Nazareth. This was to fulfill what was spoken through the prophets: 'He shall be called a Nazarene'" (Matthew 2:22-23 NASB). When we look at the prophecies in Isaiah, that he would lead a humble life and be despised and rejected, this certainly fitted into the attitude of many of the Jews who despised and contemned the Nazarenes (John 1:46 John 7:52).

Jesus as a Child in the Temple

This significant event in a Jewish boy's life is only recorded by Luke 2:41-52. Br. Russell comments "It was a Jewish custom that a Jewish boy should be considered 'a son of the Law' when he attained his twelfth year. He thus became responsible under the Law and thenceforth was required to keep its festivals" (Reprints 4957:3, 3711:2, 2559:4).

The journey with a group of fellow travelers from Nazareth to Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover would have taken five to six days to cover the ninety miles. By the time they prepared for the Passover, observed the Passover and the days of unleavened bread, the family would have spent at least eight days in Jerusalem.

On the return journey they discovered on the first evening that Jesus was not with their kinsfolk and acquaintances. They returned three days later to find him in the temple seated amongst the teachers, listening, and asking questions. His hearers were amazed at the intelligence of his own answers.

His parents were astounded and asked, "My son, why have you behaved like this to us? Here have your father and I been looking for you anxiously!" Jesus' answer confused them "Why did you look for me?" he said, "Did you not know I had to be at my Father's house?" It may have appeared that he did not think that he had to obey his earthly parents, but the narrative tells us that he did as they told him. The last statement that is recorded of his childhood is, "And Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature, and in favor with God and man" (Luke 2:52 NASB).

Our Source of Strength and Hope

We now find ourselves fast approaching the close of what has been an uncertain and tumultuous year. New cases of the Coronavirus disease, and deaths are being recorded every day throughout the world. The quick disappearance of this disease-causing pandemic has not come to fruition as many had thought. Instead of uniting us in a common effort, we appear to be growing further apart.

People's lives have been turned upside down due to the uncertainty concerning how they take care of their family, stay healthy both physically and financially, and seeing that their children are getting a proper education. Confusion, violence, and social injustice is running rampant. Medical personnel and facilities have been stretched to their capacity in many cases. The grip of the Adamic curse of sin and death upon mankind has been very evident. Fear, pride, falsehoods, political turmoil, distrust of leaders, and a lack of love for fellow man, are permeating the world.

The restless sea of humanity is asking for justice and accountability from others, and in many cases not showing accountability for their own actions (Jude 13, Psalms 65:5-7). Although there has been much speculation, no one knows when things will get better for all of us. We can be assured however, that Jehovah knows (Isaiah 46:10).

What Now?

Due to these troubling circumstances, we may ask ourselves, "What now?" The trouble and sorrow that has borne down upon humanity has been bitter, and many in their distresses have wondered whether God has any pity, or even exists at all. We should look to the scriptures for comfort and assurance so that our faith and trust in God can grow. Then we will not be fearful. The Psalmist wrote these words: "Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning" (Psalms 30:5). This "night" of sin, sorrow, and death began with the disobedience of our



Weeping for a Night, Joy in the Morning (Psalms 30:5)

first parents in Eden, and it has indeed been a night of weeping (Genesis 3).

However, we are not to despair, for there is to be a morning of joy for the human race. That morning of joy will usher in a new day of blessing that will be brought about through the establishment of God's kingdom, with Jesus as its ruler, and the government of righteousness foretold by all God's "holy prophets since the world began" (Acts 3:20, 21). This shows us the strong contrast between the present evil age and the coming age of righteousness. What a wonderful governmental arrangement this will be! Among many other long-sought desires, it will establish universal and lasting peace, which man in his selfishness has been unable to do. The divine head of this government, who is Christ, is referred to in prophecy as "The Prince of Peace," and we are assured that "of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end" (Isaiah 9:6,7).

In addition, there will be economic security. This is symbolized in the prophecy by the assurance that every man will dwell under his own "vine" and "fig tree" (Luke 10:19). Much of the suffering in the world throughout the ages has been due to lack of food, clothing, and shelter. Even today millions of people exist on insufficient supplies of food and water, have little clothing, and live with the most meager of shelter over their heads. However, this will be corrected through the agencies of Christ's kingdom. All shall have the opportunity to live in peace and safety (Isaiah 11:9).

Peace and economic security will not be the only blessings guaranteed to the people under the rulership of "the mountain of the house of the LORD." Isaiah wrote, "And in this mountain will Jehovah of hosts make unto all peoples a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined. And he will destroy in this mountain the face of the covering that covereth all peoples, and the veil that is spread over all nations. He hath swallowed up death for ever; and the Lord Jehovah will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the reproach of his people will he take away from off all the earth: for Jehovah hath spoken it" (Isaiah 25:6-8 ASV). We have been assured by the word of

God that this present evil world will one day in His due time, give way to a wonderful kingdom of peace, safety, and love. This is made possible as we know by the willing sacrifice of our Lord Jesus, who redeemed mankind from the Adamic curse (1 Corinthians 15:21-28, 1 Timothy 2:5,6).

Our Spiritual Development

With all that is going on, and with the distractions that surround us, we may also ask ourselves, "Where am I (spiritually) concerning my level of faith and trust in the Heavenly Father?" To help determine an answer to this question, we are to apply the words, "Let a man examine himself." (1 Corinthians 11:28). This implies that we examine our heart, including our motives, will, and intentions, that we should always find it true to the Lord. This self-examination should be done daily with prayerful consideration. We again look to the scriptures for comfort, for assurance, and as a much-needed source of strength as we strive, grow and develop in a way pleasing to Him. Psalms 46:2 tells us, "He is our refuge and our strength in trouble, He is our refuge and habitation." Psalms 27:1, "Jehovah is my light, and my salvation; whom shall I fear? Jehovah is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?" We read in Psalms 81:1, that "God is our strength." "The way of Jehovah is strength" (Proverbs 10:29).

Our Heavenly Father is guiding our heart. He gives us encouragement when we face sarcasm and slander. He overrules our affairs for good. The fiercer the conflict with the powers of darkness, the more glorious the deliverance. The Lord's people are fighting the good fight of faith. We must have courage, born of faith, and strengthened by endurance. Our consciousness of being loyal to God and of divine guidance should keep us without fear. We are to strive also "toward the mark" of perfect love (Philippians 3:14).

