

## **CLOTHED AND UNCLOTHED.**

"For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." – 2 Cor. 5:1.

This is a blessed and comforting assurance to those consecrated saints who in fulfilling their covenant of self-sacrifice, realize daily that the "earthly house," or "earthen vessel" is dissolving. Such have a building of God [a new or spiritual body prepared for them] eternal in the heavens. But, this Scripture is only applicable to those who by sacrifice of the human nature have become "new creatures" – partakers of the divine nature.

To this class, the human body has become, as it were, a house or temporary dwelling place for the new mind, the begotten new creature. Of the world this is not true; they are not new creatures, and the body is part of themselves and not a house. They have no new nature to maintain in the human conditions for a time, nor are they ever to be clothed with a heavenly, the spiritual body.

The world is in due time to be delivered from its present bondage to sin and death, into the glorious liberty of the sons of God, i.e., into freedom from corruption (death), but not to the spiritual nature and body. Their hope is restitution to human perfection, while that of the Church is the completion of our change of nature from human to spiritual. Our new nature, is burdened by the frailties and imperfections of the human and longs for full perfection as a new creature, remembering that the full fellowship of the Lord cannot be obtained before that change. Hence walking by faith we long for the house from heaven, a spiritual body adapted to the desires, etc., of the new mind. "In this tabernacle [or house] we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven."

"For, we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life." The unclothed or death condition, [R702 : page 6] is not desirable though the majority of the Church had to remain in that condition for many years. Paul, when ready to be offered, must wait for the crown laid up for him, but not to be received until the day of Christ's appearing. (2 Tim. 4:8.)

"Now he that hath wrought us for this self-same thing is God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the spirit." We are begotten of God for the very purpose of being developed and born into the spiritual likeness, and the fact that we now realize that we have his spirit [leading us to sacrifice the earthly] is evidence that in due time we shall be born in the spiritual likeness – made like unto Christ's glorious body.

Therefore we are always confident and willing rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord.

It is now, the privilege of the saints to be ushered into the presence of the Lord as soon as the earthly body is laid down, as we read, "Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord from henceforth." (Rev. 14:13. See TOWER for April 1883.)

Though this was the thing desired by all the saints during this age, it was not the privilege of any until this time of the Lord's presence. But it was the privilege of all to be always confident, knowing that after the earthly house should be dissolved – in God's due time, they should be clothed upon with the heavenly house, the spiritual body, swallowed up of life. Amen, so let it be.

R. W.