

JUSTIFICATION – RECKONED AND ACTUAL

TO GET the right focus upon the word "justification," our minds should go back to ascertain what is the difficulty with man, and why there is any need of justification by faith or any other way. We find that the necessity for justification before any man could be in accord with God lies in the fact that man had become a sinner, and that a death sentence had been pronounced upon him by God, the great Judge of the Universe. Before his fall, Adam was called the son of God; but no man since Adam had been called by that name, until Jesus came. Jesus was called the Son of God because He was so born, and because He was such in His pre-human condition, before He came into the world.

Adam and his children were condemned to death because they were unworthy of life, under the sentence, "Dying, thou shalt die." Not only so, but sickness and mental imperfection accompanied the fulfilment of the sentence. A further part of the sentence was separation from God, alienation from God. In order for man to come back into God's favor and blessing, a sacrifice for sins was required. Until that sacrifice would be made there could be no justification, in the full sense.

The Apostle Paul pointed out that under the terms of the Mosaic Law given to Israel, the people were promised harmony with God, forgiveness of past sins, justification, if they would keep the Law. But after trying for fifteen hundred years and more, they found that they were unable to keep it; "for by the works of the Law shall no flesh be justified" in God's sight. (Gal. 2:16.) But meantime, while none were justified under the Law, because unable to keep that Law, there were some who commended themselves to God by the manifestation of a proper spirit, a spirit of faith and obedience. These we speak of as belonging to the Ancient Worthy

class. This class includes Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Job, Moses and all the Prophets, besides others not so notable. See Hebrews 11.

But the justification which came to the Ancient Worthies was not a justification to life. No real justification to life could come until the Redeemer had laid down the Redemption-price for sin – until Christ had died, "the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God." (1 Peter 3:18.) Since Christ died for this purpose, it follows that none were brought to God until after Christ had died; for if, according to God's arrangement of "like for like," it had been possible to justify mankind by any other means, then Christ had not died. If these Ancient Worthies could have been justified to life by some other method, so could other people have been; and the death of Christ would not have been necessary.

JUSTIFICATION TO LIFE

What then was the particular difference between the relationship to God which was granted to Abraham and all the other Worthies of olden time and that which comes to us who in this Age exercise faith? For the word "justification" is used of both classes; Abraham was justified by faith, and so are we – "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ." But Abraham and others of previous ages, could not in a legal sense, have peace with God; for Christ had not yet come to earth and died for the sins of the world. And so the record is that Abraham was justified to friendship with God. Friendship with the Creator was one of the things which were lost when Adam sinned. Therefore man was a stranger to God, an "alien through wicked works." But God counted Abraham as His friend.

Abraham's faith was manifested by his works. His was not an empty profession of loyalty to God; he demonstrated his faith in a practical way – by his works of obedience. After his faith had been tested, he received certain promises from God. He was no longer dealt with as an enemy. But being justified to friendship with God

is a different thing from being justified to life. If Abraham had been justified to life, without Christ, then neither he nor the remainder of the world would have needed a Savior at all. All could have been alike justified.

But the Scriptures assure us that there is no other name given under Heaven by which we must be saved except the name of Jesus. Therefore if we cannot be saved except through faith in Jesus' name and in His blood, by being brought into relationship with God through Him, neither could Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, the Prophets and other Worthies have been otherwise justified. As they could not exercise faith in a Savior who had not yet come, and whose work had not been accomplished, it follows that they were never legally justified; i.e., justified to life. However, their obedience to God was tested and demonstrated, and they were treated as God's friends and made acquainted to some extent with certain features of the Divine Program. God said that He would not hide these things from Abraham, because he was His friend.

But there has been a curse resting upon the human race ever since the fall of Adam. There could not be a blessing of God and a curse of God upon the world at the same time; and the blessing has not yet come. Only those who are in Christ Jesus have as yet come legally from under this curse. These alone have been justified to life. Abraham was informed by the Lord that this blessing would come to mankind through his posterity, because of his great faith and implicit obedience. But Abraham was never invited to present his body a living sacrifice, as believers of this Gospel Age have been invited to do. There was none prior to Jesus' time, manifestly, who could have been granted the opportunity to "*follow* in His steps." – 1 Peter 2:21. [R5775 : page 292]

Jesus referred to this when He said, "there hath not arisen a greater Prophet than John the Baptist; nevertheless, I say unto you

that the least in the Kingdom of Heaven is greater than he." – Luke 7:28.