Reading from Psalms 73:26,28, "My flesh and my heart faileth; but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion forever. But it is good for me to draw near to God; I have put my trust in the Lord Jehovah, that I may desire all thy works." This shows us our dependency on our Father and his dear son. Our flesh is weak and our heart too faint to pursue this course set out before us except as strengthened and upheld by power from on high. This is all because of God's grace or His unmerited favor (Ephesians 1:2-4)

"Peace I Leave You"

"Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid" (John 14:27). The peace of God is compatible with great commotion and with sorrow and pain of various kinds; for it is not dependent upon outward circumstances, but a proper balancing of the mind and heart. There is nothing to fear. "If God be for us, who can be against us?" (Romans

8:31). We need rest, peace, and the promise of life everlasting to sustain us in these difficult times. We will not find these in the world around us. There is no real peace outside of the Lord's provision. Whatever your condition, whether sickness or health, whether extremely poor or in comfortable circumstances, those who God is dealing with have peace within, and realize that "godliness with contentment is a great gain" (1 Timothy 6:6).

A special scriptural passage of comfort can be found in the 23rd Psalm. "Jehovah is my shepherd; I shall not want, He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me. Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of Jehovah forever."

Comfort From God

Whatever our sufferings may be, the Bible assures us that our Heavenly Father cares and is attentive to our needs. "No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it" (1 Corinthians 10:13, New International Version). The means by which we may be comforted in the midst of suffering include providential overruling, hymns, scriptures which contain precious promises, guardian angels that may intervene if we are in harm's way, as well as the holy Spirit which enables us to comprehend and appreciate God's tender mercies towards us. God's providence allows adversity upon his prospective divine family while in the flesh, as a means of demonstrating our obedience and crystallizing our characters (1 Samuel 15:22, Psalms 37:26).

The Heavenly Father also provides needed grace and various forms of comfort to sustain us through what otherwise might seem to be unbearable trials. May we appreciate His wisdom in permitting us to endure necessary lessons that will equip us for future service as part of that sympathetic priesthood, that will help restore mankind to perfection during that glorious kingdom reign.

We must always remember that God's hand is not short — he can and will overrule. "Is my hand shortened at all, that it cannot redeem? or have I no power to deliver? behold, at my rebuke I dry up the sea, I make the

rivers a wilderness." "Behold, the LORD's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear" (Isaiah 50:2, 59:1). What wonderful assurances of God's mighty power. These promises are all by faith, and such experiences in which the Lord's will is not made clear to us may actually be permitted as a test of our faith.

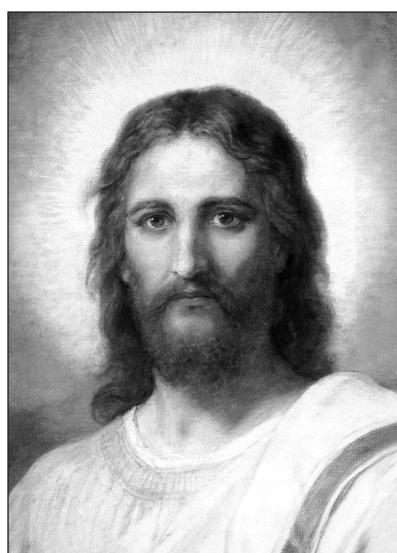
Our experiences, when viewed as an aid in determining the Lord's will, are certainly not least in importance or value. Our experiences, and God's providence in them, are a most valuable and indispensable tool in ascertaining the Lord's will. Experience, it is said, is the best teacher. We can know much in the way of God's will for us by rightly learning from our experiences. Paul expresses our progression through experience this way: "We glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; And patience, experience; and experience, hope: And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit which is given unto us" (Romans 5:3-5). True maturity, both naturally and spiritually, comes best through experience.

Paul spoke of his own spiritual maturity by using the example of the natural man. "When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things" (1 Corinthians 13:11). We are to keep in mind that we do not all grow or progress at the same rate. An important point to remember, is that we must however, grow (1 Peter 2:2, 2 Peter 3:18).

We are to claim God's promises in our experiences, remembering that his providence is always there to guide us, if we are submissive to him. "My God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:19). We are to remember that "the steps of a good man are ordered by Jehovah: and he delighteth in his way" (Psalm 37:23). This further illustrates to us that the providence of God over those who have responded to his call is a very special relationship of love and devotion. "My son, give me thine heart, and let thine eyes observe my ways" (Proverbs 23:26).

Our Focus

We are now going to look at the scripture, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me" (Philippians 4:13). This sounds like a bold statement, but it should first be mentioned that this is not to be understood as self-assurance, for we know the verse, "Wherefore let him who thinketh he stands take heed lest he fall" (1 Corinthians 10:12). And we know that when we think of self, we tremble. But we look to the Lord believing fully that not one of His promises will fail (Hebrews 10:23). It



"My peace I leave with you."

was the power of Christ that rested on Paul during all his experiences, as he spent his life in service to the Lord (2 Corinthians 12:9).

It is important to remember that God through His son will strengthen and equip those who focus on Him and depend upon His grace in every aspect of their lives. “It is God that girdeth me with strength” (Psalms 18:32). We are told to “Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time” (1 Peter 5:6). Only through consecration and spirit-begetting we can do acceptable works as “a new creature” (2 Corinthians 5:17,18). It is apparent that the words spoken by Paul demonstrate the great faith that Paul had. Look at Galatians 2:20, “I live by faith in the son.” For, “We walk by faith” (2 Corinthians 5:7); “Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith” (Hebrews 10:22).

By faith through the enlightenment of the holy Spirit we can enjoy the privileges, and opportunities to know our Heavenly Father and His dear son. We have had a portion of His Plan revealed to us, we can only see the glorious things of the future through a smoked glass, obscurely. “For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as I am known” (1 Corinthians 13:12). But we are assured that one day, if faithful, when beyond the veil, we shall be like our Lord. (1 John 3:2). With the perfections of the new condition, we will see perfectly, know perfectly, and understand perfectly. “This is the victory which overcometh the world, even your faith” (1 John 5:4).

Those who are justified by faith shall live by faith in the sure promises of God. We must come to him with a faith begotten of reverence for the all-wise author of the Divine Plan of the Ages. From this starting point faith must progress to higher and higher altitudes. We are reminded of a scripture, “They that wait upon Jehovah shall renew their strength. They shall mount up with wings as eagles. They shall run and not be weary, walk and not faint” (Isaiah 40:31). We must progress from a basic faith to a further, higher, and deeper faith.

We know also that there must be a deepening of our faith and trust in him. This will lead to becoming a mature Christian, and one with unwavering faith. Consecrated believers justified by faith in Christ as their Redeemer who have given their hearts to the Lord, then, are not to walk as the world does — only by sight — but with the most holy faith. “The just shall live by faith” (Hebrews 10:38). “By grace ye are saved through faith ... it is the gift of God” (Ephesians 2:5,8).

