

## WHO ARE SONS OF GOD?

Few seem to get a clear idea of the meaning of the words *son* and *father*. The word father, signifies producer, generator, life-giver, the word son correspondingly signifying one produced, generated, one who receives life from a father.

Applying these definitions, we find that in a general way Jehovah God might be said to be the father, producer or creator of every living creature, from the crawling worm to the great arch-angel. But a restriction is placed about the word son, by its use in Scripture, which shows us that God uses the expression "sons of God" with reference only to those of his creatures whom he created more or less in *his own likeness; i.e.*, with mental and moral qualities in harmony with his, and capable of understanding his laws and arrangements. This cuts off from the honorable name of *sons* the lower, the brute creation, but still leaves sons of various natures – angelic sons, human sons, and sons of divine nature.

Angels are called "sons of God" in parable, in Job 1:6 and 2:1. They are again represented as "morning stars," *i.e., early bright ones*, rejoicing together at the creation of this earth, when they as "the sons of God shouted for joy." – Job 38:7. As shown in the TOWER of December '87, those angels which *kept not* their first estate are referred to as "sons of God" up to the time of their fall into sin. – Gen. 6:2,4.

Among men, Adam of course was a son of God, *i.e.*, God's creation. God was his Life-giver, Creator, Producer or Father, and hence he was a "son of God" and is so designated, Luke 3:38. Be it noted, however, that none of Adam's children are called "sons of God" down to the time that our Lord Jesus gave himself a ransom for all. Those who, by wilful sin, forfeit and lose the likeness of God, the perfection in which he created them, are reckoned as unworthy of the honorable title of sons of God – as the brute creation which never had

and never lost this likeness; and such are to be treated *as* "natural brute beasts, made to be destroyed." (2 Pet. 2:12; Eccl. 3:18.) In the case of man (Adam), he was sentenced to death at once, as unworthy of life and the various privileges God had prepared for his sons. Having misused his grand superiority to the beasts, he was no longer worthy of the honors prepared for sons. From the moment of sin onward, Adam was not recognized as a son of God; and if he was fallen and degraded from sonship, it is manifest that he could in turn give life to none better or more worthy of divine sonship than he himself was. And so for four thousand years – until our Redeemer's coming – there were no sons of God, none whom God would recognize as such, except our Lord and those angels who kept their first estate of purity and sonship. Even Abraham, and Moses, and Elijah, and the prophets, were not called *sons of God*. "Friend of God" and "faithful servant" were the dearest names then possible (Heb. 3:5,6. Gal. 4:4-7); because no matter how good their intentions they were all *imperfect*, fallen from the likeness and liberties of sons of God, and had not yet been *redeemed* from that great calamity.

Next in order let us consider our Lord Jesus: –

### GOD'S ONLY BEGOTTEN SON.

The question at once arises, How can there be more than *one* son of God, since that one is called the *only* begotten Son? We answer: both statements are true. God has "many sons," and one "only begotten Son." Our Lord before he became a *man*, was a spirit being, as "God is a spirit," and angels are spirits; and he was the "first born of every creature," or "born before all creation," as some translate it – the *beginning* of Jehovah God's creative work. – Rev. 1:8; 3:14.

And since he is both the *first* and the *last*, the beginning and ending of Jehovah's *direct* creative work, it is very evident that he was the *ONLY* Son of God thus directly begotten of the Father. And since it is clearly stated that "all things were made by him, and without him was not anything made that was made (John 1:3), it becomes the more

evident to every reasoning mind that **His** creation was more **directly** and specially the Father's work than that of any other creature, or Son of God – man or angel; for though it was the Father's power and vitality that was given to angels, to men, to beasts, and birds, and creeping things, yet with none of these was the begetting a direct work of Jehovah, as in the case of the one Son distinguished forever among the sons of God by the title, "only begotten Son." And though God calls angels sons, mark the pointedness of the apostle's question, and how it points out our Lord's superiority, when he asks, "Unto which of the angels said he at any time, "Thou art my [special] son, this day have I **begotten thee.**"' – Heb. 1:5; 5:5.

Our Lord did not lose his right to the title "Only Begotten Son," by becoming a man; for the life was not laid down in death, when his nature was changed and he was made flesh. That change was only a transfer of existence from a higher nature to a lower nature, from spiritual nature to human nature; **for**, or in order to the suffering of death by him as a just man for the unjust; as the corresponding price for Adam's sin-penalty. Even as a man, then, our Lord retained his title "only begotten Son of God." As John says, "We beheld his glory [dignity, perfection], the glory [perfection and grandeur] as of the only begotten of the Father, full of favor and truth." – John 1:14.

