

THE GREAT COMPANY IN THE COURT.

SOME matters connected with the Tabernacle Shadows of the Better Sacrifices and the typical services connected therewith seem still to be obscure to some of the dear friends who apparently are giving earnest heed to their study. To all such we recommend a fresh reading of the pamphlet published by our Society, devoted to this topic, and also a fresh reading of the references made to it in MILLENNIAL DAWN, Vol. VI. pp.126-132. Matters of this kind require deep and careful study to be understood by any, and, of course, were never meant by the Lord to be understood by everybody. The Apostle clearly indicates that only those begotten of the Spirit can ever properly and correctly appreciate and understand spiritual things. Others may hear or read and partly understand and appreciate, but can never be expected to grasp matters fully. Amongst WATCH TOWER readers, however, we have hope that there are many who are spirit begotten, and our endeavors in this article and always are on behalf of these. The Lord's time and way for reaching others are our time and way, and we wait patiently for the development of that feature of the divine plan in its "due time."

THE ANTITYPICAL LEVITES

We have already pointed out that only the members of one tribe of Israel, the tribe of Levi, were permitted within the sacred enclosure outside the Tabernacle tent, called the "court," and that of this tribe only the priests were permitted to enter the holy places. We have shown that those priests typified the Royal Priesthood, of which Jesus is the High Priest and his faithful ones the under priests, and that the Levites in general represented the household of faith – the justified. We recognize a difference between the priests of the present time and those of the future; for any now recognized as priests who do not perform the sacrifice will be cut off from that special privilege

and honor, and will constitute what in Revelation is pictured as a "great company." Those who have taken the step of consecration and been accepted of God and been made partakers of the holy Spirit, cannot ignore their covenant, they cannot return to human conditions. They must go on to perfection on the spirit plane or be hopelessly lost in the Second Death. There is no middle ground, because the terms and conditions upon which the Lord will receive them on the spirit plane are as reasonable as any he could make for them on the human plane.

When during the Millennial age the whole world of mankind will be granted an opportunity of coming into full accord with their Creator, it will be on condition of their absolute obedience to his law of love – not merely a perfunctory obedience either, but an obedience from the heart. Any who will not by the close of the Millennial age reach that proper condition will assuredly be amongst those who will die the Second Death, as pictured in Revelation 20:9 and Matthew 25:46. Nothing can be accepted of the Lord as righteous that is in any degree in sympathy with sin. And that same rule which will then apply to the world is during this Gospel age applicable to the great company. It will be required of them that when brought into straits they shall at least prove loyal to the principles of righteousness, that they shall not deny the Lord nor the principles of his government, whatever the cost – otherwise they will be unworthy of eternal life on any plane. The case with the little flock is recognized as being still different: the overcomers delight to do the Father's will to such an extent that they make haste at the sacrifice of earthly interests to lay down their lives in the service of the King and his brethren and all the principles of righteousness.

ONCE CONSECRATED, ALWAYS CONSECRATED.

The difficulty with some of the dear friends seems to be their unsuccessful attempt to identify this great company with the typical Levites. Let us, therefore, examine this point. They query, How can

these, who have already made a sacrifice, be represented by the Levites who did not sacrifice? We reply that the great company do not sacrifice. Their covenant, their agreement, [R3605 : page 233] was to sacrifice even unto death, and had they faithfully carried out that agreement they would not be of the great company but of the little flock, the overcomers, the Royal Priests. From God's standpoint they never carried out their covenant, and hence cannot be recognized as priests, and therefore, although for a time recognized as priests in a tentative way, their failure to perform the sacrifice hinders them from being ultimately received as priests – it separates them from their brethren and constitutes them a different class, a class who have consecrated but who have not performed in harmony with that consecration.

