

WRESTING THE SCRIPTURES

"They that are unlearned and unstable wrest...the Scriptures to their own destruction." – 2 Pet. 3:16.

AN instance in point is found in the columns of a journal, the editor of which was once an earnest co-laborer with us in the promulgation of the Harvest Truth. While still assenting to the fact that we have been in the Harvest for thirty-five years and that it will shortly end, he tells his readers that he apologizes to God that for nearly eighteen years he has been preaching what he now believes to be serious error, namely, that the Church of Christ has a share in her Redeemer's sufferings, a share with him in his sacrifice as members of his Body, filling up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ – suffering with him that they may also reign with him, becoming dead with him that they may also live with him on the spiritual or heavenly plane.

This Editor now calls all this darkness, and evidently thinks that just at the close of the Harvest he has struck the match and lighted a fresh lamp which shows that the path he was previously traveling was a wrong one and the light which previously shone on his pathway was of the Adversary. He has not yet given up *all* of the beautiful Harvest Truths, but we may reasonably expect that with this repudiation of the foundation of all spiritual hopes he will shortly conclude that everything that he saw on coming out of Babylon was a delusion, and that he will return fully to the "outer darkness" of Babylon. "If the light that is in thee become darkness, how great is that darkness," said our Master.

Said Editor seems to have become sour towards us personally, for some reason unknown to us. The alienation or bitterness of spirit presumably led to a desire to find fault with us. And since our personality is sunk in the service of the Truth, personal antagonism finding no other course led to an attack upon the truths which we present. How much the Adversary had to do with twisting and warping of judgment we do not know. How much others may be responsible by reason of over-encouragement or evil suggestions we do not know. But **[R4434 : page 215]** we do believe that the Lord will not allow any outside influence to separate from himself and his Truth any whose hearts are loyal to him.

This case is not parallel to the one of which our Lord said, "Forbid him not: for there is no man which shall do a miracle in my name, that can lightly speak evil of me. For he that is not against us, is on our part." (Mark 9:39,40.) This is a case of direct opposition – a direct attack upon the Harvest Work, which he had been serving for years – a direct attack upon the very doctrine which, next to the Ransom, lies close to the foundation of our hopes. This erstwhile Brother is now seeking to disrupt the Harvest Work to the best of his ability. He would have the Lord's people everywhere follow him into outer darkness under the delusive cry, "We were all blinded and misled by 'The Watch Tower;' but now, Eureka! I have fortunately found the true light which **[R4434 : page 216]** the Lord was anxious to give us earlier in the Harvest but did not succeed in getting to us until now near the close."

But, dear readers, we need have no fear of any disruption in the Lord's work from that quarter, or from any other. If this Harvest message and its service be of God it cannot be overthrown. If it be not of God we would be glad to have it overthrown, that we and others might be delivered from error. Oh, how the Adversary would like to convince us that our present

Lord had served us with poisonous food and that we should straightway leave his table and go elsewhere to satisfy our hunger and thirst for righteousness and Truth. These and other efforts will be successful merely to the extent of sifting out those not worthy of the Truth. The others who remain will be stronger than ever, by reason of the agitation of the subject of the Covenants, Sin-offerings, etc.

THE COMMUNION CUP

Twenty-nine years ago we were publishing some features of Present Truth respecting the Second Coming of our Lord, the time of Harvest, the Millennial Age, the Times of Restitution; but up to that time we had been in a measure of confusion, darkness, respecting the heavenly and the earthly promises. We saw that the Church had promise of heavenly and spiritual nature and glory. We saw also that the promises to the world were seemingly of an earthly nature, that they would build houses and inhabit them, plant vineyards and eat the fruit of them, etc. We had not fully discerned why this distinction of natures and were inclined to wonder why we could find nothing in the Scriptures to intimate that at the close of the Millennium the world would be granted the heavenly nature.

It was about that time, 1880, that the Lord drew our attention to other features of his plan previously unseen by us and, so far as we are aware, unseen by others since the days of the Apostles. We realized that this further light was Harvest light for the ripening of the wheat, and by no means an evidence of greater wisdom or ability in Bible interpretation on our part. The due time had come and the unfolding came with it. The Master who had already been serving us brought forth from the storehouse "things new and old," respecting the Covenants and the Atonement sacrifices. We were astonished at the length and breadth and

height and depth of the Divine Plan and set them forth in a pamphlet entitled *Tabernacle Shadows of the Better Sacrifices*.

