

December 2

And now, why tarriest thou? Arise and be baptized. Acts 22:16

THERE is a directness in this address that is worthy of being copied by all who have an influence upon others, and who are seeking to bring them along in the right way. Urge them to promptness, to full and

F153-156 "Joy and peace come from the moment of faith in the Lord, the acceptance of his atonement, and the resolve to follow righteousness and shun sin. This joy and peace are complete until the low gateway to the narrow way is reached; but when the pursuit of righteousness involves self-denial and self-sacrifice, and this sacrifice is not made, and the low gateway is not entered, the joy and peace of divine favor are dimmed. They will not be entirely withdrawn, however, for a time, while the sincere believer seeks for other ways of serving righteousness, still loving it, and still valuing divine favor, but holding back and refusing by neglecting to enter it. Fulness of joy and peace cannot be the portion of such, for all the while they realize that a full consecration of their every power to the Lord would be but a "reasonable service," a rational acknowledgment and return for the divine favors already received in the forgiveness of sins.

Many continue for long years in this attitude, while others wander off in the ways of the world. None even become candidates for the New Creation unless they enter the low gate of self-sacrifice. The Lord does not, for a considerable time, cut these off from special privileges, granted them merely with a view to leading them to the low gate; nevertheless, in neglecting to enter it they virtually confess that they have "received the grace of God [the forgiveness of sins and leading up to this gate] in vain"; because, having come to this condition, they refuse or neglect to avail themselves of the "one hope of our calling." The Lord might properly say to such -- I withdraw from you at once all special privileges of every kind. You were not more worthy of my favor than the remainder of the world, and you shall have the same privileges and opportunities that I intend to extend to all humanity during the Millennial age; but no further special privileges, mercies, care, attention, etc., from me in the present life, nor preference in the life to come--but he does not do this at once and has long patience with many.

The exceeding great and precious promises of the Lord's Word--such, for instance, as those which assure us that "all things work together for good to them that love God" -- will apply only to those who have been favored of God and led to the low gate of self-sacrifice, and have gladly entered it, for only such *love God* in the supreme degree -- more than self...

What would be the remedy for those who find themselves in this attitude, and desire to be fully the Lord's and fully to claim his favors? We answer that their course should be to make a full consecration of themselves to the Lord, surrendering to him their wills in respect to all things -- their aims, their hopes, their prospects, their means, and even their earthly loves should all be surrendered to the Lord; and in exchange they should accept, as the law of their being and the rule for future conduct, the guidance of his Word and Spirit and

complete obedience, to a full confession of the Lord and the Truth. If they are not inclined to promptly obey after their eyes of faith have seen the Lord, and after their ears have heard His voice, they will be much less likely after a while, when the world and the flesh and the devil will say to them, Do not be an extremist; be moderate; do not make a

Providences; assured that these will work out for them, not only more glorious results as respects the life to come, but also greater blessings of heart in the present life.

How shall they do this? We answer that it should be done heartily, reverently, in prayer -- the contract should be definitely made with the Lord and, if possible, in an audible voice; and divine grace, mercy and blessing should be requested, as needful assistance in the carrying out of this sacrifice.

And what should be done if any are "feeling after God," yet do not feel fully ready to make this complete surrender to his will? We answer that they should go to the Lord in prayer about the matter, and ask his blessing upon the study of the Truth, that they might be enabled more and more to realize, first, the reasonableness of the service; secondly, the sureness of the blessing to result; and, thirdly, his faithfulness in keeping all the gracious promises of help and strength made to the self-sacrificing class. They should ask also that the Lord would enable them rightly to weigh and value earthly things -- that they might be enabled to realize and, if necessary, to experience, how transitory and unsatisfactory are all things connected with the selfishness of this present time, and those things after which the natural mind craves--that they might thus be able to make a consecration and to appreciate the privilege of setting their affections upon things above and not on things beneath, and of sacrificing the latter for the former."

