

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

BRO. RUSSELL – I have read carefully your articles in recent papers, touching the distinction between our human nature to which we become dead, and the Divine nature to which we are begotten, and hope soon to be born into its perfection. But I inquire: Is there not to some extent a vein of truth in the claim made by some, that before we reach the Divine nature and image we must be perfected on the natural plane, as human beings? In other words, while we see that to the gospel church alone, of all human beings, is given the "high calling," or promise of the spiritual nature, and the balance of mankind are to be merely restored to perfection as men – natural, earthly beings, is there not a sense in which the church share this restitution as well as the inheritance of spiritual things? And does it not seem that we must first come to the condition in which we can keep perfectly God's perfect law, which cannot be kept except by perfect beings?

ANS. To your first question we reply: Yes, we think there is a vein of truth in the claim that all mankind must be restored to perfection of the human nature before the Divine nature is attainable. But as there is a difference between the final attainment of believers – the Divine nature – and the final attainment of the world in general – restitution to the perfection, etc., of humanity, so there is a difference too in the way in which the church and world partake of restitution. "Jesus Christ by the grace of God tasted death for every man" – thus redeeming every man from sin and its consequences; and because of this purchase or ransom, all men must go free from sin and all its results; and it is for this reason, there is to be a restitution.

The restoring of mankind in general will be of the most literal kind; they will during the millennial age, come again to perfection of body and mind, so that no longer will they be "prone to sin as the

sparks to fly upward" but again at one with God. Having come to know good in contrast with evil, their restored powers will lead them to take pleasure in doing good and living in harmony with God. This will be to them the full completion of the great work of at-one-ment. Bringing into full harmony God and His creature, man, who has been out of harmony ever since sin entered the world. Thus we see that the effect of restitution to the world, will be the bringing of them again to a condition, where they will have full fellowship and communion with God, and be able to do those things which are well pleasing in his sight.

But now notice, that all these blessings of restoration to God's favor, etc., which are to come to the world in the next age are possessed by believers now – in the Gospel Age. Restitution to God's favor, etc., comes to believers by faith now. It comes to us, not actually as it will to the world. Instead of having a mental and physical restitution, we are justified or reckoned of God as though we were actually perfect, and instead of exacting of us perfection of thought, word and act, our best efforts in these directions are accepted of God as being perfect. In a word, as our sins were laid upon Jesus, so His righteousness is laid upon us. As he who knew no sin was reckoned and dealt with as a sinner, bearing the penalty of our sins – death – "in his own body on the tree," so we who were sinners are reckoned righteous and dealt with as such. He bore our sins; we bear his righteousness. As when he took our place and was treated as the sinner, the Father's face was withdrawn, and in his dying anguish he cried, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me;" so we who are justified, come into the light of God's countenance and are no more reckoned sinners, but saints; no more aliens, but sons; "and because we are sons, he hath sent forth his Spirit into our hearts, whereby we cry, Abba, Father." Jesus cried as a sinner; we cry as sons.

But this condition of reckoned righteousness – justification – is only of believers, and is entered into only by faith, and cannot be obtained by works "to him that believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.... Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven and whose sins are covered." Rom. 4:5-9. This righteousness or justification comes "upon all them that believe," "therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith." (Rom. 3:19-28.) This is our restitution, thus we who were aliens and afar off are made nigh to God by the blood of the cross – restored to his favor, as Adam was before sin. And it is our high joy that our standing in God's sight is no longer as sinners, but as sons in Christ "not having on our own righteousness...but that which is through the faith of Christ." (Phil. 3:9.) And if God reckons us justified and sinless, we should so reckon ourselves.

Our harmony with God comes because of justification – "Being justified (by faith) we have peace with God." This same result will be reached in the next age by mankind in general: Being restored fully, they will have "peace with God." We are apt, however to under-value our justification – our righteousness (ours because given to us by our head Jesus) God however puts a high value on it, reckons us – "whiter than snow," pure as Him whose righteousness we bear – if we abide in Him. Paul valued it properly when he said: "Who is he that condemneth [us]? It is Christ that died...Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth." Rom. 8:33. There is no appeal from this: The Judge of the Supreme Court of heaven says, "we are justified freely from all things" through the death of Jesus Christ His Son, who died the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to this justified condition.

"Free from the Law, oh happy condition,
Jesus hath died and there is remission."

Now how much more restitution do you want – how much more could you ask? Is not everything that the world will have in the future, now yours by faith?

"How firm a foundation ye saints of the Lord;
Is laid for your faith in his excellent word.
What more can he say than to you he hath said,
You who unto Jesus for refuge have fled."

He says – "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit." Rom. 8:1. It seems to us that the only thing which we could further ask is – why has our Father seen best to deal with us by imputing righteousness through faith, and with the masses of mankind by restoring actually?