Nevertheless, this great company class will not consist of persons who have repudiated the Lord, who have sinned wilfully, who have despised the covenant: on the contrary, at heart they are still in sympathy with righteousness, loyal to the Lord, but they do not develop that consuming zeal for righteousness which would constitute them overcomers in the Scriptural sense. They love righteousness and hate sin, and yet they do not deal with these principles in that thoroughgoing manner which would constitute them copies of God's dear Son. So long as they hold on to the Lord, so long as they love him and love righteousness, they shall not be utterly condemned of him even though repudiated as respects a share in the Bride company, the little flock. Thank God, No! All who love righteousness and hate iniquity in any measure shall have fullest opportunity of demonstrating this, and shall be accounted worthy of life everlasting, and unquestionably this company is a "great company," as the Scriptures indicate – far more numerous even than the little flock, as the Levites in the type numbered thousands in proportion to the five chosen from amongst them to be priests.

If, then, the Royal Priesthood were all originally of the household of faith (Levites in the type) before their covenant of

sacrifice as priests was accepted of the Lord, what would they be if failing to sacrifice they were put out of the priesthood? We answer that they would still be Levites after they had lost their priestly privileges, after their names had been blotted out as respects membership in the body of Christ, after their crowns had been apportioned to others; as respects the Kingdom they would still be of the household of faith unless they had wilfully and deliberately repudiated the Lord and his grace. They would still, therefore, be represented in the tribe of Levi.

IF JUSTIFICATION WERE LOST

We have already pointed out that as our standing as members of the Royal Priesthood is at the present time tentative, subject to change if we do not sacrifice, so likewise our justification is in the present time tentative – dependent upon our continuance in a condition of faith and obedience. We see again that justification by faith, as it operates during this Gospel age, is merely with a view to bringing us into a relationship to God which will permit us to consecrate ourselves for the Royal Priesthood. Were it not the divine purpose to select the Royal Priesthood there would be no present call to justification by faith, but the whole world of mankind alike would share in the blessed arrangements of the divine plan for the future age, namely, an actual justification, an actual restitution, an actual making perfect, such as the world will experience during the Millennial age – a justification by works cooperating with faith. Thus it is written respecting the world's judgment in the Millennial age that they will be judged according to their works. – Rev. 20:12.

On the contrary, we of this Gospel age are assured that our judgment will not be according to works impossible to us under present conditions, but according to faith, with which our works will cooperate to the extent of our ability. In a word faith is now the standard of test, and such works as we can present merely attest our

faith: in the coming age works will be the standard and perfection will be demanded, while faith will cooperate and approve the works.

If, then, it be granted that the only object of justification by faith now is to permit the believer to present his body a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, his reasonable service, it follows that those believers who never reach the point of such a consecration receive the grace of God (justification) in vain. It does not accomplish for them the only purpose, the only object, for which it was intended. And it follows that such justification by faith lapses or becomes null and void within a reasonable time if it be not exercised, if the consecration which it was intended to make possible be not offered to the Lord. This being true, it would seem that those whose justification lapses because not used in consecration will at the time of the lapsing cease to be considered as typified by the Levites; they drop back from the Levites' position to that of Israel in general, representing the world, just as those who do make the consecration and for a time are recognized as priests drop back from the priestly position if they fail to go on and complete the sacrifice.

Now, then, view the situation. See who ultimately will constitute the Royal Priesthood – that it will be only the little flock who have gladly and loyally laid down their lives in the service of the King and after the example of the High Priest, Jesus. Likewise note that the only ones who will ultimately constitute the antitypical Levites will be those who make consecration and fail to attain the priestly degree through their failure to make a proper sacrifice – "a great company."

THE LORD'S GOAT AND THE SCAPE-GOAT

We have already set forth in Tabernacle Shadows that the work of this Gospel age, this antitypical Day of Atonement, began with the sacrifice of the bullock, which represented our Lord Jesus. The blood of the bullock being taken within the Most Holy by the High Priest, appropriation of its merit was made on behalf of the members of the

