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The Sufferings of the Body of Christ.

Read John 15:16-27; 16:1-4, 20, 22, 23; Phil. 1:29; Acts 9:15, 16.

IT is such Scriptures as the above, as well as many others throughout the Bible, that establish beyond doubt the fact that the members of Christ's Body, in being prepared to be joint-heirs in the glory of His heavenly Kingdom, are made partakers in the sufferings of their Head during the earthly course.

As we are all aware, the term "Christ" signifies "anointed," and as there is much said in the Scriptures about the sufferings of the anointed Head, and the anointed members of His body, is it not reasonable to conclude that these particular sufferings come as a result of receiving the greatest privilege of all times, granted only during this Gospel Age to God's selected people—the anointing of His holy spirit?

The questions may be asked, Has not God's people of previous ages suffered for their loyalty and obedience to Him, and if that is so what difference is there with those of the Church of this Gospel Age? Surely there has been much suffering and sacrifice on the part of the faithful, prior to our Lord's first advent, as well as since. This is particularly revealed by the Apostle in Hebrews, chapter 11; so much so that he holds them up as living examples to the Gospel Church—as a cloud of witnesses whom we may well' copy in faithfulness and devotion even unto death.

The difference between these and Christ's members, however, is clearly defined in the Scriptures. The faithful of the ages previous to Christ's sacrifice could not participate in the sufferings of the anointed; the begetting of the holy spirit had not then begun, as our Lord was the first of the new order, the Head of the New Creation. This is a matter that we need particularly to keep in mind. By so doing it not only enables us to rightly divide the Word of God by discerning the important change of dispensations and the opening up of the high calling, but further it reveals to us the great favour of God upon those who comprise the anointed Class, beginning with the day of Pentecost and ending with the close of this Gospel Age.

There is no need to enlarge upon the difference of the rewards for faithfulness to be granted the anointed followers of Christ and the faithful of previous ages. Most of our readers are well acquainted with the truth on this matter—that all prior to the first advent of Christ had earthly promises only, whereas the Body of Christ have the exceeding great and precious promises of the heavenly inheritance.

But does not this difference in rewards promised, help us to understand a most important feature in connection with all God's created beings of all times and on all planes of existence? We believe it does. We see in -the case of the Ancient Worthies, it was not the promise of high exaltation to a heavenly sphere that kept them faithful. No, there was no such promise, and yet they remained true through the most trying experiences possible. What was it, then, that enabled these martyrs to remain faithful unto death, to whom the Apostle James adds testimony: "Take, my brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in ,the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction and of patience"? It was the very same thing that alone will enable those of the present age, who partake of the sufferings of the anointed, also to endure to the end, and that is, the love of God.

Yes, it was the love for God that enabled Job to say: "Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him." Love for Him who had given and who in His good pleasure had taken away. No thought of reward entered into the minds of those early martyrs, when it came to enduring for the Lord's sake, and this, dear friends, is the secret of success in our cases, just as much as in theirs.

The Apostle says, "The love of Christ constraineth us." Yes, right from the beginning to the close of our Christian way, it is the love of God and of Christ that constraineth us, and will enable us to finish our course successfully; so let us

guard well and cherish that which the Lord has granted, has blessed to us—that love for Him, our first love, which prompted us to enter the narrow way, willingly and joyfully entering into the sufferings of our Head. Let this gracious quality of love and supreme reverence for God be forgotten, become dim or obscured from our hearts and minds to any extent, then to that degree our participation in the sufferings of Christ will take on a different aspect altogether. There cannot be a willing, loving acquiescence to the will of God with those whose hearts have lost even a measure of that love due from all who have been begotten by a gracious Father into His house of sons.

