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THE WHITE RAIMENT OF THE KINGDOM

**"He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot his name out of the Book of Life, but I will confess his name before My Father, and before His angels."
– Revelation 3:5.**

IN THIS text, as throughout the Bible, the thought is maintained that the elect class, who will receive the highest glory, honor and blessing from the Lord, must demonstrate their loyalty by overcoming. It is not sufficient that there shall be an overcoming of the will at the beginning of the Christian career, but subsequently there must be trials and testings endured, and these must be met in an overcoming manner. The consecration having been made, and the trials and testings having begun, the individual yielding under those temptations and testings, and continuing to be overcome by them, would prove that he is not sufficiently loyal; for the Lord has promised that His grace shall be sufficient in every time of need. – 2 Corinthians 12:9.

Although the Lord's grace is sufficient, this would not mean that we might not sometimes fall into temptation. We might fall into temptation inadvertently, without the consent of our wills, and "be overtaken in a fault." But the Lord's grace is sufficient to bring us out of the temptations as overcomers, enabling us to triumph over them. [R5669 : page 118] Falling *into* temptation does not mean *falling* in temptation – falling *when tempted*. But when one is temporarily overcome, whether it be a yielding to a temptation of the flesh or whether it be a wilfulness of spirit, or mind, has much to do with the nature and degree of the sin. We may not always be able to triumph fully, completely, according to the *flesh*, but the *will* must be loyal. We must triumph in the *mind*, otherwise we shall not be overcomers.

This overcoming is a gradual work, progressing throughout our Christian course, from the moment of [R5669 : page 119] consecration down to the conclusion of life. But the text apparently takes hold of the conclusion, rather than the beginning or the middle of the work, and implies that the individual has at the *end* of the trial, the *end* of his race-course, this overcoming degree of righteousness, so that he may be classed as an overcomer. Such an overcomer will be clothed in white raiment.

WHITE RAIMENT LOANED TO US

The Scriptures give us to understand that at the very beginning of our Christian experience, we figuratively are clothed in white raiment. This white raiment represents *justification* – we are justified freely from all things. It is a robe without a spot. It is sometimes spoken of as Christ's robe of righteousness, because it comes to us through Christ. It is to be had only through Him. He is able to *impute* to us, to *loan* to us, grant to us temporarily, this robe. It is spoken of as the wedding garment. At an oriental wedding, a wedding garment of white linen was used to cover over the clothing worn by each guest. It was loaned to the guest at the wedding by the host, when he appeared at the wedding-feast.

White linen signifies purity. So when Christ gives us the use of His merit, it is as a white garment to cover out imperfections. It is an *imputation* of His righteousness, which is to us *justification*. We are exhorted to keep our garments unspotted from the world. The imputation of righteousness given us, we are to preserve, to maintain. But we cannot fully maintain it of ourselves. Our tongues may sometimes say things that we wish they had not said, and our hands may sometimes do things we would not desire. Hence, God has provided a way by which our blemishes or transgressions may be eradicated – those not wilful. This way is our daily application for the cleansing of these unwilling transgressions, through the precious blood. Thus we keep our garments unspotted from the

world. Thus our justification, our white robe, is maintained – should be maintained.

WHITE RAIMENT OUR OWN

But it is not sufficient that we have the imputation of our Savior's righteousness. This imputation is only a temporary arrangement. We need to come to the place where we shall have a righteousness of our own. Our flesh is imperfect; as St. Paul says, we cannot do the things which we would. In spite of our best endeavors things are bound to go more or less wrong. But we are to prove ourselves overcomers – "more than conquerors." The Lord has arranged that at the conclusion of our trial, at the end of the present life, all the overcomers shall receive the new body. This new body will be a body of actual purity. Thus, as the Apostle says, we shall "be clothed upon with our House which is from Heaven." So our raiment will be changed from a garment of *imputed* perfection, our justification by faith, to that which represents *actual* perfection. At the resurrection we shall receive that body of inherent purity, without blemish, without spot, which is here pictured as "white raiment."

