

Questions of Correspondents.

Q. Bro. R., please give me your view of 1 Pet. 3:18-20, which says that Jesus Christ was "quickened by the Spirit by which also he went and preached unto the Spirits in prison, which sometime were disobedient when once the long suffering of God waited in the days of Noah while the ark was a preparing."

A. We understand this to teach that the Spirit which raised Jesus from death was the same which while the ark was preparing preached through Noah ("a preacher of righteousness") to the antediluvian sinners, now in the great prison house of death.

Q. Bro. R., you have shown, I think clearly and scripturally that the body of Christ, as well as the head give their lives as sacrifices for sins, and that as his was the ransom price of "the household of faith," the body's life given during the Gospel Age is accepted as "filling up," or completing the work of the head "for the people" – the world. I see too that it seems to be the clear fulfillment of the goat sacrifice of Lev. 16., but there is one text which troubles me, i.e. Col. 1:24, where Paul says: "I now rejoice in my sufferings for you and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake which is the church." My difficulty is that the sacrifice is for the church while the type (Lev. 16) teaches that the sacrifice for the church was completed in the death of Jesus as typified by the bullock's dying for Priests and Levites, and that Paul's sacrifice and that of every other member of the body of Christ is "for the sins of the people" (the world), and is represented by the goat.

Can you suggest how we may harmonize these scriptures?

A. God accepts the offering of the High-priest, head and body – the second Adam and his Bride as the ransom price of the world's life, as the offset of the disobedience of the first Adam and his wife.

Adam and Eve were one in the transgression; Jesus Christ and his bride are one in the redemption of the world. Now consider that God has covenanted to accept our sacrifice of earth-life and nature; and has promised us the higher – the Divine – and we, Jesus and His body have accepted the conditions and covenanted to die. Next the question arises – How shall we die? Shall we go to the altar and knife as did the bullock and goat in the type? No, we have only to remember that the goat was to suffer and die as did the bullock which means that we have Christ Jesus as a pattern of how we are to give our lives.

He spent His life according to the Father's will in "doing good unto all men as he had opportunity, especially to the household of faith." And this is just what the Apostle enjoins us to do also. There are hundreds of ways of spending our life-power according to the talents we possess; in the household, in the workshop, in temperance reform, and in any other way we can bless and benefit humanity and exercise the Divine attribute love. But while it is good to do for any one, yet, Paul esteemed it a special privilege to spend and be spent "for the church which is His (Christ's) body." Jesus' time was spent largely in instructing the disciples, and we should esteem it a special honor to be permitted to do much and suffer much for each other, as long as we have life or strength to spend.

Suppose I bought an article of you for \$100, and came to you presenting the money and you said: Here is the article and the money too. I want you to spend this money, which is mine. Use it for the benefit of those you find needing it, especially any of my relatives. You will be acting as my agent and may use so much of it on yourself as you find necessary to the accomplishment of my work

(only). This would illustrate how we give ourselves, and how our Father accepts us (the body of Christ) as part, with our Head, of the world's "sin-offering" and also permits us to be his agents in doing good. Thus we in spending our lives and all that God has given us, are merely his stewards and were given all powers and blessings, not for ourselves, nor to keep, but to use for Him. Let us so do.

Q. Please explain 1 Pet. 4:6 "For this cause was the gospel preached also to them that are dead, that they might be judged according to men, in the flesh, but live according to God, in the Spirit."

A. This shows the double nature of one begotten of the Spirit – the body still human, the spirit of the mind Divine. Peter is exhorting to separateness from the world, not only our minds but also of our bodies as ruled over by our minds.

The gospel (good news of our redemption and the promise of glory,) was given us, that our lives should be influenced by it and that we should be separated from the world as "new creatures" thus living according to God in the Spirit and regarded by Him as "new [spiritual] creatures" while men who see no physical change in us, regard us still "as men in the flesh," and think it strange if we do not act as natural men.

"The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit." He understands not the begetting to a new nature, new hopes and aspirations, and thinks a self-sacrificed life unnatural; and so it is unnatural. Therefore we must have the new nature implanted before we can crucify the old.