GOD'S SERVANTS AND HIS SONS

If all in the Kingdom of Heaven are greater than John the Baptist, they are greater also than Enoch, Abraham, etc. Why is this? The answer is that it is not that the **[R5775 : page 293]** followers of Jesus are more *worthy* than John the Baptist or these others, but that the opportunity of becoming members of the House of Sons has been granted only since Pentecost, and is granted to those alone who take up their cross and follow Jesus. Since He was the Forerunner of this class, none could precede Him. Those who may become sons are pointed out in the Gospel of St. John: "To as many as received Him [Jesus], to them gave He power [liberty, privilege] to become sons of God, even to them that believe on His name, who are begotten, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." This class are the favored ones, they have lived in the appointed time, "The acceptable time"; and the Message of the Gospel has gone to these.

The Gospel did not go to Abraham in the same sense, although St. Paul says that the Gospel was preached beforehand to Abraham. We see that God first proclaimed His purpose to him. But *that feature* of the Gospel which is preeminently the preferential feature, Abraham did not know; for the Sacrifice for sins had not yet been given. God could not justify any to life and make of them sons until after Jesus had come and prepared the way. The privilege of becoming sons of God was, then, given first in Jesus' day, to those who received Him. All who had previously exercised faith were friends or servants. Israel was called a "House of Servants." "Moses verily was faithful as a servant over his House, but Christ as a Son over His own House, whose House are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end." – Heb. 3:1-6.

So we see the contrast between the House of Servants and the House of Sons, and the reason why. We are not to think of the Church as being better intentioned or as being less sinful by nature than were Abraham, Isaac, Moses and the Prophets; but this opportunity of sonship has come to us, and it did not come to the others, because their day was not God's "due time." It is for us, then, to avail ourselves of the great opportunity of entering the House of Sons and thus become heirs of God.

JUSTIFICATION TO LIFE FOLLOWS CONSECRATION

So, then, the Church were justified to life, through the merit of Christ's sacrifice. Hence they had something which God could accept. And day by day they offer themselves to God. Abraham had no merit by which he could be an acceptable offering to God; for, being a member of the fallen Adamic race, he was a sinner, and the Divine arrangement was that nothing blemished could come to God's altar. But now since Christ has died, has risen again, has ascended up on High, has entered into the presence of God and made satisfaction for the Church, He imputes His righteousness to us at our consecration, and our justification is made complete – we are freely justified from all things – made alive from the dead. It is ours then to present our bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, and receive the begetting to the new nature – the Divine.

Not having this full justification, neither Abraham nor any one else, up to the time of our Lord, could present his body to God as a sacrifice. So we find no preaching of this message prior to Jesus' day. We read that Christ "brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel." These were not brought to light before He came. The way to life had not been opened up. To Abraham there was a dim, shadowy promise that there would some time be a blessing for all mankind; but neither life everlasting nor immortality, the highest form of life, was made clear to him. He

knew simply that a blessing was coming; and he had the faith to seek to walk in harmony with God.

Seeing how wonderful are the opportunities afforded the Gospel Church, "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard Him?" (Hebrews 2:3.) Here the Apostle is distinctly declaring where this "great salvation" began to be proclaimed. It was never made clear before. The Apostles of our Lord could proclaim a salvation from death, a salvation unto life, then offered; but those who lived prior to their time *could not* have proclaimed it. Jesus was the first who brought the Message of Salvation to us, and His words on the subject were corroborated by His Apostles, who heard Him.

Justification to life *follows*, never *precedes*, consecration. Consecration is the devotion of one's being to the Lord, the surrender of one's will and *all* to God. In connection with the Church, it signifies not only the giving of one's self to God, but also His acceptance of the one thus offering himself. As it is written, "Sanctify [consecrate] yourselves, and I will sanctify [consecrate] you." During the Gospel Age it has been our privilege to offer ourselves to God through Christ, who, as the great High Priest, accepts these offerings until the predestinated number is complete. Whoever is thus justified and accepted by Him is acceptable to the Father; and to such a one comes the Holy Spirit of the Father, begetting him to the Divine nature.

During the three and a half years of our Lord's ministry, He declared to His disciples that if they would abide in Him, the blessing of life should be their portion. But they had no legal standing before the Father until first Jesus had finished His sacrifice, had been raised from the dead and had ascended up to Heaven, there to appear in the presence of the Father for them. Then they received the Holy Spirit in begetting power, with outward

demonstration. This came to them at Pentecost. They had consecrated themselves before, and Jesus had accepted them. Everything was done that could be done at that time; but everything was not up to the standard required after Jesus had appeared before God and made satisfaction for those who were to constitute His Church. At Pentecost, and not until then, they were anointed of the Spirit and recognized as sons of God. This was the completion of their consecration – its result.

