

JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH

IN ROMANS 5:1, where the Apostle says, "Being justified by faith we have peace with God," his thought is that our peace or harmony with God began with our faith and led on to this condition of grace wherein we stand as sons of God, begotten of the Holy Spirit and rejoicing in the hope of Kingdom glory, honor and immortality. Our justification by faith began with the first element of our faith; that is to say, when first we saw the Lord even imperfectly.

From the time we first approached God we began to have a measure of peace, which continues with us as long as we are walking in the right direction, growing in knowledge and obedience. Those whose faith or obedience stops find their peace with God diminishing. If the faith and obedience extend to the point of full consecration and begetting of the Holy Spirit, it becomes the "Peace of God which passeth all understanding," ruling in our hearts. (Phil. 4:7.) The latter text refers to the perfected peace imparted by the Holy Spirit, which results from a full consecration to the will of God.

After trust and obedience had increased to the point where we were willing to present our bodies living sacrifices to the Lord, then we entered into this fuller blessing, wherein we now stand. But in order to enter, we must first have our faith vitalized by the great High Priest, who imputes to us as much of the merit of His sacrifice as is necessary to perfect us; and secondly, we must be accepted as sacrifices by our Heavenly Father, who indicates His acceptance by begetting us of the Holy Spirit to newness of life.

The vitalization is that which makes justification complete and unchangeable. The person whose justification has been vitalized has received his full share in the merit of Christ. To such there would remain no more an interest in the great atonement if he were to turn back, like the sow to the wallowing. If he fails to go on to perfection

as a New Creature, the only thing for him would be a "certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation which shall devour the adversaries." – Heb. 10:27.

By way of illustration, let us consider a person not in harmony with God, but feeling after him. Typically he recognizes the Divine Presence as represented in the Tabernacle. He draws near to God. As he approaches the Tabernacle he finds but one gate for entrance from the Camp to the Court. After he enters that gate he beholds the brazen altar with its sacrifices, representing the Redeemer's meritorious sacrifice. Passing the altar implies faith in the redeeming work. From the time he enters the "court" condition of faith his faith continues to increase with each onward step of obedience. Next the first veil is seen, representing consecration to death. If the stoop of full consecration to pass under the veil be made, the result is full or perfect peace, such as our Lord referred to when He said, "My peace I give unto you." – John 14:27.

His faith is no longer merely a faith in the Redeemer's work; more than this, it has become "peace, the gift of God's love," the begetting of the Holy Spirit, which passeth all understanding, ruling in his heart. But if, after the first veil is reached and seen to represent the sacrifice of all earthly interests, that step is not taken, the result will be a lessening of the peace, and possibly a more or less retrograde movement toward the gate, toward the world.

The difference between the justification of those now justified through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ and that of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and the other Ancient Worthies who were said to be justified by faith is this: The Ancient Worthies lived at a time when their faith could not be *vitalized*. Hence, nothing that they could do would give them more than the privilege of having the Divine approval and a better hope for the future, according to the amount of knowledge they enjoyed. They could never gain eternal life actually, except through the Redeemer. Hence they received only the promise of eternal life.

Their full justification will come when the Redeemer shall have made application of His merit to the world.

During the Gospel Age matters are different. Whoever would be justified by faith and similarly approved of God now, must present His body a living sacrifice. Those who do so, in this "Acceptable Time," will be accepted of the Lord and begotten of the Holy Spirit. Such then cease to be of the earthly, and get their reward with the heavenly class, with our Lord, on the spirit plane.