Now, how is it that particular sufferings come upon those begotten of God's holy spirit which do not come upon the household of faith generally, nor upon the world at large? Would we not expect that God's special people should be protected more than others, instead of being required to suffer in ways additional to the remainder of mankind? There is certainly a protecting care over the members in Christ not granted to others, but this does not shield them miraculously from the sufferings incidental to the fall on account of disobedience, and the Lord additionally wisely permits trials and testings upon these called out people, to test, prove and develop their loyalty to Him—determining as to whether their love for Him is of the quality that it will endure all things for His sake, and not only so, but count it a privilege so to do.

There are various kinds of sufferings in the world, if we may express it that way, all of which are permitted for some good purpose, and in considering those that come upon the anointed Body of Christ, it will not be out of place to briefly review the sufferings of others as well, as this will help us to appreciate our standing in the favour of God not enjoyed by others.

Sufferings as a whole may perhaps be grouped under four main headings—two of these relating to the world, the third applying to the household of faith, and the fourth only to the anointed in Christ Jesus.

In the first place, there are sufferings that come to every human being because of the death sentence pronounced upon our first parent. No one escapes these, though all do not share in them in exactly the same way. Some have more bodily weaknesses than others, and so have many aches and pains, while some with other inherited weaknesses suffer in different ways just as severely. The sufferings connected with the loss of near and dear ones on account of the death sentence would also come under this heading.

Now, what is the position of the Body members in Christ, in regard to sufferings of this kind? As we saw previously, they are not shielded from; these in any miraculous way; they are permitted to experience aches and pains and other inherited weaknesses incidental to the dying process, just as others, but there is this difference. Inasmuch as they have presented their bodies to God a living sacrifice, being previously justified by faith in the blood of Christ, all experiences connected with the consummation of their offering on God's altar may be viewed in a sacrificial sense; not in a direct way as the sufferings of the anointed, but in an indirect way which does not fail to bring a blessing when these sufferings are accepted from this viewpoint and taken in the spirit of patience and submission. Thus the Lord's people suffer not as those without hope, just as they sorrow not as those without hope with the passing of their brethren, earthly relatives or others of the human family from the present life. So, from this, the first aspect of sufferings, we find the Lord's people highly favoured above the world at large, realising that these general sufferings help greatly in the development of their new minds, the new character that is being formed like unto that of our Head. What the world, then, may take oft times in a grumbling manner, the members in Christ should take in a spirit of cheerful endurance, praising God for His grace and strength, which alone assists, them to endure all things, for their highest welfare.

Coming then to a second form of sufferings which also come upon all in common, we would refer to those which are the result of a measure of wilfulness—more or less as the case may be. Where the degree of wilfulness is very small there would be a close connection with the sufferings referred to in the first place as being inherited sufferings, but where the wilfulness increases, sufferings that then result are in a definite class of their own. The Apostle seemed to have such as these in mind when he said, "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap"; the result being particularly an individual matter, and in the case of wrong-doing, the reaping is of course intended to correct and show the wrong-doer that such a course of wilful transgression will not profit him or her lastingly. How often sufferings of this kind turn those in the world to bitterness—quite the reverse result as should be, and so something more severe will be needed to correct in due time. However, many others in the world learn their lessons, and so profit by the sufferings and are building up a right foundation for the times ahead.

Respecting the Lord's people we find they also are not exempt from sufferings of this kind, though with their progress in the Christian way the Lord would expect, and they should expect also, to have less and less of wilfulness in any thoughts, words or actions. The Apostle Peter exhorts: "Let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evil-doer, or as a busybody in other men's matters." Any sufferings as a result of any of these things should at once prompt to repentance and seeking forgiveness at the throne of grace. As the Apostle John declares: "My little children,

these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

How favorable again is our position in comparison with that of mankind as a whole—they have no advocate, but we have an Advocate with the Father; they have no throne of grace, but if we confess our sins God is faithful and just to forgive us, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. Realising, then, the gracious provision whereby we may keep our garments white, does not this provoke in us a most fervent desire that our use of the throne of grace for forgiveness of anything of a wilful nature would diminish more and more as the days go by, ever remembering that any sufferings under this heading are really blots upon our garments. Not that we should neglect to have our account cleared, so to speak, but striving that nothing should enter on the adverse side of the ledger; having the mercy seat as free as possible for praise and thanksgiving to God, and petitions for increasing blessing and filling of His spirit upon all the members in the anointed, as well as ourselves.