THE PRESENT OBJECT OF CONSECRATION

So the Scriptures inform us that God is pleased to accept in the same way all who come unto Him through Christ, until the time when the last member of the foreordained number of the Elect has been chosen. After that the door will be shut – not the door of mercy, but the door to the High Calling to joint-heirship with Christ, offered only during the Gospel Age. This is what consecration is for during the Gospel Dispensation. The Father has ordained that before He will impute the merit of Christ to us, we must do our part by the dedication of ourselves to God. Only those who do this will be justified to life through Christ's imputed merit.

"If any man will be My disciple, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me." This is the condition. In no other way will Jesus become our Advocate. "We [the Spirit-begotten] have an Advocate with the Father." He is not the *world's* Advocate in any sense. He is *our* Advocate, the Advocate of all who come unto the Father by Him. The great Divine Court may not be approached except by those who are authorized.

Jesus became the great High Priest by the offering up of Himself. And having become the great High Priest over the House of God, He is the Advocate of all those **[R5775 : page 294]** who come into harmony with the Father. He is their *Surety*. As such, He has a right to make His own terms; and the terms that He has made

are that He will accept as disciples only those who renounce self, and take up their cross and follow Him.

We see the great mass of professed Christian people – four hundred millions of them – some of them in jail, some of them in the army, on one side or the other. The most of them are striving for wealth or for the pleasures of sense. Few are justified to life. Some may be justified partially as was Abraham. In proportion as any are trying to do right, they are justified. But in order to have *life*, it is necessary to have this *full justification*, which can come to us only after we have made a complete consecration to the Lord. – Romans 12:1.

ALL THE WORLD ARE YET HEATHEN

The heathen were not justified in Abraham's day, nor in Jesus' day; in fact, the heathen are not justified yet; and all the world are heathen, except those who have come into covenant relationship with God. The Israelites spoke of the remainder of the world sometimes as heathen, sometimes as Gentiles, sometimes as people – three different terms meaning all who were not children of Israel.

Since Christ has come among us and inaugurated the way to *life* through His blood, we are privileged to enter into a special Covenant with God. The New Covenant is reserved for Israel and the world by and by. The special Covenant which God has for the Church is shown in His command, "Gather My saints together unto Me, those who have made a Covenant with Me by sacrifice." (Psalm 50:5.) Only by sacrifice – only by the giving up of our will, our all – can we come into this Covenant, and none can come except through the great Advocate. It is a Covenant of Sacrifice. The heathen, the world, have entered into no such Covenant of Sacrifice; therefore they cannot come into the position of sons of God. None can enter into this position without a definite knowledge of its terms and conditions.

When the Jewish Epoch had terminated and the Gospel Call was extended to the Gentiles, Cornelius the Roman centurion was the first to enter. We read that [R5776 : page 294] before Cornelius had received this Call he was a just man, who feared God, who prayed always, and who gave much alms to the people. We would say that he was a very fine character. But he was a Gentile, and so had not been able to come in under the Call. But now the time had come for the Gospel Message to go to the Gentiles. Did the Father receive Cornelius at once? No. The Lord sent an angel to him, who said, "Thy prayers and alms have come up before Jehovah." They had been noted before, but God could not receive them until now.

And did this message to Cornelius bring him into covenant relationship to God? Oh, no! The angel of the Lord merely directed him what to do. He said, "Send men to Joppa, and call for one Simon, whose surname is Peter. He lodgeth with one Simon a tanner. He shall tell thee *words* to the saving of thyself and thy house." These words were necessary; the knowledge was indispensable. There can be *no justification in ignorance*. Such is not God's Plan. Cornelius and his family were ready; for he had previously been a consecrated man to the best of his knowledge. St. Peter would not have known how to deal with the Gentiles; therefore God gave him a vision, a special manifestation of His will.

The case of Cornelius gives us the clue to the fact that God does not justify any Gentiles except those who come into Covenant relationship with Him, and that there is no way of coming into such relationship except that way which He has appointed. The one special way for the Jew was through Moses and the Law Covenant, and thence into Christ. The method by which the Gentile may come into covenant relationship with God is by being engrafted into the "good olive tree," whose root is the Abrahamic Covenant. (Romans 11:16-22.) Whoever would belong to Christ must become an Israelite, a member of the true Seed of Abraham. This we do by faith in Christ, the Seed, and baptism into His death. Hence we are

no longer of the world. The whole world are heathen; for they are not in covenant relationship with God. They are Gentiles; and Gentiles are heathen, from the standpoint of the Scriptures.