High Priest's body, the under priesthood, and on behalf of the entire household of faith, the antitypical Levites. Next in order came the [R3606 : page 234] two goats, both bound, consecrated at the door of the Tabernacle, representing all who consecrate themselves to the Lord, and how ultimately they would be divided into two classes – the little flock and the great company. The course of the little flock, the Royal Priesthood, was typified in what was done to the "Lord's goat." As that goat was sacrificed after the same manner as the bullock, its fat burned upon the altar, its hide, etc., burned without the camp, and its blood taken into the Most Holy and sprinkled, so with the entire company of the little flock: they pass through the experiences of the High Priest, they suffer with him, they are hated with him, they go to him without the camp bearing his reproach. But as a bullock has much fat and a goat is very lean, so our Lord had much love to offer upon the Lord's altar, while his followers altogether have very little, and that little is acceptable merely because the High Priest's previous sacrifice opened the way, covered its blemishes and made it acceptable.

It has required this entire Gospel age to do this sacrificing of the Lord's goat, and its blood has not yet been presented before the Father by the glorified Christ, – Head and body.

Next we have to consider the scape-goat. It represents a consecrated class, because it as well as the other goat was tethered at the door of the tent, devoted to sacrifice. It represents a class, however, that does not go to sacrifice, that does not go without the camp and bear the reproach with the bullock, a class whose fat does not go upon the altar, a class whose blood will never be sprinkled upon the Mercy Seat. It represents the great company of the consecrated who fail to make their calling and election sure, but whom the Lord's mercy rescues from the second death because they also trust in him, because they love righteousness and hate iniquity, even though they did not display the proper amount of zeal in

connection with their love of righteousness to merit their being classed with the overcomers, the Royal Priesthood.

THE SINS BORNE BY THE SCAPE-GOAT

The Scriptures show the priest laying his hands upon this scape-goat and confessing over it the sins of the people, and that then it was taken into the wilderness and left there under that load. This we have interpreted as the delivering over of the unworthy members of the Church to the power and control of the Adversary, that their flesh might be destroyed, that their spirits or life might be ultimately saved. In other words, the life which was not sacrificed was destroyed, the sufferings which were not voluntarily taken up in harmony with the consecration are nevertheless inflicted; and if those sufferings are rightly received and if as a result loyalty to the Lord is ultimately demonstrated, that spirit shall be saved "so as by fire," coming through great tribulation – "a great multitude whose number no man knoweth" shall "come up out of great tribulation and wash their robes and make them white in the blood of the Lamb" – the Levites, a glorious company, but occupying a lower plane in the divine plan for the world's salvation, occupying a subordinate place to the Bride in the glorious work of uplifting the world of mankind during the Millennial age.

Some who do not grasp the matter clearly, who have not learned how to apply types and antitypes, may say that the scape-goat never went into the Holy and therefore could not represent the great company class. We answer that neither did the goat go into the Holy nor did the bullock go into the Holy. The bullock represented our Lord as a human being, not as a spirit being; the goats represented the Lord's consecrated people as human beings, not as spirit beings. The point to be noticed is that the one goat followed the bullock to sacrifice and the other goat did not. The blood of the Lord's goat, therefore, was sprinkled by the High Priest upon the Mercy Seat, while the blood of the scape-goat was not so sprinkled.

A TIME OF TROUBLE

As to the signification of the confessing of the sins of the people upon the scape-goat: the sins thus confessed upon the head of the scape-goat are assuredly not the sins for which atonement is made by the blood of the bullock and of the Lord's goat. The atonement is made for original sin and all of its blemishes and imperfections as they affect the race of Adam. There are other sins than these for which atonement is not made, which are not to be forgiven, but on account of which divine wrath has been more or less manifest throughout the past six thousand years, and will be especially manifested in the great time of trouble such as was not since there was a nation nor ever shall be again, and which is now nearing. That trouble is spoken of as the pouring out of the vials of wrath upon the world because men have not lived up to their knowledge and opportunities and privileges. It will come as a natural effect from natural causes, and yet will be retributive punishment upon the world. In that, we understand, the great company will be given a special place, a special share. That will be the time in which every man's work shall be tried "so as by fire," this being applicable specially to the Church.

