

[R2385 : page 332]

JUSTIFICATION MUST PRECEDE SANCTIFICATION.

DEAR Brother Russell: – The Nov. 1st WATCH TOWER is at hand, and I note the answer given my question *re* Justification. But you have not quite satisfied me. I fear I did not make the question sufficiently clear. Let me state again the point respecting which I am specially solicitous: –

Do you understand the Scriptures to teach that the sinner is justified in God's sight *before* he is "a new creature in Christ Jesus," or, is he justified at the moment he is accepted as a member of the body of Christ, as a new creature?

ANSWER: – He is justified *before* he becomes a new creature in Christ.

Your difficulty arises from a failure to discern that justification and sanctification are two separate steps, both of which are necessary to those who would accept the high calling of this Gospel age, the only calling now [R2385 : page 333] extended to any. Sinners cannot be sanctified or set apart in the divine service: sinners therefore are not invited to present their bodies living sacrifices to God. Sinners are called to repentance, and to the exercise of faith in Christ as the Redeemer and only way by which they can approach God. The moment the sinner accepts Christ by faith, with a desire to approach God, he is *justified by his faith*, and at once becomes privileged as a justified man.

The next step of consecration should follow quickly, as soon as God's grace is fully appreciated, yet with many, because of lack of Scriptural instruction, the second step of consecration is neither seen nor taken for some time, and God apparently exercises mercy for a season, waiting for his justified creature to realize his privilege, and to present himself a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, and his

reasonable service. He is reckoned holy and acceptable to God, because he has been justified – he is accepted as a sacrifice upon the Lord's altar because his sins and blemishes are not imputed to him, having been transferred to his Redeemer's account, at the moment of his justification.

We understand, however, that no one can *maintain* his reckoned justification who indulges in wilful sin – nor can he long continue in a justified attitude without progressing to the next legitimate step of full consecration and self-sacrifice. If he loses his justification without making use of it in consecration, etc., he has merely slipped back again to the plane of the world, and *if he has not enjoyed* full opportunity for consecration, he probably will have some future opportunity to revive his justification and to consecrate himself; but in any case he loses all the precious opportunities of the high calling to the new nature, besides the blessings which he might have enjoyed in this present life. Furthermore, his greater knowledge having added to his greater responsibility, he may expect "many stripes" in the future, or disciplinary judgments, in proportion to his resistance to the light, and failure to use it. – Luke 12:47,48.

But for those who have been clearly enlightened, and who have made the covenant of consecration, there is no Scriptural hope of a future opportunity with the world in the Millennial age. They, having received their full share of the ransom-bought blessings and opportunities for eternal life as human beings, and having *exchanged those* for the proffered "new nature," with its terms and conditions, of sacrifice of his justified human nature, must proceed to offer themselves willing sacrifices, and thus ultimately be accepted as overcomers. Or (2), hesitating and being overcome by the cares of this life, they will be liable to the "great tribulation," to be of the second company, who shall be "saved so as by fire." Or (3), by repudiation of the Lord, or the repudiation of his principles of righteousness (transgressing against their clear enlightenment), they will be

reckoned as the sow which returned to her wallowing in the mire, and will have their portion in the Second Death.
