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“The Word of God is Not Bound”

(2 Timothy 2:9)

“Remember that Jesus Christ of the seed of David was raised from the dead according to my gospel; wherein I suffer trouble, as an evil doer, even unto bonds; but the word of God is not bound. “Therefore, I endure all things for the elect’s sake, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory” (2 Timothy 2:8-10). Verse 9 from the Amplified Version reads: “For that [Gospel] I am suffering affliction and even wearing chains, like a criminal. But the Word of God is not chained or imprisoned!”

It is generally acknowledged that when the Apostle Paul wrote his second epistle to Timothy, he was imprisoned in Rome; and that this was the last of Paul’s epistles. It is understood that Paul was therefore literally in bonds, or chains, as the Amplified Version states. Knowing also that his earthly ministry was nearing its end, some may have expected that this servant of Christ would have been sad and downcast as he faced death, after so much suffering for the Gospel’s sake. He was not sad and downcast, for he knew that while he was in chains, the Word of God was not bound. He knew there was the whole Gospel Age ahead, during which time the members of Christ’s body, the Church, would be found by the proclaiming of God’s Word and the influence of the holy Spirit upon those who had ears to hear.

One of the most outstanding experiences of any of the apostles was granted to Paul and helped to impress upon him the assurance that the truths of God’s Word would never be allowed to be bound or hidden. Referring to the visions and revelations Paul received from the Lord and described in 2 Corinthians 12:1-4. It seemed Christ revealed his truth in an outstanding way, perhaps even more than to those who were with him in person. Paul states “Such an one caught up to the third heaven ... he was caught up into paradise.” These verses imply that Paul was carried forward by

revelation on the stream of time to behold what had been accomplished throughout the Gospel Age, as though he was looking back upon those events from the third heaven, the Kingdom of God.

This means that God’s Word of truth had been revealed to the hearts and minds of all the members of the body of Christ, so that the words of James 1:18 would have been fulfilled, “Of His (God’s) own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first fruits of his creatures.” God begat the first fruits with or by the Word of truth. In other words, as the Lord’s people comes to a knowledge of the Word of truth, it so acts upon their minds and hearts that they are led to respond to him, and yielding themselves fully to the Lord the result is the receiving of the holy Spirit. It is through the Word of truth that they are led to become followers of Christ.

Revelations to Paul

The granting of those revelations to Paul means also that the apostle, perceiving in his day “the mystery of iniquity was already working,” he could see beyond this partial hindrance to the work of the truth, and would know that Christ’s true church would be with him in the “third heaven” in readiness for the Kingdom reign to follow. Being “caught up to

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paradise” would convey the same assurance to the apostle. He would see in his vision the “heavenly paradise” as revealed in Revelation 2:7, with the overcomers of the Gospel Age given “to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.” This would be the spiritual paradise, in contrast with the earthly paradise that will also be established throughout the length and breadth of the whole world.

Beholding this heavenly “paradise of God” was also equivalent to the amazing experience which Paul describes in 1 Corinthians 15:3-8. “I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that he was buried, and that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. After that he appeared to more than five hundred brethren at one time, most of whom remain until now, but some have fallen asleep; then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles; and last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared to me also.” Paul explains the wonderful information he received from the Lord directly, and not through association with fellow apostles. This apparently took place on the Damascus Road when he was intercepted on a mission contrary to the Lord’s cause, and from which time onward, he declared in Acts 26:19 “I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision.”

Knowing all this wonderful outworking of God’s plan truly gave full assurance to the Apostle Paul that the Word of God is not bound, because it is the message of God’s Word which accomplishes all that was revealed to Paul in the vision of the “third heaven,” in the spiritual kingdom. Further, not only did Paul perceive the heavenly phase of the kingdom, but he would also grasp the restoration of the earthly paradise being accomplished through the truths of God’s Word conveyed to all the families of the earth.

Working Out of God’s Plan

Our Lord Jesus indicated this same working out of God’s plan in his words recorded in John 12:47, 48. “If any man hear my words, and believe not, I judge him not: for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world. He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day.” These are very helpful verses when we consider the situation of those people who rejected our Lord at his first advent. These words reveal what the Kingdom will mean to mankind: the very truths, the very principles, the very words that the Lord spoke at His first advent will be the same upon which mankind will be judged when they all know the Lord from the least to the greatest. This helps us to see, then, that the Word of God will be vital, it will be instructive, it will guide mankind to obey and know the Lord on the earthly plane. Paul knew, as our Lord did, what was going to be accomplished right down over the two thousand years of the Gospel Age, and throughout the



Jesus, giving words of life

thousand years of the Kingdom Age. Paul knew in his own day, “the Word of God is not bound,” but would accomplish all its wonderful works in harmony with God’s will.

In addition to this long-range view of the Word of God not being bound, we know that the Apostle intended Timothy and all Christians from his day forward to know that the binding of himself with literal chains could not hinder the Gospel message progressing in harmony with God’s will in His plan from that time forward. That is why he wrote to Timothy in 2 Timothy 1:8, “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.” Paul is saying, be not ashamed of me in my present situation; do not be offended; do not be intimidated or kept from being a servant of Christ because of the way I’m being treated. No, indeed, this reminds us of the participation associated with the Memorial of our Lord’s death — participating with our Lord in His experiences. So, the Lord’s people are to be partakers of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God, even as Paul was setting that lovely example in his own faithfulness under all those trying conditions.

Purpose of Paul’s Imprisonment

Possibly Paul did not know that the very imprisonment which he suffered would have such a far-reaching influence in promoting the cause of the Word of God. Because of his imprisonment, restricting his ability to visit the Churches, he instead wrote letters. God preserved these epistles for the benefit of many more than the members of the actual churches or individuals to whom they were sent in Paul’s day, even down to us in this end of the Gospel Age. When we think of all the valuable epistles recorded by the apostle, we feel he would never have realised in his day the full extent and value of all these wonderful messages.

Further, in Paul’s case, his being in bonds sometimes resulted in promoting the cause of the gospel, as stated in Philippians 1:12-14, “I would ye should understand, brethren, that the things which happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of

the gospel; so that my bonds in Christ are manifest in all the palace, and in all other places; and many of the brethren in the Lord, waxing confident by my bonds, are much more bold to speak the word without fear.” Here is an actual reaction favourable to the brethren because Paul was really in prison; this shows how the example of the faithful servant of God can react upon others, who, under other circumstances, may have felt intimidated because of the treatment which Paul received. So, his words, “What happened unto me has fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel,” shows how he gave courage, confidence, and assurance to the brethren who went forward despite the threatening possibility of receiving similar treatment to the apostle himself.