(2 Cor 5:14 KJV) "For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead..."

R5423 "We, being imperfect, have very little to give; and when there is an opportunity for showing our appreciation of the Heavenly Father, then we should make haste to use it."

R2642 "To render all they have to the Lord's service is not only a reasonable thing, but an offering far too small--far less than what they would like to render to him who has manifested such compassion and grace toward us. And we should feel thus, even if there were no rewards attached to such a consecration of ourselves. But inasmuch as God has attached great rewards and blessings, we should feel not only that a refusal to accept would be an indication of non-appreciation of divine mercy, but an indication also of a weakness of mind, of judgment, which is unable to balance the trifling and transitory pleasures of self-will for a few short years, with an eternity of joy and blessing and glory, in harmony with the Lord."

R1657 "Beloved, it is appropriate that each of us search his own doings, and his own heart's motives, and see whether we are fully awake to the value of the great wealth

of God's love and favor and honor hidden in Christ, of which we are invited to become joint-heirs. God has given to us, and to all, a great *gift* in Christ, in that eternal life is secured for all of Adam's race... but in addition to that *gift* is the present offer to *sell* to us a share in the glorious Millennial Kingdom at a price "not worthy to be compared" to the glories and blessings which, as heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ, we may receive in exchange.

The *price* is small, but it is *all* that we each have to give -- ourselves, our all. Whether our all be more or less than another's all, it is nevertheless our *all*, and God graciously proposes to accept the little all of each, whatever it may be, the sufficiency of Christ's *all* compensating for the deficiency...

To buy we must consecrate and *give--* time, energy, study, to gain even a *knowledge* of the mystery (the secret mine of wealth) hid in Christ. (1 Cor. 2:7.) Each day will bring to the consecrated opportunities for giving something to the Lord, either directly, or indirectly to his people or others in his name. Each day will bring opportunities for *giving up* something precious to the selfish, carnal nature.

All such gifts presented to God (by those who have already been reconciled to God, through faith in his precious blood) are acceptable in the Beloved, and are treasures laid up in heaven, of two sorts: (1) the service rendered to God which, although in itself imperfect, he accepts as perfect through Christ; (2) the character thereby developed in our own hearts is a heavenly treasure acceptable to God by Jesus Christ; for every time we *give* anything to the Lord's service or *give up* things highly esteemed among men for the sake of the Lord, or his Word, or his people, or even for humanity's sake, we to that extent overcome the fallen disposition or spirit of selfishness, and cultivate the spirit of love and benevolence, the spirit of God, the spirit of Christ, the holy spirit or disposition, without which none will be acceptable as joint-heirs with Christ in his Kingdom;--for "if any man have not the spirit [disposition] of Christ he is none of his."--Rom. 8:9.

Let us see to it that, having made the contract, we pay over the price in full. -- Acts 5:1-11."

R5538 "What shall I render unto the Lord for all His benefits toward me? I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord. I will pay my vows unto the Lord now, in the presence of all His people."--Psalm 116:12-14...

Having been begotten of the Holy Spirit and received into sonship, these wish to make a special return for all God's mercies... "What shall I render unto the Lord?"

The Apostle Paul exhorts us: "I beseech you, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, and acceptable unto God-- your reasonable service." This is what we gladly

render, then -- our bodies as *living sacrifices*. In every truly noble heart gratitude is the responsive chord to kindness and love; and no harmony is sweeter or more inspiring to noble deeds and lofty purposes. God would have His children cultivate for their own sake, as well as for the sake of others, all the graces of true nobility and moral excellence. It is therefore most fitting that we should note every deed of love and kindness toward us, and be careful to return the gratitude and appreciation due. How often does love go unrequited because selfishness or thoughtlessness crowds out the nobler instincts of the soul!

While human love and acts of kindness often draw largely upon us for the exercise of this grace of gratitude, appreciation, how much more does the constant loving-kindness and tender mercy of our Heavenly Father thus fittingly draw upon our inmost being to respond in grateful acknowledgment and praise! To Him we are indebted for every good that we possess. What this

implies only those can know who have been brought by His love into the secret place of the Most High..."