A third form of suffering which is not experienced by the world at all is that which comes upon the household of faith. All who by faith in the blood of Christ have reached the position of justification would participate in these sufferings for righteousness sake, and for the Word of God, if faithfully living up to their privileges. This would seem to be the form of sufferings endured also by the faithful ancients of the ages prior to this Gospel Age referred to previously, and while the members who will make up the anointed Body of Christ endure all these experiences also, it will be realised that there are some sufferings which the Church, the antitypical goat class, experience which no others do, inasmuch as it is from the household of faith that the Church is selected.

It was this fourth and highest form of sufferings that our Lord urged His disciples to endure in, just as He had set an example, and which all the Apostles so faithfully emulated in their lives of sacrifice as the foundation members of the anointed Body of Christ.

Let us note again the words of our Lord to that effect in John 15. Verse 20 reads: "Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted Me, they will also persecute you. But all these things will they do unto you for My name's sake, because they know not Him that sent Me." How clear it is that the sufferings that came upon the anointed Head, must come also upon the members of His Body, and in a very special sense upon no others.

Turning again to Phil. 1:29, we see too how the Apostle so definitely expressed the matter—"For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ not only to believe on Him, but also to suffer for His sake." Some may be content to merely believe in Christ and may suffer to a marked extent for such belief, as members of the household of faith, but for the members of His Body, His anointed, there is a deeper and feller affiliation altogether,—they suffer for His sake in that they have fellowship in His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death—the sacrificial death. They are beheaded for the witness of Jesus; being planted together in the likeness of His death that they may also be in the likeness of His resurrection.

St. Paul expounds this matter so clearly again in Col. 1:24—"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." He rejoiced in suffering for those brethren, because, they being Christ's members, he was in that way suffering for Christ, and so was participating in that which was left over of the sufferings of the Head for the anointed Body to fill up, or complete, during this Gospel Age, the antitypical Day of Atonement. It is in this way that we can understand the matter of the sin-offering. There is nothing to imply that the sufferings of Christ the Head were not completed at the time of His death; nothing more is necessary to add to that which He finished at Calvary, but God has graciously arranged that those who will constitute the members of His Body shall walk in His steps of suffering, if they are to be worthy of a place with Him in His throne. This implies participation in the most absolute sense, and which can be understood and experienced only by the fully consecrated and anointed members of His Body.

How true it is that throughout this Gospel Age great numbers of earnest men and women have suffered for their beliefs in the Word of God, who have not participated at all in the sufferings of the anointed. Many to-day are likewise giving their lives in what they believe to be a true witness for Christ, and yet the teachings given out so often do not honour the One they seek to serve, and while we are glad that all who are sincere shall have their reward in due time, yet it will be only those who enter completely into the sufferings of Christ who shall be granted a part in the first resurrection.

The question may be asked as to how we may know that we are participating in the sufferings of Christ? Surely this is an important matter, and the words of our other text in Acts 9:15, 16, concerning the Apostle Paul, may help in this respect—"The Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto Me to bear My name before the Gentiles and kings and the children of Israel: For I will show him how great things he must suffer for My name's sake." While