True, some of this great company class have been turned "over to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit might be saved [that they might be saved as spirit beings] in the day of the Lord Jesus" all down through this Gospel age. But the proportionate number of these has probably been small as compared with the number who to-day, under the greater light and opportunity and privileges which we enjoy, have consecrated themselves, yet hold back from the completion of their sacrifice. The portion of this Day of Atonement picture which relates to this great company class is not different from that which relates to the other classes. For instance, the sacrifice of the Lord's goat is not represented as being accomplished until the very last member of the body of Christ shall have suffered with the Head, until the final work in that connection,

the sprinkling of the blood of the Lord's goat upon the Mercy Seat shall have been accomplished, and until the last member shall not only have consecrated but shall have finished his sacrifice. [R3606 : page 235]

LORD, CHOOSE MY CROSS FOR ME.

"It was a time of sadness, and my heart,
Although it knew and loved the better part,
Felt weary with the conflict and the strife,
And all the needful discipline of life.

"And while I thought on these – as given to me,
My trial test of faith and love to be –
It seemed as if I never could be sure
That, faithful to the end, I should endure.

"And thus, no longer trusting to his might
Who says, 'We walk by faith and not by sight' –
Doubting, and almost yielding to despair,
The thought arose: My cross I cannot bear.

"Far heavier its weight must surely be,
Than those of others which I daily see:
Oh, if I might another burden choose,
Methinks, I should not fear my crown to lose.

"A solemn silence reigned on all around,
E'en Nature's voices uttered not a sound;
The evening shadows seemed of peace to tell,
And peace upon my weary spirit fell.

"A moment's pause, and then a heavenly light
Beamed full upon my wondering, raptured sight;
Angels on silvery wings seemed everywhere,
And angels' music thrilled the balmy air.

"Then one more fair than all the rest to see –
One to whom all others bowed the knee –
Came gently to me, as I trembling lay,
And 'Follow me,' He said – 'I am the Way.'

"Then speaking thus, He led me far above;
And there, beneath a canopy of love,
Crosses of diverse size and shape were seen,
Larger and smaller than mine own had been.

"And one there was more beauteous to behold,
A little one, with jewels set in gold;
Ah, this, methought, I can with comfort wear,
For it will be an easy one to bear.

"And so the little cross I quickly took,
But all at once my frame beneath it shook;
The sparkling jewels – fair were they to see,
But far too heavy was their weight for me.

"This may not be,' I cried, and looked again,
To see if there were any here could ease my pain,
But one by one I passed them slowly by,
Till on a lovely one I cast my eye.

"Fair flowers 'round its sculptured form entwined,
And grace and beauty seemed in it combined;
Wondering, I gazed, and still I wondered more,
To think so many should have passed it o'er.

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"But O! that form so beautiful to see,
Soon made its hidden sorrows known to me:

Thorns lay beneath those flowers and colors fair,
Sorrowing, I said, 'this cross I may not bear.'

"And so it was, with each and all around,
Not one to suit my need could there be found.
Weeping, I laid each heavy burden down,
As my guide gently said, 'No cross – no crown.'

"At length to him I raised my saddened heart,
He knew its sorrow, bade its doubts depart.
'Be not afraid,' he said, 'but trust in me,
My perfect love shall now be shown to thee.'

"And then with lightened eyes and willing feet,
Again I turned my earthly cross to meet;
With forward footsteps, turning not aside,
For fear some hidden evil might betide.

"And then, in the prepared, appointed way,
Listening to hear and ready to obey.
A cross I found of plainest form,
With only words of love inscribed thereon.

"With thankfulness I raised it from the rest,
And joyfully acknowledged it the best;
The only one of all the many there,
That I could feel was good for me to bear.

"And while I thus my chosen one confessed,
I saw a heavenly brightness on it rest,
And as I bent, my burden to sustain,
I recognized my own old cross again.

"But O, how different did it seem to be,
Now I had learned its preciousness to see,

Yes, now no longer will I say,
'Perhaps another is a better way.'

"Ah! henceforth my one desire shall be,
That he who knows me best shall choose for me,
And so whate'er His love seems good to send,
I'll trust it's best – because he knows the end."

– *Unknown*