But when our Lord in obedience to the Father's purpose would redeem mankind, nothing but his death could accomplish the work. That was the penalty imposed upon Adam and the race which lost life in him – and that he must suffer if he would redeem Adam's life (and ours lost in him); so then the "Only Begotten" died, ceased to be, and remained so until the third day. Now, question: Did our Lord cease to be the only begotten Son of God when he laid down his life a ransom for many? Yes, truly. When his existence terminated in death the only begotten Son had ceased to exist – was dead. But in his resurrection, his **re**-creation, he was again the only begotten Son of God, for no agency was called into service to accomplish his resurrection, but, as when first created, he was the direct workmanship of Jehovah, who so

arranged that not even this distinctive title and honor of "only begotten" should be lost by his obedient Son. Hence no agency of man, nor even of the angel Gabriel, was permitted in the work of our Lord's resurrection: no *agencies* great or small were employed, but it is written "Whom God hath raised from the dead" – "God hath both raised up the Lord, and will also raise up us by his own power." – Acts 2:24; 3:15; 4:10; Rom. 4:24; 6:4; 8:11; 1 Cor. 6:14; 15:15; Col. 2:12; 1 Thes. 1:10; 1 Pet. 1:21. And since his resurrection was a *re*-creation of the same being or individuality first created, it can still be said of him that he is the first and the last, the beginning and the ending of the creation of God, the Only Begotten of the Father. – See Rev. 1:18.

### **POWER TO BECOME SONS OF GOD.**

Coming now to the Gospel age, consider the import of the words, "To as many as received him, to them gave he power [*i.e.*, liberty] to become the sons of God, even to them that believe in his name," (John 1:12) and "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when He shall appear we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is." – 1 John 3:2.

As already noted, all the human race from Adam down came under condemnation through his wilful sin (1 Tim. 2:14), and all lost recognition as the sons of God, as well as the *likeness* because of which they had been so recognized above the brute creation. Indeed since their minds ceased to be godly, and became carnal and devilish, they might be said to have been reconstructed by the tyrant Sin to bear much of the image of God's adversary; and hence they might in this sinful state be called *sons of the devil*, bearing his moral likeness. And so our Lord declared even to the Jews, "Ye must be born again" – "Ye are of *your father* the devil." (John 8:44.) And since the same apostle also records, (1 John 5:19) that "The whole world lieth in wickedness," it is evident that the standing of all in God's sight is that of children of the devil.

The question then arises, Since only those possessing the *perfect likeness* of God, are worthy to be called sons of God, and since God himself refuses to call any others by that honorable title, how can *we* be called "sons of God" who are confessedly imperfect, and who at most bear but a slight likeness to the holy God? The answer is, that our Lord Jesus *gave power* or liberty to become sons of God, – "to them that *believe on his name.*" Mark well, he did not make us sons, but simply gave us the liberty or privilege *to become* sons. It follows then, that the patriarch and prophets of the preceding four thousand years could not become sons, because they were not given that privilege or liberty.

What did our Lord *do* for us to secure us this great boon, this liberty or privilege? Something must have been *done*, for Jehovah changes not (Mal. 3:6.) He did not once declare Adam and his children cut off from sonship and subject to *destruction* in death, as brute beasts, and then change that decree. Nor could, nor would our Lord Jesus set aside the divine decision to reinstate the sinners to the dignity of sons and to worthiness of life. No; he came not to oppose the Father's will, but to obey it. "I delight to do *thy will*, O God," was the sentiment expressed in his every act and word. "Not my will but thine be done," was his constant prayer. Hence we say, he must have *done* something for us, by which he lifted from us the embargo of sin, to give us *liberty* to again become sons of God. What did he do for us?