As a result of all that God has done for us, we are encouraged to “Let your light so shine among men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven” (Matthew 5:16).

1 John 1:5 tells us that “God is light, and in Him there is no darkness.” Light stands for truth, and for righteousness. Since in God there is no darkness at



“God is Light” — the Apostle John

all, he has promised to guide us continually by His Spirit through His Word. To the child of God, there is expressed, “But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light” (1 Peter 2:9). It is their desire to show forth a faith and a trust in Him. Since he has “called you with a holy calling” (1 Timothy 2:9, Isaiah 42:6), you are the Heavenly Father’s gemstone, and if faithful you will develop a complete and perfect character likeness to Him.

Our Spiritual Focus

Our spiritual health/motivation is not associated with anything involving worldly goods or wealth. These things we have vowed to give up, even concerning our earthly inheritance. We know that Jesus paid the price for us, and he admonished us, “Lay not up treasures upon the earth, But lay up treasures for yourselves in heaven. For where your treasure is, there will be your heart also” (Matthew 6:19-21). We are given words of assurance in Romans 8:28, “And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to his purpose.” Even the seeming delays, difficulties, troubles, persecutions, and seeming disasters that come our way during our lives (James 1:3,4).

It is always our privilege to rejoice, under all circumstances, and our pleasure is always to give thanks to God for all things (Philippians 4:4). We should also be submissive to God so that we develop a strength of character and apply the tests so that we grow in strength spiritually, and in grace, until it is finally fixed and perfected (1 Peter 5:7).

The exceeding great and precious promises of God are briefly comprehended in this one scripture. “The trying of your faith worketh patience” (James 1:3-4). Remember that if Christ is in you, this is your “hope of glory” (Colossians 1:27). It should be our goal to daily “prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God” (Romans 12:2). If we have faith in God and in his son, we must show our complete faith and trust in Him. “I live by faith in the son of God” (Galatians 2:20). We also want to study the word of

the Lord, and to apply these things so that we can be pleasing to Him (2 Timothy 2:15). Our goal is to be “fighting the good fight of faith,” and striving to put down the old man, including the flesh’s resistance to sacrifice (2 Timothy 4:7).

It is our aim to let the peace of God into our hearts and minds continually by faith (Philippians 4:7). Our daily lives should involve meditation upon our Lord Jesus, and our Heavenly Father. “And ye are Christ’s; and Christ is God’s” (1 Corinthians 3:23). To develop Godlikeness will compel us to strive to reach the perfect mark of character development, and to then stand faithful, “having done all, stand” (Ephesians 6:18). This refers to cultivating or seeking after “the wisdom that is from above, that is first pure, peaceable, and gentle” (James 3:17). We are to follow after charity — love — that is the key.

We desire to “walk not after the flesh but after the spirit” (Romans 8:4). “For the grace of God which bringeth salvation hath appeared for all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, We should live soberly, and godly, in this present world; Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ” (Titus 2:11-13). This is key to determining where we are concerning our spiritual lives, our commitment to fulfilling our vow of consecration, and our desire to demonstrate our trust and faith in God

through His son.

Let us continue to look to our Father and His Word, His dear son, and to the scriptures, as our source of strength and hope. Let us draw strength from each other, and dwell together in unity of the Spirit, showing love for our Father and his son, and for one another — reflecting that love back to “the giver of every good and perfect gift” (James 1:17).

As we are reminded in Ephesians 4:1-5, “Walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, with lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love. Endeavoring to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of love. There is one body, one spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling. One Lord, one faith, one baptism. One God and father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.”

Knowing that those who prove faithful, He will transform to His own spiritual image and likeness, so that they (His Church) may be associated with Him in His great work of bringing in the Millennial blessings. (Genesis 22:18).

Dear brethren, seek the Lord with sincerity, honesty, and peace of heart and mind, without guile and selfishness. Our Lord desires us to bear fruit. The fruits of the spirit are manifested in “temperance, meekness, gentleness, patience, longsuffering, brotherly kindness and love” (Galatians 5:22-23).

The Pillar of Cloud

(The word “LORD” is Strong’s Number 3068 — ye-ho-vaw, Jehovah, and is the Jewish national name of God.)

Israel’s Guide

After leaving Egypt, God miraculously guided the Israelites by creating a special cloudy and fiery pillar to move some two million people. “The LORD was going before them in a pillar of cloud by day to lead them on the way, and in a pillar of fire by night to give them light, that they might travel by day and by night. He did not take away the pillar of cloud by day, nor the pillar of fire by night, from before the people” (Exodus 13:21,22 NASB).

The Israelites left Rameses, staying at Succoth, then Etham. Exodus 12:20, Numbers 33:5-7 provides details of the Exodus Itinerary. It appears that the cloud began to cover the nation when the Israelites left Succoth, as there they were in booths, or temporary shelters. From then on they were shielded by the cloud from the hot desert sun. The cloudy pillar led them by day; and the fire pillar by night. It appears the pillar that came down was like a guiding hand.

It is quite remarkable that the cloud and fiery pillar continued with the Israelites during their 40 years in the wilderness and it was not taken away until

they entered the Promised Land. In addition to this miracle, manna was provided, their clothes or sandals did not wear out, nor did their feet swell during this period of 40 years! (Deuteronomy 8:4, 29:5).

What an amazing sight to behold, an all-night pillar of fire with no apparent fuel source and in the day-time a cloud covering the Israelites, despite shifting winds. This was a mobile cloud that zigzagged through the wilderness despite contrary winds for 40 years! For Israel it was, truly, a daily and nightly reminder of God’s guiding power. It was a phenomenon, that was never repeated, that existed only as long as it was needed, until the promised land was finally reached!

A Witness to Nations

We are informed that it was not only for the sake of Israel, but it was also to be a witness to all the surrounding nations that Israel’s God was wise, powerful, and protective of his chosen people. “And they will tell it to the inhabitants of this land. They have heard that You, O LORD, are in the midst of this

people, for You, O LORD, are seen eye to eye, while Your cloud stands over them; and You go before them in a pillar of cloud by day and in a pillar of fire by night" (Numbers 14:14).

The Moabites or Ammonites on any mountain could see the Israelite camp at night. They would see a cloud lighting the camp and a miraculous fiery pillar, or column of the cloud over the Tabernacle that reached up into the heavens. This cloud cover reflected the fiery pillar and provided light at night for the Israelites to see.