The Falling Away

Not only was the Apostle Paul given revelations about the Plan of God being fulfilled into the Kingdom Age, he informed the Thessalonian brethren of events to transpire during the early part of the Gospel Age in 2 Thessalonians 2:1-3. “Now we beseech you, brethren ... that ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled ... as that the day of Christ is at hand. Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition.” Here we find Paul was given instruction regarding the great falling away in respect of the gospel truths. This means, that by prophetic vision he was able to detect and tell beforehand what was to come to pass.

Following on this “falling away” from the truths of God’s Word, how clearly it is shown by the Lord’s messages to the Churches, in Revelation, that the truths of God’s Word were bound or restricted for a limited time only. When the Lord’s due time came, the message to the church in Philadelphia showed how truly the Word of God was not bound, from the period of the Reformation onward in particular. A message of this kind gives courage, confidence, and inspiration even to us today. When we recall the opening up of the Word of God after the period of the Dark Ages, when there was almost a dead condition throughout some of the church periods. The Lord’s will in respect to His Word is stated, “To the angel of the church in Philadelphia write; These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no

man openeth; I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it” (Revelation 3:7-8).

The Word of God is not bound. It is obvious that, when that time came, God’s Word was to be elucidated, to be revealed and expounded, gradually of course. “I know thy works; I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it.” This was the time when the noble Reformers, by God’s grace and with His Spirit in their hearts, defied all opposition — because God was with them.

We see further that those noble Reformers were used by God to prepare for additional unfolding of truth throughout the last century, leading up to the harvest truths which the Lord has blessed to his people now for over one hundred years. The clear understanding of the manner of Christ’s return was of outstanding importance, to grasp that the “days of the Son of man,” Christ’s second presence, with the Church, meant additional unfolding of truth for the benefit of God’s people.

The Harvest Period

Our Lord made special reference to the harvest period at the end of the Gospel Age, when the time of his second presence became due, in Matthew 13:39, “The harvest is the end of the age.” We call to mind the vision given in Revelation 14:14, where our Lord is pictured as the Son of man, sitting upon a cloud, with a sickle in His hand, and a crown on His head, depicting the time for the reaping of the harvest of the Gospel Age. This signifies that the harvest of the Gospel Age will be completed before the Millennial Age, or Kingdom Age, begins. In other words, the first resurrection of the “dead in Christ,” and members of the church who do not sleep in death but are changed to be with the Lord and the risen saints, would be completed before the new age, the Millennial Age, begins. This would seem necessary so that the value of Christ’s sacrifice, covering the church class throughout the Gospel Age, could be made available to bless Israel under the New Covenant, and then to all the families of the earth throughout the Kingdom Age. The church class are being developed under the Abrahamic Covenant, while the New Covenant applies to the Millennial Age only.

The distinction between the work of the Gospel Age and the Millennial Age is well revealed by the Apostle Peter in Acts 2:18, 17. These verses we know were quoted from the prophet Joel. Verse 18, “On my servants and handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my spirit,” undoubtedly refers to the Gospel Age only, the time when God is selecting His servants and handmaidens, calling out a people for His name, to be associated with Christ in the heavenly kingdom.

Verse 17, “I will pour out of my spirit upon all flesh,” clearly refers to the Millennial Age. If the Millennial Age were present for the past nearly one hundred years, we would expect God’s spirit to be poured out



Nicholas and Arius at Nicean Council

on all flesh. Some of the Revivalist people are even claiming this with the speaking in tongues, etc., which is a great deception of Satan in these last days of the Gospel Age. It is obvious that God's Spirit is not now manifest upon all flesh. Evil men are waxing worse and worse (2 Timothy 3:13), but with the overthrow of the present order of things and the establishment of Christ's Kingdom we rejoice that God's Spirit will ultimately be poured out upon all flesh in the new order of things.

The Passing Away of this Present Evil World

The passing of the present order, "this present evil world," and its outcome, is well pictured in Psalms 46:9, 10. Here we have a message of God speaking peace to humanity. The church class will then be with Christ. The time of trouble will have humbled mankind sufficiently so that, with the Kingdom operating, the blessings will so much more than compensate for all troubles of the past six thousand years of man's work week, so to speak. "Weeping endures for a night but joy cometh in the morning." Joy comes in the Millennial morning. "Be still and know that I am God," will be the message to subdue, humble, and hush humanity, brought down, as it were, as a necessary preparation for the introduction of the Kingdom of God.

How thankful we are, then, that the Word of God is not bound to God's people who are rejoicing in the liberty of the sons of God, the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free. How favoured we are then, in these days of the harvest of the Gospel Age, to realise the blessings of God's Word, in having personal experience that the Word of God is not bound but is a living revelation to all who meditate upon its precepts and are blessed thereby to God's praise. The Word of God is alive to the hearts of God's people; they prove it as a reality. The Plan of God is so satisfying and is the only solution to all distress and perplexity throughout the world today. We are delighted that in this end of the age the truths of God's Word are assembled in such as the various translations of the Bible, the availability of dictionaries and Bible helps such as "Studies in the Scriptures."

These vital keys to the Bible, the truths, satisfy our longings as nothing else can do. It was lovely of the Apostle Paul to request the co-operation of the Thessalonian brethren in his ministry, even as he felt God had blessed them, as he declared in 2 Thessalonians 3:1, "Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have free course, and be glorified, even as it is with you." May the Word of God have free course, and be glorified in each of God's people today, to His praise for all time.

The Lord's Last Supper and Memorial Considerations

"This do in remembrance of me" (Luke 22:19).

What we refer to as the "Last Supper" is an important topic for students of the scriptures. The earthly life of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ was almost at an end. He had accomplished much in his ministry of about 32 years. (While the precise length of the Lord's ministry does not bear directly on the topic under consideration in this article, it is an interesting study. Daniel 9:27 would be one of the several key verses to examine in such a review.)

The fate of the entire human race was at stake in Jesus perfectly offering up himself as a ransom for Adam. Jesus, alone, was the key to all of the Heavenly Father's divine plan of redemption, and we rejoice to know that He was faithful unto death. His resurrection just days after his crucifixion was proof that our Lord was indeed the promised "ransom for all" (1 Timothy 2:6).

The commemoration of the Last Supper in our observance of the annual Memorial celebration has two important symbols: the bread, and the fruit of the vine. Jesus makes it clear how to interpret those two

symbols, in stating that the bread "is my body" and the fruit of the vine "is my blood" (Matthew 26:26-28). We must be careful not only to recognize those two symbols but also be very careful about adding any additional symbols to this simple, yet profound, commemoration. (Please note that the second symbol, the fruit of the vine, is also called a "cup." The cup is not, however, the symbol — its contents are the symbol. Nonetheless, because the fruit of the vine has to be contained, the cup serves as a synonym for its contents — both practically and scripturally.)