R5094 "Remember that when the pilgrims were in the house of the Interpreter, he took them into a room where there was a man with a muck-rake in his hand, drawing to himself straws, small sticks and the dust of the floor. Above his head was one with a celestial crown in his hand. This crown he proffered to the man in exchange for the muck-rake. But the man neither looked up, nor regarded what was said.

Today we see some who use muck-rakes, gathering all the trinkets of life, not knowing what to do with them after they have been accumulated....The world thinks, "Look at this dust! Is not this fine straw?" or what not. They say, "Get some of these sticks and worm-eaten fruits that we have here." But what they strive for is all illusion."

E258 "What are known as the wisest men of the world are spending their labor for that which satisfieth not--in the accumulation of wealth; in strife for honor, social standing and preferment; in vainglorious display and pleasures of sin. Even were there no future life, all who have the Spirit of a sound mind can see that such courses are unwise; for the majority spend the present life in getting ready for enjoyment, and then lie down in death, realizing that they have not obtained what they sought."

R3720 "Our exhortation to all who have forsaken all to follow the Lord is that we do not look back, that we estimate that we have made the grandest bargain imaginable, that we are in the way for obtaining the grandest prize imaginable, together with association with our Lord in his wonderful work and with the divine approval....

Lay aside every weight and entanglement that we may run with patience the race set before us..."

R2823 (From Harvest Truth Database V5.0)
PAUL'S HEAVENLY VISION

--ACTS 22:6-16.--JUNE 9.--

"I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision."--Acts 26:19.

WHILE waiting at Jerusalem for the Pentecostal blessing promised, the eleven apostles overlooked the fact that they were not to begin their work, nor to consider that they had the proper endowment of wisdom or authority from on high for any part of it, until they should receive the promised blessing. Their selection of Matthias to fill the place of Judas, as the twelfth apostle was, therefore, a blunder; for altho they cast lots, to give the Lord a choice, and the lot fell on one of the two they had decided upon, they were in this doing something beyond their authority. The Lord had his own choice for the one who would take the place of Judas, and this one already had been undergoing special training and discipline "from his mother's womb."--Gal. 1:15; Acts 9:15; Rom. 1:1; 11:13; 1 Cor. 1:1; 9:1.

The name of the Lord's choice for the twelfth apostle was, in the Hebrew language, Saul, and in the Greek, Paul. Under divine supervision, and with a view to his future work, without, however, interfering with his will, the Lord had carefully guided, in respect to the birthplace, opportunities, education, etc., of this one whom he foresaw to be his chosen vessel to bear his message to the Gentiles. He was well-born, well educated, inheriting the valuable right of a Roman citizen; was of a very religious cast of mind, a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee.

Paul, like others of his countrymen, was zealous for the Law, and for the promises made to Israel. He was not a wicked man in any sense of the word, but, on the contrary, was moral, upright, religious, having a religious zeal which led him to persecute Christ and his followers as heretics against the Mosaic institutions. He himself tells us that he persecuted the Church "in all good conscience," and yet he freely admits that in his language respecting Christians he blasphemed the holy name, and was an injurer of the saints and a persecutor. In his religious zeal, he tells us, he was "exceeding mad against" the Christians, and "delivered into prisons both men and women."-- Acts 22:4; 26:11; 1 Tim 1:13; Phil. 3:5,6.

