

Our Reasonable Service

“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*

strength, or our time and talents, we must be used in the Lord's service as the opportunity affords or as he has directed. Greater faithfulness may involve activities that pertain to our preaching the message of Truth in some of the many ways that have been made possible to us. This may include ministering to those who have a hearing ear, or visiting the sick and isolated.

A LIVING SACRIFICE

Our consecrated life is a 'living sacrifice' because from God's standpoint we have had the benefit of

IN OUR FEATURED SCRIPTURE

the Apostle Paul is admonishing consecrated brethren to greater faithfulness in their covenant of sacrifice. To be faithful to our commitment, it is necessary that we yield ourselves to the Heavenly Father's will. This means that without consideration of self, our physical

Christ's blood applied on our behalf. This means that Adamic condemnation has been lifted from us, and that we are now reckoned as having a perfect life to offer in sacrifice even as Jesus did. The sacrifice is holy and acceptable only because of the application of the blood of Christ. Such a sacrifice is a 'reasonable service,' and is thus the fulfilling of a good conscience toward our loving Heavenly Father and our Lord Jesus.

In our everyday experiences, we must endeavor to walk in the footsteps of Jesus which is a necessary part of our preparation to be a part of the royal family. These day-to-day experiences were also necessary for Jesus, as the Apostle Paul wrote, "Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him."—Heb. 5:8,9

LEARNING OBEDIENCE

The question may be asked why it was necessary for Jesus to learn obedience? We know that he was a perfect man and was always obedient to his Heavenly Father. It was from the standpoint of his changed status after being spirit-begotten, and this took place at his baptism in the River Jordan. From that time forward, he had to be tried, tested, and proven. In his letter, Paul used the word 'obedience' which means to be submissive, and he also used the word 'suffer' which suggests endurance. This points to our Lord Jesus having learned to be submissive by the many experiences that the Heavenly Father permitted to come upon him.

These experiences came to him under very difficult and trying circumstances, and his final test of obedience resulted in his death on the cross. The matter of Jesus 'being made perfect' is that his experiences crystallized his character and made it possible for God to resurrect him from death and exalt him to the Divine nature. The purpose of Jesus' suffering is affirmed by the Apostle Paul, saying, "It became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings."—Heb. 2:10

FILLING UP THE AFFLICTIONS

Speaking of himself, Paul revealed his innermost feelings in his letter to the brethren at Colosse. "Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake, which is the church." (Col. 1:24) Here Paul must have had in mind the many difficult experiences that he had suffered at the hands of the Jews and others as he endeavored to serve and encourage the brethren. It is apparent that he rejoiced in the privilege of being a partaker of Christ's sufferings, realizing that they were brought about in the course of his ministry to the church. Therefore, it was accounted to him for righteousness.

The footstep followers of Jesus must be partakers of Christ's sufferings if they are to share with him in the glories of the kingdom. "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.”—Rom. 8:16,17

It is only through suffering that the church is enabled to perfect the new mind, to learn to be sub-missive under difficult and trying circumstances, and to develop the fruits and graces of the Holy Spirit. If we were to attempt to overcome all of these things in our own strength we would surely fail. The disciples, in contemplating some of these very matters, questioned Jesus on one occasion. “They were astonished out of measure, saying among themselves, Who then can be saved? And Jesus looking upon them saith, With men it is impossible, but not with God: for with God all things are possible.”—Mark 10:26,27

Like the Apostle Paul, we too must endeavor to rely completely on the power of God, “For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind. Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God.”—II Tim. 1:7,8

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