Was Jesus "Broken For Us"?

In Memorial service discourses, we often hear the expression that Jesus "was broken for us." Where does this expression come from? It comes from 1 Corinthians 11:24, "this is my body, which is broken for you" in the King James Version. The phrase "which is broken for you," however, is likely spurious. It is not present in the Sinaiticus or Vaticanus, two of the oldest manuscripts, nor in most other of the highest-quality manuscripts.

Another indication is that none of the Gospel accounts mention the phrase “is broken for you” (Matthew 26:26, Mark 14:22, Luke 22:19). Rather, the expression is, as recorded in the Matthew account, simply “Take, eat; this is my body.” (We must keep in mind that Paul, the author of 1 Corinthians, was not personally present at the Last Supper, so he would have received details of that event from Peter, the other apostles who were present, or perhaps from the Lord himself. Please see 1 Corinthians 11:23.)

It is interesting to note that there is no other verse in the Bible that states that Jesus was broken for us. There is no question that Jesus suffered greatly for us and for the world — but why is the word “broken” used so often? It may be because of Matthew 26:26: “And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it.” The Greek word for “brake” in this verse is Strong’s 2806, *klao*, which simply means “to break.” Therefore, was the breaking of the loaf symbolic, or simply practical? If it was symbolic, are we adding a third symbol to the Memorial?

It does make sense that breaking the loaf was practical, in that each of the apostles would be given a piece. There is no other way to dispense portions of the loaf other than to break it apart. Was the passing of the bread emblem also symbolic? Are any other actions or aspects of the Last Supper also symbolic? In our interpretation of what the symbols of the initial Memorial service are, we must be careful not to make virtually everything in the service that was in reality simply practical to do, mean something more. If the Memorial is to symbolize our Lord’s body and blood, perhaps we should consider affirming that the only symbols in the service were the bread and the cup.

There is another caution to be noted on this point. John 19:33-36 says, “But when they came to Jesus and saw that he was dead already, they brake not his legs: But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came there out blood and water. And he that saw it bare record, and his record is true: and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye might believe. For these things were done, that the scripture should be fulfilled, ‘A bone of him shall not be broken.’”

This is because Jesus is “our Passover lamb” who was sacrificed for our sins (1 Corinthians 5:7, John 1:29), and the Passover lamb was not to have any of its bones broken. Exodus 12:46 adds, “In one house shall it be eaten; thou shalt not carry forth ought of the flesh abroad out of the house; neither shall ye break a bone thereof.” The same restriction appears in Numbers 9:12.

Also, note that early Christians broke bread as noted in Acts 2:42, “And they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.” Generally, no symbolism in the breaking of bread is suggested in instances such as this. It was a practical matter to facilitate the distribution of the bread to the gathered brethren. (As students of the scriptures, we do not want to miss



Jesus at the Last Supper

anything that is symbolic, has a double meaning, etc. However, we must also be very careful that we do not see a need to find double or special meanings where literal Interpretations are intended.)

The ASV version properly renders 1 Corinthians 11:24 as follows: “And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, ‘This is my body, which is for you: this do in remembrance of me.’” This rendering is in harmony with each of the Gospel accounts.

Is the Memorial About Jesus Only?

Is the purpose of the annual observance to remember Jesus exclusively, or to also commemorate the role of the footstep followers of Jesus?

Jesus said of this occasion, “This do in remembrance of me” (Luke 22:19). There is universal agreement that the primary focus of the Memorial service is to remember our Lord’s sacrifice. Is there a secondary focus as respects the Body of Christ, i.e. the church’s role in God’s plan? Is that aspect to also be celebrated at the Memorial service? Some brethren believe that such is the case. Other brethren, including those who zealously embrace the church’s share in the sin-offering, believe that when Jesus said “do this in remembrance of me,” he did not mean “do this in remembrance of us.”

One of the issues in this matter relates to whether or not there are primary and secondary symbolisms or only one symbolism in the emblems. There are only two emblems in this celebration; it is important for us to be clear about what those emblems mean. Sometimes seeing “primary and secondary” meanings is an accurate interpretation, and sometimes it is not. For example, when we read that Jesus “gave himself a ransom for all” (1 Timothy 2:6) we do not find a primary and secondary application of who is the “ransom.” Jesus, alone, provided the ransom, and there are no secondary applications whatsoever. Of course, sometimes there are secondary applications

in scripture. For example, our Lord provided a secondary application of the prophet Elijah to John the Baptist in Matthew 11:13-15 (NIV), “For all the Prophets and the Law prophesied until John. And if you are willing to accept it, he is the Elijah who was to come. Whoever has ears, let them hear.” Some brethren also see a third application of Elijah as a type of the church (see *The Herald of Christ’s Kingdom*, January/February 2019).

Primary, secondary, and even more applications are certainly also found in parables.

The secondary application of one or both of the Memorial emblems, however, likely stems from an interpretation of 1 Corinthians 10:16, “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?”

The keyword “communion” in this verse is Strong’s 2842, *koinonia*, and its meanings include fellowship, association, and community (Thayers Lexicon). Christians are privileged to have communion with Jesus. While there are verses of scripture which brethren believe establish the concept of the church’s share in the sin-offering doctrine, 1 Corinthians 10:16 may, or may not, be one of them. *Koinonia* is also used in scripture to note a sense of communion of purpose, when there is no oneness of personage. For example, 2 Corinthians 13:14, “The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion (*koinonia*) of the holy [Spirit], be with you all. Amen.” Obviously, Paul’s listeners were not one in personage with the holy Spirit, since the holy Spirit is not a person. They do, however, desire to live in harmony with God’s power and influence, thus their “communion” with the holy Spirit.

Koinonia exists where people have a common purpose, a common goal, and perhaps even a common hope. There is a sense of communion among people who have a common interest — the common interest binds them together. Community is established when people, for example, have a common history — such

as those who might have lived in a particular part of the world during a historically significant time.

So, determining if 1 Corinthians 10:16 indicates that the church is pictured in one or both of the Memorial emblems is entirely interpretive. The Greek word for “communion” is not singular in its meaning, so we should be cautious about drawing definitive conclusions.

Who Is the “One Bread”?

The answer to this question is easy, because there is a nearly universal agreement regarding the correct rendering of 1 Corinthians 10:17. Here is that verse in the KJV: “For we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread.” This is a mistranslation. The NIV renders the verse as follows: “Because there is one loaf, we, who are many, are one body, for we all share the one loaf.” (Virtually all other Bible translations have similar wording.) “We being many are one loaf” is not an accurate rendering. The “one loaf” or “one bread” is, of course, Jesus. We “partake” of Jesus because of our obedience to, and relationship with, him. The world will “partake” of Jesus in the Kingdom.

