

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

Q. Wherein consists the difference between "the Bride" and the great company if both have spiritual bodies?

A. Angels are spiritual bodies; but "unto which of the angels said God at any time, Thou art my son, this day have I begotten thee?" (Heb. 1:5.) But "when he bringeth the first-born (Jesus) into the world (first-born from the dead, to the divine nature, at his resurrection) he saith, "Let all the angels of God worship him" – render the homage due to his nature and office. (Heb. 1:5,6.) He became a partaker of the divine nature, and it is fitting that all other forms of life should worship divinity. "God hath highly exalted him (Jesus) and given him a name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven (heavenly beings – angels) and things in earth, (men) and things under the earth, (the dead when raised to life) and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord (master, ruler) to the glory of God the Father." (Phil. 2:9-11.) From 1 Cor. 15:40,41 we learn that there are different degrees of glory on the celestial, or spiritual plane, illustrated by sun, moon, and different stars, just as verse 39 calls attention to the fact there are different degrees of glory on the terrestrial, or earthly plane.

Though both companies will be spiritual beings, the Bride is joint-heir with her Lord, who is "appointed heir of all things; being made so much better than the angels, (other spiritual beings), as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they." (Heb. 1:2-4.) Thus, though the "great company" will be the companions of the Bride, spiritual beings, (Psa. 45:14; Rev. 7:15) there will be a very great difference in the degrees of glory. (See "Food," page 134 and 121.)

Q. What is the work of the Bride in making herself ready?

A. The Bride, as we have seen, is a company composed of many members. Paul says, "Ye are the body of Christ and members in particular"; and again, "Ye are members one of another"; and one is not to say to another, I have no need of you: The foot member must minister to the hand and the hand to the foot, and all, by a mutual and vital union of spirit with the Head, are to build each other up. (Jude, verse 20.) All the members have one aim, one joyful hope, one work of preparation – adorning for the marriage. She is to put on the spotless robe of Christ's righteousness (imputed to her by faith in the ransom) and to keep the same "unspotted from the world." And not only so, but she is to adorn it with fine "needle work." (Psa. 45:14.) The Christ-like character is to be wrought out in her life. As Paul expresses it, she is to "add to her faith" the various Christian graces. We must help one another in this important work.

Each member has a work to do in the making ready: Some may travel and preach, some may write, some publish the grace of God by printing it, some may teach more privately, some may publish it by furnishing of the Lord's funds entrusted to their care, some may seek out the "meek" (see Isa. 61:1) and put words in their ears and reading into their hands, and the work of all is thus to build up yourselves in the most holy faith. It is thus that the "Bride makes herself ready." It was by the faithfulness of some of the other members that these "glad tidings" ever reached your ears and gladdened and sanctified your heart; and now you, if a member of that company, are doing what you can to "make ready" others. To be ready to help each other, we must diligently hearken and incline our ear to the word of truth, forget the world and worldly associations. (Psa. 45:10.) "So shall the King greatly desire thy beauty; for he is thy Lord." (verse 11.)

Q. Please explain 1 Pet. 3:19,20. I have not gotten clearly in mind what becomes of the spirits of men from death until the resurrection.

A. (By Bro. Smith.) Does not the Scripture you quote state the condition of "spirits in prison"? The first question that would naturally occur, in examining this passage, would be, When did Christ preach to them? We find the answer in verse 20: "When once the patience of God waited in the days of Noah." Gen. 6:3 refers to Noah's days: "The Lord said, My spirit shall not always strive with man." It is not unreasonable, then, to say he was at that time striving with man.

The general belief, that Christ preached to these spirits during his death, we think, unscriptural, for then other spirits than those of Noah's day could have heard him.

None knew better than Jesus that Scripture: "There is no knowledge nor device in the grave;" hence he would never go there to preach. Isa. 42:7; 49:9 and 61:1 state that Christ is to deliver death's prisoners. He did not do so at his first advent (excepting the temporary deliverance of Lazarus and a few others), but will in due time set at liberty all the captives and open the prison doors of hades (the tomb) to all captives.

Our understanding, then, of 1 Pet. 3:19,20 is this: Those of Noah's day who were disobedient, and to whom Christ preached by Noah, are NOW in prison. If any Scripture teaches otherwise, we shall be glad to have our attention called to it.

Q. "Would not an earnest, aggressive organization (or sect), built upon scriptural lines, be the best means of spreading and publishing the real Good Tidings? We must have fellowship and sympathy. Union is strength. It is not the skirmishers that win the battle, but the disciplined and solid battalions."