Ah yes! he did a great work for us; he gave himself a ransom for us, he redeemed **[R1006 : page 3]** us from all iniquity and from all the condemnation and loss attaching to it. Giving thus the price of Adam's guilt he thereby purchased the dead and dying race, with full right to do what he *wills* to them and for them. He wills to give during this Gospel age, *liberty* to become sons of God to all that believe on his *name*. His name was called Jesus, which signifies *Saviour* or *Liberator*. – (Matt. 1:21.) "Thou shalt call his name Jesus; for he shall save his people from their sins." Hence we see that it is to them that receive him in the sense of believing in him as

their Saviour or Liberator, that he gives now the liberty of becoming sons of God – none others. Believing that such a person lived at such a time is not the kind of belief which brings the liberty: believing that he was a fine man who taught many excellent precepts, is not the kind of belief necessary: believing that he set a good example, and that all should *try* to follow it as best they can, is not the belief demanded here: No, it is a different belief, a belief in and recognition of his name *Saviour*: the recognition and acceptance of him as the one who saves his people from their sins. No one who rejects the Bible account of the fall and condemnation of all in Adam, and the utter loss of sonship and all its privileges (life, etc.), can possibly receive and "*believe*" in this SAVIOUR or Liberator, who by redeeming them grants them liberty or privilege to become sons of God.

But is it only to "*believers*" in his name that our Lord grants this privilege? Only these; belief in no other person will do, nor will the acceptance of our Lord by any other name than the one which acknowledges his ransom-sacrifice avail – he must be recognized as *Saviour*, and not merely as Lord and Guide. He saves his people from their *sins that are past* as well as teaches and guides them to abhor and avoid sin for the future.

Next let us examine the *liberty* which proper believers obtain through the Saviour. What does the expression *liberty* signify as here used? It simply means that our Saviour, having paid the penalty of Adam's sin, offers to all who accept of his finished work, and who desire to return to the likeness of God and to sonship, *a clear receipt of exoneration* from the sin which brought condemnation upon all six thousand years ago, and that he will throw about such the robe of his own righteousness to cover all their present imperfections and unavoidable weaknesses, so that they may at once go to God and thus find acceptance and grace to help, *until* having proved by their obedience in the present life, the sincerity of their consecration to God's will and service, they shall ultimately be delivered from all the present weaknesses into the grand, perfect spiritual bodies like unto our Lord's.

This is the promise to such overcomers, who thus will be received into *final* and *complete* [R1006 : page 4] sonship, as heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ their Lord and Saviour.

This is what the apostle means when he says: "Beloved *now* are we the sons of God – and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that when He shall appear we shall be like him." The "*we*" here does not refer to the world of mankind, but to the saints, the truly consecrated, who believe in the *only name* [Jesus – Saviour] whereby we must be saved. As already shown God really has no *imperfect* sons, such as we *now* are, hence in the full sense we will not be sons until in the end of this age, the selection and trial of these probationary sons being complete, they shall be received to the full perfect likeness of God – like unto their Redeemer and King. But *now* we may *reckon* ourselves Sons of God by faith. Grasping by faith the anticipated *end* of our high calling, we may and do speak of the things which are not yet fully accomplished, as though they were completed. In saying, *Now* are we the sons of God, and grasping it *as* a reality, we fasten to it by the threefold cord of faith, the three parts of which are first, faith in the perfect sacrifice, and finished work of him who gave us liberty or privilege to become sons; second, faith or confidence in promises made us of grace to help us overcome and quench all the fiery darts of our opponents; third, faith or confidence in our consciousness that our consecration is full, complete, and that our desire is to know and do the Father's will under any and all conditions. This threefold cord of faith, firmly fastened upon our promised inheritance and sonship, to be verified to us when we are tried and made perfect, will indeed be "an anchor to the soul both sure and steadfast," which will enable us to say and feel that *even now* (by faith) we are the Sons of God, though not yet clothed upon with our perfect bodies.

### **WILL LIBERTY TO BECOME SONS OF GOD BE GIVEN TO ALL MEN?**

Do not answer this question hastily – give it due consideration. At first you may be inclined to differ from our view when we answer that *it*

*will not.* To us it seems clear that this liberty is connected with the special high-calling of this Gospel age, and ceases with it.

Call to mind again what we saw above to be the meaning of the words father and son: father – life-giver or creator; son – offspring, one who receives life from a father. Now consider man as represented in Adam. At first he was God's son, but afterward because of sin he forfeited all, and *ceased to be*, as God's son. Now if brought back to life and perfection, whoever is his life-giver will be his father. Since man's life was forfeited totally, it follows that his resurrection will virtually be his re-creation, and he who re-creates will be the father of the re-created being, in the same sense that Jehovah God was Father to the being destroyed by sin.

