

QUESTIONS OF GENERAL INTEREST.

Question. What do you mean by the expressions "earthly phase" and "spiritual phase," in relation to the Kingdom? (MILLENNIAL DAWN, Vol. I., page 288.)

Answer. There is only one kingdom *per se*; and that is, the Church; but it will have servants and representatives which to the world will be its kingdom or direct government. Though all will be instructed to recognize the overruling spiritual Kingdom of Christ and the Church and the still superior Kingdom of the Heavenly Father, yet this spiritual phase will be represented by the Patriarchs and other overcomers of past ages who will constitute the "earthly phase" of the Kingdom. (Luke 13:28; Heb. 11:39,40.) The "great company" do not belong to the Kingdom at all. They will be associated in some way not explained, but will not be part of the Kingdom real, nor yet of the earthly or representative Kingdom.

Question. Is the Church a part of the atonement sacrifice? If so, why is our Lord Jesus *only* referred to as the "Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world?" – 1 John 2:2; 4:10; 1 Tim. 2:6.

Answer. The atonement is based upon the sacrifice made by the high priest, who "offered up himself." The Church's share in the atonement is a reckoned one. In the same sense that the Church is reckoned as the body of Christ, so its sacrifices are reckoned as being joined with that of Christ, and are so represented or typified in the sacrifices of the Day of Atonement. So, as accepted members of the body of Christ, we throughout the Gospel Age "fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ." The sufferings of Christ are reckoned as continuing so long as we, his Church, reckonedly members of his body, his flesh and his bones, are suffering. The merit in God's sight as *the ransom* lay in the sacrifice which our Lord Jesus offered.

Ours is merely incidental, and reckonedly accepted as a part, in order that we might be granted a share also in the rewards.

Question. What is the difference between "ransom," "propitiation" and "atonement?"

Answer. The *ransom* is the corresponding price, and was paid by our Lord by the giving of his life. The *propitiation* was accomplished when he ascended up on high, appeared in the presence of God on our behalf and presented as for us and in payment of our penalty his death as our ransom. The *atonement* is the result of the offering of the ransom and its acceptance by God as a propitiation or satisfaction. It has a secondary feature or bearing upon us, when we realize the fact that so far as the divine law is concerned an atonement has been made; and if we are rightly exercised thereby, it will lead us to a condition of harmony of mind with God and to a desire to please and serve him, which is the human side of the at-one-ment.

Question. In what sense does the Apostle (Heb. 6:1) advise the Church to leave "the [first] principles of the doctrines of Christ;" does he mean that the practice of baptism, etc., should be abandoned?

Answer. The Jews had washings or baptisms under the Law, but they had nothing to do with Christian baptism. Every time a Jew washed his hands he performed a baptism. But it is not the washings under the Law to which the Apostle Paul refers. He does not say, leave baptisms because they are part of the Law, with which Christians have nothing to do. If he is so interpreted with reference to baptism, the same argument would apply to the other doctrines mentioned in the same connection; namely, repentance from dead works (all works are dead *if without faith*), faith in God, laying on of hands, resurrection of the dead and eternal judgment. Surely, we are not to understand that we should cease to believe in or practice [R2052 : page 249] repentance and faith; neither should we cease to believe in and practice baptism. What the Apostle is trying to show is, that we should not have to learn all of these things over and over again. He was reproofing the Hebrews addressed,

because, when they ought to have been teachers (chapter 5:12), they required somebody to teach them the first principles (the first principles mentioned in chapter 6:1,2). They should have understood all of these things, and been able to teach them; and while continuing to believe in these they should have been adding to their knowledge of the Word and plan of God; and not only so, but they should remember that it is not only correct doctrines on these subjects that are necessary to our full development as followers of Christ, but in addition the graces of Christian character; the doctrines being only a means to an end, and not the end itself. Therefore he says, Leaving the first principles, *let us go on to perfection* – let us cultivate our characters and endeavor to grow more and more like our Lord.

In the same way a child, when it goes to school, first learns the multiplication table, how to add and subtract and divide. These are the foundation principles of mathematics; and yet we would think a child either very stupid or careless in his studies to remain several years learning these first principles; and we would say that it ought to leave the first principles and go on to other things; by which we would not mean that it should forget these first principles or consider them errors or something to be despised, but that it should remember them and use them and *add to them* the higher branches.

For a full treatment of the subject of Baptism see TOWER, June 15, '93.

Question. In the TOWER for Sept. 15, '96, page 222, you say, "If the powers that be should ever compel us to vote, it would be our duty *to act with the side most nearly approved by our consciences.*" Can any earthly power compel us to be disloyal to our King? Let us ever bear in mind that no person can have any power at all against us, except it be given from heaven, and that God is not going to give any person power to compel his children to violate their consciences rather than be thrown out of work. Many have been drafted and fought in time of war against their wills; but he who has laid down

his life, given it up for Christ and the Gospel will never take it back again to destroy the life of his fellow-man, or in any way to please man. "If any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him." Let God take care of the sacrifice, while we fulfil it. Called out of the world, *dead* to the world, how can we heed the threats of the world? *Dead* to sin, how can we use our members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin? "His servants ye are to whom ye render yourselves servants to obey." Our salvation depends on our *faith in God* and our loyalty to him.

Many will talk of their faith and courage until it comes to the test; then their courage often fails. Too many begin the life of sacrifice without considering the cost, and with too many it is a failure.

Another writes: – I cannot see why we should permit them to compel us, especially in the voting part, to act against our conscience at all. Shall the body of Christ do wrong at the behest of the powers that be?

Answer. These two readers have totally misunderstood the answer to which they refer; and since others may have misunderstood similarly, and to guard against error on so vital a point, we answer these publicly.

If laws should be passed commanding every man of twenty-one years to vote at election time, as has already been proposed in the Ohio legislature, it would not mean a violation of the writer's conscience to obey this law, although we prefer to have nothing to do with electing the rulers of this world and would be unwilling to shed blood to maintain them in office, should such a crisis ever arise. In this connection we should but follow the Lord's direction, If any man *compel thee* to go a mile, go with him. – Matt. 5:41.

But if ever compelled by law to vote, we may be sure that we will not be compelled by law to vote for any particular person or party. Therefore, should it become our duty by law to vote, we would be

obliged to use our judgments as between parties, platforms and candidates. We would find none of these in all respects up to our ideal and standard; and hence some would vote one way, while others, equally conscientious, [R2053 : page 249] would vote another way. We might better have said, that in such an event it would be the duty of each to vote according to his *conscientious judgment*; – for principles and men most nearly in line with his conception of wisdom and righteousness; using his full liberty to cross off the names of any or all candidates, if not approved, and of substituting any names he may approve.

Conscience is never to be violated, and the above remarks of the objectors are fully endorsed. They merely misunderstood our meaning.

Question. The word "body" found in Lev. 21:11, is from the Hebrew *Nephesh*, which is so many times translated "soul." Would it be proper to substitute the word "soul" for "body" in this text? See statement in Oct. 15, '95, *Tower* to the effect that it is not proper to say a "*dead soul*."

Answer. This text more critically rendered would read, "Neither shall he go in to any living creature [soul] after death." The Hebrew language is "poor," and many words must serve many shades of thought each. Hence, "any dead body" is equivalent to "any *body* [soul] dead; *i.e.*, any *living creature* [soul] after death." The same is true of Num. 6:6; 19:13; Hag. 2:13.