we cannot expect to be used in anything approaching the degree in which God used the faithful Apostle, yet His words, there—"I will show him how great things he must suffer for My name's sake," would seem a very definite guide to all the members who belong to the same Body as Paul. Has not the Lord shown us in the past many great things concerning His wonderful plan of salvation, and amongst these has He not clearly revealed the necessity for us to walk in the sacrificial course as set by Christ and those who formed the early Church? Surely He has; and do we not find as individual members in Christ that the Lord "shows" us, from time to time, various ways of serving Him, and amongst these may come some suffering for His name's sake. The main point is: do we act on all that the Lord "shows" us as being opportunities of service? If so, no doubt we receive much blessing at His hands, even in the hard places, but if not we cannot expect the Lord to keep on "showing" us; we must follow out the opportunities that are already ours, if we are to merit His guiding and leading in the way of sacrifice for His name's sake. No doubt Paul was a very ready pupil in the school of Christ, but he was not "shown" everything at once respecting the sufferings required of him; so with us the Lord graciously "shows" us step by step that which He would have us do and suffer as members of His Body. This of course applies to those who do not only believe on Him, but who esteem it a privilege to suffer for His sake.

And what do we mean by esteeming it a privilege to suffer for Christ? Is it a privilege? It surely is, whether we understand and appreciate it that way or not. If God had not predestinated the selection of the Body of Christ, there would of course have been no opportunity of entering into the sufferings of our Head. The faithful of the present time would have been in the same position as the Ancient Worthies, who were glad to endure all things permitted, because of their love for God and His righteousness, with no promise of high exaltation at all. Even under such terms it would have been a reasonable service for us also to suffer as they, but how reasonable or gracious is the invitation of the present time, during this Gospel Age only, when we find that the sufferings of the anointed Body are for the purpose of preparing us for heavenly glory. Who cannot see that there never has been such a privilege available, and never will be again, and that the Apostle truly had the right viewpoint when he declared that "the sufferings of the present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory to be revealed in us."

Dwelling again on the thought of the Lord "showing" us what things we are to suffer for His sake, even as with the faithful Apostle, does this not give us a sense of security, so to speak, that nothing apart from what God designs can come to us as part of the highest of all sufferings, because we are members of the anointed. Even with the experiences that may be classed in the first three forms already discussed, there is nothing that can come but what passes under the complete supervision of the Lord; so, surely, there is full protection in every way that nothing can touch us at all, but what can be turned to good account, for our own blessing and to the praise and glory of God.

This should guard us against thinking or feeling that if only the Lord would "show" us in some other way, by some different sufferings to those we may have, then we would be sure to overcome easier. Even as we covenanted to be beheaded for the Lord's sake, how we need to keep very fully in this beheaded condition, appreciating and rejoicing in the fact that the Lord condescends to "Show us what things we are to suffer for His sake." If we are not able to accept and enter into those experiences which He "shows" us with full desire and delight to do His will, then we cannot expect to be granted the great prize which will be gained by all those who do, even as our dear Lord set us an example.

Let us then endeavour to walk in the steps of our dear Master, counting not our lives dear unto us, but sacrificing in every opportunity, "about our Father's business," and then, because of our loyalty to the truth and witnessing for His cause, being counted worthy to suffer for His sake, let us take in the true spirit those things "shown" to us as being the very best for our individual cases, because supervised by our all-wise and loving Lord who knows us better than we know ourselves.

It is good, too, that we meditate upon the long-suffering of God toward us, and realise that it is not on account of our worthiness and suitability for the heavenly inheritance that He has arranged the high-calling especially for us of this Gospel Age. Truly, we might think it would have been easier for God to elevate some of the heavenly hosts to be joint-heirs with His Son. Then, coming to earthly beings, surely those old patriarchs referred to previously were as good as any called during this Gospel Age, and possibly better in many ways, and yet God passed them by and condescended to raise up from amongst the poorest and weakest of the fallen race a company who, by this very transformation, would thus manifest forth the glory of God's power to all eternity. It all depends, then, how we co-operate with God in His desire to work in us, by His holy spirit, to will and do His good pleasure of transforming us vessels unto honour, and meet for His use both now and in the ages to come—to the praise and glory of His name. Let us rejoice in the fact that to this end He "shall show us what things we must suffer for His sake."

The World is Old with Centuries.

“The world is old with centuries,
But not for these she bows her head;
Close to her heart the sorrow lies:
She holds so many dead!