It was because Paul of Tarsus was not a bad man, but a good man, laboring under blindness and misapprehension, "an Israelite indeed," fighting the truth ignorantly, that our Lord favored him in the miraculous manner related in this lesson. Indeed, we may suppose that the Lord in some manner favored all "Israelites indeed," as we note, for instance, that he favored Nathanael, who at first was skeptical respecting his Messiahship, but was granted convincing evidence because of his sincerity. Similarly we may suppose that some of those who were converted by the miraculous manifestations of the day of Pentecost and shortly afterward (numbering thousands), may have been amongst the very ones who, but a few days previously, had thought of and perhaps had spoken of Jesus as an impostor, and his disciples as shallow-minded dupes. The Lord had mercy upon Nathanael, and assisted him in one way, while he assisted others, at Pentecost, in another way, through manifestation of the spirit; and now in a still different manner he arrested the attention of Saul, convincing him speedily that he was doing the very opposite

thing from what he intended to do.

The heart of Paul being in a right attitude,--of loyalty toward God, of zeal for God, he merely needed to be set right; and we see that immediately the same zeal and fervency of spirit which once persecuted the Church was enlisted on behalf of the Church;--that he gladly forsook all to follow Christ, as soon as he recognized his true character. These things being true, those who refer to the Apostle Paul's "*conversion*," and who compare it to the conversion of an ordinary evil-doer, show that they are laboring under a serious misapprehension of the facts. Had Saul of Tarsus been a wicked man we could not suppose that the Lord would have been interested in him in any such manner, nor that any such miraculous means would have been used to bring his attention to his wrong course of action.

God's time for dealing with the unbelieving world is not in this age--that work is left for the Millennial age. He is dealing now only with those who are "Israelites indeed," honest at heart; and it is for this class, and this class only, that the Lord's providence and drawing and convincing power is exercised. In other words, God never proposes to change a man's *will*, but where his will is right and his ideas, his conceptions of proprieties, are wrong, it is in accord with every principle of righteousness for the Lord to favor such, and to open the eyes of their understanding; and this same rule holds good now, as the Prophet has declared: "None of the wicked shall understand-- but the wise shall understand"--the truly wise. If any of the wicked gain a partial knowledge of the truth we may be sure that they will lose it, for, as the Scriptures again declare, "Light is sown for the righteous: truth for the upright in heart." (Psa. 97:11.) God has abundant provisions for dealing with other classes in the future, "in due time"--such as will be best suited to their cases.

Our lesson shows us Saul on his way to Damascus, armed with authority for the apprehension of the Lord's followers, accompanied by others who seemingly were under his command as a police force. All who know anything respecting the exceeding clearness and brightness of the noonday sun in Palestine, glaringly brilliant, will note the force of the statement respecting the great light which suddenly shone upon Saul from heaven about noonday. It must have been an exceedingly bright light; but apparently it affected Saul alone, and not those that were with him, tho they saw it and noted its effect upon Paul, who was blinded by it, as he fell to the ground. If he were afoot this might mean that he immediately prostrated himself, as one would be said to fall down before a king; if he were on horseback it might mean that he dismounted and prostrated himself;--but we do not incline to the thought which seems to be the common one, that he fell from his horse as in a faint. Rather, instead of being stunned or in a faint condition, Saul seems to have been fully possessed of his senses, and to have realized that he was the subject of a miracle. The voice which he heard was one, not of approval, as he might have expected, since he was supposedly in the divine service, but one of reproof: "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" Paul's clearness of mind is manifest in his inquiry, "Who art thou, Lord?"

He recognized at once that the one who had thus power to arrest him in his journey was a lordly one, a powerful one, yet he wished to make no mistake, he wished to know who it was who thus reproved him, that he might benefit the more. The answer must have been a surprise to him, almost a shock: "I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom thou persecutest."

