

## "IF WE SUFFER WITH HIM"

**"The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: and if children, then heirs; heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ, if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together." – Rom. 8:16,17.**

ST. JUDE speaks of "our common salvation" – a salvation from sin, from death, from human imperfection to human perfection – to all that God intended that our race should be, to all that our race lost through Adam's disobedience. The Divine provision is, as expressed by our Lord, "to seek and to recover that which was lost." – Matt. 18:11.

The world is to be sought and to be recovered during the Millennium, its period for judging (disciplining) and trial for life eternal. Then the faithful and obedient of all peoples will obtain full Restitution and life eternal. But *now*, in advance, this "common salvation" comes *by faith* to a certain class – to those who have the hearing of faith and the eye of faith, and obedient hearts. These, by virtue of the merit of Christ applied to them when Jesus "ascended up on high there to appear in the presence of God for us" – these are reckoned as having all the advantages of restitution *imputed* to them on account of their faith. They do not get restitution actually, but *reckonedly*. Their faith is counted to them for righteousness or perfection.

Why is there this discrimination in Divine providence – that some now *hear* the voice of the Son of Man and live, through Justification of Faith, while others will not hear the voice of the Son of Man and come to life and perfection until the Millennium and then actually and not reckonedly? – "Verily, verily, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that *hear* (obey) shall live." – John 5:25.

The answer is that this is a part of the "Mystery" of God; that the Lord is now seeking for and electing a special class to be joint-heirs with his Son – joint-sufferers with him in his sacrifice and joint-sharers in his Kingdom glory, "the Bride, the Lamb's Wife." The special arrangement permitting these to be justified by *faith* instead of *actually* justified (or perfected) is with a view to their being privileged to offer a proper sacrifice – "holy, acceptable to God, their reasonable service." (Rom. 12:1.) This Justification by faith is necessary because nothing unholy or unclean may come to the Lord's altar, as the Law clearly taught and the types clearly showed. Every sacrifice for the Lord's altar must be "without spot or blemish." Every member of our race was spotted and blemished by inherited sin and imperfection, and hence the necessity for the Divine [R4398 : page 155] provision of Justification by *faith* – not faith in Covenants, but faith in the precious blood of Christ, the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world." This faith grasps the fact that while the sin of the world has not yet been taken away by the Lamb of God, and the world still lies under condemnation, nevertheless the merit of the blood has been applied on behalf of the "household" of faith – and in due time will be made efficacious, under the New Covenant, for the bringing of forgiveness to every creature, with the opportunity of eternal life.

But under which Covenant does God purpose to receive the *faith-justified* ones as *sacrificers*? The answer is that the Divine proposal to the Redeemer that he sacrifice and as a reward of his sacrifice be highly exalted to the Divine nature and glory – this blessing (which belongs only to Jesus and was applied only to his sacrifice) has by the gracious plan of God been extended to include all those of this Gospel Age who have the character likeness of the Redeemer. They are invited to share in his sacrifice, and are promised that if faithful they shall share in his glory.

But what sacrifice is this? Could Justice call for more than a life for a life – the death of Jesus as the *ransom-price* for the death penalty of father Adam? Surely not. Justice has no voice in the present proceeding of Grace. Justice, however, cannot interfere, if it is agreeable to the Great Judge and the Redeemer to accept a "little flock" of justified believers as members under the Redeemer as Head. This very matter pleased the Father and pleased the Son, and is, therefore, a part of the Divine program. These members are "elect according to God's foreknowledge through sanctification of the spirit and the belief of the Truth." (1 Pet. 1:2.) Their selection is not a change in the Divine program, for they were "chosen in him before the foundation of the world." (Eph. 1:4.) Their selection was unexpected of the angels and of men and hence was a "mystery" and still is a "mystery" to mankind. "The world knoweth us not, even as it knew him not." (1 John 3:1.) But the selection of this class was always the Divine purpose. "The God and Father of our Lord Jesus foreknew us also by Jesus."

Whatever, therefore, was the Divine program for the Master, the Forerunner, the Chief-priest, is the Divine program for his *members* – they must "walk in his steps"; they must "suffer with him"; they must "fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ." If any decline so to do, he loses his place as a member of the Body. We know, nevertheless, that the full number of the "elect" will ultimately be found and every one of them will be *sacrificers*, for none others are *members of his Body*. It is the spirit of the Head coming upon these that produces the sacrifice of the flesh (the justified flesh) "holy, acceptable to God." – Rom. 12:1.

There is only one object in the sacrifice which God has provided for, the sacrifice which Jesus accomplished, and is accomplishing in all those who will become his members – that is a *sacrifice for sin*. It is presented to God, holy and acceptable.

In this respect it differs from other sacrifices which men make; as, for instance, a father or mother may sacrifice comfort or even sacrifice life, on behalf of their offspring, but such sacrifices, however appropriate, are not the *sacrifice of Christ* – are not of the "better sacrifices" typified in the sacrifices of the bulls and the goats.

St. Paul calls our attention to the fact that only those sacrifices which were burned outside the camp were a *Sin Offering*. Next he shows how our Lord was the sin offering. Then he points out how, if faithful *members of his Body*, we also must suffer outside the camp – as members of the sin-offering – represented in "the Lord's goat." This sacrifice is not yet completed. It is in process. Hence the Apostle's expression, "Let *us* go to him outside the camp, bearing *his reproach*" – just as the slain goat was carried outside the camp and there consumed as the bullock had been. (Heb. 13:11-13.) These matters, dear readers, are amongst the "deep things of God which no man knoweth except by the spirit of God." (1 Cor. 2:10.) The world knows nothing about them. "To you it is given to know the mysteries of the Kingdom of God, but to outsiders all these things are spoken in parables." (Matt. 13:11.) *Outsiders* are in what the Scriptures term "outer darkness" – the darkness which belongs to this present time of ignorance and superstition. (Matt. 25:30.) The few have been permitted to enter into the banqueting halls and to see the glorious beauties of the riches of Divine grace. Blessed are your eyes that see and your ears that hear. As for those who never saw they properly have our sympathy, nor should we expect so much of them as of ourselves who have been blessed with this knowledge of this important sacrifice and of its glorious reward. Furthermore, as we are now in the sifting and testing time, it must not surprise us if some who once saw eye to eye with us in these matters become blind to them and drift into the "outer darkness" as respects these matters and others – we know not how

far. Truths so interweave that one lost or perverted injures presently [R4399 : page 155] the beauty of the entire fabric.

Our expectation must be that the differences will increase and that the loss of spiritual sight will ultimately extend to other features of the Divine Plan. We have nothing but sympathy to express for such. Indeed to us their case is most pitiable. It is practically a hopeless case, too, whereas some of those who have never seen and never tasted we may hope will yet see and taste of this grace. But of those who see and who then become blind our Lord says, "If the light that is in thee become *darkness*, how great is the darkness." (Matt. 6:23.) It would be better not to have known the way of Truth than to have departed from the holy command. It is not for us to judge one another, but to leave all in the Lord's hands, assured that he makes no mistake. We may have thought their hearts all right, when the Lord may have seen them to be all wrong. But the results will show. And what we could not read, and should not have attempted to read of unfaithfulness to the Truth, will be manifest of themselves in the Lord's time and way. Let us not forget that he that sanctifieth and they that are sanctified (his *members*) are all *one*. He is in us all. In our consecration we lose our humanity and all of its rights, exchanging these for our spiritual membership in the Body of Christ.

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