Sad discords mingle in her song,
Tears fall upon her with the dew,
The whole creation groans—
How long Ere all shall be made new?

“Yet brightly on her smiles the sun,
A bounteous heaven delights to bless;
O! what shall be that fairer one,
Wherein dwells righteousness?

O happy world! O holy time!
When wrong shall die, and strife shall cease,
And all the bells of heaven chime
With melodies of peace.

“No place shall be in that new earth
For all that blights this universe;
No evil taint the, second birth
There shall be no more curse.

Ye brokenhearted, cease your moan;
The day of promise dawns for you;
For He who sits upon the throne
Says, ‘I make all things new.’

“We mourn the dead, but they shalt wake!
The lost, but they shall be restored!
O! well our human hearts might break
Without that sacred word!

Dim eyes, look up! sad hearts, rejoice!
Seeing God’s bow of promise through,
At sound of that prophetic voice:
‘I will make all things new.’”

—Selected.

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A New Year Exhortation.

The following article, written over thirty years ago on 1 Peter 1:13-16, is commended as a very fitting exhortation for the opening of another year.

To appreciate the exhortations of the apostles, we need to become acquainted with their several characters; to note their circumstances; to mark their zeal and faithfulness; and_ to remember that every word of exhortation addressed to the church has the substantial backing of their worthy examples. They endured hardness as good soldiers, and suffered much for the privilege of declaring the truth. In their writings are blended a high degree of the power of logic, eloquence and pathos, combined with an inspiring enthusiasm which must awaken in every student of their teachings a measure, at least, of the same sacred flame.

Though written so long ago, these words of exhortation lose none of their force to us. They were penned for the instruction of the whole church, down to the end of the age. The introductory, “Wherefore,” refers us to the glorious hope of our high calling, and of the necessarily severe measures required to’ fit us for our exalted inheritance, as mentioned in the preceding verse. Peter would have us appreciate what it is to be called with such a high calling—to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for those who are kept by the power of God through faith. (Verse 4.) He would have us know that, if faithful, we are to be ‘made even “partakers of the divine nature,” and that we are to be joint-heirs with Jesus Christ, of all things.-2 Pet. 1:4.

As the spirit of God draws our hearts into closer fellowship and sympathy with the divine mind, the value of these “exceeding great and precious promises” is more and more fully realized, until there glows in our hearts the same holy enthusiasm that so filled the hearts of the apostles. And only when our hearts are thus warmed and our minds thus awakened, are we prepared to understand the Apostle’s “Wherefore,” upon the inspiring comprehension of which depends our ability to heed the earnest exhortation which follows.

If our hearts are not duly inspired with this hope we have begun to esteem it lightly, or to forget it, or to think of it as an idle tale—to heed the counsel of Peter, here given, will be impossible. If, therefore, we realize that a spiritual lethargy has to any extent been creeping over us, imperceptibly benumbing our spiritual senses, so that the truth is losing its inspiring power upon us, our first duty is to betake ourselves to prayer and to communion with God and His Word, that its sanctifying power may be realized.

“Wherefore,” then, you that discern the prize of your high calling, and who are endeavouring to press along the line toward the mark, “gird up the loins of your mind.”—as in illustration; strengthen and fortify your purposes and efforts; renew your determinations, redouble your diligence; cast aside the weights of unnecessary worldly cares; increase your zeal; and, as the Apostle Paul also urges, run with patience the race set before you. Run, not like one who is merely beating the air, but like one who has a purpose in view, and who, in desperate earnest, is determined to make his calling and election sure.—Heb. 12:1; 1 Cor. 9:26.