While all things which our Lord Jesus did, were done according to the will and plan of the Father, yet the Scriptures are particular to keep separate the work of Christ Jesus in man's redemption. Our Lord Jesus "bought" the world; he gave the "corresponding price" for all; and the earth and all belonging thereto are called his "purchased possession." (Eph. 1:14.) Having thus become possessed of sin-wrecked, dead humanity, it is the purchaser's privilege and design to begin the work of restoring all things – of giving life to the dead world, which he purchased eighteen hundred years ago. He delays the commencement of this life-giving work until the "little flock" to whom he gives liberty to become sons of God is complete. "He is not ashamed to call them BRETHREN," and they shall be his joint-heirs in the purchased possession, and his co-workers in restoring the redeemed race to life.

Since it is from death that man is saved, the Saviour is evidently the *life-giver*. In fact the Syriac MS. of the New Testament gives the name LIFE-GIVER in every instance where we have the name Saviour in our common translation. The special work of the Millennial age will be to awaken the dead, and by gradual process give to them the life secured for them by their Redeemer as they shall believe and accept of



it upon the conditions (obedience, etc.) which the Life-giver, as judge of all, shall require. This being the case, it must be evident to all that (separating the works of the Father and the Son – John 5:17,) the *life-privileges* which come to the world, come directly from the Son – our Lord Jesus: He BOUGHT them with *his own* precious blood, and He it is that will restore all who will comply with the conditions, to full perfect LIFE at His appearing and kingdom of a thousand years. He therefore is the one and *only* direct life-giver to whom the world must look; and as life-giver is the true meaning of *father*, He is properly declared in prophecy to be *to mankind* "The everlasting Father," as well as the "Prince of Peace" and the "Mighty God" [ruler].

Hence it is, that though Abraham and David, etc., are spoken of as *fathers* of Jesus, – "of whom according to the flesh Christ came" – yet it is also declared that "*Instead* of thy fathers shall be thy children," (Psa. 45:16,) meaning, instead of the fathers continuing as such, they shall, by the fact that our Lord becomes *their* LIFE-GIVER in resurrecting them, thus become his *children* – his sons.

As heretofore shown, the process of life-giving while it will begin with the awakening from the tomb, the giving of a measure of life such probably as men now generally possess, (as illustrated in the awakening of Lazarus from the tomb,) and such only as "obey that prophet," will reach completeness, in full restoration to *all* that was lost – human perfection – LIFE in the full sense of the word. That only such as "hear [obey] shall *live*" in this perfect sense of attaining life, see John 5:25. All others awakened and granted a knowledge and *full* opportunity of gaining this perfect and lasting life, who will reject it by rejecting its conditions, – conformity to God's perfect law – will be "cut off" in the second death. They will not become sons of Christ, because of refusal under full opportunity to receive his image. Those refusing the likeness of Christ or the proffered terms of the age of Restitution will be treated as Jehovah treated Adam when he chose disobedience; only, that the experience being greater there will be no preparation for *another* redemption. Such as die the second death are

not *sons* as above shown, but as those who having the opportunity yet despise the likeness of the Life-giver they will be treated "as brute beasts – destroyed." – 2 Pet. 2:12; Eccls. 3:18-20.

The question may occur to some, How comes it that our Lord who redeems or purchases *all*, is not the LIFE-GIVER to the "little flock" of the Gospel age as well as to the world in general? – Where and how comes the distinction between us as the "Sons of God" and "brethren" of Christ, and the world as children of Christ?

We answer: He who redeemed all, did not actually give or restore to us the perfect human life as he will to the world in the next age, but *instead* he threw over us the mantle of his merit, of his imputed [R1007 : page 4] righteousness, and thus introduces us directly to the Father, to be *begotten* BY HIM as "*new* creatures," "partakers of the *divine* nature" (not restored *human* nature, grand as that will be), and joint-heirs with our Lord and Redeemer.

The *liberty* [freedom from condemnation, – otherwise known as *justification* through his blood] which our Redeemer grants us is FREE; we can do nothing to purchase or merit it; it must be accepted as a *free gift* of God through our Lord Jesus Christ, or not at all. But there the *free* part stops. Having obtained the privilege or liberty *to become* Sons of God, the matter thereafter rests with us, and to profit by this great privilege or liberty, we must work out our salvation, with fear and trembling. Appreciating the grandeur of the privilege put within our grasp, we must *act* soberly, wisely, earnestly, not as them who idly play and beat the air, but as true soldiers we must fight a good fight. We must overcome our former master, Sin; and let not Sin reign and rule in us, but throwing all our (at most) little influence on the side of our new Captain, Leader, and Fore-runner Christ Jesus, we must overcome the world, that with him we may be sons of God without rebuke in the midst of a wicked and perverse generation, among whom we are to shine as lights. (Phil. 2:15) If thus we prove our earnestness, and love and zeal for God and his truth, we shall be accounted "meet

to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light." (Col. 1:12.) Faithfulness in our warfare implies that we will be continually losing mental and moral likeness to the world, and be more and more conformed to the image of God's dear Son, who is a perfect likeness for us to copy after. – Rom. 8:29; 1 Pet. 2:21.