A. We believe that a visible organization, and the adopting of some particular name, would tend to increase our numbers and make us appear more respectable in the estimation of the world. The natural man can see that a visibly organized body, with a definite purpose, is a thing of more or less power; therefore, they esteem the various organizations, from which we have come out, in obedience to the Master's call. But the natural man cannot understand how a company of people, with no organization which they can see, is ever going to accomplish anything. As they look upon us, they regard us simply as a few scattered skirmishers – a "peculiar people" – with very peculiar ideas and hopes, but not worthy of special notice.

But, though it is impossible for the natural man to see our organization, because he cannot understand the things of the Spirit of God, we trust that you can see that the true Church is most effectually organized, and in the best possible working order. (See the plan of our organization, as stated in October issue, under the caption "The Ekklesia.") The Apostle Paul urges all to unity of faith and purpose (Phil. 3:15,16 – Diaglott.) All led by the same Spirit may and do come to a knowledge of the same truth. Under our Captain, all the truly sanctified, however few or far separated in person, are closely united by the Spirit of Christ, in faith, hope and love; and, in following the Master's command, are moving in solid battalions for the accomplishment of his purposes. But, bear in mind, God is not dependent upon numbers (See Judges 7, as an illustration).

Recognizing this organization, which is of the Spirit, and desiring no assimilation whatever with the worldly, who cannot see or understand it, we are quite willing to bear the reproach of a peculiar people. We always refuse to be called by any other name than that of our Head – Christians – continually claiming that their

can be no division among those continually led by his Spirit and example as made known through his Word.

We disown none of our Lord's dear children. The weakest child of the household of faith (in Christ, our Redeemer) we gladly recognize as our brother. Some, in ignorance of their privilege of the communion of saints, are mixed with the various worldly organizations, to their great detriment. Though we cannot follow them there, we gladly welcome them when they come among us. Wherever we have hope of finding any such, in the various nominal Churches, etc., we tell them the "good tidings of great joy," and, by word and example, say, "Come out from among them (the worldly, though professing Christians) and be ye separate." How could we deliver this message if we were not obeying it? We have unbounded faith in our Captain; and this perfect organization, invisible to the world, marches on to certain and glorious victory.

"From victory unto victory,
His army he shall lead;
'Till every foe is vanquished,
And Christ is Lord indeed."

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FROM BROTHER BLUNDIN.

MY DEAR BROTHER RUSSELL: I am hungry, not, however, for the carnal things of this life – for I have no pleasure in these now and rejoice not in them – but rejoice in the truth, for I have tasted of the Good Word of God and have found it rich food. Oh, so rich that I cannot but hunger for more! and our beloved Father continues to give me the blessing promised to those that "hunger and thirst after righteousness; for they shall be filled." Join me in saying, Glory to his name, for he hath revealed unto us, who are not the great men nor the wise men of this world, his purposes in Christ, hid from the ages, but now made manifest unto us who are living in the end

of this Gospel age. To him be the glory and the honor for the power of that grace given unto me, to "Comprehend, with all saints, what is the length and breadth, and know the love of God which passeth all knowledge," and, by the power of his grace working in me, every thought and every action of my being is being wrought on and brought into subjection to his will – for "Whatever is not of faith is sin."

He has captivated my being, and day and night (when awake) I adore and bless him, and rejoice in the hope set before me, which is so supremely grand that I can now thank God that I was ever born, and that it is my privilege to walk in the footsteps of my Lord Jesus, that I may be partaker with him in bringing the world into unison with the mind of our God. And, by the strength of the grace given unto me, I am ready to bear all things that I may attain to that grace (favor) that shall be brought unto us at the revelation of our Lord Jesus; for "his reward is with him (for us who shall reign with him) and his work before him;" (Isaiah 60:10) "for all the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the Lord." (Psa. 22:27.)

I not only constantly pray, but earnestly seek, that the will of God may be wrought in me to the uttermost, that his name may be glorified in me, and he does graciously grant unto me opportunities of manifesting his name, by unfolding these beautiful truths that we have been feeding on for sometime past, to those who have an ear to hear; and the word is received gladly by those who intimate, by their manner or express themselves in words, as desirous of receiving more instruction in these good things "God hath revealed... unto us by his Spirit;...yea, the deep things of God" (1 Cor. 2:10) – The eyes of our understanding being enlightened ...(we) know what is the hope of our calling. (Eph. 1:18.) And I "lay aside every weight"... and "run with patience the race set before me;" and I seek not the praise of men like myself, but I do earnestly desire the

approval of the incorruptible God, and I know that I have passed from death (in Adam) unto life, (in Christ), because I love the brethren" with an unfeigned love: Beholding my Lord in his Word, I am being "changed into the same image;" "I shall be satisfied when I awake in his likeness;" when I shall have received the end of my faith, the salvation of my soul (being). Unto him that hath washed me be the glory and the honor and dominion forever.

S. O. BLUNDIN.