Clouds are rare in the deserts and this cloud was both unique and miraculous. Clouds are porous and thus incapable of keeping out rain. But this miraculous cloudy pillar prevented not only a downpour but also the flash floods that rush down the baked desert wadis. For 40 years, the Israelites were protected from wind, screened from the heat and burning sun of the desert, and sandstorms, which are so devastating in the wilderness. They were also protected from the danger of flash floods in the wadis of the desert. This cloud also kept the ground from being super saturated with water which would prevent the movement of their wagons and impede the Israelites' progress. The cloud was almost like a literal tent above the Israelites. This cloud exercised an influence that preserved them from "storm" (sandstorms) and "rain" (flash floods), which comes down in torrents and races down wadis with the speed of a freight train (as witnessed at wadis of the Dead Sea that have washed buses off the road.). So the cloud was a protecting cover against sandstorms and flash floods, providing a covering upon all of the Israelites.

The Cloud at Crossing of the Red Sea

This cloud played a crucial role at the shores of the Red Sea. The Israelites appeared hopelessly trapped, with mountains looming on the right and the left of them, the waters of the Red Sea lay directly in front of them, and that formidable host of Egyptian troops was rapidly advancing from the rear.

"The angel of God, who had been going before the camp of Israel, moved and went behind them; and the pillar of cloud moved from before them and stood behind them. So it came between the camp of Egypt and the camp of Israel; and there was the cloud along with the darkness, yet it gave light at night. Thus the one did not come near the other all night. At the morning watch, the LORD looked down on the army of the Egyptians through the pillar of fire and cloud and brought the army of the Egyptians into confusion" (Exodus 14:19,20,24).

It appears the "angel of God" or pillar of cloud moved to a position behind the fleeing Israelites and ahead of the pursuing Egyptians. By so doing it went between them, serving as a barrier. The pillar



A Pillar of Fire by Night

cast light, illuminating the way forward to the Israelites. But in contrast it created darkness and confusion at the rear upon the Egyptians. The front of the pillar was like a lamp, and the rear was black. So the pillar proved to be a blessing to the Israelites and created trouble for the Egyptians, thereby creating two different conditions at the one time.

The Israelites would have crossed the Red Sea at night, as in the "morning watch" God "brought the army of the Egyptians into confusion. He caused their chariot wheels to swerve, and He made

them drive with difficulty; so the Egyptians said, 'Let us flee from Israel, for the LORD is fighting for them against the Egyptians'" (Exodus 14:25). The chariot wheels dragged in the mud or came off. As a result, the Egyptians cried, "Let us flee from Israel! For the Lord is fighting for Israel against us!"

Movement of Cloud and Departure from Mt. Sinai

In Exodus 40:36 to 37.38, the words when "the cloud was taken up from over the tabernacle" means when the pillar foot rose up into the main body cloud above it, this was a sign that it was time to move and Israel went onward in all their journeys (Numbers 9:16,17,22).

"Now in the second year, in the second month, on the twentieth of the month, the cloud was lifted from over the tabernacle of the testimony; and the sons of Israel set out on their journeys from the wilderness of Sinai. Then the cloud settled down in the wilderness of Paran" (Numbers 10:11,12). Israel had stayed at Mount Sinai for quite some time, and later on resumed their journey. We are told, "Thus they set out from the mount of the LORD three days' journey, with the ark of the covenant of the LORD journeying in front of them for the three days, to seek out a resting place for them. The cloud of the LORD was over them by day when they set out from the camp" (Numbers 10:33,34).

The first of their journeys lasted just three days, taking them to Paran. When the Israelites broke camp at Mount Sinai, the large canopy cloud moved with them and covered them. "The cloud of the LORD was over them by day, when they set out from the camp." This verse suggests that the journey most likely began in daylight.

Usually Cloud was Over The Tabernacle

Apparently the usual resting place of the cloud was over the Most Holy of Israel's tabernacle. Occasionally, when God wished to make a pronouncement to his chosen people, the cloudy pillar moved and took up a position at the door of the tabernacle (Exodus 33:9,10, Numbers 12:5, Deuteronomy 31:15).

In Deuteronomy 31:15 we read, "The LORD ap-



Pillar of cloud by day

peared in the tent in a pillar of cloud, and the pillar of cloud stood at the doorway of the tent.” So when the pillar of the cloud moved it was visually trying to draw the nation to pay special attention. We recall that Moses and Joshua had been together in close camaraderie for 40 years and in verse 16 they were about to part, in the following verses Joshua was given detailed instructions and his responsibility.

The Shape of the Cloud

There are two possible suggestions as to the shape of this miraculous cloud. Some consider it as an upright plume as suggested by the word “pillar.” Like a column ascending straight up into the sky. Others view it more as a canopy, like a covering.

The prophet Isaiah sheds some light on this very question: “Then the LORD will create over the whole site of Mount Zion and over her assemblies a cloud by day, and smoke and the shining of a flaming fire by night; for over all the glory there will be a canopy and a pavilion. It will be for a shade by day from the heat, and for a refuge and a shelter from the storm and rain” (Isaiah 4:5,6, RSV).

In verse 6, the cloud is described as protecting the Israelites from sandstorms, heat, rain, flash floods, and wind. Also it gave them warmth at night — like a booth. “It will be a shade by day from the heat, and for a refuge, and a shelter from storm and rain.” The other surrounding nations, the travellers, and bedouins later on, saw the huge cloud covering the 2 million Israelites and knew that something peculiar was happening over Israel’s camp. For at night it gave a luminescence, rather like the moonlight.

The Isaiah verses are a general lesson showing that God will be with Israel in the future as He was with that nation in the past. The Lord had visible manifestations of His presence with His people, so in the future, when the Kingdom is established, there will be visible manifestations of divine power on behalf of natural Israel. The powers that were exercised back there were temporary, whereas those of the future will be more beneficial and everlasting.

Cloud Was Like A Canopy

The Hebrew word translated “a pavilion and a canopy” of Isaiah 4:5,6 in the RSV and NIV is chuppah (Strong’s 2646). It literally means “covering” (NRSV),

or “canopy.” This word chuppah is still used today by the Jews to describe the embroidered canopy under which weddings are performed.

This Hebrew word is found two other times in the Old Testament: Psalms 19:5, translated “chamber” in the NASB, and Joel 2:16, rendered “bridal chamber.” Its significance in the Jewish wedding ceremony of today had a slightly different significance in Old Testament biblical times. Today it is used to represent the new home the couple will make for themselves. But in ancient times, the entrance into the chuppah marked the actual union of bride and groom; it also signified their trust in divine protection.