We occasionally hear that we are part of that “one loaf” since bread is made up of many grains, even if that is not what the verse literally says. For this application to be Biblically valid, we would need to find where in the scriptures the church is referred to as grains.

This brings up an important aspect of Biblical interpretation — we must be careful not to apply symbols to situations and/or objects that were never intended to symbolize something. For example, our Lord’s garments were taken from him prior to his crucifixion (Matthew 27:35), and lots were cast for them. The garments belonged to Jesus, so is the church pictured in those garments? It might be easy to answer in the affirmative because a singular garment is made of many threads. The glorified Christ is made up of Jesus as the head and the church as his body. However, since we do not see the church pictured as threads in the scriptures, we do not make such an application.

In what many call “the Lord’s prayer,” Jesus said “Give us this day our daily bread” (Matthew 6:11). Most brethren believe that this refers to the physical needs of life, as well as daily spiritual nourishment — not in any way connected to the actual Memorial emblem. Still, the word for “bread” in this verse is the same Greek word, *artos*, as in John 6:35 (“I am the bread of life”), and in 1 Corinthians 10:17 (“we all share the one loaf” NIV). We must be careful to not necessarily apply the same meaning to every use of a particular word in scripture.

Jesus is the “one loaf” as noted in John 6:35, “I am the bread of life.” The Lord expands on this reality in John 6:51: “I am the living bread that came down out of heaven; if anyone eats of this bread, he will live



Jesus teaching disciples the Lord's Prayer



Bread and cup, symbols of redemption in Christ

forever; and the bread also which I will give for the life of the world is my flesh.” No one but our Lord is ever referred to as “the bread of life.” Bread is a wonderful symbol for Jesus, because it is a symbol of life, as is water. Note our Lord’s words to the Samaritan woman at the well in John 4:13,14: “Jesus answered and said unto her, ‘Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.’” Just as “bread and water” are traditionally considered necessary to sustain life, they are suitable symbols of Jesus who will offer life to the entire human family. His reference in John 6:51, “the bread also which I will give for the life of the world is my flesh,” is a direct reference to his sovereign role as the ransom for Adam, and is the substance of the bread emblem in the Memorial service.

What Is the Meaning of “Cup”?

The word “cup” in the New Testament is always Strong’s 4221, *poterion*. Strong’s defines this word with three meanings: a drinking vessel, the contents of the vessel, and figuratively a lot or fate.

We suggest that these two meanings help explain some of the uses of the word “cup” in the New Testament. First, there is the literal cup in the initial Memorial service. Since the “fruit of the vine” is a liquid, it requires a means of containment and conveyance, and that is why a literal cup was provided. There was no other reasonable way to distribute this emblem to the apostles. Second, the Lord used the word “cup” to describe an experience, and, by extension, the fulfilling of a responsibility.

When James and John asked if they could have special places of favor with Jesus in glory, our Lord responded (Mark 10:38) as follows: “Ye know not what ye ask: can ye drink of the cup that I drink of?” Was Jesus here referring to the Memorial cup?

If so, since he clearly stated that the cup represents his blood, the text could read “can you drink of the blood that I drink of?” which would not make sense. As mentioned, Strong’s Concordance also provides a secondary definition of “cup” as one’s lot or experiences in life. Jesus was here essentially saying that this request would not be easily granted, for a favor in glory requires obedience and faithfulness during the difficulties in the Christian walk. Favor is granted as a reward for faithfulness, and that is achieved with great effort. (See John 18:11 and Acts 14:22.)

The Lord also asked, “are you able to be baptized with the baptism I am baptized with?” Was the Lord talking about water baptism? No, he was not. No one is baptized as Jesus was at Jordan by John (Matthew 3:14). The Lord was continuing the figurative theme of the “cup” with the figurative use of baptism. He was talking about the rigors of the Christian life as we endeavor to fight the temptations of the flesh, the world, and the Adversary.

The “cup” in Mark 10:38 about life experience is not the same “cup” we see in the Memorial service, because Jesus clearly states that the cup he passed to the apostles at the Last Supper “is my blood,” just as the bread “is my flesh.” The Memorial cup symbolized Jesus’ blood. The cup he asked the Heavenly Father to remove from him in Gethsemane (Mark 14:36) pertained to his experiences, not to his blood. The challenge to brothers James and John regarding what is required to prove faithful was about the rigors of a Christian life of obedience, not about Jesus’ blood.

Only the flesh and blood of the perfect man Jesus could provide the ransom for the perfect man Adam. The prospective members of the bride of Christ are imperfect, and hence have no share in providing the ransom for Adam.

It is always important for students of the scriptures to properly understand additional applications, if they exist, in the experiences of individuals portrayed in the scriptures. We must keep in mind, however, that not everything in the Word of God has additional applications. If such was the case, it would be easy, but not a good use of consecrated time, to needlessly search for additional meanings where they do not actually exist. Where they do exist, we can be richly blessed by the intended associations.

Special caution should be exercised when we look for double-meanings or associations in the experiences that were unique to Jesus in paying the ransom for Father Adam.

The beloved hymn “Rock of Ages” says it well: “In my hand no price I bring, Simply to Thy cross I cling.”

Paul summarized the sole reason for the Memorial emblems succinctly in 1 Corinthians 11:26. “For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord’s death till he come.”

— *Br. Robert Brand*

“Sold All that He Had and Bought”

The Bible Teachings (Part Eighteen) — Covenants, Mediator, Ransom, Sin Offering, Atonement

Parables Illustrating Difference Between Ransom-price and Sin-offering.

Two of our Lord’s parables are very helpful to gain a proper understanding of the difference between the Ransom-price and the Sin-Offering. “The Kingdom of Heaven is like unto a treasure hid in a field; the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field. Again, the Kingdom of Heaven is like unto a merchantman, seeking goodly pearls, who, when he hath found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it” (Matthew 13:44-46). The Kingdom of Heaven, the Millennial Kingdom, its glory and honours and its privileges in connection with the world’s restitution, constitute the great prize peculiar to this Gospel Age. This prize never before was possible of attainment, and opportunity to attain it will end with this age, when it will be established in power and great glory at the Second Coming of our Lord- at which time “we shall appear with Him in glory.” This prize was first presented to our Lord Jesus; as we read, “Who for the joy that was set before Him, endured the cross, despising the shame and is set down on the right hand of the Majesty on High.” This is the same prize or High Calling.