But if the *liberty* or *privilege* granted to us of becoming sons of God consisted only of a covering of the sins that are past, if it in no way continued to cover our imperfections, it would avail us nothing; for cleansed in the morning and presented to the Father as candidates for sonship, we would through inherited weaknesses and imperfections be defiled and worthy of condemnation again before night; hence, as the apostle declares, it would be a fearful thing for us in our present condition to have to deal direct with the perfect laws of the Father; and we are glad that he has graciously provided that we shall have our standing before him as yet, not as individuals, but as *body members* of the perfect one whose robe of righteousness covers fully our every deformity and weakness, whose sacrifice made full atonement for every result of inherited depravity to which our shattered depraved "earthen vessels" are subject.

So then we are safe so long as we abide in him – under the cover of *his* merit; while in him, we are "*accepted* in the beloved" by the Father, as sons. But having been admitted to this privilege, having tasted that the Lord is gracious, having learned the necessity of *abiding* in him, we must do the abiding – we must not ignore the precious blood through the merit of which this access into sonship and joint-heirship was obtained; we must not ignore our Redeemer, and attempt to offer our own *imperfect* works as meritorious and acceptable (See the type of this Lev. 10:1-4. Num. 3:3,4), else we shall come to nought. If any branch *abide not* in the vine it is cast forth, and destroyed. (John 15:5,6.) So then the *liberty* which our Lord grants to all who come unto the Father by him and in him, (John 14:6.) is full and complete; and the assistance rendered such as draw nigh to God with their whole heart is *sufficient*, that they may come off conquerors

through [in] him who loved them and gave himself for them. This *sufficiency* of grace to help in every time of need is supplied mainly through God's Word, the exceeding great and precious promises of which are given us that *thereby* we may overcome self and the world, and become partakers of the divine nature. – 2 Pet. 1:4.

It is thus that the Father deals with those to whom, through the Son, liberty to become sons is now granted, viz., by the word of his grace – the Scriptures. Granted the privilege, or liberty, or ability, to do so through their Redeemer's merit, these are then "*begotten by the word of truth*" that they should become a kind of first fruits of God's creatures." – James 1:18.

The apostle Peter clearly tells the whole story saying: "The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ...hath begotten us...to an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for us, who are *kept by the power of God* [his exceeding great and precious promises and providences upon which we lay hold] through faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time" [ – in the end of this age when the body, the "Royal Priesthood," the little flock of Sons of the "divine nature" shall be completed and glorified.] "Wherein ye rejoice greatly though now for a season if need be ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations, that the trial of your faith...might be found unto [or result in] praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ...Of which [special] salvation the prophets have enquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace [peculiar *favor*] that should come unto you." – 1 Pet. 1:2-10.

Since the overcomers of the Gospel age – those who use their ransomed privilege or liberty and become sons of God on the divine plane of sonship – are to be so closely identified with their Lord and Head Christ Jesus, as to be called "members of his body," his "bride" and his joint-heirs, it is evident that they with him, and by virtue of the ransom which he gave, are to be members in particular of that great Prophet and Life-giver Christ, and will share in the work of *life-giving*,

restoring the dead and dying world to perfection; hence the term Everlasting Father, as well as every other title of the Head, is to be shared by his joint-heirs and co-workers. In harmony with this, note the Apostle's words in Heb. 11:39-40. Here speaking of even the *overcomers* of the past he contrasts their position [sons of Christ] with our position as sons of God *in Christ* saying: These all, having obtained a good [record] through faith received not the promise [made to them], God having provided some BETTER THING FOR US, that *they* without *us* should not be made perfect." – Heb. 11:40.

Since in God's plan they are to be the *children* of Christ instead of the *fathers*, it follows that they could not get their life – be perfected – until the Christ (head and body) their Everlasting Father (or father of their everlasting life) shall first be made perfect on the higher plane – Sons of God of the divine nature.