The wording of a bridal chamber is used in reference to the fiery pillar. The dangers of the harsh and unforgiving Sinai wilderness were sufficient to make anyone apprehensive. But the sight of the column of fire by night and the overhanging cloud by day was a constant assurance and reminder that God, who had delivered them from their ruthless Egyptian taskmasters, was able to protect them in the arid desert. If only Israel had believed! How forceful this lesson should be to the Christian today: His wisdom will not lead us where His grace cannot keep us.

Nehemiah’s Inspiration for Future Generations

The returning Israelites from Babylon were reminded by Nehemiah of their first arrival in the promised land. That event had taken place some thousand years earlier. It was then that they observed the Feast of Tabernacles. This feast, also called Succoth (the very first place where they dwelt in booths after leaving Egypt), was to commemorate the protection God provided in the wilderness for 40 years and it may have also marked the cessation of the fiery pillar.

The nation was divided into eight groups and each was led in the same or similar prayer by eight Levites whose names are given in Nehemiah 9:5. It is worthy to note that on two occasions in Nehemiah’s prayer of thanksgiving for the divine protection in their exodus from Babylon, that his prayer specifically refers to the guidance and protection provided by the pillar of fire and cloud, “And with a pillar of cloud You led them by day, And with a pillar of fire by night to light for them the way in which they were to go. You, in Your great compassion, Did not forsake them in the wilderness; The pillar of cloud did not leave them by day, To guide them on their way, Nor the pillar of fire by night, to light for them the way in which they were to go” (Nehemiah 9:12,19).

The psalmist also draws his inspiration from that guiding light and of the cloudy pillar: “Moses and Aaron among his priests, and Samuel among them that call upon his name; they called upon the LORD, and he answered them. He spake unto them in the cloudy pillar: they kept his testimonies, and the ordinance that he gave them” (Psalm 99:6,7).

“Jesus is The Gospel Age Guide”

In the Gospel Age, though there is no literal pillar of fire or cloudy cover to provide such protection and guidance in a Christian’s wilderness journey, they are not without his guiding light. All of the functions provided by this miraculous cloudy and fiery pillar are given to them through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Like the cloudy pillar, our Lord Jesus is a guide. He guides by his example. He says “I am the way the truth and the life, no one cometh unto the father but by me” (John 14:6). As long as we walk in the path made by his own blessed footsteps in the sand, we shall not lose our way on the road to glory. Christ like the cloud, goes before his people, and says to them, follow me. By marching after him, every step will bring us nearer to that better country. Like Jesus, let us go about continually doing good. We recall Our Lord Jesus prayed often. Before break of day, he climbed the solitary mountain to communicate with his Father. We should at all times be in contact with our headquarters.

Also, he guides us by his word. “Thy word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path” (Psalms 119:105). The Holy Bible, like the “angel pillar,” is an ever present and seen guide. We can see it with our bodily eyes, and even feel it with our hands, and when open to it we may discern it ever pointing onwards, and upwards. If we follow its guidance we will not miss the narrow way, nor fail to reach at last that blessed goal at the end of our wilderness journey.

Jesus guides us by the holy Spirit. “Howbeit when he, the spirit of truth is come, he will guide you into all the truth for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak; and he will show you things to come” (John 16:13). By the holy Spirit, even when like Israel’s cloud he may seem to be acting otherwise. Into whatever circumstances of difficulty, suffering, or danger he may bring His people, they need not have the slightest fears. For he is a divine and unerring leader. The road ahead may appear like the wrong way as those in the world are all travelling in a totally different direction to us. But it is the right way, as Job said, “Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him” (Job 13:15).

Like the fiery pillar, Christ is our light. His words are, “As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world” (John 9:5). Till illuminated by him, none can see. It is the same great light that chases away our darkness and enables us to see the first step of our spiritual pilgrimage that brightens our very path



Jesus is our Light and guide

during all the succeeding steps of our journey to the New Jerusalem. We can miss the way or stumble on the road only if we wilfully shut our eyes, and refuse to admit his glorious rays. Christ will be the light of the heavenly city. “And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the lamb is the light thereof” (Revelation 21:23).

Like the cloud, Christ is our shady pillar. To pilgrims travelling heavenwards, he is “the shadow of a great rock in a weary land” (Isaiah 32:2). He is our shade. Were this blessed shelter provided by our dear Heavenly Father withdrawn, how soon would all that is lovely and pure and God-like be burned out!

Like the cloud, Christ is our shield. He said to the Apostle Paul, and still says to everyone of his disciples, “My grace is sufficient for thee, for my strength is made perfect in weakness” (2 Corinthians 12:9). His grace justifies us, and by his grace we will have part in the divine nature if faithful unto death. Defended by his grace, where are the enemies who can overcome the righteous? If Christ comes between them and the legion of foes ever seeking the destruction of us, we are safe from assault as were the Israelites from the Egyptians at the Red Sea, when the cloudy pillar stood between the pursuing and the pursued.

The Christian’s strength lies in the knowledge of his own weakness, which prompts him to lay hold of an almighty shield, able to defend him in every emergency. However many strong enemies there may be, one has but to look away from himself, and up to him in whom all fullness dwells, in order to be effectually guarded from the darts of the enemy. Guarded by this almighty armour, one may sing, “The Lord is my buckler” (Psalms 18:2). “My refuge and my fortress my God; in him will I trust” (Psalms 91:2).

Like the pillar, Christ is our oracle. “He is the word,” the grand medium of communication between God and man. “No man hath seen God at any time, the only begotten son, who is in the bosom of the father, he hath declared him” (John 1:18). Let us lend our ears to this great oracle, our saviour Jesus Christ, and let us listen and give heed to his commandments, and we shall become wise unto salvation and receive all the necessary directions to that heavenly Jerusalem.

Christ is thus as the fiery cloudy pillar that went before the Israelites, a guide, a light, a shade, a shield, an oracle, a fast friend, and a constant attendant to the Christian. Like the cloudy pillar, he leads, he enlightens, he screens, he shields, he defends, he instructs, and he commands. The Israelites on their march to the promised land are a type of the Christian on their journey through this world to their heavenly promised country.

At the Jordan River the cloud took its departure. It did not accompany the Israelites into Canaan, but Christ will never, ever leave those whom he has guided through the wilderness of this world to the land of bliss.

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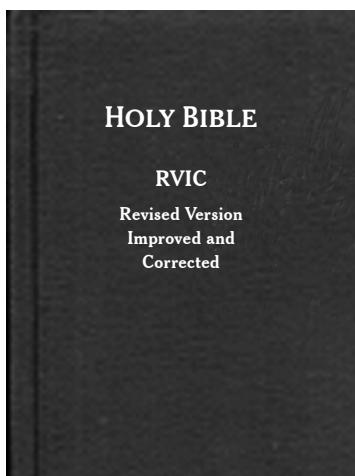
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This book was published by the Berean Bible Institute during the 1970's and sets out the teachings from the Bible on topics which so eluded many in the Christian world. The insert in this edition of the Peoples Paper covers the next part of this 274-page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

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Letter

Dear Brethren, I write this because I want to say "Thank you" for the received a letter package with 5 Biblical booklets from BBI Inc. I am very happy to receive them. I am really very glad and thankful. They are really precious to me. I am an older Christian woman. I read the Bible and I study, too. I do not speak very good English. I want to receive Peoples Paper, too. I will order books later.

