

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

Ques. Please explain Luke 12:4,5.

Ans. These words are addressed to the "friends" of Jesus, to those who believe in a future existence secured through Jesus, the life-giver. The killing of the body represents the loss of the present measure of life, but casting into Gehenna (translated hell) represents utter destruction and extinction. Because of God's favor all are redeemed from the first or Adamic death, and those who believe and appreciate this will realize that the present spark of existence is as nothing compared to the future life made possible through our Lord and Redeemer. Therefore such should lightly esteem the present life and fear not to lose it in any righteous cause. Should such circumstances arise, as they do, where the favor of men and the welfare of this present life on the one side, stand opposed to the will of God on the other, we should seek God's favor at any cost, knowing that "in his favor is life" (Psa. 30:5), the future existence, and that in his hands is the power of utter extinction, the "second death" represented here by Gehenna.

Ques. A brother writes saying, "I find so few who can or will receive the truth, or what seems such to me, that I am left to do my thinking and studying almost alone. Orthodoxy, so called, has leveled its guns at me, and in the church where I was honored and looked after my name has been cast out. But there is something of more importance to me than this. It is the question, Is my experience as an outcast in this present evil world fitting me for the Master's service? I can bear this, if sure that I will not be rejected also by the Master in the gathering of his jewels. Fears sometimes arise within me that I have caught at the shadow and missed the substance, and that would be loss indeed. Help me, if you can, to an answer to this

question in harmony with Scripture. Another question, Think you that the world can see the beauties set forth in the Scriptures?

Ans. Unquestionably the world will in the coming age see much beauty in Scripture; for much of it is devoted to natural or earthly things, and it abounds in glorious earthly promises; and even now some who are not consecrated see much beauty in God's grand and benevolent plans. So, then, the fact that you see in God's character and plan that which is grand and good is not a sufficient evidence that you will be among his jewels. Not all who believe in him and pray to him – "Not every one that saith, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven." (Matt. 7:21.) God's will for this Gospel age is to select such as believe his promises for the future so fully that they will give up the present in sacrifice to obtain it.

The fact that you have already sacrificed one of your dearest treasures – "a good name" – for the sake of your love of the Lord and of his word marks you as having become a partaker of the Master's spirit; for no man will sacrifice for such things without assistance from on high. Peter said, "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you as though some strange thing happened unto you. But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that when his glory shall be revealed ye may be glad also with exceeding joy. If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye, for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you....But let none of you suffer as an evil doer, or as a busybody in other men's matters. Yet if any man suffer as a Christian [for his adherence to the doctrines of Christ] let him glorify God on this behalf." (1 Peter 4:12-16.)

We hope that the Spirit of God may thus rest upon you to such an extent as to cause you to suffer the loss of many other things once

counted precious, when you looked at the things that are seen. Remember when the Lord marked out Paul for special favor and special service how he said of him, "I will show him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake." (Acts 9:16.) May the Lord also show both you and I and all that are in Christ Jesus daily how much more it is our privilege to suffer for his sake!

If, dear brother, you desire evidences of your acceptableness with God, they are found in what he permits you to suffer for his and for his truth's sake. Increase the sacrifice daily, and you increase the proof daily that you are his; and such as are his he gathers.

If you are suffering with him, and like him for the truth's sake, you have many exceeding great and precious promises. Some of these read as follows:

"Blessed are ye when men shall revile you and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you FALSELY FOR MY SAKE. Rejoice and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in heaven; for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you." (Matt. 5:11,12.)

"It is a faithful saying, For if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him. If we suffer we shall also reign with him." (2 Tim. 2:11,12.) "As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God," and "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God" [i.e., our willingness to suffer with Christ proves our harmony with the Spirit of God, thus proving that we are the children of God.] "And if children, then heirs – heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ, if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together. For...the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us." (Rom. 8:14,16,17,18.)

"And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to his purpose." (v. 28.) "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For...neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. (vs. 35-39.) "The eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers. And who is he that will harm you if ye be followers of that which is good? But if ye suffer for righteousness sake, happy are ye, and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled. 1 Pet. 3:12-14.

For all the tempted and tried ones – the faithful followers of our Lord – our Father's Word is full of cheering and helpful promises, which we should often call to mind for needed strengthening and encouragement.

Ques. Cannot the real church of Christ be identified; that is, Can we not tell where to draw the lines? Again, Can a man be in the church of Christ and not be in Christ?

Ans. The church of Christ in its widest sense includes all believers in the "redemption through his blood." In a more restricted sense it is such of the above as have made a covenant to sacrifice earthly interests for heavenly interests. And in the most restricted sense it is such only of this last class, as fulfill their covenant and accomplish the sacrifice, who constitute THE CHURCH which is HIS BODY (Col. 1:24) otherwise termed "The Bride the Lamb's wife." (Rev. 21:9.)

Each of us may definitely decide [R581 : page 8] whether we have taken the first two of these steps, and whether we are now

taking the third. We may know of each other's position regarding the first two steps, by profession, and fruit; but regarding the last step while we should know absolutely concerning self, we should use great care not to decide without positive proof, that any who have taken the two preceding steps, are not taking the last also: for there may be many circumstances of which we may be ignorant, to obscure from our sight the fruit and evidences of their sacrifice, known only to God and themselves.

During this age those who belong to any of these classes are reckoned as in the church. The church nominal is composed not only of these genuine classes, but also of hypocrites. The harvest is the time for separating and gathering the grain, and then each class of the genuine will be separated. In the day when the Lord shall make up his jewels, he will gather such as have completed the covenant of sacrifice (Psa. 50:5), and these only will constitute "THE CHURCH which is his BODY."

During the Millennial age, there will still be a church in the world – a church of BELIEVERS in "the redemption which is in Christ Jesus"; and under the blessed and enlightening influences of the reign of Christ, that church will spread and increase and bring the entire world under the influence of the truths then due. And the knowledge of the Lord shall fill the whole earth.

Ques. When in Rev. 22:9, the angel said to John who was about to worship him: "See thou do it not, for I am thy fellow servant and of thy brethren the prophets," does it not prove that the prophets who died became angels, and that this angel who talked with John was one of them?

Ans. No, the book of Revelation is a symbolic book, and as shown in this journal sometime since, both John and the angel represent classes in the church now living. John represents the disciples living at the time that the scenes of the Millennial age begin

to unfold at the second presence of Jesus, as was implied in Jesus' words concerning John, applicable not to John himself, but to the class whom he represents in Revelation – "If I will that he tarry TILL I COME." (Jno. 21:22.)

While John represents the entire company of living saints; the angel (messenger) who showed the things to John, represented those of the John class who are used as God's instruments in drawing attention to the coming glory, and causing all of the John class to see them **[R582 : page 8]** with the eye of faith. As John fell down to worship the messenger so there is always a danger that human weakness in the John class might lead some of them to over-estimate, and almost worship those through whom God has been pleased to send them a knowledge of his plans.

The action and words of the angel, show the way in which the true messengers of God will treat such honor. They will not be puffed up and receive the homage and praise, but will say, All wisdom comes from God, worship not us but Him. We are your brethren and fellow-servants, and fellow-servants with the prophets, and with all that keep the sayings of God – worship God.