Having thus “girded up the loins of your mind” for a long, steady and determined effort, he further counsels,— “Be sober:” do not allow yourself- to become excited and, under the spur of excitement, to exhaust all your spiritual vitality in a very short time, and then to suffer a relapse into coldness or discouragement; but thoughtfully to consider and prepare for a long and patient endurance of all the discipline and trial of faith and patience necessary to prove an overcomer and worthy of the blessed reward promised “to him that overcometh.” The race before us is not one to be run by fits and starts, but by “patient continuance in well doing.” Soberly, thoughtfully, we are to weigh and endeavour to realize the import of the exceeding great and precious promises and to gather from them their invigorating inspiration; earnestly we must apply our minds and hearts to the instruction of the inspired Word of God, availing ourselves also of such helps --of “pastors and teachers” and their literary productions—which prove harmonious with, and helpful to, the study of the Scriptures; diligently and patiently we must submit ourselves to all the transforming influence of divine grace and truth; and then, loyally and faithfully, we must devote our consecrated talents, however few or many, to the great work of preaching this gospel of the kingdom to all who will hear.

Such a sober view of the situation fortifies the mind against discouragement, and enables us, as the Apostle suggests, to “hope to the end for the grace to be brought unto us at the revelation of Jesus Christ.” Such a sober view keeps Reason on the throne of our minds. And Reason says, The divine call to joint-heirship with Christ clearly implies eligibility to the exalted office; the divine promise clearly insures divine grace to enable us to fulfil the conditions; the divine provision for my justification, by faith in the precious blood of Christ, releases me from the condemnation to death; and the righteousness of Christ, imputed to me by faith, fully supplements all my weaknesses, so that before God I stand approved in Him. Sober Reason also says: The directions given in the Scriptures to those who would run the race are clear and explicit, and make plain every step of the way to those who are truly and fully consecrated to the Lord. The

examples of the Lord and the apostles shine on the pathway with a moral lustre and glory that cannot lead us astray. If we walk in their footprints we will assuredly reach the same goal.

Therefore in this sober view of our high calling and its privileges, and the abundant resources of divine grace, let us not be discouraged or overcome in any way, but let us hope to the end for the grace (favour) that is to be brought unto us at the revelation of Jesus Christ—at His second advent. The church has enjoyed much of the divine favour all through the age of her probation and trial; but the grace to be revealed at the revelation of Jesus Christ—when He comes to reign in power and great glory—is her exaltation with Him to sit with Him in His throne. This glorious consummation, the church all through the age must steadily keep in view: but how glorious is the privilege of those of its members living in this. end of the age, when already, even before our change into His glorious likeness—in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye—we begin to enter the joys of our Lord.

Those who are still sober and faithful, and who have not cast away their confidence, have been led into the secret of the Master's presence; and they have been made to sit down to meat, and the Master Himself has come forth and served them. Yes, our hearts have been made to burn within us while He has opened up the Scriptures and made us understand, from the testimony of the law and the prophets and the apostles, that the time is fulfilled—that the end of the age is now here, and that the Lord of the harvest is present to direct and supervise the great work of reaping the fruit of precious seed long ago sown in tears, and now to be gathered with joy and singing; while He has opened up to us the treasures of divine wisdom and grace displayed in the plan of the ages, which God purposed before the foundation of the world, Which He has been gradually working out in the ages past, and which is now nearing its glorious consummation.

Oh, what feasting, what rejoicing there has been around the table of the Lord, as one after another the treasures of divine grace have been opened to us, revealing the glories of the new heavens and the new earth, and the blessedness of all the obedient- subjects of Him who sitteth on the throne to reign in righteousness; how all tears shall be wiped from off all faces, and how the-reproach of God's people is to be taken away ! Well indeed dirt Daniel prophesy, saying, "Oh, the blessedness of him that waiteth and cometh to the thousand, three hundred, thirty and five days!" the days of the Lord's second presence, when all that is written to be accomplished by His glorious reign shall begin to come to pass.