Process by Which Kingdom is Obtainable

The two parables under consideration illustrate the process by which this Kingdom is obtainable. Our Lord left the glory of the Father and humbled Himself to become “the man Christ Jesus.” But this humbling was not part of the Ransom nor of the Sin-Offering. It was preparatory work. A perfect man had sinned and had involved the entire race in his death condemnation, and only a perfect man could pay the price for one or any number or all of the sinners. When our Lord reached the age of thirty years, the age of manhood according to the law, He was ready to be put on trial for His own life, that by loyalty under tests He might prove His worthiness of everlasting life on the human plane. Only such a tested, proven, perfect man could be the world’s ransom price.

What Our Lord’s Keeping the Divine Law Did

Our lord’s keeping of the Divine law was not the ransom-price of the sinners. It merely demonstrated that our Lord could be an acceptable ransom-price for all. The giving of His life at thirty years in consecration was finished at Calvary. By that consecration, by the things which He suffered, by the laying down of

His life, He laid down the world’s ransom-price. It mattered not that the testing of His personal loyalty and His consecration of Himself unto death were simultaneous. It was just as proper that it should be so as it was that He should have been tried and tested first and should subsequently have surrendered His life willingly as man’s ransom-price.

Selling All

This feature of the work — the laying down of His life — is illustrated in the parables under consideration by the statement, “Sold all that He had.” As in the parable the selling of all that the merchant had did not purchase the field or the pearl, but merely secured the price, which was sufficient afterward for its purchase, so, our Lord’s surrender of His life and all of its rights and interests sacrificially on the world’s behalf did not purchase the world--did not pay the price--but merely secured the ransom-price for the sins of the world, to be applied afterward as He may please.

Securing and Using Ransom-Price Different Transactions

As in the parable the price was afterward used in the purchase of the treasure, so in reality our Lord’s payment of the price to Justice corresponded to the buying of the treasure, the buying: of the pearl. In other words, the ransom- price of the world was secured by our lord by the sacrifice of His human life, but the use of that price for the purchase of the treasure was a later and totally different transaction. It was after our Lord had risen from the dead and sojourned with His Apostles forty days and had ascended up on high that He “bought us with His own precious blood.” “He appeared in the presence of God for us” and there applied on our behalf the merit or ransom-price which previously cost Him His life.



Jesus at his baptism

Buying Treasure in Field Illustrates Purchase of Church

Those whose eyes of understanding are open to a discernment of “the mystery of God” will readily see the further application of the parable to us, the lord’s followers and members. By the grace of God our lord paid the price and bought us for whom He appeared. He did not buy the world, but the “Church.” He “loved us and bought us with His own precious blood.” “Ye were redeemed [bought] not with corruptible things, but with the precious blood of Christ” (1 Peter 1:18,19). But this application of the ransom-price to us is provisional, conditional. To be of the class included in this purchase requires that we shall not only flee from sin and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ unto justification, but that additionally we must have our Lord’s character-likeness and must, like Him, sell all that we have, that we might share with Him in His great work and thus pass His merit on for the purchase of the world- for the cancellation of the sins of the whole world, at the close of this age.

Must Have Christ’s Spirit of Sacrifice

Whoever has not the Spirit of Christ in this sacrificing is none of His. And whoever, after thus consecrating his life, draws back does so unto perdition, destruction (Hebrews 10:39). Whoever seeks to preserve his life- the restitution life imputed to him through the merit of Christ — will lose his eternal life (Mark 8:35). This principle is applicable to the Church only, during this age. The rule will be the reverse for the world during the Millennium. Whereas we receive of Christ restitution rights to sacrifice them as His members and to gain the new nature with Him, the world will get restitution rights to keep them everlasting and never to sacrifice them.

The Merit All from the One Man

In the transaction, be it noted, the merit, the value, all proceeded from the one man — the man Christ Jesus. No more was needed. No more was demanded by Justice for the sins of the whole world. So to speak, our lord Jesus loaned to the “elect” the merit of His righteousness, imputing it to us by faith as a wedding garment. Thereby He qualifies us as His members and in His name to share in His sacrificial work in order that we may be permitted to share with Him in His Millennial Kingdom glory and its great uplifting work for the world of mankind. The merit of Jesus now temporarily is loaned in justification by faith to the Church and which must be sacrificed again by us as His “members” — that is to constitute eventually the ransom-price of the whole world of mankind.

It is the merit of Jesus which now temporarily is loaned in justification by faith to the Church and which must be sacrificed again by us as His “members”- that is to constitute eventually the ransom-price of the whole world of mankind, who are to be blest during the Millennium.



Treasure, hidden in the field

Condition for Sharing His Resurrection

The condition upon which we may share the Millennial Kingdom with our lord is that we shall walk in His steps; that we shall suffer with Him; that we shall drink of His cup; be partakers of the blood of the New Covenant which, at the end of this age, will be sealed for Israel, and the world. Thus, we shall be sharers in the sufferings of Christ, by immersion into His death, in order that in due time, we may share also in “His resurrection.”

Counting Cost and Selling All

Who cannot see the force of these parables? Who cannot note that our dear Redeemer counted well the cost, then laid down His life- sold all that He had? And who does not remember that He calls upon us to sit down and count the cost of being His disciples? The field will be bought. The precious pearl will be secured by our lord, in harmony with the Father’s arrangement. And more than this, the faithful elect Church will secure a share therein as members of His Glorified Body. How important, then, that we count the cost in advance and that we count not our lives dear unto us that we may win the prize, the pearl, the treasure! (Z1909- 379).

“GIVE THEE FOR A COVENANT”

Christ, Head, and Body

“Thus, saith the Lord, the Redeemer of Israel, and His Holy One, to him whom man despiseth, to him whom the nation abhorreth, to a servant of rulers; Kings shall see and arise, princes also shall worship, because of the Lord that is faithful, and the Holy One of Israel, and He shall choose thee. Thus, saith the Lord, In an acceptable time have I heard thee, and in a day of salvation have I helped thee, and I will preserve thee and give thee for a covenant of the people, to establish the earth, to cause to inherit the desolate heritages that thou mayest say to the prisoners, Go forth; to them that are in darkness, Shew yourselves. They shall feed in the ways, and their pastures shall be in all high places” (Isaiah 49:7-9).