Our Lord's answer shows us how intimately he stands related with all those who are truly his; those who touch his saints touch him, for are they not, as the Apostle declares, "members in particular of the body of Christ?" He is indeed, "the Head of the Church, which is his body," and the ascended Head feels for and cares for and is interested in even the weakest and humblest of those whom he recognizes as truly his. If we remember this it will be a great help to us in the midst of trials and persecutions--the thought that we are "filling up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ," that "as he was, so are we in this world," and that while we are in the flesh, Christ is in the flesh, and that this will continue until the last members, even the feet members of the body, shall have suffered and have entered into glory. Let us remember this also, and specially, if at any time we are tempted to deal harshly or speak rudely or think unkindly of any of the "brethren." Let us consider that as we, with all our weaknesses and unwilling imperfections, are the Lord's members and subjects of his interest and care, so also are all of the brethren; and that inasmuch as we do, or do not do, to one of the least of his brethren, we do, or do not do, to him. If this thought of the intimate relationship between the head and the members could be always fresh before our minds, how favorable would be the influence; how often we would improve the opportunity, not only of suffering, as the body of Christ, but of suffering with the fellow members, and assisting in bearing their burdens. "We ought also to lay down our lives for the brethren."--1 John 3:16; Heb. 2:11; Col. 1:24.

We are told that Paul's companions also saw the light, but heard not the voice. Elsewhere it is stated that they heard the voice, but saw no man. The statements are not to be supposed to be contradictory, but can be understood to be harmonious by remembering that the expression "hearing the voice" is sometimes used in two different ways. We may say to a friend, "I did not hear what you said." And again, speaking of the same matter, we might say, "I heard a voice or sound, but did not distinguish the words." The two statements might seem to be contradictory, but are really quite in harmony; and so with these two records of the Apostle's words. The voice was heard by all, but the message by Saul only.

Paul was an intensely practical man, and as soon as he understood who it was that had thus arrested him in his course of error he immediately inquired, "Lord, what shall I do?" This meant a great deal; it meant: I am anxious now to undo what I have been heretofore mistakenly doing; I am anxious to be your servant; I appeal to you for orders; I am ready to obey. "He, trembling and astonished, said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" (Acts 9:6.) This, the language and the attitude of all sincere souls, meant full surrender. It meant, I am not more sincere now than I was a moment ago, but the eyes of my understanding have been opened, tho it has cost me the loss of my natural sight. Let me demonstrate, O Lord, that my crime against thee was not of heart, but merely of misapprehension of head; let me lay down my life in thy service.

And similar seems to be the attitude of the Lord's true people today: those who have been blinded for years with misconceptions of the divine character and plan, and who have blasphemed God's holy name ignorantly, in misrepresenting him and his plan; and who have persecuted Jesus by opposing his truth, and those supporting it--these, when now the eyes of their understanding are opened, feel as did Saul, that the remainder of life is only too little and too short to show forth the praises of him who hath called us out of darkness into his marvelous light;--of him who had mercy upon us, and who graciously shined into our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, as it shines in the face of Jesus Christ our Lord. (2 Cor. 4:4.) Those who do not feel their hearts burn, and who feel no desire to pledge themselves to the service of the Lord and his truth, have not the spirit of the Apostle;--have not the spirit which is best pleasing to the Lord and most esteemed amongst those who have the mind of the Lord. And if we have this spirit or disposition in any measure let us cultivate it, by thinking what great things the Lord has done for us, and by considering how little we are able to do in return to manifest the appreciation which we feel and ought to feel.

The Lord's answer, sending Paul to Damascus, and informing him that "there it shall be told thee of all things which are appointed for thee to do," shows us that Paul was in the divine mind and plan beforehand. The Lord knew that he was honest, and one who, when the truth would shine into his heart, would not be disobedient to the

heavenly vision, but would be prompt to consecrate his life, his all, in the service of the Lord and of the brethren. Verily, "The Lord knoweth them that are his." The same thought is brought to us in noting the Lord's answer to Ananias, when the latter was fearful to go to Saul. The Lord said, "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." Such language could not be used by the Lord in connection with one whose heart was not already fully consecrated to the divine will and service, however ignorantly it had been misused. So today we may have more hope of some who are outspoken in their opposition and enmity to the truth and its servants than for some who are its very cold and indifferent friends. The former may be truly consecrated, but blind, and if so the Lord's due time will come for their mental eyes to be open, and then we may be sure that they will be amongst his most faithful followers.