Seeing, then, that such are our privileges and hopes, "what manner of persons ought we to be in all holy conversation and god-likeness?" (2 Pet. 3:11.) Being purified by this hope, ought we not, as the Apostle exhorts, to fashion ourselves, not according to the former lusts (desires and ambitions, which we had) in our ignorance, but as He who has called us is holy, should not we also be holy in all manner of conversation—in all our words and ways? Since it is written, "Be ye holy; for I (the Lord) am holy" (1 Pet. 1:15, 16), should not we who are called to be partakers of His own nature and glory be holy also?

Some Christians have the erroneous idea that God does all the fashioning and that His children are to be merely passive in His hand; but Peter does not so express it. He exhorts us to fashion ourselves according to the divine instructions. There is a work to be done in us and about us, and those who are not up and doing, but who passively sit and wait for the Lord to work miracles on their behalf, are greatly deceived and are giving the enemy great advantage over them, which he will certainly use to bind them hand and foot and cast them into outer darkness, unless they bestir themselves to work out their salvation with fear and trembling, while God, co-operating with their earnest efforts, works in them, to will and to do His good pleasure. (Phil. 2:12, 13.) "Watch and pray," beloved, lest any of these snares of the enemy entrap you and beguile you of your reward.

How Readest Thou.

“‘Tis one thing, friend, to read the Scriptures through,
Another thing to read to learn to do;

‘Tis one thing, too, to read it with delight
And quite another thing to read aright.

“Some read it with design to learn to read,
But to the subject pay but little heed;

Some read it as their duty once a week,
But no instruction from the Scriptures seek

“Some read to bring themselves into repute,
By showing others how they can dispute;

Whilst others read because their neighbours do,
To see how long ‘twill take to read it through.

“Some read the blessed Book, they don’t know why,
It somehow happens in the way to lie;

Whilst others read it with uncommon care.
But, all to find some contradictions there.

“One reads with father’s specs upon his head,
And sees the thing just as his father did;

Another reads through Campbell or through Scott,
And think it means exactly what they thought.

“Some read to prove a preadopted creed,
Thus understand but little what they read;

And every passage of the book they bend
To make it suit that all ‘important end.

So people read, as I have often thought,
To teach the Book instead of being taught.”

For this He did once.

“Who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people’s; for this He did once, when He offered up Himself.”--Heb. 7:27.

IN studying the Book of Hebrews it is well to keep in memory that the Apostle’s thought was not to give a detailed explanation of the types Of the Law, but merely to prove to the Jews that they should look beyond the high priests and the under-priests of the Aaronic order for a greater higher Priest of our profession (order) and a superior under-priesthood, “a royal priesthood.” In the text above quoted St. Paul is drawing attention to the fact that a repetition daily and yearly of the sacrifices of the Law on a higher plane is not to be expected, but rather that the One Priest (Christ, Head and Body) in the antitypical Atonement Day accomplishes the entire work which will usher in full forgiveness and reconciliation to all the people. This in type was done in the one Atonement Day and the antitype of that Atonement Day is not yet ended. It will close with the end of this Gospel Age. It will close when the last member of the Body of Christ shall have suffered with the Lord, “Filling up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ.” -- Col. 1:24.

The Anointed One.

The first offering of the Day of Atonement was the bullock, which typified the man Jesus. It was because of this offering and by the act of consecration that our Lord became the Anointed One—“The High Priest of our profession.” As the spirit-begotten High Priest our Lord for three and a half years offered up Himself, His manhood, in sacrifice.

He finished that offering, typified by the bullock, at His death. Then, as shown in the type, He took the blood of the bullock and proceeded into the Most Holy, “there to appear in the presence of God for us”—the “household of faith.”

Goat Follows Bullock.

In the type the typical high priest, after offering the first sacrifice and after applying its blood on behalf of the body (the under-priests) and his house (the tribe of Levi), laid his hands on the Lord’s goat and slew it and did with it as with the bullock, • except that its blood when taken into the Most Holy was differently applied—on behalf of the other eleven tribes, who represented all nations, peoples, kindreds and tongues of humanity.