Earthly Inheritance and Mediator Different

Full often have we made application of this Scripture to our Lord, the Head, and the Church, His Body. We now call attention particularly to the feature which declares, “I will preserve thee and give thee for a Covenant unto the people, to establish the earth,” etc. Notice the fact that the people and their earthly inheritance are here differentiated from the great Mediator of the Covenant, through whom the people are to be blessed. Our lord has not yet received the heathen for an inheritance and the uttermost parts of the earth for a possession. He has not yet regathered and blessed natural Israel and made them the special channels of His blessing to mankind. For more than eighteen centuries He has been waiting at the right hand of majesty for His to be turned over to Him — for the time to come when He shall take to Himself His great power and reign. The beginning of that reign will be the binding of Satan. Then the blessing and uplifting of the groaning creation will follow. Gradually the world will be prepared to resume covenant relations with God at the close of the Millennium.

Ministry of the World’s New Covenant

Why the delay? Why did He not begin the work at once, immediately after He ascended up on high? The Scripture answer is that, in harmony with the Divine Plan, He has been waiting for the “members” of His Body to join with Him in sacrifice in the sufferings of this present time, that they may share with Him as His “members” in the glorious work to which He has been appointed as the Spiritual Seed of Abraham (Galatians 3:29). From this standpoint all the work of God’s people during this Gospel Age is so much of the ministry of the world’s New Covenant- serving that New Covenant by getting themselves and each other ready for the future work of glory at the expense of self-denials as respects earthly things and the present life.

Paul’s Application to the Church

Note St. Paul’s application of our text to the Church. He quotes the passage as applicable to the Body of Christ, saying, “We, then, workers together, beseech also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain. For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted (the antitypical Atonement Day), and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee; behold, now is the accepted time (when we, like our Lord, may sacrifice earthly rights and restitution privileges, and thereby attain the spiritual blessing of our “high calling of God in Christ Jesus”); behold, now is the day of salvation” — the great salvation to the Divine nature (2 Corinthians 6:2).

No Room for Question

Reading again the prophecy from which this quotation is made — our text — we perceive that there



The Apostle Paul, who wrote Hebrews

is no room to question that the entire Christ Head and Body was given as a Covenant for the people, the world, to institute general “times of restitution of all things which God hath spoken by the mouth of all the holy prophets since the world began” (Acts 3:19-21).

Blood of New Covenant Signifies “Better Sacrifices”

We see, in this connection, also the appropriateness of our Lord’s speaking of His “Cup” of suffering and death which He invited His faithful to share with Him as being not only His own blood shed for us, but also “the blood of the New Covenant shed for many,” in which we are privileged to participate. Those who see and who appreciate the privilege rejoice to be counted worthy to have fellowship or participation with Christ in His sufferings and sacrifices- that they may share with Him also in His glories and work. The blood of the New Covenant signifies the “better sacrifices” by which God has been pleased to arrange to bring the whole world anew into Covenant relations with Himself.

The Ministry of Reconciliation

“If any man be in Christ, he is a New Creature; old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. [Such are already back into harmony or covenant relationship with God.] And all [these] things are of God, who hath reconciled us to Himself by Jesus Christ [brought us back to covenant relationship], and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; to wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us; we pray you in Christ’s stead, be ye reconciled to God. For He [God] hath made Him [Jesus] to be sin [offering] for us [Him] who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him” (2 Corinthians 5:17-21).

Set Your Mind on Things Above

“Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth. For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God” (Colossians 3:2-3 NASB).

While journeying on the narrow way there are days that are a struggle, things do not appear to be going right, the battles against the flesh can be wearisome. Trials can be tough bringing pressures which can be hard to bear.

While we are here on earth, we cannot fully escape all the troubles this world can bring. We can through prayer, study, and learning, rise above this tumult. Whatever we must face we can only remain steadfast, strong, and faithful if we rely on God’s strength. Apostle Paul writes, “There is nothing in us that allows us to claim that we are capable of doing this work. The capacity we have comes from God” (2 Corinthians 3:5 GNB).

Being able to rise above the fear, temptation and the hardship of this life comes about because we are in Christ, redeemed and set free. Apostle Paul states “Therefore we do not lose heart, but though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day” (2 Corinthians 4:16 NASB). We are our Heavenly Father’s workmanship in Christ Jesus.

In the opening verse the Greek word used for “set” means “to seek after, strive for, be intent on.” This must be our constant goal in life. It allows us to be set free from the things of this world that would seek to hold us back and keep us down. Apostle Peter tells us “Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour” (1 Peter 5:8 NASB).

To “set your minds on things above” is to: (1) Look at life from our Heavenly Father’s perspective. (2) Seek after what He desires of us.

There are many verses in the Bible that remind us we are made new in Christ when we accept Him into our lives as Lord and Savior. We are made new as believers in Him and are continually being “made

new.” “For the love of Christ controls us, having concluded this, that one died for all, therefore all died; and He died for all, so that they who live might no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died and rose again on their behalf. Therefore, from now on we recognise no one according to the flesh; even though we have known Christ according to the flesh, yet now we know Him in this way no longer. Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come” (2 Corinthians 5:14-17 NASB). Unfortunately, our sinful nature is strong, and the enemy wants nothing more than to make us fall. It’s a daily battle and a choice we must make to follow Christ’s example.

God Has Given us Everything we Need

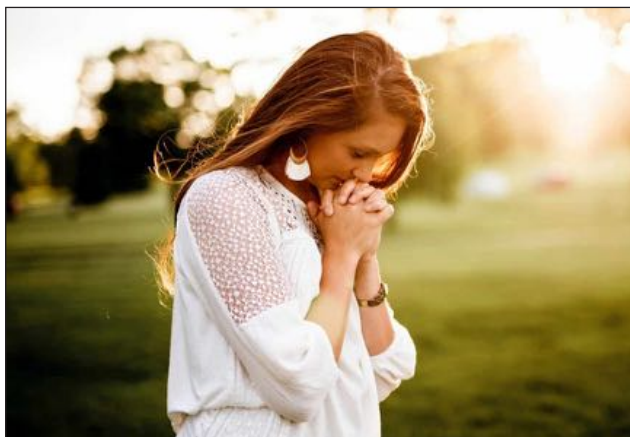
Apostle Peter states “To those who have received a faith of the same kind as ours, by the righteousness of our God and Savior, Jesus Christ ... seeing that His divine power has granted to us **everything pertaining to life and godliness**, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence. For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, so that by them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust” (2 Peter 1:1-4 NASB).

Peter tells us that the antidote for covetousness and temptations of this life is to recognise the need for us to place our full affection, thinking, focus, and attention on heavenly things above, rather than the lust, greed and sin that encompasses this world. Jesus reminded His disciples “No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will stand by and be devoted to the one and despise and be against the other. You cannot serve God and mammon (deceitful riches, money, possessions, or whatever is trusted in)” (Matthew 6:24 AMP).