We have already given our views of why, and now repeat: that Restitution to perfection of the human nature (which is something grand and glorious, and inferior only when compared with the high exaltation of the church to the divine plane of spiritual perfection) is the full fruition of all promises held out for the world in the bible; but "God (has) provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect," (restored – Heb. 11:40). Therefore because God has a "better thing" for us – our high calling to joint-heirship with Jesus Christ our Lord, He has found it necessary to give us a schooling and discipline in the school of faith, and calls us out from the world while evil is allowed to triumph in order that, as his sons, we may be trained to overcome evil. He calls us out from the world that we should "walk by faith and not by sight."

These lives are justified then given **[R193 : page 8]** to us that we may have something to offer. As our Leader (Jesus) was the just one and gave his life a sacrifice, so when we come to realize that we are justified we esteem it a privilege to "present our bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, our reasonable service." It is

acceptable because it is holy; it is holy because it is justified; it is justified because Christ died.

To your second question I reply: It certainly is true, as you say, that none but perfect beings can keep God's perfect law, and I will go further and add that none but perfect beings are acceptable with God. And when God's plans are all accomplished there will be nothing imperfect – all things will either be brought to perfection or destroyed.

But as we have just proved we are perfect beings, being justified by Christ Jesus and therefore are acceptable with God by Jesus Christ. And though "by the deeds of the Law shall no flesh be justified in his sight, we being justified not by the deeds of the law but by faith, can "do those things which are well pleasing in his sight." (1 John 3:21). And the righteousness of the law (love) is fulfilled in us who walk not after the flesh but after the spirit. (Rom. 8:4,) i.e.: We are reckoned as having kept the Law perfectly while we walk after the Spirit – use our endeavors to follow the leadings of our new nature.

In conclusion let me say: If we receive our share of restitution now, and present our justified lives a sacrifice acceptable to God, we need look for no second restitution, nor can I think that any Christian who realizes his perfect standing in Christ, and the begetting of the Spirit to newness of life (the perfect spiritual) has any desire for the restoration of the old (human) nature which he has crucified, but rather for the new – divine nature – into which we so soon hope to come, when we shall be like him and see him as he is.

If only perfect beings can keep the law of God perfectly does it not prove that Jesus was more perfect than his human nature was spotless from the imperfections of the race whose likeness he took? We think so. How then, say some, Jesus was as imperfect physically, etc., as any member of the fallen human race – "on the lowest round of the ladder" – yet all admit that Jesus **[R194 : page 8]** kept the whole law.

QUES. Dear Editor, please explain 1 Cor. 14:34. Let the women keep silence in the churches, for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but let them be under obedience as also saith the law. (Gen. 3:16).

ANS. It is not for us to say why, when God gives no reasons. Neither can we tell why Jesus sent none of the noble and good women who believed on him to preach, when he sent first the twelve and then the seventy before his face. However, much may be said of good accomplished by women in the temperance cause, etc., we nevertheless believe that this scripture has never been disregarded with impunity. We believe woman to be a type of the church, and man the type of Christ the head of the church, and we might draw the lesson that we, the spouse of Christ, are not to dispute or instruct in the church, but listen to the voice of our Head – give ear to his word.

QUES. Bro. Russell, please give us your views of Job 7:9, and 14:12. Does Job mean that man will not have a resurrection?

ANS. In considering these and other scriptures, we should remember that different statements are true from different standpoints; for instance, Isaiah said "Unto us a child is born." This is true, and in the past; he also said: "The government shall be upon his shoulders." This will be true in due time. David said, personating Jesus – They gave me gall, etc., and parted my raiment among them. This has been fulfilled but some other matters are still future, as for instance: "The Lord reigneth; let the earth keep silence," etc. This last will not be fulfilled until He shall take his great power and reign, when we shall reign with him a thousand years. So in the sayings of Job. He saw mankind going down into death, and that being sinners they had no hope of saving themselves, and says, "He that goeth down to the grave shall come up no more." This was properly the human standpoint, for remember that as yet Jesus had not died – the ransom price had not been paid, and the resurrection was little understood until Jesus

"abolished (vanquished) death and brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel." (2 Tim. 1:10).

The necessity of pardon for sins is recognized in Ver. 21. Job well knew that he could not "climb up and win life for himself;" that sin would cause him to sleep in the dust; and yet he seems to realize that God intended furnishing a ransom for sin – to take away the sin of the world – and he looks forward to the millennial or Restitution morn, for though he should be gone to dust, yet he says: "Thou shalt seek me in the morning." In 14:12, the same general hope is expressed: "So man lieth down and riseth not." A tree might be cut off and sprout again, but not so man, he cannot sprout, he cannot help himself; he must await the great deliverer, who says: "I, (the Redeemer of the race – Jesus,) have the keys of death and hades" (the grave) "'Til the heavens be no more, (symbol of present rule of evil or Satan" – the prince of the powers of the air" – heavens) they shall not awake nor be raised out of their sleep."