The wonderful light which flashed upon his eyes destroyed his sight. "Saul arose from the earth, and when his eyes were open he saw no man, but they led him by the hand and led him into Damascus, and he was three days without sight, neither did he eat or drink." We may be sure, however, that during those three days he did a great amount of thinking;--endeavoring to grasp, so far as possible, the lessons of his wonderful experiences. He tells us that he realized his experience to be nothing else than his seeing of Jesus. We need not suppose that he saw our Lord's spiritual body in its wonderful glory, for we are to remember the Scriptural statement that our Lord now is the express image of the Father's person; and we remember, too, that it is declared that no man can see God and live; that he dwells in a light no man can approach unto. And since our Lord Jesus is his express image and likeness, the same thing must now be true of him. Saul was but a man, and could not, therefore, have seen that which no man could see, and live. What, then, did he see? We answer, that he saw a representation of Jesus' glory. Since he could not see the fulness of that glory and live, he was permitted only to see a part of it, and that part destroyed his eyesight. This demonstrates to us the truth of the statement that the divine glory, if fully revealed to man, would cause death. Nevertheless, such an appearance of the Lord's glory to Paul made him as really a witness of Jesus' resurrection as were the other eleven apostles, for neither did they see Jesus, in reality, in his glorious spirit person; they saw him as he appeared in bodies of flesh, assumed for the very purpose of appearing and instructing; Paul saw him partially; that is to say, he saw some of the light from his glorious presence, sufficient to give him absolute assurance that Jesus was no longer, as he had supposed, the dead Nazarene, but the resurrected, glorified, heavenly Lord, a quickening spirit.

Let us note how the Lord chose a devout man amongst the disciples, when he would send a message to Paul, the record being that Ananias was esteemed amongst the Jews as a good man; and so we should always expect that those whom the Lord would choose as his special messengers would be good men, devout men, pious men;--not frivolous, not worldly, not immoral. And should we ever find any, claiming to be the ministers of the truth, of immoral character, we would have good reason to doubt them; or to suppose that if the Lord even had used them once, he would no longer use such after they had departed from the ways of righteousness. Nevertheless, we are to remember that we must not judge any hastily upon the testimony of the worldly, and especially not according to the witness of enemies of the truth, however religious those enemies may claim to be, but should remember our Lord's word, "They shall say all manner of evil against you falsely for my sake."

Altho the Lord, at the hands of Ananias, performed a miracle on the eyes of Saul, so that scales fell from them, and he was able to look upon Ananias, nevertheless, we have every reason to believe that his eyes were never restored to their former strength, and that it was for this reason that the Christian brethren would have gladly plucked out their own eyes for him (Gal. 4:15); for this reason, also, that, altho a learned man, he wrote very few of his own epistles, and was largely dependent upon his companions, tho himself invariably the chief speaker and writer. This was the "thorn in the flesh," which the Lord was not pleased to remove entirely, and which the Apostle learned to rejoice in ultimately, when he came to know that through this God's mercy and grace would abound toward him the more.--Gal. 6:11; 2 Cor. 12:7-9.

And so with us: we might be inclined to think that if we had greater talents and abilities, or we were relieved of certain weaknesses of the flesh, it would be better for us and for the Lord's cause; yet we are to remember the Master's words again, that we are to "seek first the Kingdom of heaven," and that all things needful of an earthly kind will be added to us. Our desires and prayers are not to

be for the earthly things after which the Gentiles seek, but are to be chiefly for the spiritual things. We are to remember that as respects our earthly interests they have all been committed to the Lord, and that he knoweth what things we have need of before we ask him, and that he has promised to do for us in every matter exceeding abundantly better things than we could ask or think, as viewed from the standpoint of our spiritual and eternal interests. We surely would not want temporal blessings which would in any degree hinder our attainment to the exceeding great and precious promises--the spiritual things which God hath in reservation for them that love him.