Jesus continues “For this reason I say to you, do not be worried about your life, as to what you will eat or what you will drink; nor for your body, as to what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air, that they do not sow, nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not worth much more than they?” (Matthew 6:25-26 NASB). Our lives are hidden, kept safe, concealed under the authority and covering of the Heavenly Father’s care. When we take this to heart, we can let go of the burdens and the anxieties of this present life, they no longer hold power over us.



Jesus and Peter



Trust in God through prayer.

But sometimes, as we know, that's easier said than done. So just how do we go about learning to "set your minds on things above, not on earthly things," There are various scriptures that can point us in the right direction.

Anxiety

Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:6-7).

Is it possible for a Christian to be anxious for nothing? It is possible if we have used the resource of prayer. The rest of the verse goes on to explain how our lives can be free from sinful worrying. Everything should be taken to the Lord in prayer. Everything means everything. There is nothing too great or small for His loving care!

Often, we come to the Lord at specific times and bring specific requests before Him. But it is also possible to live in an atmosphere of prayer. Paul speaking to the Colossians states "Devote yourselves to prayer, keeping alert in it with an attitude of thanksgiving" (Colossians 4:2 NASB). Our prayers should not always be requests for something that we need, but ones of thanks for the many blessing that are received from above. We have the wonderful promise "casting all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you" (1 Peter 5:7 NASB).

Jesus tells us "Your Father knows what you need before you ask" God loves us more than we could ever fully comprehend. His desire is to help us and is always there. His words of life remind us that He is our strength, especially when we are weak. He promises to draw near to us and to see us through the struggles of this world.

Trust

"Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight" (Proverbs 3:5-6).

First, there must be a full commitment of ourselves to the LORD. We must trust Him not only for the salvation but also for the direction of our lives. It must be a total commitment without holding back.

There must be a healthy distrust of self, an acknowledgment that we do not know what is best for us, that we are not capable of guiding ourselves. Jeremiah expressed it emphatically: "I know, O LORD, that a man's way is not in himself, nor is it in a man who walks to direct his steps" (Jeremiah 10:23 NASB).

There must be an acknowledgment of Christ as our Master. We must have no will of our own, only a singular desire to know His will and to do it. "Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father" (Colossians 3:17 NASB).

Freedom

"You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free" (John 8:32).

Jesus started this statement with the words "If you continue in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine." God has a plan for our lives. The enemy has a plan for us too. We just have to decide which voice we're going to listen to, and who we choose to follow each day. And chances are, if we don't make a determined choice to follow God, we may eventually fall into a trap of the enemy.

The Bible has much to say about Satan's devious schemes and how he operates:

- He distorts the truth.
- He is deceiver,
- And the father of lies.

He becomes very in tune with our weaknesses and will use whatever means he can to bring us down. God never tells us to walk in fear, however He does tell us to be on guard and to live aware. As we keep pressing to know God, we set our minds on His Word, spending time to not only read but to meditate on it, and understand God has a plan that does not alter.

Apostle John writes "Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world. By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God" (1 John 4:1-2 NASB).

Defence

"Put on the full armour of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore, take up the full armour of God, so that you will be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm" (Ephesians 6:11-13 NASB).



"A Living and Holy Sacrifice" (Paul)

God has provided us with six pieces of armour. The belt of truth, the breastplate of righteousness, the gospel of peace, the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation and the sword of the spirit. As soldiers of Christ, we cannot decide which piece or pieces we don't need, all are required for our protection. The attacks are real, and continuous. There is another critical piece of the armour, prayer which binds all together. "With all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit, and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints" (Ephesians 6:18 NASB).

Resist the Enemy

God's given us His Word and Spirit, so we have the wisdom from above and the protection to stand against the enemy. We have to do our part in this resistance as Apostle Peter states "Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. But resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same experiences of suffering are being accomplished by your brethren who are in the world" (1 Peter 5:8-9 NASB).

Peter tells us that we are not alone in this battle, there are other brethren in the world that are resisting these attacks and that we can gain strength from this fact. We are reminded "Not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near" (Hebrews 10:25 NASB).

Safeguard your Heart

"Watch over your heart with all diligence, for from it flow the springs of life" (Proverbs 4:23 NASB).

Rotherham states: "Above all that must be guarded, keep thou thy heart." Our thoughts, our words, really matter. The state of our heart determines how we run our lives, the decisions we make, how they can affect others. Our conduct must reflect that of our Master and our Heavenly Father.

When we fill our minds, our thoughts, our hearts with the things of above, there is no room for evil thoughts to enter. We are to cast our cares on Him, our problems and burdens, seeking forgiveness for our human failings. It is not about pretending we do not have worries, ignoring our problems, or living a life of indifference.

- It requires effort on our part — choosing to rely on God.
- It requires trust on our part — remembering that He is in control.

Believe that God is With You

"Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil, for You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me" (Psalms 23:4 NASB).

The Psalmist reminds us that even when we are in the most difficult and trying circumstances the Heavenly Father is with us to guide and comfort us. We are never alone. There are times when we cannot see God's hand in the affairs of the world. We have times when we are not sure that his leadings are correct due to the trials we might have to suffer. The battle can feel to be uphill, especially when we feel drained and down hearted, but it is at these times that the Heavenly Father uses the rod and the staff to guide us and to lift us up.

Abounding in Grace

"And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that always having all sufficiency in everything, you may have an abundance for every good deed" (2 Corinthians 9:8 NASB).

The Psalmist wrote, "You anointed my head with oil, my cup overflows." David was looking at the many spiritual benefits that had been bestowed on him. As Christians we also are blessed with all the spiritual blessing in Christ which are granted to us. Paul encourages "Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you will abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit" (Romans 15:13 NASB). As we set our minds on Christ, it becomes the place where doubts get crushed and confidence in Him can grow deeper and fuller.

Summary

Apostle Paul gives the following advise "Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. 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 12:1-2 NASB).

The Gospel Age is not the time for the conversion of the world which is still blinded by the prince of this world. It is the time for the calling out of the Church. A time for making our calling and election sure. **"A time to set our minds on things above."**

Eventide

“Abide with us ... for the day is far spent” (Luke 24:29).

What a change that stranger’s conversation had made in the demeanour of those two downcast men who had left Jerusalem for the quieter scenes of their village home. Hopes dead, faith shattered, expectations gone — a melancholy state of heart and mind indeed! “We trusted” — despondent words! not “we trust”! “We trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel” (Luke 24:21). And now all the fair hopes of Israel’s redemption lay dragged in the dust, decayed, withered, dead!