Then, dearly beloved, appreciate more fully than ever before your privilege as a Son of God and understand the Apostle's words, "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, *by whom also we have access* [R1007 : page 5] (by faith) in to THIS GRACE [special favor] wherein we stand, – rejoicing in hope of the glory of God" [as sons, as joint-heirs with our Redeemer in his great work of reconciling the world, whom he has already redeemed.] And from this standpoint of hope and grand anticipation, knowing that we must be tested and tried, "we glory in tribulations also," knowing that it is by such means, with his promises, that the Father would develop in us patience, experience, and hope, as well as the love of God shed abroad in our hearts by the holy spirit of the truth imparted to us from the truth. – See Rom. 5:1-5.

Be strong then, acquit yourselves like earnest, sober men, receiving now by faith (trust) the grace [special favor] to be brought unto you at the coming of our Lord Jesus, for HE that raised up Christ from the dead will raise up US also, by Jesus who will present us before him, unblamable and unreprouvable in love. – See 2 Cor. 4:14-18.

## LIBERTY OF THE SONS OF GOD.

"For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now." "For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the SONS OF GOD." "Because the creature itself shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption [death and dying] into the glorious *liberty* of the children of God." – Rom. 8:2.

Though the race in general will not become sons of God, it is here expressly shown that they may obtain, through the Sons of God, the liberty or freedom from death, pain, etc., the common heritage of all sons of God. The children of the Christ – all who receive the redemption life – will stand as dear and as close to the Father Jehovah, as sons, even as in the earthly family the grandsons are as dearly loved and as kindly treated. And they shall be treated *as sons*, having full release from all corruption and from all condemnation. But here again it is shown that "they without US [the sons and heirs] cannot be made perfect;" they cannot receive the life provided for them until all the sons of God are selected and glorified. "The manifestation of the Sons of God" is therefore the great event for which the whole creation waits and hopes and groans, even though in ignorance their hopes and expectations of the future are not clear and fixed, but only a vague longing for "a golden age" a "good time coming by and by."

## ONLY THE CONSECRATED ARE SONS.

The liberty to become Sons of God not only did not extend to those men who lived before the Redeemer came and purchased the world, but it has extended to only a comparatively few during this Gospel age; the great mass of mankind even in the present day know nothing about our Lord Jesus, and how could they believe on him "of whom they have not **[R1008 : page 5]** heard?" (Rom. 10:14.) And of those who have even heard that there was such a person, how few comparatively believe in or recognize the meaning of his name *Saviour*; yet none but these have even the *liberty* or privilege of becoming Sons of God.

Look again, and see among the comparatively few, even of those who do recognize him as the Redeemer, the Saviour, and who therefore were all granted this privilege, liberty, favor, and note *how few* have availed themselves of the great privilege, – how few have become Sons of God. To see clearly just what class of believers constitutes the Sons of God, let us now examine the process by which those who "believed in his name" were granted and accepted the proffered liberty and became Sons of God, joint-heirs with Jesus Christ their Lord.

We have said that all such are *covered by the robe* of Christ's righteousness imputed to them, because of which they find acceptance with the Father. But to whom does the Lord give his robe for this purpose? Not to all believers; for though all have the liberty to wear the robe and obtain "access," all do not choose to use it by fulfilling the conditions. The robes are provided for the BODY OF CHRIST, and to come under those robes we must get into that *consecrated company*, into that select class, known as those whose names are written in the book of life – and as branches *in* the Vine. This is the class to which the Master said, "Abide *in me* and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself except it abide in the vine, no more can ye except ye abide *in me*...If a man abide not *in me*, he is cast forth as a branch." To the same class the apostle John wrote, "Abide *in him*." The apostle Paul wrote that God "hath chosen us *in him*" and exhorts "so walk ye *in him*" – "rooted and built up *in him*," for "ye are complete *in him*." And of his own aims he says, "That I may win Christ and [abiding in him to the end] be found *in him*" complete at last. – See John 15:4,6; 1 Cor. 8:6; 2 Cor. 5:21; Eph. 1:4; Phil. 3:9; Col. 2:6,7,9; 1 John 2:5,6,28.