The Bible Teachings (Part Eight)

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

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Israel's Sins Removed Before Establishment of New Covenant

St. Paul refers directly to this New Covenant to be made with Israel at the end of this age (verse 27), saying, “This is my Covenant unto them (Natural Israel), when I Shall take away their sins” (Romans 11:27). The taking away of their sins is a necessity for them, before they can receive this New Covenant, because God makes no Covenant with sinners.

Israel's sins were not cancelled by our lord when he ascended up on high and appeared in the presence of God for us — according to the type, sprinkling the blood on the Mercy seat for the sins of those for whom it was applied — us, “the household of faith” — not them, not Israel in the flesh, nor any others, than “us.”

Lord's Goat Typical of Church

According to the type, a second sin-offering was to be made, “the lord's goat” was also to be sacrificed by the Priest and its blood sprinkled upon the Mercy Seat, not for the household of faith, but “for all the people.” The Lord's goat, as we have seen, typified the Church, the Body of Christ, made acceptable for sacrifice through the merit of Christ's blood and sacrificed by our High Priest throughout this Gospel Age. We delight in this sacrifice and “present our bodies living sacrifices, holy, acceptable to God, and our reasonable service,” because we are assured that if we suffer with him, and be dead with him in his sacrificial death, we shall also live with him and reign with him in his Mediatorial Kingdom, which will bless Israel and the world (Romans 12:1).

“Those Days” and Joel's Prophecy

This same expression, “after those days,” occurs in connection with Joel's prophecy of the outpouring of the holy Spirit. Through him the Lord declares the ultimate pouring out of the Divine blessing, the holy Spirit, upon all flesh; but he informs us that it will be “after those days.” It is still future; hence here is another evidence that this expression, “after those days,” signifies after the completion of the work of the selection of the Church — the Bride of the Messiah — the Mediator, the Christ. The lord proceeds to say through the prophet that his holy Spirit would first be poured out upon his special servants and handmaidens “during those days.” And it has been so: ever since Pentecost, the holy Spirit has been for the servants and handmaidens of the Lord, and for no others. It cannot reach the others — the world of mankind in general — until “after those days.” The same thought is expressed by the Apostle when he says that “our Lord is a propitiation [a satisfaction] for our sins [the

Church's sins, throughout this Gospel Age], and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world [in due time]” (1 John 2:2).

Secondary Application of Merit

This secondary application of the merit of our lord upon the Mercy Seat, on behalf of the world, corresponds to the second sprinkling of the blood on the Atonement Day — “the blood of the Lord's goat” — “His own blood” “on behalf of all the people,” sealing for them, consummating, the New Covenant.

Why New Covenant Delayed

Why has the New Covenant been so long delayed? We reply that, although it was promised centuries before Christ, it did not become an assured fact until our Lord Jesus died. His death was sufficient to have sealed that New Covenant and at once to have brought in restitution blessings to Israel, and through Israel to the world in general, if the Redeemer, when he ascended on high, had so applied the merit of his sacrifice. But it is evident that he did not so apply it; first, by the fact that Israel's restitution did not begin there, and has not begun yet, and will not begin until “after those days.” Secondly, it is proven by the other fact that the merit of Christ's sacrifice, which was not given to Israel for the sealing of Israel's New (law) Covenant, was given to another class, to a new nation, to Spiritual Israel, and has been applicable to and brought manifest blessings to her during all these centuries of the Gospel Age.

Our Lord a “Surety” of the New Covenant

So, then, in the Scriptural language, that which our Lord did do in connection with the promised New Covenant between God and Israel at his first advent, was that he became a “surety” and guarantee for its later fulfilment (Hebrews 7:22). From that time, therefore, the New Covenant may be considered as assured or legislated or guaranteed, but not put into force, because, as the Apostle declares, a testament or will is of no binding force until the death of the testator. In harmony with the Divine Plan, the Redeemer applied the merit of His sacrifice to a special class “called” and “drawn of the Father” during this Gospel Age, to be members, to join with him in his sacrifice. These were to receive of his fulness, his merit, as the atonement for their sins, and then they were to drink of his blood or share in his death, that his blood or the merit of his sacrifice might as a blessing pass through them and permit them by sacrificing restitution blessings to attain the divine nature and glory (2 Peter 1:4). None of these may keep the blessing of restitution privileges. Each was obliged in advance to pledge his life in sacrifice

with his lord before his final acceptance and begetting of the holy Spirit to joint heirship with the head in his glory, honour, and immortality. So then, the reason that the New Covenant promised in Jeremiah's day and assured by our Lord's death has not yet gone into effect and become operative in restitution blessings to Israel and the world is that the death of the testator has not yet been fully accomplished; for the testator, through whom Israel will get that great blessing of the New Covenant, is not our lord Jesus alone, but The Christ, Head and Body.

Natural Israel and Spiritual Israel re Mercy

To this agree the words of the Apostle again, namely, that natural Israel will "obtain mercy through your [Spiritual Israel's] mercy" (Romans 11:31). The laying down of the restitution rights received by us from the Lord through faith in his blood is our sacrifice of the same, the dying of the Testator's Body (2 Corinthians 4:10). Israel is to be the beneficiary of this testament, this legacy, this will, the merit of which is all as Jesus said, "In his blood," in his cup, which we must drink.

If the Church are to be members of the great Mediator, why are not Israel, who were baptised into Moses (1 Corinthians 10:1,2), thus made members of the Mediator of the Law Covenant?

Israel's Types Complex — Unlearned in Danger of Wrestling Scriptures to Their Own Injury

The Divine arrangement which used Moses, Aaron, the tribe of Levi, and all Israel as types is complex, so that the unlearned and unstable are in danger of wresting them to their own injury. Whoever will begin with the Passover type of the deliverance of the first-born and proceed with the history of the typical people down to the time when they entered Canaan, then turn to the death of Christ as the antitypical Passover Lamb and attempt to parallel the experiences of the Church and the world with the experiences of Israel, will find himself confused greatly until he comes to understand that in Israel a number of types mingled and overlapped.