It was through those Tabernacle Shadow blessings that the Lord showed us how and why the Church of this Gospel Age has been called to *heavenly* glory while the Divine purpose respecting mankind in general is restoration to *human* perfection with everlasting life to all the willing and obedient – to be granted to the faithful in the close of the Millennial Age, when they shall have reached human perfection and the "paradise restored" shall have been extended to the whole earth.

We then understood for the first time the meaning of the Apostle's words respecting the "Hidden Mystery," namely, that close, intimate relationship between Christ and his faithful followers, the "more than conquerors." It was then that we understood the Apostle's words, "God hath given Christ to be the Head over the Church, which is his Body," and "We are members in particular of the Body of Christ." "This is a great mystery; but I speak concerning Christ and the Church." Oh, yes, this is indeed a *hidden* mystery – that the Church is completely separated from the world and offered a great prize of glory, honor and immortality, the Divine nature. But we came to see, also, that this prize was offered on certain sacrificing conditions – not merely upon condition of faith, though faith is the basis of all our hopes. This "high calling" proffered is justification from sin as the reward of faith, but it additionally held out the promise to the justified that if they would suffer with Christ as his members, they should also be glorified together with him in his heavenly Kingdom and be with him and sit upon his throne and share his glory.

Now we began to understand why the way during this Gospel Age should be made so "narrow," so difficult, while the Lord promised to make the way to eternal life a broad, "high way"

during the Millennium. Ah, yes! all is clear from this standpoint, and the Apostle's words were full of meaning to us as we read, "I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service." (Rom. 12:1.) Now we saw the two steps; first, justification by faith, and secondly, an entrance into this grace of the "high calling" by being begotten of the holy Spirit. As expressed by St. Paul, "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in the hope of the glory of God," which is to be revealed in our Lord and in us as his members in his Kingdom. Now we know why St. Paul was so anxious to fill up a measure of the afflictions of Christ and we were stimulated also to follow his example, filling up a share of Christ's afflictions, which he left for us. Now we know what St. Paul meant when he said, "Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach." – Heb. 13:13.

We perceived from this last text that he referred to the sacrifices of the Day of Atonement mentioned in the context and in which he says that the bodies of those beasts whose blood accomplished sin atonement were burned outside the camp. The type shows that the first of these sacrifices was the bullock and the second the Lord's goat (Levit. 16); that the priest first killed the bullock provided by himself, and afterward killed the goat provided by the Congregation of the Children of Israel. We saw clearly enough that the bullock represented our Lord's sacrifice and that the only other sacrifice burned outside the camp was the goat, and hence that the Apostle must have referred to *us*, the Church, the members of the Body of Christ.

This has been the basis of our presentations to the Church for these twenty-nine years. We consider it the only key to all the wonderful harmonies of the Divine Word, as they are now in our

possession by the Lord's favor. We have no doubt whatever that our great Adversary would like to take from us this valuable key to the Divine Plan, which alone explains the "*mystery*" of this Gospel Age, which is the Church and her special call – to the privileges of sacrifice now and the privileges of glory by and by. The Apostle made no mistake.

Not anything of the merit belongs to us. Now, and first and last and all the time we have shown that the merit belongs to our dear Redeemer, who, by reason of the "body prepared" for him for the sacrifice of death, was able to become the justifier of all who trust in him. Our justification came by faith in his blood, and hence any merit and all merit would be his, not merely on that account, but also because our begetting of the holy Spirit was based upon our full consecration to be dead with him.

THE THINGS NO LONGER SEEN

These are the things said Editor tells us that he no longer sees – that our sufferings as members of the Body of Christ are part of *His sufferings*. All this he now claims is a mistake. That we are to reign with him *because* we suffer *with him* is claimed to be an error. Some day if he will tell us we shall be glad to know any other reason why we do suffer and with whom else we suffer; *what* we do sacrifice and *for what* we sacrifice and *what* useful purpose our sacrifice will ever accomplish. Possibly some may find ways of applying these Scriptures, but we are sure they will find no interpretations satisfactory to our minds other than that we have already found connected with the "mystery." Our friends in the nominal churches have wrestled with these Scriptures for centuries in a kind of hazy bewilderment, not knowing [R4434 : page 217] how to intelligently apply them and not understanding the "mystery," because the due time for its unfolding did not come prior to the Harvest.

