

JUSTIFICATION, SANCTIFICATION, REDEMPTION.

These are the three steps by which we are to reach "the prize of our high calling" – glory, honor and immortality. Not one of these steps can be omitted by those who win the great prize, nor can they be taken in any way but their order as directed in the Scriptures.

Justification comes first as a necessity, because, all the human race being sinners, as such God could not either sanctify or glorify them; therefore, by some means, they must be "made free from sin" (brought to a condition of sin-less-ness) in order that they might "have their fruit unto holiness" (sanctification), and eventually receive "the end thereof – eternal life" (redemption). Rom. 6:22.

As sinners, men "are not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can they be." (Rom. 8:7). We are "made free from sin" by faith; that is, we are told of God that a ransom has been given for our sin, and that if we by faith accept the ransom, he no longer regards or treats us as sinners, but as perfect and sinless beings. This cleansing from sin is a complete work. You are justified – reckoned of God just and perfect, but it cannot be seen with the natural eye. You cannot realize that physically you are any more perfect than before you believed yourself justified. It is entirely by the eye of faith that you know yourself now as a being, justified freely from all things. God's word declares it and you believe Him.

We need not fear that our justification is incomplete, for Jehovah Himself is the justifier, as we read, God is "just and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus" (Rom. 3:26), and again, "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth."

Upon what grounds does God reckon human sinners as justified or righteous persons? Because the ransom for our sins has been paid by Jesus, who "Himself bare our sins in His own body on the tree." (1 Pet. 2:24). For "Christ suffered, the just for the unjust (sinners), that He might bring us to God" (1 Pet. 3:18) as justified beings. Jesus was treated as a sinner on our behalf, and we are now treated as just persons on His behalf. As we read again, "Ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus." (1 Cor. 6:11). And again, "Being now justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him." (Rom. 5:9). But

ONLY BELIEVERS ARE JUSTIFIED

during this Gospel age. They who do not believe that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that "He rose again the third day," for our justification (1 Cor. 15:14; Rom. 4:25), are not justified: "Ye are yet in your sins." So we read, God "is the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." Again, "All that believe are justified from all things" (Acts 13:39), and "A man is justified by faith." (Gal. 2:16 and 3:24).

When we believe the "good news" of our justification, it causes us joy and peace to realize that we may now come to God; and we no longer dread but now love God, because we see His goodness and love, for "herein is the love of God manifested." (1 Jno. 4:9).

We are thus brought into fellowship with God as justified human beings – "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God." (Rom. 5:1). Few, very few, lay hold upon justification fully; few believe God that they "are justified from all things" and are in God's sight clothed in the spotlessness of Jesus, in whom was no sin; consequently very few have the joy and peace which spring from believing. And it is no uncommon thing to hear, in church meetings of all denominations, men and women tell God that they know themselves to be "miserable sinners." Poor creatures, no wonder they agonize and daily ask the forgiveness of those sins which God's word declares are forgiven. 2 Pet. 1:9. They know not that they partake of the justification by believing. If they would only

believe God, they would have the realization of forgiveness, and consequently joy and peace. "For without faith it is impossible to please God." Beyond this point of rejoicing in a consciousness of forgiveness of sins, and acceptableness in God's sight, few Christians go.

Did you ever think why God has [R199 : page 7] made known to us our justification now, but keeps it hidden from the great mass of the race until the millennial age, though the ransom price is eventually to release all mankind from sin and its penalty, and bring them to the same condition of acceptance – sinlessness – perfection which we now enjoy by faith? It is because God has a plan which He is working out according to the counsel of His own will, and a part of that plan is that He will select from among mankind a number who will eventually be transferred from the earthly conditions and human nature to spiritual conditions and the "divine nature" – to be "heirs of God, joint heirs with Jesus Christ our Lord."

