

QUESTION ON JUSTIFICATION

QUESTION. – Have you changed your views respecting the justification of the Church, so that the presentations of STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES, Volume I, on this subject no longer represent your thought?

Answer. – Surely not! If we have, why would we continue to publish and circulate the Volume? "The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day." So the subject of our justification is clarifying daily to many of the Lord's dear people. Features of justification not previously discerned by them are now very clear. For instance, many failed to see in the past, and some still fail to see, that justification by faith is a gradual process. Each step of faith brought us nearer to the climax.

But the climax was not wholly reached until our faith manifested its perfection by our obedience and full surrender in consecration to the Lord. Then our great Advocate accepted our consecrated bodies and imputed to them of His merit, absolutely justifying them in the sight of Justice – the Heavenly Father. Then it was that the Heavenly Father accepted that completely justified soul by the begetting of the Holy Spirit. Thenceforth he was a New Creature, and a son begotten to the spirit plane.

During the period of progress in faith, justification was being gradually approached, and the individual had more and more of the Divine favor. But not until the final step was taken did he become fully justified to human nature – a son on the earthly plane. And *only for an instant* did he there remain. Then the begetting of the Holy Spirit indicated the acceptance of the sacrifice of the perfected one, and started him as a New Creature.

TENTATIVE AND ACTUAL SONSHIP

All this is indicated in the Chart of the Ages. Plane *N* represents the justified condition in its various steps. Thus Abraham and others of the Old Testament times were justified before God by their faith. They were not justified to *life*, not justified even to *sonship*. They were justified to God's *friendship, favor and supervisory care*. After Jesus had died, risen, ascended and made application of His merit on the Church's behalf, He became the Advocate of all this class, desirous of walking in His steps in full consecration. The imputation of His merit constitutes for each one the work of justification, and this makes it possible for God to accept his sacrifice and to beget him to the new nature.

Abraham was styled God's friend, because of his faith and desire for harmony with God. So was John the Baptist, of whom we read, "The friend of the Bridegroom ...rejoiceth greatly because of the Bridegroom's voice." The term "servant" is in the Bible specially applied to those Jews who were under the Mosaic Law [R5317 : page 286] Covenant. By that Covenant they enjoyed God's care and blessing, and were permitted to be His servants. Although many of them, as well as Abraham, were friends of God, and would have been fully qualified for all the sonship privileges, nevertheless it was not possible, in harmony with the Divine arrangement, for them to be recognized as sons. For, as the Apostle explains, a "son abideth forever," and not until Christ's sacrifice had opened the way for the cancellation of sin and death, could any be received to Divine sonship.

Likewise our standing even now as sons of God is tentative. If we abide in God's love, we shall abide as His sons and be perfected in due time. But if any man draw back to wilful sin and its service, he will lose his sonship. His name will be blotted out of the Lamb's Book of Life. The Advocate with the Father would cease to recognize him. He would have no standing with the Son, and another

would be permitted to take his place as a member of the Body of the Anointed.

Thus the Apostle declares, "Now are we the sons of God [in embryo], and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that, when He shall appear [our Redeemer, our Head], we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is." (I John 3:2.) That is to say, our present sonship is tentative. The actual sonship will begin after we shall have passed our probationary trial. As many as shall prove acceptable by their faith and loyalty will be made sons in the fullest sense, by the glorious resurrection change. Thus we see that as none are fully received to plane *N* until they have gone the full length of consecration, so none will be *fully* received to sonship until they shall have reached plane *L*.

THE "BETTER RESURRECTION"

Although the Ancient Worthies, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, the Prophets, etc. (Hebrews 11:38-40), could not be styled sons of God, and were not so named, it was not because they were not worthy of such a station and such a name. The Apostle draws our attention to this, assuring us that they "pleased God," and nothing pleases Him short of perfection of heart. The only thing which hindered their acceptance as sons was the necessity that first the Atonement blood should be presented on their behalf. In the "better resurrection" which the Ancient Worthies will experience, they will, we understand, come forth perfect men. They will be perfect as was Adam before his sin, and with minds, hearts and wills developed, exercised, tested, proved loyal to God. In that perfect condition they will be samples of what all mankind may attain by obedience during Messiah's Reign.

From the moment of their resurrection, these perfect men would have the same right to come to God as had Adam, and would be as fully entitled to be called sons of God as was Adam, except for one *thing*. And that is, that [**R5317 : page 287**] the Ancient

Worthies, as well as the rest of mankind, will be in the hands of the great Mediator of the New Covenant for the thousand years of His Messianic Kingdom. And, according to the Scriptures, not until the end of that period will He deliver up the Kingdom to the Father.

Hence we understand that the Ancient Worthies will have no direct dealing with the Father as sons, and no direct recognition from Him as such, until the end of Christ's Reign, when He will deliver over to the Father all things, that He may be "all in all," and that all may be directly subject to Him. During the thousand years, however, under Christ's Mediatorial arrangements, the Ancient Worthies, perfected, and all others, in proportion to their attainment of perfection, will enjoy privileges and blessings, because they will no longer be under a reign of sin and death and of Satan, the "Prince of this World," but under the Prince of Life and His reign of Righteousness, unto Life.

=====