The way in which we get *into* Christ, – counted in as members of his body, and therefore under the robes of his righteousness, – is fully explained by the Apostle in Rom. 6:3-5. He there shows that such members are immersed or buried into Christ, *i.e.*, their wills, plans, etc., are completely buried; such having thereafter no will of their own; instead, the will of Christ reigns in and rules over them, controlling

their acts, and words, and looks and thoughts. Being dead to self, to their own wills, plans, etc., for them to live is for Christ to live; and in them Christ is still present in the flesh, they being his representatives before men. (Phil. 1:21.) These share the reproaches of Jesus their Head and Lord now and have fellowship as members of his body, in the sufferings of Christ; and in due time, if they continue faithful unto the end, they are promised membership in the church or body to be glorified – joint-heirship in the glory and dominion and work of their Lord when the sufferings are past. – Rom. 8:17.

These are represented in the Jewish types by the priesthood and its head, the High-Priest. The high-priest of our profession, or order, is Jesus; and all the under priests together with him constitute the Royal Priesthood, as Peter says. As the under priests were all represented in the *person* of the High Priest, by his head and members, so in our priesthood; while we are each severally priests, we are all *represented* in our High Priest as body members in particular. (1 Cor. 12:27.) Our Lord the head of the body is not covered with any covering, for he was perfect; "in him was no sin;" but we all need the covering of his white robes of justification, else we never could have found access into the "holies" and "into this grace wherein we stand rejoicing in hope of the glory of God" soon to be revealed in us as Sons and heirs – joint-heirs with Jesus Christ our Lord.

So then we see that only those who after believing in the only name, Saviour, followed on and *consecrated* themselves, took up the cross and sufferings of Christ and shared them, – only such were accepting of the liberty to become Sons; and only such coming into his "body" and under his robes are presented before the Father, or accepted as Sons. In these only, can we see a begetting of the truth and a desire to be conformed to the image of God's only begotten Son.

But are not all believers under Christ's robes? even those who do not consecrate themselves? No; only the consecrated. In fact the others have no need for those presentation robes [robes in which to be



acceptably presented to the Father as candidates for Sonship and heirship] because they *do not wish to occupy the positions of sons*, after they find that its distinguishing features in the present time are trials and sufferings, etc., in the "narrow way." (Heb. 12:6.) To be a Son implies both special favor and special *endurance*, and since the only benefit of the "robe" consists in making the wearers presentable to the Father, and since these do not desire to thus present themselves living sacrifices to God, holy and acceptable [as sons and heirs] through [*in*] Jesus Christ, it is manifest that to cover such with a robe would be useless.

The question then occurs: Do believers in Christ who have not consecrated, but merely practiced benevolence and moral reforms, – who endeavor to live moderately, soberly, honestly, truthfully, etc., influenced to such a life by their faith in Scripture and in our Lord, – have these no blessing as a result of their faith, etc.? We answer, Yes; every one who lives moderately, morally and temperately, has a reward daily and hourly, – in his health and true pleasure; and his every deed of kindness and generosity done from unselfish motives always brings a blessing to the doer in the present life, and is sure of a suitable recognition by the Master in the Kingdom, after the resurrection and exaltation of the "Body" class. (See Luke 14:14.) These too may have quite a measure of *joy and peace* through believing in the Saviour. They can see in Christ, dimly the Redeemer and realize (even though vaguely) that he is the one through whom God has arranged to *save* all who shall be accounted worthy of the gift of life. Thus all believers have much advantage over the ignorant and blindfolded even in the present life; and present progress in righteous living will be a step of progress beneficial to such in the "times of restitution" under the Kingdom soon to be set up in power.

So then all who have consecrated, and only they, have the "robe" which assures to them access to God and to sonship. Question – Will all the consecrated become sons of God? Many have *consecrated* (*i.e.*, resolved on complete submission to the will of Christ at any cost) who

do not fulfil their consecration, who do not follow the Lamb through evil as well as good report, but instead are drawn away into half-hearted service, dividing their services between God and Mammon. Only a "little flock" of "overcomers" are represented as attaining to joint-heirship with Christ their head, only such constitute his "body" as finally glorified. Now the question is concerning the great number who do not fully and freely fulfill their covenant – will they be sons of God?

