

CONCERNING THE CLOSING OF THE CALL.

A BROTHER wrote us on this question recently, and a portion of our reply may be of interest to others and hence we present it below. We wrote him: –

Respecting restitution: We have held from the first, or at least, since 1881, that we are in "the times of restitution" now; and that the opening features of restitution work will be manifested in the downfall and destruction of the things pertaining to this present order, making ready for the new order of things. We have given the illustration in first and second "Dawns" of how the new order of things might be compared to the beginning of a contract for the substitution of a new building for an old one – that the first evidences of the work would be those of destruction, the pulling down of the old. We still hold this, and hold that this is all that we should expect – that we should not expect personal, physical restitution now. Some years ago we had the impression that *possibly* some signs of physical restitution to humanity would be due in this "harvest" or lapping period; but all question on this subject is dispelled for years past, as we have seen most clearly that the new order of things and its blessing must wait until the entire "body" of the Great Priest has been completed – until the entire work of atonement has been finished – then the High Priest, head and body complete, will lift up his hands and bless the people, in glorious garments, – i.e., clothed in the majesty of divine power and authority as the foretold Prophet, Priest and King in one.

Some years ago we were less careful than now in the use of language respecting the restitution times, in mentioning that coming condition as a "call" to restitution. We should have been more particular, more specific, and should have said that the

"Trumpet of the Jubilee" would be blown, announcing the beginning of restitution times. This work is now being done, through the *Watch Tower* literature, etc. The Jubilee Trumpet is not a *call*, in the ordinary sense of the word call, but rather an announcement; the Lord will announce his Kingdom and its blessed regulations, and will expect every one to yield implicit compliance; and those who do not yield compliance will receive "stripes;" and if still persistent will "be destroyed from amongst the people." This thought is very different from the thought of a *call*, as that term applied during the Gospel age, when the matter was open to each who heard to either accept or reject the high calling and its "narrow way."

Respecting consecration before 1881 being necessary to a share in the high calling: We must admit that all who were consecrated in 1881, when the general call ceased (because the full *number* had accepted which would complete the elect class) would have a precedence over any others: Indeed, that no others could be accepted to the "Bride" position in any sense, except as some of these already consecrated ones should be accounted unworthy, and their places and crowns vacated. (Rev. 3:5,11.) But since it requires all of these consecrated ones to complete the elect number, it follows that any who would be accepted to take their places must make their consecration and be accepted of the Lord subsequent to 1881.

We are to remember, moreover, that justified believers are accounted "holy," and their justification is specifically designated in this way in several instances. For instance, the Apostle says, "I beseech you, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies living sacrifices, *holy*, acceptable to God," etc. And again, "Else were your children unholy; but now are they *holy*" – children one or both of whose parents are the Lord's children. It is from this class of justified ones that we should expect the Lord to accept the number necessary to complete the elect number – to

take the places of those who in 1881 were in a consecrated attitude, but who, because of unfaithfulness since, will be rejected from [R2901 : page 345] the "Bride" class, to have their portion either with the second company, "saved so as by fire," or with those who sin wilfully and deliberately, and thus incur the "Second Death" penalty. We should, therefore, look for those who would now come into divine favor and joint-heirship with Christ amongst this class – amongst those who were already justified in October, 1881, or amongst the children of such as were justified at that time; though we may not know nor say that others may not have become eligible by a more recent justification.

Since the general "call" ceased October, 1881, although the "door" is not yet shut, but stands ajar for some to pass out who fail to keep their covenant, and for others to pass in to take their places, that the predestinated number may attain the prize, and yet that none shall attain to it except such as are copies of God's dear Son, in heart, in intention – it is impossible for us to make positive promises of joint-heirship in the Kingdom to any who may consecrate their lives to the Lord at the present time. All that we can say to them is that consecration is their reasonable service *in any event*, and that if the Lord shall manifest his acceptance of their sacrifice it would be proper for them to consider this an evidence that they had been accepted of the Lord to all the rights and privileges of such sacrificers as made their consecration before the general call ceased.

As to what would constitute evidences of divine acceptance, we suggest two, the enjoyment of both of which would seem to us a good basis for full assurance [R2902 : page 345] of faith on this point. (1) God's acceptance of the sacrifice might be reasonably inferred if the consecrated one finds opportunities for self-sacrifice, self-denials, etc., in the service of the Lord, of the truth and of the brethren – however humble the service or opportunities for "laying down our lives for the brethren." (2) God's acceptance

of the sacrifice should in the present time imply not only a begetting of the spirit of holiness, but also an ability to appreciate clearly the spiritual features of the divine plan, represented by the light of the golden candle-stick in the "Holy," and by the shew-bread, and by the privileges of communion and service represented by the incense at the golden altar.

Whoever has these two evidences has what we think he should consider a satisfactory proof that he is inside the first vail of the Tabernacle, that he is therefore counted for the time being at least as a member of the High Priest's body. And such, we believe, should consider themselves as fully eligible to the prize as any upon the race-course, upon condition of faithfulness even unto death. It will be noticed, however, that we distinguish between an appreciation of spiritual things and appreciation of restitution and earthly things merely. We believe that the "natural man," under favorable conditions, may appreciate a great deal of the divine provision for the world, and that it is the spiritual things which God has specially in reservation for the little flock, which can be appreciated only by those begotten of the spirit. This does not mean that the natural man cannot understand what we mean when we discuss spiritual things; but that, as the Apostle declares, though he understands what we say, our words are "foolishness unto him," he cannot grasp them as truth, and as applicable to himself.
