

## INTERESTING QUESTIONS ANSWERED.

### IMMORTALITY AND ETERNAL LIFE.

*Question.* – We read in Rom. 2:7 that to those who by patient perseverance in well doing seek for glory, honor and immortality, God will render eternal life. Why this declaration, if immortality is a higher and more desirable reward than everlasting life?

*Answer.* – It is well that we should notice that the Scriptures treat matters from a broad standpoint; thus, although those known to us as the great company, who come through great tribulation (Rev. 7:14), are not called to such a position as they will attain, but merely get it as of the Lord's grace after they have failed in respect to their high calling; and none being called to this favor, it is not specifically mentioned in the Scriptures; nevertheless, provision has been made for them, and the holy spirit seems to have guided the utterances of the apostles in such manner that their language includes these as well as the overcomers. This class will seek the glory, honor and immortality; but through negligence to seek with sufficient diligence, and along the lines laid down in the Lord's Word, they will fail to attain these chiefest blessings, which will go to the little flock. Nevertheless, as the Scriptures declare, they and all who seek it in the appointed way, will gain eternal life, and that, after all, is the chiefest and greatest blessing and gift held out before us.

(2) *Question.* – Again in John 17:2, our Lord, in praying for his Church, says, "As thou hast given him (Jesus) power over all flesh, that he may give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him." Why is nothing here said respecting immortality?

*Answer.* – For the same reason as given in the preceding answer. Furthermore, the context does not particularly state that the elect Church only is referred to. Rather the fourth verse indicates

the [R3154 : page 63] Sin-bearer's larger work in blessing all the families of the earth. By the Father's provision he, by his sacrifice, obtained eternal life "for all them that obey him" – not only for the little flock of the present time, but also for the larger flock of the coming age. Additionally, we notice that the eternal life granted to the gospel Church is only indirectly the gift of our Lord Jesus. As immortality was the Father's gift to his Son, so it will be the Father's gift, by and through the Son, to those who are members of his Body – the true Church. Indeed, the heavenly Father specially is declared to be the Father, or Life-giver, to all who attain to spiritual conditions, either as the Christ, the overcoming Church, or as the great company who come through great tribulation. The eternal life which our Lord Jesus will give more particularly on his own account, will be eternal life to the world during the Millennial age – the eternal life which he gives to us of this gospel age, reckonedly, in our justification by faith, the first step preparatory to our being begotten of the Spirit by the Father.

### **WILFUL SIN IN THE "BODY."**

*Question.* – In view of the statements in 1 John 3:6-9, may we not reason that if we have God's mind in us we, therefore, could not sin? and further, that it is impossible for us to sin in the body (of Christ)? or that if we commit sin it would imply that we were no longer members of his body?

*Answer.* – We understand the Apostle to teach that the holy spirit of God is opposed to sin; that in proportion as we have the mind of Christ we will not only love righteousness but also hate iniquity. To our understanding the Apostle here refers to sin in its fullest sense; viz., wilful transgression of the divine law. Such a wilful transgression would imply that we loved the sin and hated righteousness; and, hence, that if we ever had spiritual life we had lost it, and become spiritually dead – "plucked up by the roots."

We are to remember, however, that there are other sins not of this kind – not unto death. There are sins in which wilfulness is not complete, since they are the results of temptation, and sins that are the results of our own weaknesses through the Adamic fall. Such weaknesses and such stumblings under temptation belong to the flesh which is already reckoned dead (in the consecrated Christian) and is not reckoned of God as belonging to the new creature. Hence, such lapses from rectitude are not here designated by the Apostle as sins, nor are they so reckoned of God who judges us not according to the flesh, but according to the spirit.

However, as we have heretofore shown, there are some partial sins – that is to say, they are not full sins in the sense of being thoroughly wilful and intentional transgressions of the divine Law – they are weaknesses of the flesh, and yet perhaps in those weaknesses of the flesh the mind failed to be as strong and courageous as it should have been, and to some extent yielded to the wrong-doing. Since such wrong-doing is not approved by the Christian mind after the brunt of the trial has passed, it is not counted sin in the full sense of the word. It is, however, a misdemeanor, for which a measure of stripes may be exacted according to the degree of knowledge, and according to the opportunities for resisting the wrong course which were left unused. From this standpoint it is evident that a full, deliberate sin cannot be committed while we are in the body (of Christ), possessed of the holy spirit and recognized by the Head. To commit such a wilful sin would involve our having left the Head, abandoned his teachings and service and love, and hence, it would involve our having left the body of which he is the Head.

### **"THE EARTH ABIDETH" – "THE HEAVENS WAX OLD."**

*Question.* – How are we to harmonize the statements of Eccl. 1:4, "The earth abideth forever," with Psa. 102:25,26; Heb. 1:10; etc.?

*Answer.* – In both cases the word used indicates that the physical earth is meant. We harmonize them by understanding that the latter

Scripture refers to the changes taking place as respects earthly conditions. This is signified by the illustration given, as a vesture (robe, coat). "Thou shalt fold them up, and they shall be changed;" as one would re-make or re-arrange the drapery of a gown, so the Lord will change, re-arrange, etc., the general matters pertaining to the earth. One such change took place at the flood, so far as we know, and we anticipate that some other change will take place in the near future, making the earth more fit than at present for the Millennial Kingdom conditions. Additionally, we are to remember that the physical earth is used as the basis of a symbol, and that the symbolical earth refers not to the land, but to the people, the order of society, etc. In this view also we expect a great transformation, the turning upside down, or changing all round, by which the present social order will be transformed into a social order more acceptable to God during the Millennial age. The time of this change is near at hand, and when the present symbolical earth – society – shall melt like wax from the fervent heat of strife and anarchy, the symbolical heavens, or ecclesiastical powers, will also take fire, and pass away with a great noise, commotion, disturbance – both to be superseded by the new heavens and new earth condition (symbolical), the Church, in glory, honor and power, and mankind under new social conditions.