In our opinion, yes; their heart intentions were good, and their "robe" was good, and if they do not cast away the robe of Christ's righteousness and deny his name *Saviour*, and do not *wilfully* violate their covenant, they stand in the position mentioned by the apostle: their works shall suffer loss, but themselves shall be saved so as by fire [severe discipline destroying what such do not sacrifice]. Such are building on the *rock*, though it be with wood, hay and stubble, and though they will suffer the great loss of the prize – the kingdom and the joint-heirship with Christ – yet they themselves, under the Master's discipline, will be saved, brought to perfection, because their hearts were longing for better things even when they fainted by the way, and got their "robes" contaminated with the affairs of this world. They did not keep their garments unspotted from the world, and hence they are represented as *washing* away such defilements of their "robe" in the Lamb's merit, but with great *tribulation* to themselves. We read of this "great multitude" that they came up "through great tribulation and washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." "Therefore are they *before* the throne and serve." (Rev. 7:15.) They suffered great *loss* by reason of their failure to go forward boldly in self-sacrifice for the Lord and his truth – the loss of the crown, and the loss of positions in the throne, and *suffered* more tribulation than if they had been faithful, but holding to their "*robes*" they were finally brought off victors of the second grade with palms of victory, though not with the crowns of glory to which they were invited, and to obtain which their robes gave them liberty or privilege.

Beloved, "Abide in Him;" let the mind of Christ dwell in you *richly, let* his spirit control your mortal bodies and present them living sacrifices, partakers of his sufferings and death, that you may be glorified with him also in due time and crowned sons of glory. [R1009 : page 5]

### STRANGE CHILDREN.

"For they have begotten strange children." – Hosea 5:7.

"They are not all Israelites that are of Israel." – Rom. 9:6.

Since the true "church of the first born whose names are written in heaven," are all of this consecrated class, *begotten* by the word of truth, sons of God possessing the "mind of Christ," it follows that many of the *nominal* church are what might well be called "*strange children*," begotten not of the truth, but begotten of error; partaking not of the spirit or mind of Christ our head, but of the spirit or disposition of the world. These, God does not acknowledge as his sons. Many of them are well meaning, *i.e.*, honest and kind, lovers of peace and plenty more than lovers of the truth with the tribulations, and persecutions, and self denials, which faithfulness to the truth always brings, things which every son of God begotten of the *spirit* of the truth appreciates as the foretold witnesses of the spirit to their faithfulness. (2 Tim. 3:12.) These are as really the "children of this world" as were the popular religionists of the *nominal* typical church, Israel after the flesh. In the next age such may become children of Christ by faith, and obedience to his just requirements, but they do not become "Sons of God" now, because of one of two reasons: either because, being *blinded* by the delusions of the god of this world they cannot discern even fundamental truths, or else because though seeing the fundamentals they do not appreciate the privilege or liberty afforded them of becoming sons, preferring rather lives of ease to lives of self-sacrifice with Christ, preferring the pleasures and ambitions of the present world (age) to what they can see of the honor and glory promised to those who shall become sons.

As the true sons, *begotten of the truth*, [R1009 : page 6] are the "wheat" described in our Lord's parable, so those *nominal* children of God, "strange children," developed by fear and error and by false ideas and theories, are the "tares," and the "field is the *world*" which makes no profession of Christ, containing *elements* which in the next age under the rule of the great Master and King will be accepted and used of him, but which at present untilled brings forth noxious weeds.

In the time of separation (the "harvest") the wheat and tares so long permitted to grow together are to be separated. The "tares," which constitute the majority in the nominal church or kingdom, will be separated from the true sons of God, the consecrated, who as joint-heirs with their Lord of the kingdom, will be *established*, "set up" in power and great glory. The "tares" on the contrary will be consumed as "tares" (as *imitations* of the true) and will be resolved into the elements of the field again. "He that hath an ear to hear let him hear!" The gathering together of the elect to receive the kingdom is in progress – they are being gathered, not into one place, but into one condition of heart and mind. Those who love the friendship and companionship and communion of the worldly minded, tares, shall suffer loss, and have their portion with them, partaking of their "plagues" in the trouble already beginning. Think not that the "harvest" time is a time of peace and quiet. Nay! the Jewish harvest proves to the contrary that it is a time of commotion and unsettling, a time for breaking up of old associations, for bundling tighter the bundles of the tare classes, and for the gathering of the true wheat into the barn. All this is a part of the test put upon the true wheat, to prove the "overcomers."

For the joy and refreshment of such, let us suggest here a Bible reading, pointing out our high calling now, our acceptance in the Beloved, our final exaltation and joint-heirship with him, and our glorious work of blessing the world in the coming age. These promises are indeed a great *power* of God unto salvation to all them that believe and obey them.

Take your *Emphatic Diaglott* and read – Col. 1:9 to 28; next read 1 Pet. 1:2 to 23; next Eph. 1:3 to 14 and finally, Acts 20:32.

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