

INTERESTING QUERIES ANSWERED.

IS FAITH THE GIFT OF GOD?

Question. – I have always considered that faith is what each individual must personally exercise and develop, but according to Romans 12:3 it would seem that this is something we get in a measure at least from God. Can God impart what he himself does not possess? In what way, then, does God give us a measure of faith? God having told us a truth in his Word, is it not entirely a matter resting with us as to whether or not we have confidence in it – have faith in it? "Faith cometh by hearing of the Word."

Answer. – The word here rendered "faith" (Rom. 12:3) is from the Greek *pistis*, otherwise translated fidelity, assurance. As you say, we have much to do with our own faith and assurance and exercise a certain amount of it before we are begotten of the spirit at all, else we could not be justified by faith, for justification precedes our presenting of ourselves living sacrifices and our acceptance and begetting of the holy spirit. This much of faith is our own evidently, but after we have received of the Lord's spirit our faith may grow exceedingly, so that we will be able to walk by faith and not by sight – to accept the things that are not seen, and to sacrifice for them things that are seen and temporal. It may be said with propriety that the attitude which permits us to receive God's message of grace unto justification is all of God, in the sense that all of our blessings are from above – "every good and perfect gift." But it is especially true that faith in spiritual things which we develop after we are begotten of the holy spirit is the result of divine instruction; as it is written, "They shall be all taught of God," and the faith which will enable the consecrated ones to come off victors is not merely the natural faith with which they started, and with which they laid hold upon the Lord and

justification, but a higher attainment of faith, the result of being taught of God through his Word and by his providence.

In the text under consideration our sober thinking must depend upon the time we have been under the Lord's instruction, and the degree of attention we have given to learning the lessons intended for the increase of our faith. This development is in the Scriptures spoken of as a "gift," also as a "fruit" of the spirit of God in us, and again as God's "workmanship," for by his truth and by his providences he is working in his children, not only to will but also to do his good pleasure – he is working in us faith, hope, joy, peace, love and all the graces which he approves; and if we will be obedient to his teaching and leading he will complete the work eventually and we shall be copies of his dear Son our Lord, and joint-inheritors with him.

WHO WERE THOSE SAINTS?

Question. – Who were those "saints," mentioned in Matt. 27:52,53, who arose and came into the holy city after the Lord's resurrection?

Answer. – (1) The persons mentioned could not have been the ancient worthies, perfected; because of those the Apostle declares that "they without us [the Gospel Church] shall not be made perfect." In other words, their resurrection will not be due to take place until after the first resurrection of the Church has been completed. – Heb. 11:39,40.

(2) The class mentioned cannot have been saints of the Gospel Church, because the Church had not been selected – even the beginning of its acceptance with God had not yet taken place, and did not occur until the day of Pentecost, nearly fifty days later.

(3) The record seems to imply that the earthquake which occurred at the time of our Lord's death opened these graves – produced the awakening mentioned; but that the awakened ones tarried and did not manifest themselves in the city of Jerusalem until after our Lord's resurrection.

At very most it was an awakening similar to that which Lazarus experienced, and the daughter of Jairus, and the son of the widow of Nain, to die again, later on. We may be sure of this because the express declaration of 1 Cor. 15:20 is: "Christ is the first-fruits of them that slept" – the first one *resurrected to perfection of being* – the first one lifted *completely* out of death to perfection of life. The persons mentioned could have been no more than merely aroused from the slumber of death temporarily, and for some purpose of which we have no knowledge. We were at first inclined to doubt the genuineness of the passage, but find that a portion of it at least appears in the oldest Greek MSS. yet discovered.

SEVEN, SIXTY-TWO AND ONE EQUAL SEVENTY.

Question. – In Dan. 9:25,26 we have different periods given – seven weeks, and sixty-two weeks: some things are said to happen after the sixty-two [**R2811 : page 157**] weeks, and again something is said about one week, and altogether the matter seems to be confused. Please give us the harmonizing view.

Answer. – We must take into consideration the statement of vs. 24; *viz.*, that the entire period under discussion is seventy weeks (symbolical). This is divided into three parts; *viz.*, seven weeks, sixty-two weeks and one week – total, seventy. The first seven weeks marked specially events connected with the Temple; the end of the sixty-two weeks were to mark Messiah's appearance. But we are to remember that the sixty-two followed the seven, hence the end of the sixty-two weeks would be the end of the sixty-nine weeks as respects the whole, and the one week

following would be the seventieth week. It was this last, or seventieth week of years, that constituted the Jewish time of favor. It (seven years) began with our Lord's baptism, was marked in its middle with our Lord's crucifixion, and ended three and a half years later, after the ripe "wheat" of the Jewish age had been gathered into the Gospel age; and immediately at its close the Gospel message began to be sent to the Gentiles upon equal terms with the Jews, – Cornelius being the first Gentile convert.