The glorious dawn, at one time deemed so near at hand, was now enshrouded in deepest midnight gloom, and none could give assurance now that Israel should at any time be redeemed. And if **he**, of all the sons of Israel, had failed to bring deliverance, who, among her waiting hosts, could hope to break the foreign yoke? He in whom they had trusted had been laid away in a borrowed tomb, and there their shrivelled hopes lay too. Even the excited words of some womenfolk in Jerusalem, that they had seen him alive again, had not rekindled the spark of expectancy and hope — for them the disappointing affair was over and done with, once, and for all!

With an Eastern freedom and courtesy that stranger joined himself to their company, and for a while listened silently to their tale of woe. Then in a quiet reassuring way he insinuated himself into the conversation to make their grief-shocked minds begin to work again. Slowly his quotations from the prophets, interspersed with reasoned explanations, began to take effect, as emotion and understanding began to “burn” within. As he walked and talked with them along the way the miles rolled by, and their journey was all but at an end. At the fork of the road that lay just ahead he would bid them a friendly adieu, for “He made as though he would go further.”

Had they tired of his company? Had his searching words probed too deeply and left a wound, or a sting? Had he dominated them too long? No! not a bit of it. The burning fires within their souls had kindled goodwill to such a traveller and made them long for more such conversation. Would he come and stay the night with them? At least he should not go forward without an invitation to their abode! He did go in with them to their quiet home — then came the Revelation — and he was gone! Withered hopes revived again, a new joy gripped their hearts,

as their travel-stained feet began the journey back to Jerusalem again.

Wonderful Journey — and yet More Wonderful Guest!

Not alone on life’s pilgrim journey was that walk from Jerusalem. We too have had our melancholy walks. We too have felt the chill of withered hopes, disappointing expectations, and overpowering frustration. There may be amongst us some who made as if to withdraw to some distant “Emmaus” home, and let the whole thing go by. It is so easy to go aside, like a wounded animal, and in loneliness lie down and die.

But we were precious in his sight. He, “watching over Israel,” saw our melancholy plight, and came out upon our outward way to revive our withered hopes, to fan anew our flickering love, and to make our hearts burn within us by the way. How? By some word spoken to us in loving confidence, by some good word in a re-assuring article, or by some sincere warm-hearted clasp of a welcome hand. Some dear servant of the Lord, himself at rest in God, walked out on his behalf and talked with us, and that was all! But it was enough.

And then the invitation went forth again — “Come in to me, dear Lord. **Abide with me**, as the evening shadows fall.” Let the sweet, voiced poet give tongue to our desire: In the maturing experience of every true child of God there comes at last — sometimes earlier, sometimes late — a deepening sense of Christ-consciousness. It is the expression of a deep inborn desire for someone on whom to rest implicitly and with confidence. In the earlier years of life, when one’s mental powers are at their prime, the need for this arbour of repose may not be so keenly realised. It is only when the brain with its reflective and retentive faculties begins to fail, and to function less capably, that the desire for something that is central to every

element of Truth begins to assert itself. It is then that the maturing saint begins to feel his need of the abiding Presence of the Lord. Thenceforth the need is more for “Him” than “It.”

But the Lord awaits the invitation to enter in and be our abiding Guest. He will not thrust himself upon us unsolicited. He “waits” to be gracious — but he awaits our solicitation. **“In life, in death, O Lord abide with me”** — be that our “evening” prayer.



On the way to Emmaus

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The Bible Teachings

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

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

A Finger, then a Hand

I remember one time my daughter was begging her mother to get her a muff, and so one day her mother brought a muff home. Although it was storming, my daughter naturally wanted to go out to try her new muff, so she asked me to go out with her. As we went out, I said, "Emma, better let me take your hand." She wanted to keep her hands in her muff, so she refused to take my hand. Well, by and by she came to an icy place, her little feet slipped - and down she went. When I helped her up she said, "Papa, you may give me your little finger." "No, my daughter, just take my hand." "No, no, Papa, give me your little finger." Well, I gave my little finger to her, and for a little way she got along nicely, but pretty soon we came to another icy place and again she fell. This time she hurt herself a little, and she said, "Papa, give me your hand." I gave her my hand, closed my fingers about her wrist, and held her up so that she could not fall. Just so, God is our keeper. He is wiser than we. And he can keep us from falling — if we hold onto his hand.

A. C. Frey Collection

"He leads the humble in the right way and teaches them his will" (Psalms 25:9 GNB).



Memorial

"Do this in remembrance of me" (1 Cor. 11:24-25).

The Lord's Memorial this year falls on Sunday, 21 April, 2024, after sundown. An online service will be provided for brethren starting at 1900 hours AEST. Details of the service can be obtained by emailing — australianbiblestudents@gmail.com

I Came to Jesus

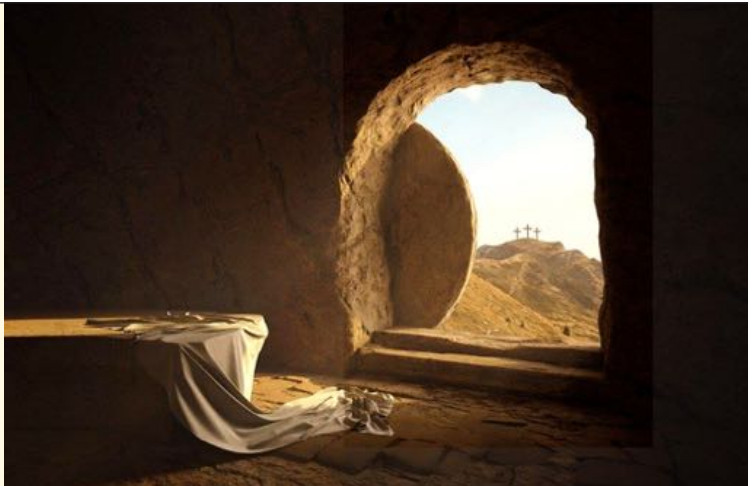
I heard the voice of Jesus say,
"Come unto Me and rest;
Thy load of care thou mayst lay down
and be no more distressed."

I came to Jesus as I was,
weary, and worn, and sad;
I found in Him a resting place,
and He has made me glad.

I heard the voice of Jesus say,
"Behold, I freely give
The living water, thirty one;
Stoop down, and drink, and live."
I came to Jesus, and I drank
of that life-giving stream;
my thirst was quenched, my soul revived,
and now I live in Him.

I heard the voice of Jesus say,
"I am this dark world's Light;
look unto Me, thy morn shall rise,
and all thy day be bright."
I looked and saw my star of hope,
My Sun of Righteousness;
O! soon 'twill rise and fill the earth,
And all the nations bless.

Author: Horatius Bonar (1846)



**Come unto me, all ye that
labour and are heavy laden,
and I will give you rest.**

- Matthew 11:28 (KJV) -