"BROUGHT BEFORE THE KING"

Furthermore, we read of each of these that the Lord "will not blot out his name out of the Book of Life," in which are written the names of all those who become truly the Lord's people, those who have made with the Lord "a covenant by sacrifice," all who renounce their wills, who present their bodies a living sacrifice. The name of each of these is recorded, entered in the Lamb's Book of Life, when he starts to live the new life, and to demonstrate his loyalty. Just as these are clothed upon with the robe of Christ's righteousness in advance of being actually tested, so their names are written in that Book in advance of being actually tested. If they do not remain faithful, their names will be blotted out of that Book of Life. But if they are faithful their names will not be blotted out

of the Book of Life; and they will attain all those glorious things which are promised to those who love Him supremely. – Revelation 21:7.

More than this, the Lord says, "I will confess their names before My Father and before His angels." The intimation here is that the overcomers will have such characters that the Lord will not be ashamed of them, but will be pleased to own them in the presence of the Father and the holy angels. We are to be "changed from glory to glory," into the likeness of our Lord. (2 Corinthians 3:18.) In the end, these overcomers will each be so grandly developed that the Lord will not be ashamed to confess any of them and to say, Here is one of My followers. Here is another. They have walked in My footsteps and have overcome. But He will be ashamed of any who are ashamed of Him. Of such He says, "Whosoever shall be ashamed of Me and of My words, of him shall the Son of Man be ashamed, when He shall come in His own glory and in His Father's, and of the holy angels." – Luke 9:26.

It is not a matter of favoritism, but of character-development. If they will not endure to the end, if they do not prove overcomers, they will not be fit for the Kingdom and association with their Lord.

This brings up the thought that there is another class mentioned in the Bible – the Great Company class, as in contrast to the Little Flock – or the antitypical Levite class as in contrast to the antitypical Priestly class. The Great Company had their names written in the Lamb's Book of Life, but they were not overcomers in the truest sense. They did not stand faithful. Because of not proving faithful, they will not be confessed before the Father and the holy angels in the same sense as the Bride class.

It is stated that the Bride will be presented before the Father, and that "the virgins, her companions" (Psalms 45:13-15) will be there also – but the latter will not be confessed as the Bride class. We will not say that their names will be blotted out of the Lamb's

Book of Life. *Their* names may remain. But those who go into the Second Death will surely have their names blotted out of the Book; they will be destroyed with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord.

ROBES WASHED IN "THE GREAT TRIBULATION"

The Great Company will not have the "abundant entrance" granted the Little Flock. And the same distinction obtains between these two classes in connection with the white raiment. While all receive the robe of Christ's imputed righteousness, some of them do not keep their garments "unspotted from the world." Their white raiment becomes spotted and soiled, bedraggled by contact with the earth. Their justification, or robe of Christ's righteousness, becomes unpresentable. When a spot comes upon it, instead of having the spot cleansed away at once, they allow it to remain, and the spots accumulate until their garment becomes quite soiled. Then at the conclusion of their course, when the examination day comes, their robe is found to be spotted – yet they *wear* it still. They are not divested of that robe of justification. They have not abandoned the Lord and He has not abandoned them. But they have failed to use the means which the Lord provided for their cleansing.

In the Revelation this class is spoken of as "a great multitude" – the Great Company. We are told that they "will come up out of the Great Tribulation, and will wash [R5669 : page 120] their robes, and make them white in the blood of the Lamb." Instead of doing a cleansing work day by day, maintaining their justification with God and being ready for the change (by means of their faithfulness) they are, on the contrary, found of Him as unworthy of this chief place. Their robes will not be taken from them, but they will be obliged to suffer great tribulations, with the view to making them ready to wash and make their robes white in the blood of cleansing, so that they, also, will be clothed in white and in their

resurrection bodies will be pure. But they will attain this only by passing through "the Great Tribulation." – See Revelation 7:9-14.

