

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

Question. – Since the Apostle says, "It is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy" (Rom. 9:16), to what extent do our efforts avail?

Answer. – We understand the Apostle to mean that even though it be as a reward for our "willing" and our "running" that the Lord will give the crown of life to the overcomers, yet back of all this lies the [R2001 : page 153] fact that we of our own selves could never intrinsically have merited such reward. We needed and received first of all God's mercy through Christ in the forgiveness of the sins that are past, and the call to run the race for the glories promised, to encourage us on the way, and we still must have imputed the merit of Christ's sacrifice, which covers the blemishes of our best efforts. It is therefore *by* our willing and *by* our running that we obtain the prize; but it is not *of* our willing nor *of* our running, but *of* God's mercy. The Apostle recognizes the same distinction in the use of the prepositions "of" and "by" in 1 Cor. 8:6 – "To us there is but one God, *of* whom are all things,...and one Lord Jesus Christ, *by* whom are all things."

God is the originator or author of our salvation upon whom all depended, yet in his plan it lies with us to "work out our own salvation with fear and trembling." – Phil. 2:12.

Question. – Please harmonize the statements of our Lord that in the "last day" *he* will raise up those who believe (John 6:39,40,44,54) and 1 Cor. 6:14; which says that *God* will raise them up.

Answer. – The same principle applies here as in the preceding question. It is *of* God that the dead are to be raised, but *by* Jesus. Our Lord is the Father's agent in carrying out the entire plan of redemption. Of his own self he has done nothing, and of his own self he will do nothing. His power is delegated. (Matt. 28:18.) He and the Father

are *one* in man's redemption as in his creation, though, as before shown, Father and Son are not one in person. – See TOWER, June '92.

Question. – If the holy Spirit is not a person, as (a) conclusively shown in the TOWER for June '92, why were the disciples commanded to baptize *in the name of* the holy Spirit (Matt. 28:19)? and (b) why is the pronoun "he" used in referring to the Holy Spirit?

Answer. – (a) It is proper to use the expression "holy Spirit" when performing symbolic immersion; first, because the Lord so instructed his disciples; second, because it is the holy influence and representative of the Father and the Son in directing the Church into all truth. The holy Spirit also represents the anointing which came upon the Lord at his baptism, and into which all the members of the body are immersed when they are united to the Head.

(b) The different Greek pronouns used in reference to the Comforter, the spirit of truth, "he," "himself," "him," might be, and are in other connections, translated she, it, herself, itself or her.

The word rendered "himself" (Greek, *heauton*) is translated "itself" nine times in our common version English Bible. The word rendered "he" (Greek *ekeinos*) is more frequently rendered "that" and "those," and is once rendered "it" – "I do not say that he shall pray for *it*." – 1 John 5:16.

As the holy Spirit is an influence from God, and since God is always referred to as masculine, it is proper in the Greek to refer to it by a masculine pronoun; but not so in English, where inanimate subjects (influences, etc.) are not personified. Those acquainted with German, French or other languages personifying inanimate things will understand this.

Question. – Recently I quoted Heb. 2:14 as evidence that the devil would be destroyed. A minister stated in reply that the word here rendered "destroy" does not mean "destroy" in the sense of annihilate

or put out of existence, but simply "to render impotent," "to annul the power of;" that in the Revised Version it is rendered "*bring to naught* him that hath the power," etc.

Answer. – The word rendered "might destroy" in Heb. 2:14 is *katargeo*. It has the sense of "to render powerless," but it does not limit in what way the thing shall be rendered powerless. To take away the life of Satan will certainly be to render him powerless, and that more effectually than in any way of which we can conceive. If he were merely restrained of his liberty he might still have power to exercise his will and other powers in opposition to God and righteousness. The only way to render him absolutely, effectually, completely powerless would be by rendering him unconscious as in death – by his destruction.

The following translations of this Greek word in the New Testament (italicised) clearly indicate that it is used in the sense of utter destruction: –

Rom. 6:6 – "that the body of sin *might be destroyed*."

1 Cor. 1:28 – "*to bring to nought* the things that are."

1 Cor. 6:13 – "God *shall destroy* both it and them."

1 Cor. 13:8 – "prophecies, *they shall fail* [or cease]; knowledge, it shall *vanish away*."

1 Cor. 13:10 – "that which is in part *shall be done away*."

1 Cor. 15:24 – "when He *shall have put down* [destroyed] all rule and authority and power."

1 Cor. 15:26 – "the last enemy that *shall be destroyed* is death."

2 Cor. 3:7 – "ministration of death...*was to be done away*."

2 Cor. 3:11 – "which is *done away*."

2 Cor. 3:14 – "which vail is *done away* in Christ."

Eph. 2:15 – "having *abolished* [destroyed] in his flesh the enmity."
2 Thess. 2:8 – "whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and *shall destroy* by the bright shining of his presence."

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A careful examination will show that in all the above cases no less than in the text (Heb. 2:14) this word *katargeo* has properly the sense of destroy. Note especially how it is used with reference to Antichrist, the Jewish Law Covenant and the destruction of the Adamic death.

Speaking of the destruction of the devil and reprobate men, it might be well to remark that we have no thought of the destruction of their component elements, but of their destruction as organisms or intelligent creatures. – See TOWER, October 15, 1895, page 241.