Let us note carefully the message God sent to Paul through Ananias. "The God of our fathers hath *chosen thee*, that thou shouldst know his will, and see that just one, and shouldst hear the voice of his mouth." Ah! how few indeed realize the truth of the Master's statement, "No man can come to me except the Father which sent me *draw him*." How few realize that God, during this present time, is not attempting to gather the world into his arms, but merely, as the Scriptures abundantly declare, is taking out from amongst the people a peculiar people, a little flock, to constitute the Bride, the Lamb's wife and joint-heir. If all who have heard the voice of Jesus speaking to them through his Word, and who, with the eye of faith, have seen him, and into whose hearts the light of the glory of God, above the brightness of all earthly light, has shined, could but realize how great a favor has come upon them, it would indeed be a great stimulus to their appreciation of the privileges thus put within their grasp. They would see that all this signifies that we are called to be coworkers together with God, to be fellow-sufferers with Jesus in this Gospel age of sacrifice for righteousness' sake, and to be fellow-heirs with him in the coming age, in which the reign of righteousness shall prevail to the blessing of all the families of the earth, and the subjugation of Satan and sin.

This was the thought conveyed to Paul: that the meaning of the experience which had come to him was, that he had been found of such condition of heart as to be worthy to be a witness for God and for Jesus respecting the things he had seen and heard. And so with each of us; we are not to attempt to tell to others things which we have not seen and have not heard ourselves; but first of all the eye of appreciation and faith must be opened, and the ear of understanding unstopped, and then out of that which we ourselves hear from the Lord, through his appointed agencies and ministers, we are in turn to repeat to others-- dispensing the divine favor according to our capacity for appreciation and for utterance.

The Lord's declaration to Ananias respecting Paul was, "He is a chosen vessel unto me...I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake." (Acts 9:15,16.) Thus it is with all of the Lord's chosen ones, like the Captain of our salvation, Jesus, each and all must learn and prove their obedience and loyalty to the divine plan by suffering in this present time, that they may be thus fitted and prepared for the glory, honor and immortality of the Kingdom. And to be chosen to suffer much implies qualification for the higher glory hereafter. Thus it was with our Lord and with the apostles: and thus it is written, for our encouragement, that the sufferings of this present time work out "for us a far more exceeding and an eternal weight of glory."--2 Cor. 4:17.

Let us also note and apply the words of Ananias, "And now why tarest thou? Arise and be baptized, and wash away thy sins,

calling upon the name of the Lord." ⁽¹⁾There is a directness in this address that is worthy of being copied by all who have an influence upon others, and who are seeking to bring them along in the right way. Urge them to promptness, to full and complete obedience, to a full confession of the Lord and the truth. If they are not inclined to promptly obey after their eyes of faith have seen the Lord, and after their ears have heard his voice, they will be much less likely to be ready to make a consecration after a while, when the world and the flesh and the devil will say to them, Do not be an extremist, now; be moderate; do not make a full consecration of yourself to the Lord. Your neighbors and friends will think you beside yourself, and it will interfere with your hopes and prospects, and turn your friends into enemies. It will cost you too much; go slowly. The right course for every one who would give instruction is that of Ananias, to favor prompt obedience. "The time past of our lives sufficeth us" to have misrepresented the Lord, his character and his plan *to any extent*. The remainder of life is far too short to show forth the praise of him whom we now see to be the glorious one, the author and finisher of our faith.