Firstborns Passed Over vs. Deliverance of Israel

For instance: Recognising the Passover lamb as typical of our Lord Jesus and his death; and recognising the first-born of Israel spared "in that night" as typical of Spiritual Israel, we know that "that night" typified this Gospel Age. We know also that the following morning typified the Millennial morning. The deliverance of Israel through the Red Sea would therefore seemingly typify the final deliverance of the whole world of mankind from the bondage of sin and death, typified by Pharaoh and his army. Similarly, the overthrow of Pharaoh's army would seemingly represent the ultimate destruction of Satan and every evil influence at the close of the Millennial Age. That was the end of that type.

With the end of that type another began, for the march of Israel toward Mt. Sinai, where they entered into covenant relationship with the Lord, typified the approach of the Gospel Church and of the whole

world to the condition of things pictured by St. Paul in Hebrews 12 — the end of this Age, and a time of trouble and the establishment of the New (law) Covenant with Israel for the blessing of all the families of the earth. Following this, the wilderness journey constitutes still another type representing God's people and the failure of many to enter into His rest, because of lack of faith. Subsequently the smiting of the rock by Moses and his not being permitted to enter the promised land is yet another type. The crossing of Jordan is still another type. The appointment of Joshua, the new leader, instead of Moses, is still another type. Israel conquering the various enemies in the land of Canaan is still another type.

Baptism of Israel Into Moses Typical of World's Baptism in Millennium

Coming back now to the first-mentioned of these types — the one which began with the killing of the Passover lamb, the sprinkling of its blood, the eating of its flesh during "that night" in which the firstborns were passed over and spared — we notice that the feature of the type which has to do with "the Church of the Firstborn" and this Gospel Age was passed before the time when the Israelites as a nation were baptised into Moses in the sea and in the cloud. Consequently, that baptism into Moses evidently pictured, not the baptism of the Church of the Firstborn into Christ's death, but the baptism of the whole world of mankind into Christ's life during the Millennium.

Israel Into Liberty or Life vs. Church Into Sacrificial Death

The Church passed from justification of life into sacrificial death with the Lord to become members of the Mediator's "Body." The Israelites passed through the sea and the cloud, not into death, but into liberty — into freedom as a nation. That baptism into Moses evidently therefore represented the deliverance of the groaning creation into the liberty wherewith Christ proposes to make free all who will come unto him in response to his drawing during the Millennial Age. Thus the Apostle tells us that as Jesus already is the Head of the Church, which is his Body, so ultimately he will be the Head of all creation, because it is the will of God "to gather together in one all things under one Head" (Ephesians 1:10).

Pyramid of Chart Illustrates Christ the Head

This we have sought to illustrate in the Chart of the Ages in Volume 1. In the pyramid of that chart we show our Lord Jesus the Head, the Church his Body, the Great Company, Fleshly Israel restored, and ultimately all nations brought under the one Headship. The same thought that the world will become Christ's in the possessive sense is expressed by St. Paul. When telling of the resurrection he says, "There shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and of the unjust — Christ the firstfruits; afterwards they that are his at [during] his presence" (1 Corinthians 15:23). The Apostle expresses the same thought that the world will be brought under the control and under the name of

Christ, saying, "In whom the whole family of God, both in heaven and in earth, is named" (Ephesians 3:15).

Church of First-born Not Illustrated in Israel's Baptism into Moses

So then in this type of Israel being baptised into Moses we have a suggestion of what belongs to the Millennial Age, but no suggestion whatever appertaining to the Church of the Firstborns during this Age — no suggestion of a baptism into Christ's sufferings and death. Indeed, nowhere in that type is the association between the Head and the members shown. It merely pictures to us the Lamb of God slain, and our privilege of being spared or passed over from death into life in this Gospel Age — before the general deliverance of mankind from the power of sin and death.

Must Adam First Be Redeemed?

Accepting the Scriptural presentation that "By one man's disobedience sin entered into the world, and death as a result of sin, and thus death passed upon all men, for that all are sinners" (Romans 5:12-19); accepting also the declaration of Scripture, "As by man came death, by man also comes the resurrection of the dead" (1 Corinthians 15:21); also the assurance that "As all in Adam die, even so all in Christ shall be made alive" (1 Corinthians 15:22), shall we understand that Adam must first be redeemed and atoned for before any of his children can receive reconciliation? If so, should we understand that Adam was included amongst the believers, the household of faith, on whose behalf Jesus, our great High Priest, appeared and made satisfaction for sin when He appeared in the presence of God for us?

Adam Not Included in Ancient Worthies

Most assuredly we should not! St. Paul did not mention Adam in his list of Ancient Worthies in Hebrews 11. On the contrary, our expectation for Adam is that as a man of the world class, "all people," his sin will be atoned for in the end of this age. When the great High Priest shall antitypically sprinkle his blood on the Mercy Seat for the sins of the whole world, "all the people," just as at the beginning of this age He made atonement for our sins — the Church's. Our expectation also is that Father Adam will be one of the last to be awakened from the sleep of death and be brought forth to the privileges, blessings, opportunities, and testings of the Millennial Age.

Restitution Begins with the Living

Our thought is that the restitution blessings will begin with the generation living at the time of the inauguration of the Mediator's Kingdom; that it will deal first with these and bring them to a measure of recuperation before beginning with any of those who sleep in the dust of the earth; and further that those of the sleepers who went down into death most recently will be the first to come up, while those who went down first will be the last to come up. In other words, the first shall be last and the last shall be first. Our thought

is that quite probably the awakenings of the world will be in response to the prayers of their friends during the Millennium; and that those living at any time will be specially interested in praying for such as were their acquaintances or relatives. We can see no reason why Father Adam should take any precedence in connection with the work of redemption. While it is true that he was the man through whom sin and death entered the world, nevertheless amongst the thousands of millions of his children he has no pre-eminence in the sight of Justice, whose record respecting humanity we understand to be: One man's sin — penalty, Death.

Justice Does Not Recognise Individuals

Likewise, although our Lord Jesus is the one who paid our penalty, Justice in her records would probably take no particular note of that fact, but would merely enter the record, One holy, harmless, undefiled man died and made appropriation of the merit of his death for the household of faith. Later we may assume the records of Justice read, The merit of the one man who died, the Just for the unjust, which was appropriated to "the household of faith," having been laid down again sacrificially, is now applied again — this time "on behalf of all the people" not included in the first application.

Justice Did Not Separately Condemn Adam's Children

The sacrifice of the man Christ Jesus was sufficient for the sins of the whole world, and that ultimately it will be made available for the cancellation of the sins of the world is because Justice in the condemnation merely sentenced Father Adam as a man and has paid no attention to his children in the way of separate condemnation, but counted them all as members of the one man. Hence the death of Jesus could have been applied for anyone of Adam's race, or for any number of them, or for all of them, including Adam. And this last will be the ultimate result (Z1909- 315).