God's object in the development of this "little flock" is two-fold: first, He will make them everlasting monuments of His goodness, to be known and read of angels and men. As Paul expresses it (Eph. 2:7), God's plan in the development of the Gospel church of overcomers, is, "That in the ages to come, He might show the exceeding riches of His grace, in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus." The second part of God's [R200 : page 7] plan, in which we are directly associated, is, that He purposes to use us during the next – millennial – age as kings (rulers) and priests (teachers), when we shall reign with Christ a thousand years. (Rev. 5:10, 20:6). Thus shall the "seed," of which Jesus is the head, bless all the families of the earth. (Gal. 3:29).

No sinners are called to have part in this "high calling, which is of God in Christ Jesus." True, Jesus called "sinners to repentance" – so does the word of God, and all his children seek to bring men to repentance and faith in Christ and consequent justification. But only the justified ones are called to be "kings and priests unto God, and to reign

on the earth." It is worse than useless to present the grand prize for which we run to the attention of sinners – the unjustified. For the natural man receiveth not the things of the spirit of God, neither can he know them, for they are spiritually discerned – they are foolishness unto him. Therefore, "cast not your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you."

This being true, that none are called to the high calling except the justified ones, the fact that you know of your justification may be the proof to you that you are one of those whom God has "called" to spiritual life and joint-heirship with Jesus. What a blessed privilege to be called with such a high calling. Now do you realize that you are called to be a member of the Bride of Christ? Then remember who called you – God; and that "Faithful is He that calleth you, who also will do it." (1 Thess. 5:24). Our Father mocks none with a call which they cannot attain to. His grace is sufficient for us.

All who are called may take the second step –

SANCTIFICATION

To sanctify is to set apart or separate to a special thing or use. God's will is that all justified ones should be sanctified or set apart to his service as we read: "This is the will of God even your (believers) sanctification." (1 Thes. 4:3.) There are two parts to sanctification – first ours, secondly God's part. As we have seen, God provides for our justification as men and then calls us to set apart – sanctify – or consecrate to him, that justified humanity. When we do, thus consecrate or give up our will, our time, talent, life and all we have and are to God, and ask him to take our little all and use it as seemeth to him good, and agree to let the will of God dwell in us richly – when we have done this we have done all that we can do; and here God who accepts of every such sacrifice, begins His part of the sanctification work. He begins to use this will resigned to his care and "to work in you both to will and to do" in harmony with his will. From that moment it is no longer you (the

human) but "Christ in you." Even the earthly (human) body, under the new controlling will (God's) is used in God's service and is thereby made holy.

From this moment when we give consecrate – ourselves – we are reckoned dead, as human beings for the human will, should be buried from that moment forward; and when the will of God – the mind of Christ – the Holy Spirit takes possession of us so that it becomes our will and our mind, we are called "new creatures" – we are thus begotten to newness of life. This new creature is only an embryo being: It is not complete; but it grows and develops and "we all with open face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory even as by the Spirit of the Lord." (2 Cor. 3:18.) Thus as new spiritual creatures we grow in his likeness during the time we abide in this earthly condition. As the spiritual nature grows stronger the human nature grows weaker and is the easier to keep dead, for I must not only give up my will to God, but keep it in a surrendered condition, "keep my body under" – under God's will.

As the new spiritual nature grows it longs for its perfection when it will no longer be trammled and fettered by human conditions, but be "like unto Christ's glorious body." This is promised us – we have been begotten, and by and by shall be born of the Spirit – spiritual bodies, for "that which is born of the Spirit is Spirit," just as truly as "that which was born of the flesh was flesh." Our begetting we have and our spiritual life is begun. It is to be completed, perfected, when this corruptible, and mortal condition shall give place to the incorruptible, immortal conditions of the Spiritual body. This will be at the moment of resurrection to those who sleep in Jesus – raised spiritual bodies; and it will be the moment of change to the living (from the fleshly body to their own spiritual bodies – theirs as new creatures.) Thus, "we which are alive and remain shall be changed in a moment." 1 Cor. 15:52.