THE BLOOD OF THE COVENANT

This erstwhile co-laborer now assaults us and charges that we have committed the sin unto death, in connection with this application of the Scriptures – because we claim that we suffer with him; that we share in *his sufferings* (Christ's) and not some other suffering. If this position is true we have been under the Second death condemnation for twenty-nine years and this co-laborer has been under it for eighteen years. Yet those years were the most blessed of our experience and, we presume, also of his. And this doctrine during these years has been the "key" to the "Mystery of God," which has brought more Christians to a full and deep consecration to the Lord than anything else ever known since the Apostle's day.

There certainly is plenty of inconsistency connected with the position of this Brother, and with that of all others who ever leave the light of Present Truth. For instance, the Scriptures intimate clearly enough that any who ever commit this sin unto death cannot be renewed **[R4435 : page 217]** unto repentance, seeing that they have crucified the Lord afresh and put him to an open shame. (Heb. 6:6.) If, then, this doctrine of the Church's participation with our Redeemer in his sacrifice as his "members" is the "counting of the blood of the Covenant an unholy thing," how could this Brother claim that, after eighteen years of such delusion and Second Death worthiness, he has now escaped such a condemnation and obtained a special blessing from God and a special privilege to light a new torch and to call the Lord's sheep in an opposite direction?

But let us examine the ground of this serious charge respecting which this Editor waxes eloquent, saying, "We do not know any consideration on which we would occupy their position. Oh, that we had ten thousand trumpet tongues to warn those who accept this latest of the last-day delusions. It is

a *test!* Who will be on the Lord's side?" We agree that it is a *test* and that it will fully discover those who are on the Lord's side; those who will share of his cup, share in his sufferings – none others will share in his glory.

Notice the Scriptures which this new light-bearer assures us condemn all who have been believing that they were sharing the sufferings of Christ as the condition by which they might hope to share his glory future. It reads, "If we sin willingly after that we have received a knowledge of the Truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment, and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses; of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the Covenant wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace." – Heb. 10:26-29.

This marvelous exegete lifts his hands in horror and, pointing at this Scripture and then at us and the thirty thousand or so who similarly believe, he intimates that he has gotten out of this Second Death condition and that he is willing to help all of us out, if we will follow him, and subscribe for his Journal. On the contrary, the very Scripture he quotes tells that there is absolutely no hope for the class described in these verses, because "there remaineth no more sacrifice for their sins." They consumed their share in the merit of Christ's sacrifice.

The Apostle speaks of wresting or twisting the Scriptures and it may easily be surmised that a considerable amount of wresting and twisting of this Scripture needs to be attempted in the endeavor to make it serve this Editor's purposes. He lays all his stress upon the words, "Counted the blood of the Covenant wherewith he was sanctified an unholy thing." To serve his

purpose he has twisted the Scripture thus, "Has counted the blood of the Covenant wherewith he was sanctified a thing shared by a number." The attempt is to prove that all who claim to have fellowship with Christ in *his* death or, as the Apostle says, "to be dead *with* him," "to be baptized into *his* death," thus participate in the blood of the New Covenant, which Jesus is sealing with his own blood and in which he invites us to be partners and share – all these are guilty, according to this indictment, based upon this Scripture, of "treading under foot the Son of God and counting the blood of the Covenant wherewith they were sanctified an unholy thing."

This expositor has lost his bearings altogether. The Apostle tells us that we were justified through faith in the blood of Jesus and he here speaks of those who had gone on after justification through the blood of Jesus to sanctification through the blood of the Covenant. What is the difference between justification and sanctification and between the blood of Jesus which justifies and the blood of the New Covenant which sanctifies?

We answer that there is a great difference – two distinctly separate transactions are thus brought to our attention. Nowhere in the Scriptures are we said to be justified by a New Covenant or by any Covenant; nor by the blood of the New Covenant; nor by the blood of any other Covenant. We are justified by faith – faith in the blood of Jesus as our Redeemer. Our justification comes as soon as we accept the great fact that we were sinners and that Jesus gave his life for our redemption and accept our share in that redemption by faith. It is only those who are thus justified by faith in his blood that are invited to become his disciples, his followers, his joint-sacrificers and his joint-heirs in glory, as members of the great Prophet, Priest, King, Judge and Mediator, who will come in power with great glory as soon as the last member of his Body shall have been perfected through a participation in the sufferings of Christ. Let us keep in memory

the fact that only the justified are called to this "high calling," this great privilege of participation in Christ's Covenant, the blood of the New (Law) Covenant. This being true, it will be readily seen that the Apostle is referring to this consecrated class – "sanctified through the blood of the Covenant."