MOSES A MEDIATOR BEFORE AARON A PRIEST

Institution of Priesthood vs. Time of trouble

The record of the institution of the priesthood, the establishment of the tabernacle service, etc., comes after the account of Israel reaching Mt. Sinai — after the account of the mountain quaking and smoking and the terrible sights and sounds referred to by St. Paul (in Hebrews 12:26-28), which, we understand, prefigured the great time of trouble we are expecting, in which society will be shaken and mankind be prepared for the establishment of the Mediatorial Kingdom of Christ under the New Covenant. How shall we understand this fact? How can we harmonise it with the Scriptural thought that our Lord became High Priest more than eighteen centuries ago, when he offered up himself and later as Priest presented his blood on our behalf at the heavenly Mercy Seat; and that since then he has been gathering and sacrificing the body of under-priests, and that he, as the Head and they as the Body, will shortly be revealed as the antitypical Moses, the Mediator of the New Covenant?

Types Not Always in Sequential Order

We must remind our readers afresh that the various types of the Scriptures do not follow one another in sequential order. Moses assuredly was a type of Christ — Head and Body (Acts 3:22). Just as surely Aaron was a type of Christ Jesus, and his sons types of the Church, the Body of Christ, the Royal Priesthood. King Solomon in some respects was a type of Christ. As the rich, the wise, the famous king, his fame was worldwide. Similarly, Melchizedek was a type of Christ, in him being blended the kingly and the priestly offices. These types could not all be worked out in one person and at one time; hence we do not so find them. When thinking of Moses as a type of the Mediator between God and men, we should consider him as St. Peter explains, as composed of Head and members, and that God has been raising him up during this Gospel Age. Our Lord, the Head, first was raised to the plane of glory, honour, and immortality. Later all of his faithful ones, sharers in his sacrifice, will be sharers in his Divine nature and glory, they will be raised up with him by a share in his resurrection (Philippians 3:10), "the first resurrection," which includes only the blessed and holy. These, his members, shall live and reign with Christ a thousand years and be unto him and unto the Father kings and priests for the blessing of mankind (Revelation 20:6).

Moses vs. Christ as Mediator

In considering Moses, the mediator of the Law Covenant, as typical of The Christ, the Mediator of the New Covenant, we should view him from this standpoint — as one Head and many members, just as we would Melchizedek, who represents our Lord, the Head, and the Church, his Body, the Royal Priest of the future. On the contrary, Aaron represents the same great Priest from a different standpoint, because his typical work related to Christ and the Church in the present life only — as a sacrificing priesthood — up to the end of the sacrificial work, the sprinkling of the blood of atonement in the most holy on the Mercy Seat and the inauguration of the new dispensation of glory and blessing. His service, also, in some degree, shows the Millennial work of cleansing humanity from sin and that both the High Priest and the under priests, his members, will be associated in that work.

Two Types Could Not Be Expressed Simultaneously

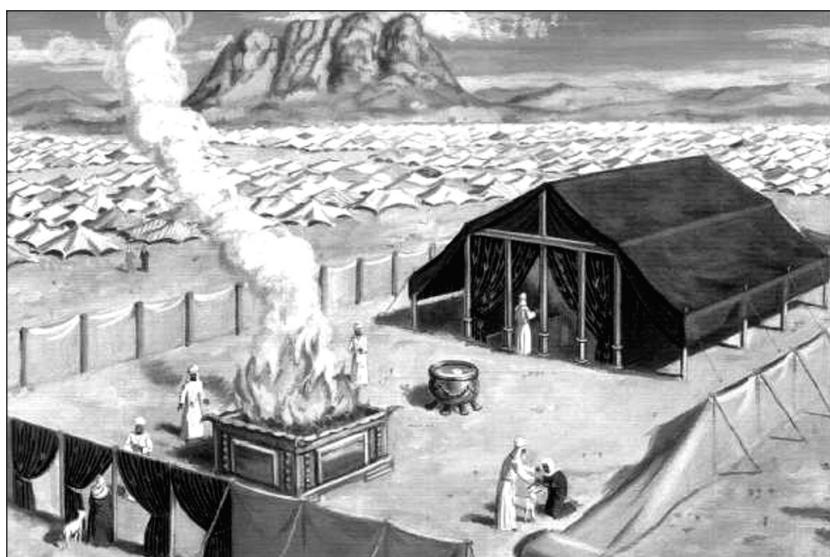
Since the two types could not be expressed simultaneously, it was every way better that the mediator type and the institution of the Law Covenant, typical of the New Covenant, should precede all sacrificing; yea, precede the appointing and setting apart of the priesthood, even though the active work of the Mediator of the New Covenant cannot begin until the close of this age, when the sacrificing of the "better sacrifices" shall have been

completed. Coming first in the record, no one who rightly understands the types could misunderstand this to teach that the antitypical Mediator must first come forth and institute the New Covenant, before the antitypical priesthood would come forward and make the sacrifices, the sin-offerings which would make possible the institution of that New Covenant. We have been surprised that anyone could be so blind as not to see that the sacrifice of Christ is the very basis of his work as the Mediator of the New Covenant. Hence, he could not be in any sense either a part or all of the antitypical Moses, until after serving as the antitypical Aaron. The correctness of this thought is also borne out by the fact that Aaron was older than Moses.

Answering Argument re Priesthood Was Not Inaugurated Until after Sealing of Law Covenant

It follows, then, that those who raised the objection that the Church could not be members of the Body of the Mediator, because the Priesthood was not inaugurated until after Moses had mediated and sealed the Law Covenant, put themselves in a very foolish light and show the shallowness of their argument. For if this be an argument against the Church being members of the Mediator's Body, it would be an equally strong argument against our Lord Jesus, the antitypical High Priest, being the Head of that Mediator.

The harmony between the two types is shown in the fact that in the end of the Atonement day, after Aaron had offered the sacrifice of "the bullock for [instead of] himself" as the sin-offering for his body and his house, the household of faith, and after he had subsequently offered "the Lord's goat" and applied its blood on behalf of all the people, then, as the antitypical Priest, Head and Body, completely clothed in the garments illustrative of his authority and power, he was accompanied by Moses, the mediator, to the altar. Thus, we read: "Moses and Aaron went into the tabernacle of the congregation, and came out, and blessed the people: and the glory of Jehovah appeared unto all the people" (Leviticus 9:23) (Z1909-325).



Israel's Tabernacle in the Wilderness