

INTERESTING QUESTIONS

Question. – In Romans 5:18, we read, "As by the offense of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation, even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life." When will this "free gift" be applied for all?

Answer. – Aside from the "household of faith," dealt with in this Gospel Age, we understand that this free gift will come to the world in the next – the Messianic – Age, but that, as a gift, it will have certain conditions attached to it, just as the gift of grace to the Church has certain conditions attached to it. In our case, it is to take up the cross of sacrifice and follow our Head; otherwise, it does not apply to us. But for the world after the close of this Age, the great High Priest will appear in the presence of God and will sprinkle the blood upon the mercy-seat a second time; and that, so far as Jesus is concerned, will fulfil all demands of Justice, and the whole world will be turned over to the Redeemer.

The method by which he will bestow this great gift is a matter that is associated with responsibility. We are guaranteed that a full opportunity will reach all, but that opportunity will be under the terms of the New [R4760 : page 46] Covenant for the blessing of all the families of the earth. It will be first applied to the Ancient Worthies; they will get the blessings and privileges of the New Covenant immediately. After that it will be, "to the Jew first," because for his long waiting for such a Kingdom, and his waiting for such a Kingdom will be rewarded with the joy and blessing which he will at that time enter into.

However, it will not stop with the Jew; but all mankind will be privileged to come into these blessings, and thus they will be *blessing themselves* through the Seed of Abraham. While it is true that the Seed of Abraham will bless the world, this is particularly true of the Spiritual

Seed which will bless all; yet the strict reading of the text would imply that "In thy Seed will all the nations or families of the earth *bless themselves*." They will bless themselves by coming under the New Covenant arrangements; just as the Jews were not blessed by the Covenant which Moses mediated, immediately after they said, "All these things will we do," but not until they came voluntarily under its terms; so, the acceptance of the New Covenant by whosoever will accept it and will comply with its conditions, will ensure to them eternal life – and this they will get *only by obedience to that Covenant*. Thus the gift which they receive will not be their gift at once, as with the Ancient Worthies. It will be their gift and will be attainable as they come into harmony with the Lord during the thousand years of Messiah's reign by their compliance with the terms of the New Covenant.

Question. – When will the obedient of the world be entitled to eternal life and when will they receive it?

The obedient of the world will get their life under the terms of the New Covenant, and will begin to receive it just as soon as they begin to obey; in proportion as they do this they will get a little more and a little more life, and so on. The whole thousand years will be for the purpose of giving life to the world and they will receive more and more of it as they progress in the right way: "He will swallow up death in victory." – Isa. 25:8.

It will be a gradual work; as they come into the terms of the New Covenant they will be blessed with life: "The man which doeth those things shall live by them." (Rom. 10:5.) They will come to perfection gradually, as they keep the Law. There will be no death there; there will be no occasion for death. But as Adam needed to be tried and to be tested, so will it be with those who reach the end of the Mediatorial reign; they will be tested as to whether they are worthy to keep this life.

God applies the various temptations or tests so as to demonstrate whether or not they are worthy of eternal life; and all who do not give way under the testing, "shall not perish, but have everlasting life."
– John 3:16.

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Question. – Is Christ the Advocate for the "great company," as well as for the "little flock"? If so, will he be the Advocate of the "great company" during the time of trouble, until they shall have been made white by the blood of the Lamb?

Answer. – Yes. The "great company" is part of the Church of the First-born. In the type, the "passed-over" ones, the Church of the First-born, were represented in the whole family of Levi. They took the place of Israel's first-born, who were spared through the blood of the lamb. We keep our garments unspotted by the blood of the antitypical Lamb – "the blood of Jesus Christ, which cleanseth us from all sin." Evidently "the great tribulation" through which the "great company" will pass will take place before the Mediator takes the Kingdom, hence they are not now under him as a Mediator, but must be under him while he is now holding the office of Advocate.

The "great company" are not distinctly recognized anywhere, save in an incidental way. For instance, when Rebecca became the bride of Isaac, her two maids also became part of the family; but no particular notice is taken of them. In connection with the Church, it is stated that those that followed her are her servants. This is particularly shown in the illustration given in Psalm 45.

TRIBULATION – THEN EXALTATION

Question. – Are the Lord's people more awkward than others, more quarrelsome, or more injurious to their neighbors that they should have tribulation; or why does the Lord say, "In the world ye shall have tribulation"?

Answer. – We believe the Lord's own answer to the question is that himself and all of his true followers would have tribulation in the world because "the darkness hateth the light." We do not mean that all but the saintly are vicious or unkind. We know that there are many well-intentioned people. The thought is that there would be such inharmony between God's people and those of the world that there would be continual disapprobation manifested by the worldly toward the saintly. Some of the world would *hate* righteousness while others would be so out of sympathy with the light that they would not give God's people the defense or assistance which they would otherwise be willing to give.

We think it quite true that those who are looking for the coming Kingdom must expect their peace, not from the worldly, but from another quarter. "In the world ye shall have tribulation." We also believe that part of our tribulation in the world is because we are being more and more transformed; hence we do not find the satisfaction in the world that we otherwise would and that others find. Our chief business is to keep our bodies under and restrain our natural appetites. The opposition of ourselves – the warring against our human nature and the misunderstandings of others – all these combine to make our tribulation in the world.

FIGHTING THE GOOD FIGHT OF FAITH

Question. – What is the connection between the first and the latter part of this text, "Be of good cheer; I have overcome the world"?

Answer. – We have before us a very remarkable proposition in the Lord's call. We are called to be children of God, sons of the Highest, joint-heirs with Christ, his Son, in the Kingdom work. Instead of this bringing us great honor among men in the present life, it brings the very reverse – persecution, tribulation. God's people have persecution because they have consecrated their lives to him. The tribulation would naturally lead them to disappointment and to feel that God's favor is not with them.

Hence it is quite necessary for them to have some such encouragement as the words of our text, as though the Lord had said, Do not allow these tribulations to make you discouraged; remember that I am the Captain of your salvation; remember that I have gone before you; remember my degradation before obtaining a share in this Kingdom; remember that although entirely without sin I endured great contradiction of sinners against myself. These things should be an assurance to you of the greatness of the coming Kingdom; that the glories far outweigh any sacrifices you may endure. Furthermore, [R4761 : page 47] in every trial and difficulty you may have my succor. In every tribulation I will provide a way of escape. Fight a good fight. Think of the joys and honors and privileges which will be yours if you are faithful to the end. "We shall be kings and priests unto God and reign with Christ a thousand years."

WHICH WEARS THE ROBE?

Question. – Is the robe of Christ's righteousness worn by the New Creature or the Old Creature?

Answer. – The answer can be approached from either standpoint; for instance, we might say that the New Creature needs no robe, never having sinned, but that the flesh, which is imperfect, needs the robe as a covering for its blemishes.

But while the answer is correct it would not be correct to say that the Old Creature needs the robe, for those who wear the robe are dead as Old Creatures, and have their standing with God only as New Creatures, "Old things have passed away; behold all things have become new." – 2 Cor. 5:17.

So, then, it is the New Creature only that is recognized of God, and invited to the wedding, and granted the wedding garment, the robe of Christ's righteousness. The New Creature needs this robe, not for itself, but as a covering for its flesh. The fleshly will is dead, but the fleshly body is the New Creature's only body at the present time while it waits for its new body in the "first resurrection." "Reckon ye your bodies dead indeed unto sin, but alive toward God through Jesus Christ."

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