Two Parts of One Sacrifice.

These two offerings and their distinctly separate sprinklings of blood were both parts of the one Atonement Day service--“This he did once.” Two . deaths are clearly shown and two blood sprinklings; and on behalf of two different classes; but they were parts of the one sin atonement. Just so our Lord, during His earthly ministry, was dying daily, yet it was one sacrifice; so also when we fill up a share of His sufferings, dying daily, it is a part of His sufferings and sacrifice, which He is still accomplishing in us once for all—this He does once and will never repeat. All sacrificing of this sort will end with this age—He will accept no further members of the Body of Christ, no additional members to “the royal priesthood.”

Fellowship of Mystery.

As we have repeatedly shown, the first Atonement Day sacrifice was our Lord’s sacrifice of His own flesh, the man Jesus, and the second sacrifice was that of His adopted members—those justified by His blood and consecrated to his service even unto death. These accepted by the Lord are sacrificed by Him as parts or members of Himself; and their blood (death) is counted in as a part of the blood of Christ—“Dead with Him.” This is the “Mystery” hidden from previous ages and generations. The “fellowship of this Mystery” was granted to the Jews and Gentiles of the “little flock” of the called and chosen and faithful.

Lord’s Hand on Antitypical Goat ‘at Pentecost.

Our Lord as the High Priest laid His hands upon the “Lord’s goat” at Pentecost. His power (hand) there came upon His followers accepting their consecration and bringing to them the trying experiences as His members which faithfully endured will, according to the Divine plan, grant them a share with Him in His Divine nature and Kingdom. It is not the suffering of the Church that counts, but the sufferings of Christ. It is because we are counted in as members of Christ, “Members in particular of the Body of Christ,” that we are permitted to be His members on the spirit plane and to share the glories and honours of our Head. “If we suffer with Him, we shall reign with Him.” “If we be dead with Him we shall live with Him.”

Sufferings of Christ Continue in His Members.

Thus the sufferings of Christ, while in the one sense of the word ended at Calvary, in another sense of the word continue in His members; this is a “mystery” to many. The sufferings of Christ are still in process and His faithful ones are still filling them up. St. Peter tells us that the prophets of old spake of the sufferings of Christ and of the glories that should follow. The sufferings of Christ Jesus were followed by His personal glorification, demonstration of which was given at Pentecost; but the glory mentioned in this text has not yet been accomplished. It awaits the completion of the sufferings, of Christ—the sufferings of the members. “For if one member suffer, all the members suffer with it.” (1 Cor. 12:26.) “When he shall appear in glory, we shall appear with Him.” We shall be glorified together, if we suffer with Him as His members.

When Millennial Kingdom Will Be Ushered In.

With the Jews there was a Day of Atonement every year, with its sacrifices repeated year by year continually.

But with Christ there is but one anti-typical Atonement Day and when its “better sacrifices” shall have been accomplished—when the great antitypical High Priest shall have finished the work of offering up Himself, including His members, thereafter there will be no more sufferings of Christ for anybody to fill up. The glory of the Millennial Kingdom will then be ushered in. The sins of the whole world will be blotted out so far as God is concerned and the High Priest of our profession will be a Priest upon His throne (Head and members) after the order of Melchisedec.

(Z. 1909-153.)

Post Cards, Bookmarks, Poems, Calendars, Wall Texts.

Supplies of cards for New Year and general use are available. With appropriate texts and helpful verses, these cards are in three series.

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Poems of Dawn.

The production of the above book of poems has now been definitely decided. Owing to the busy period recently the work of preparation has been delayed, but this will proceed early in the new year, D.V.

The book is to be printed by duplicator, and the setting and the type to be used will be seen by the sample poem enclosed in this issue. The orders already placed by some of our friends are much appreciated, and all particulars as to price, etc., will appear in next month’s issue.

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“Hope Beyond the Grave”—5d. per copy; 9d. for two; 4/- per dozen, post paid.

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