The baptism of John, which was instituted for Jews, was a baptism unto repentance and remission of sins--not original sin, but sins against the Jewish covenant, and sins against Jesus, the Messiah who fulfilled that Covenant. This was John's baptism, the one that was appropriate to the Jews; for every Jew who was in harmony with his God and with his covenant had his original sin covered under the arrangement of the Mosaic Law, in the sacrifices which took place year by year continually, until the great sacrifice came, the antitypical one, which superseded all others. Every true Israelite, therefore, who was in Moses under the Jewish Law Covenant, by virtue of Christ's work in taking the place of Moses, and in substituting the New Covenant for the Law Covenant, was, so to speak, transferred from the Old to the ⁽²⁾New; from Moses into Christ; and the *typical* covering of original sin became *actual* in Christ. Therefore the Jews were everywhere called upon to repent and to be baptized *for the remission of their sins against their covenant*; that thus they might be in full accord with the Lord. This baptism for the remission of sins, John's baptism, was for the Jews only, and not for the Gentiles, who were not under the Mosaic covenant nor in Moses (baptized into Moses--1 Cor. 10:2), and hence in the transfer of the Mosaic institution into the Christian we were not transferred into Christ. Baptism to the Gentiles means an admission into Christ--into the body or Church of Christ, as the Apostle explains.--Rom. 6:3-5.

Noting that the Apostle Paul was so faithful a follower of the Lord Jesus, and that his enlightenment in many respects so clearly illustrates our own spiritual enlightenment in this harvest-time, let us lay well to heart the Golden Text, the Apostle's words, "I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision." Let us, dear brethren and sisters, who have seen in the light of this harvest-time the light of the Lord's presence (*parousia*), shining above the brightness of all earthly light, giving a light of the knowledge of the glory of God, showing us something of the divine character and plan--let us not be disobedient unto the heavenly vision, but faithful to our privileges and opportunities in letting the light that has shined into our hearts and minds so shine out to others in our words, and in the living epistles of our lives, that men may glorify our Father which is in heaven.

⁽¹⁾ Dec. 2 Manna, Acts 22:16

⁽²⁾ Important: See New Covenant Clarifications below:

IMPORTANT NEW COVENANT CLARIFICATIONS

When reading above R2823, keep these clarifications & the 6th Vol. foreword in mind:

CHURCH NOT UNDER THE NEW COVENANT

Fii "Inadvertently, the name New Covenant, which belongs to God's dealings with the world during the Millennium, has been used in respect to the Covenant which is now in operation during this Gospel Age with the Church. Our Covenant, of course, is a new covenant in the sense that it is different from the Jewish Covenant of Mt. Sinai, but it is not THE New Covenant. The Church's Covenant is referred to in the Bible as a "Covenant by Sacrifice."

NEW COVENANT WILL BE WITH ISRAEL IN THE FUTURE (Jer 31:31)

R4321 "As the old Law Covenant was with

Israel only, so the New (Law) Covenant will be with Israel only. Other nations will share it by becoming Israelites, "Proselytes of the gate," not under the old but under the New Covenant. (Ezek. 16:60,61.) "He that hath an ear to hear, let him hear." [Isa 56:6-7]

BETTER SACRIFICES

R5294 "Unless there were Better Sacrifices, there would be *no basis* for that New Covenant." (Heb 9:23)

(Heb 9:16 Wilson Diaglott) "For where a covenant exists, the death of that which has ratified it is necessary to be produced;"

R4605 "We have been invited to share in our Lord's "Cup," have been invited to participate with him in this blood of the New Covenant, this blood which is to ratify, to seal the New Covenant"

MEMBERSHIP IN GREAT MEDIATOR R4477 "The New Covenant is not yet sealed.

The blood of Jesus -- the merit of his sacrifice -- which will eventually seal the New Covenant at the end of this age, is now being *otherwise used*. It has been applied to the Church for her Justification, in order that she might have justified human rights to sacrifice and thereby might come into membership in the Body of Christ, the great Mediator, the antitype of Moses, whom God has been raising up during this Gospel Age. (Acts 3:23.) So far from telling us that Christ sealed the New Covenant, the Scriptures tell us the very reverse, namely, that he became the "*surety*" of it. (Heb. 7:22.) A sealed Covenant needs no "*surety*," but an unsealed Covenant does need a "*surety*."

R5963 See subtitle "How Jews Were Transferred from Moses to Christ" for concise yet comprehensive info. on this Transfer.