Get the thought that our Redeemer, "the man Christ Jesus," laid down his life that he might seal the New (Law) Covenant with Israel and through Israel with the world. He consecrated his earthly life and laid it down in death with this in view. His ignominy and death are symbolically called *his cup, of which he drank*. He offers a portion during the Gospel Age to justified believers, proposing that if they drink the cup with him, if they suffer with him, he will accept such as "*members of his Body*." The Father will beget them of the holy Spirit and in due time they shall be born from the dead in "his resurrection," as his glorious Body and sharers with him in the work of dispensing the New (Law) Covenant blessings to Israel and to the world.

All who accept his proposition are counted in with him as messengers of the Covenant or servants of the Covenant – those whose lives have been devoted, consecrated, sacrificed with a view to the establishment of this New (Law) Covenant, by which the Christ, including the Church, as the Seed of Abraham, will bless Israel and all the families of the earth. The Apostle says, "We are made able ministers of the New (Law) Covenant" – that is to say, qualified servants of that Covenant. Part of our service we perform at the present time in serving our great Head and the fellow-members of his Body, "edifying one another and building one another up in the most holy faith." (Jude 20.) But in a larger sense of the word we are being qualified or made able servants of the New (Law) Covenant by present experiences, which we shall put to effective service when the New (Law) Covenant shall go into force and the Millennial Age be inaugurated.

We trust that we have made clear the fact that our consecration, our sanctification, our acceptance of the Lord, our sacrificing with him, and our final glorification with him, are all in connection with the great Work [R4435 : page 218] which he has undertaken, namely, the mediating of the New (Law) Covenant between God and mankind in general. We were called out from mankind in general, from the world, for these very purposes – that we might be made members of this "mystery" class, the Mediator's Body. Hence our *sanctification* was in connection with "the blood of the New (Law) Covenant." Had it not been for the New Covenant and our invitation to share in its mediation with our Redeemer, there would have been no present Call to glory and honor and immortality and joint-heirship in the Kingdom. Hence, when the Apostle is speaking of those who "count the blood of the Covenant a common thing," we should understand that he meant that some who desert the Lord, renounce his teachings, renounce their consecration, do disrespect to this special call to joint-heirship. The Apostle explains that this is because they do not sufficiently appreciate the value of this consecration, the value of this "*blood*," the privilege of sharing with Christ in his sacrifice. They count the statement, To be dead with him, an ordinary thing. They lose sight of its real value. They lose sight of what they really undertook to do when they made a consecration unto death. They lose sight of what it meant to present their bodies living sacrifices. Having changed towards the Lord, they no longer count their covenant to be dead with him as a *sacred* obligation, but rather as an ordinary matter, a *common thing*.

PROVING IT BY THE GREEK

The Brother whose inconsistency of argument we are criticising tells us that his contention is supported by the Greek text – that the Greek word rendered unholy in Heb. 10:29, *koinos*, really should be translated "*a thing shared by a number*." He

would apply this to *us* and all who see with us; because we say that the blood of Christ, the cup of Christ, is shared by a "little flock" of Christ's disciples, who become dead with him, suffer with him during this Gospel Age. Our answer is that the Brother has not dipped deeply enough into the Greek. The Greek word which would have suited his purpose is *koinonia*, which signifies *partnership*, or literally, *participation*, as defined by Strong's Unabridged Dictionary. The same dictionary defines *koinos* to mean *common, defiled, unclean*. In other words, while the thought of participation is in both of these words, the one has the unclean thought connected with it, while the other has the clean and pure thought of partnership. Manifestly the thought we present of participation with Christ in the sufferings of this present time and his glory to follow is not the common or unclean thought of *koinos*, but the partnership and participation thought of the other Greek word, *koinonia*. This is our answer to the charge and to the misinterpretation of the Scriptures to support it.

But let us look a little further in the same direction and see what we find. We turn to 1 Cor. 10:15-17 and hearken to the Apostle saying, "I speak as to wise men; judge ye what I say. The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the *communion* of the blood of Christ? The bread which [R4436 : page 218] we break, is it not the *communion* of the Body of Christ? For we, being many, are one bread and one Body; for we are all partakers of that one bread." This passage is very plain and clear as it stands in the English, but when we point out the Greek word twice rendered *communion*, in respect to the blood and in respect to the Body of Christ, the passage becomes doubly forceful. This Greek word is *koinonia*, which signifies *partnership*, literally, *participation*.