"If I in Thy likeness, O Lord, may awake,

And shine a pure image of Thee,
Then I shall be satisfied when I can break
The fetters of flesh and be free.
When on Thine own image in me Thou hast smiled,
Within Thy blest mansion, and when
The arms of my Father encircle His child,
O! I shall be satisfied then.
And O! the blest morning already is here;
The shadows of nature do fade;
And soon in Thy likeness I'll with Thee appear,
In glory and beauty arrayed."

This change of residence or condition, from the earthly body to the spiritual body is the third step of our development, viz:

REDEMPTION.

This redemption from the present earthly conditions, finishes and completes our salvation and the glory of power will follow.

Toward this the end of the race we are looking with longing eyes, "Ourselves, that have the first fruits (begetting) of the Spirit, even we groan within ourselves waiting for sonship, – the redemption of our body" (the body of which Jesus is the head and all overcomers are members.) Rom. 8:23.

THE POWER WHICH SANCTIFIES.

It is not a power of physical force that is used by the Spirit of God in our development, but a mental power which appeals to our minds and wills.

The Spirit appeals to our reason, and uses the word of God as its agent. In the Word, the Spirit has in former ages stored up, both by prophetic utterances and Law shadows and types, those truths which

God designed should during this Gospel age be the food to sanctify the body of Christ and build it up in the most holy faith. And we act wisely if we make use of this spiritual food. ("Thy words were found and I did eat them." Jer. 15:16). It is furnished us for the purpose of sanctifying us. If we go to our Father and say, Father, I give myself all to thee; I pray thee, set me apart as holy to thy service, both now and hereafter. Give me needed strength to do thy will. He answers, yes, my child, I have already provided a rich store-house of truth, from which, if you eat, you shall have the strength you ask. "Knock, and it shall be opened unto you" – seek, and you shall find."

The seeker returns, saying, Father, I found the store-house, but saw little but plain food exposed to view; most of the choice viands must have been locked up in the great closets which the keys did not seem to fit. Father, give me strength in some other way. Not so, my child. Part of your lesson is to learn that my way is best; that my way of giving is your best way of receiving strength. Go; your strength, joy, zeal and love for me will increase as one after another these closets open before you, revealing their rich treasures.

Yes, the word of God is the treasure-house of our Father, in which He has stored truth to sanctify the church in every age, wherein is "given us exceeding great and precious promises, that by these we might become partakers of the Divine nature" (2 Pet. 1:2,4). In it is revealed "the love of Christ (which) constraineth us." (2 Cor. 5:14), and by means of it our Master prayed that we should be sanctified: "Father sanctify them through Thy truth. Thy word is truth." (John 17:17.) What Christian, then, who desires sanctification can afford to ignore the Scriptures? Which one will say he has no time to examine and seek in it for truth? As well say he has no time for sanctification. "It is the power of God unto salvation." (Rom. 1:16.) Let us, then, who seek this great salvation – high calling – say to ourselves as Paul said to Timothy (2 Tim. 3:15-17), "From a child thou hast known the Holy Scriptures

which are able to make thee wise unto salvation." "All Scripture given by inspiration of God is profitable, for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."

Now call to mind the steps: First, justification of the human nature; second, a consecration or sacrifice of that human nature to God, its consequent death and the beginning of your existence as a spiritual new creature in the human body during the present life; third, the completion of your new, divine nature, by the power of God, when you will be like unto Christ's glorious body – who is the express image of the Father's person. Glorious, high calling! You are called: "Many are called, few are chosen," "Make your calling and election sure."

Do you ask how you can make it sure? I answer, by doing according to your covenant; give up your all to Father and let Him use you as he sees best

"All for Jesus! all for Jesus!

All your being's ransomed power:

All your thoughts and words and doings,

All your days and all your hours."

"If you do these things (which you covenanted) ye shall never fall: for so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." (2 Pet. 1:10-11.) God will surely keep His part of the agreement [Faithful is He that called you.] "If we suffer, we shall also reign with Him." (2 Tim. 2:12.)