We have heretofore noticed, that Job was used as a representative of the world in general – the great restitution masses, (whether he personally will have anything more than restitution we are not prepared to say,) but in his life he is used as a great illustration of the race. Possessing much at first he loses almost all, and then a time of restitution comes and he has as many sons and daughters, comforts, friends, etc., as at first. So our race was at first possessed of wonderful blessings of life, health, etc., almost all of which is now gone; but like Job their type they are soon to have a "restitution of all things which God hath spoken by the mouth of all the holy prophets since the world began." (Acts 3:21.)

And not only does Job represent the world in his experience, but he speaks for them when he says – "Oh that thou wouldest hide me in the grave; that thou wouldest keep me secret (hid) until thy wrath be past; that thou wouldest appoint me a set time and remember

me....Thou shalt call and I will answer thee; thou wilt have a desire to the work of thy hands." (Vs. 13-15.) The saints are to be raised before the day of wrath for "This honor hath all his saints to execute the judgments written." (Psa. 149:9.) But the class for whom Job speaks do not arise until the time of trouble is over – the present heavens (Satan's control) be no more and the new heavens (spiritual government of Christ and his bride over earth) be fully established.

QUES. Please explain Rev. 10:6: The angel sware "that there should be time no longer."

ANS. Many are the "times and seasons which God hath put in his own power," and no doubt each of these will end as its work is accomplished; many have so ended already, for instance, the time of God's favor to fleshly Israel – the Jewish age – ended; and the time of favor to the gentiles – the gospel age – during which God is taking out of the gentiles a people for His name (His bride) is also to end, and it is this Gospel time or age which we understand to be referred to as the "time to be no longer." Verse 7 shows this: "But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel – "The seventh trump" – "The last trump" – "The trump of God," (1 Cor. 15:52, 1 Thes. 4:16, and Rev. 11, 15, 18, 19,) [during which the first resurrection and change of living saints occurs] the mystery of God should be finished."

Both God's plan and His church are called a "mystery." Neither are comprehended by the world. When, however, the Gospel age or time ends, the church is exalted; and after the time of trouble the great work of blessing all the families of earth begins, the mystery both of the church and God's plan will be finished, and both will shine forth to the praise of Him who loved us and bought us with His own precious blood. God will no longer veil His plans and be thought vengeful and merciless, but the bud that had the bitter taste will bloom to a beautiful and fragrant flower. His goodness in full glory shine declaring: "God is LOVE."

QUES. Bro. Russell, please explain the command concerning feet washing. John 13? It seems to be so plain a command I wonder why it is so little observed.

ANS. To our understanding, the lesson here taught the disciples by our Lord is humility, and that they should love one another to such an extent that they would consider no service too great nor too degrading which would minister to each other's comfort. "Let him that would be chief among you become servant of all." "If I, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, you ought also to wash one another's feet." And if you and I lived in the same warm country and wore the same kind of shoe or sandal which permitted the feet to be soiled and soiled by the dirt and sand, it would no doubt be a great comfort and privilege for us to wash one another's feet. But while we live as we do, under totally different circumstances, climate, etc., it would be anything but a service to me if you were to insist upon washing my feet as frequently as they do in Palestine – several times a day.

But there are hundreds of opportunities of showing the meek, lowly and loving spirit of our Master. Would that Christians could realize that, as God's stewards and servants, it is not self we are to minister to and serve and pamper, but it is our mission to "do good unto all men as we have opportunity, especially to the household of faith," remembering that we are to walk in His footsteps who "came not to be ministered unto (served), but to minister (serve) and to give his life a ransom for many."

QUES. Please explain Rev. 20:5. The rest of the dead lived not again until the 1,000 years were finished.

ANS. We understand that the resurrection is of two general divisions: One of which is the resurrection to the immortal condition. ["Neither can they die any more." (Luke 20:36,) "on such, the second death hath NO POWER." (Rev. 20:6,)] and is composed exclusively of "overcomers." This is scripturally called "The resurrection," "The

first resurrection," etc. This first resurrection (to immortality) commenced 1,800 years ago in the person of Jesus our Lord "who is head over the church (of overcomers) which is His body" and it will be complete when the "overcomers" of this age are made like Him – the Bridegroom and Bride – head and body united. This will complete the resurrection to "Immortal life." (See article "The narrow way to life," October No. 1880, "Z.W.T.")

All the balance of mankind are to be raised, but "every man in his own order." The second company of the Gospel church – the great company who "come up out of great tribulation" will be second in order. These come to the spiritual condition but never reach Immortality, the prize for which all christians now are running and of which Paul says: "So run that you may obtain," &c.

After these comes the resurrection of Jews and Gentiles of all ages, (in what order we know not except that it will be God's order.) Their resurrection includes not only raising to partial life but also the bringing to perfect life, hence it is the restitution and takes place during the Millennial age. "The times (years) of Restitution."

The words found in Rev. 20:5 of the common version of the Bible, viz.: "But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished," are not found in the old and authentic copies of Revelation.

Read the chapter, omitting these words, and you will find it more and better connected, and in harmony with the balance of the Bible. [See Z.W.T., vol. I, No. 6, page 8.]