Here the Apostle tells us that all the *members* of the Body of Christ have *koinonia*, participation in the blood of Christ, of the

one cup, and in the Body of Christ, the one loaf now being broken, that through the operation of the New (Law) Covenant sealed with his blood, Israel and the world may be fed with the bread of life. Of course no one can be convinced against his will, but we hold that all of the Lord's people enlightened under his Spirit should be able to see that the Apostle commends, approves, endorses, that which said Editor condemns and by twisting of the Greek, endeavors to make out to be the basis of his own Second Death condemnation and yours and ours.

BLINDED BY WILFULNESS

We have pointed out for years that on the same night in which our Lord was betrayed he instituted a Memorial of his own death, substituting it for the Jewish Passover Supper and setting forth the bread and cup, as representing his flesh and blood, as instead of that of the passover lamb, saying, This do as often as ye do it in remembrance of me – not in remembrance of the lamb, nor of the type, as in Egypt, but looking forward and recognizing the antitype. He wished them to realize him as the lamb and the Church as the first-born saved during the night of this Gospel Age, and ready to go forth in the morning of the Millennium, typified by Aaron, the high priest, his sons, the under-priests and the tribe of Levi, their servant-associates, typified on the other hand by Moses, the great Law Giver and Mediator. As it is written, "For Moses truly said unto the fathers, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things, whatsoever he shall say unto you. And it shall come to pass, that every soul, which will not hear that prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people." – Acts 3:22,23.

God raised up Jesus to be the Head of this great antitypical Mediator. And during this Gospel Age he is raising up the Church of the First-borns as *members* of his Body. Shortly the whole will

be complete, and then, as the great Mediator of the New (Law) Covenant, this antitypical Mediator will seal that Covenant with his blood, with the merit of his sacrifice, which he is now passing through the Church, which is his Body, permitting us to share in his sufferings, that we may also share in his glory.

This share of Christ's sufferings is symbolically represented in his "cup," styled the blood of the New Covenant, New Testament, New Will. By his death the Lord surrendered his *earthly* rights to seal that New Covenant and by permitting justified believers to join with him in his sufferings, he permits us to share as his Body members in this sealing of the New (Law) Covenant.

Consequently when he passed the disciples the "cup" he did not mean them to understand that the drinking of that cup meant their justification. They were already justified. Already he had said to them, "Now ye are clean through the word I have spoken unto you." "Ye are not of the world, even as I am not of the world." By passing the "*cup*" to them, saying, All of you drink of it, and, Drink ye all of it, he meant, I thus symbolically give you the privilege of sharing in my sufferings, which are symbolically represented in this cup. I am laying down my life to seal that New (Law) Covenant long promised of the Father and, if you would be members of the Spiritual Seed of Abraham, now is your opportunity. You are already justified by faith. My death will make that effective to you and you will be sprinkled from all consciousness of evil. All that was preparatory, and with a view to giving you this opportunity of sharing in my cup of ignominy, of death, of woe, of sacrifice. If you suffer with me, if you drink of my cup, you shall sit with me in my throne. If you do not drink of my cup you shall not sit with me in my throne.

All Christ's faithful members who partake intelligently of the bread, understand it to mean not only our Lord's broken body, but

also the broken body of his Church, as St. Paul explains. And similarly the "cup" was both Christ's blood or sacrifice and ours if we accept it at his invitation and partake with him. As to our argument in respect to our sharing the Lord's cup, this Brother was apparently so anxious to get rid of it that he declared in so many words that our Lord *did not drink of it*. Let us see whether Jesus drank of one cup representing one set of sufferings and gave his followers another cup representing a different kind of sufferings. Is this true? [R4436 : page 219] What say the Scriptures? We read particularly, "The Lord Jesus, the same night in which he was betrayed, took bread, and when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat; this is my body, which is broken for you; this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner also he took the cup, *when he had supped*, saying, This cup is the New Testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me." – 1 Cor. 11:23-25.

The records in the four Gospels leave the matter of our Lord's drinking of the cup indefinite, though they clearly intimate that he first drank and then gave to his disciples. But the Apostle Paul, as above, makes the matter positive.

Furthermore, notice our Lord's words to the two disciples who requested special nearness to himself on his Throne in the Kingdom. He said, "Can ye drink of the *cup* that I shall drink of? and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?" When they assented their willingness he assured them that he would see to it that they should have the opportunity and thus gain a seat in the Throne, though he could not tell them how near to himself they would be, since this would be arranged of the Father. Have we any doubt as to what cup he meant and what baptism? Surely not, because the Master's cup was that of suffering, ignominy and death. Ours must be the same "cup," his cup, else we shall have neither part nor lot in his Kingdom glory. – Mark 10:38-40.