"THE SAINTS SHALL JUDGE THE WORLD"

All the families of the earth shall yet be blessed and enlightened, through Abraham's Seed, which Seed is Christ. "And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's Seed, and heirs according to the Promise." We have not yet blessed the world; we have not yet judged the world; for we are not yet instructed to do so. But the Apostle Paul said, "Know ye not that the saints shall judge the world? Know ye not that we shall judge angels?" (1 Corinthians 6:2,3.) It is not while we are in the flesh, but after our glorification in the First Resurrection, that we are to be judges.

So, then, God has appointed a great Day of Judgment for the world (Acts 17:31; Psalm 96:9-13; 98:1-9; Acts 15:13-18); and the saints are to be the judges with Christ. The world are still condemned in Adam. They are yet to have justification – "whosoever will" – and the groundwork of that justification is to be laid, first of all, in that New Covenant which Christ will make with Israel as the result of His sacrifice on Calvary. It will be exactly like the old Law Covenant, except that it will have a better Mediator – The Christ, Head and Body. As the old Law Covenant was established on the basis of the typical sacrifices, so the New Covenant is to be established on the basis of the "better sacrifices." The work of the Gospel Age has been the offering of the better sacrifices than bulls and goats – Jesus, the Head, and the Church, His Body members, associated with Him as parts of these "better sacrifices." He will have completed all the sacrificing when the last member of His Body shall have passed "within the Veil." Then the opportunity to follow in Jesus' steps will no longer be given; for there is only a definite number to become the Priesthood. These will have part in His resurrection, the Chief Resurrection. Speaking of

these the Apostle says, "We must all be changed"; for "flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God." (1 Corinthians 15:50-54.) When this class shall have inherited the Kingdom, they will be prepared to do the work of judging the world.

THE WORK OF THE NEXT AGE

Immediately after satisfaction is made to Justice for the sins of the world, all mankind will be turned over to the One who bought them. Then Justice will have no more to do with them; for they will be in the hands of Christ. He will then be the Life-giver, the Judge, the King. During His Millennial Reign His work will be the awakening and the uplifting of all for whom He died. The opportunity will be given to all to come into harmony with the Lord, of devoting themselves to His service. The reward for their so doing will be everlasting life and full perfection of being on the human plane. Those who thus devote themselves will rise out of degradation to full perfection. Their perfecting will be their justification; for this means to be made right.

The difference between the justification to which the world will attain and that of the Church now, is that with **[R5776 : page 295]** the Church it is a justification *by faith*, a *reckoned* justification, attained instantly, by the imputation of the merit of Christ; while the justification of the world will be by works – it will be a making right *actually*, an *actual perfection*. But there will be no justification *without faith* and *heart loyalty*, either *now* or *then*. Under the Lord's present arrangement also it is important that there shall be perfect works. The New Creature is actually just, perfect; and the Father imputes to our imperfect bodies the merit of Jesus and counts us *dead* according to the imperfect flesh. Thus our imperfect works are counted, through Christ, as perfect. The perfect New Creature, from its small beginning, is gradually to grow and develop to maturity, using the fleshly body as its servant.

With the world it will be different. Theirs will be a work of gradually coming to a condition of justification, of perfection of mind and body, under the cover of the New Covenant, sealed with the blood of Christ. They will be coming nearer to this perfection day by day and year by year, rising toward perfection. When they shall have reached that pinnacle, they will be fully justified, or fully made just; and if they pass faithfully their final test, after the close of the Millennial Age, the reward of everlasting life will be given them. But the dead of the world will not live, from God's standpoint, until the close of that Age, when Christ shall have finished His Mediatorial work. Meantime, those who will not come into accord with God's arrangement will die the Second Death; they will be destroyed as "natural brute beasts." – 2 Peter 2:12.

The Second Death is like the first death, only that it will be instantaneous; it will not be for the father's sin, but for the individual's own sin; and it will be eternal. There will be no redemption from it, as from the first death. "Christ dieth no more." The reward of the righteous will be everlasting life; none will be granted it until they have been fully tested and proven. Therefore God can guarantee that thenceforth there will be no more crying or sighing or dying forever; for all will be fully in accord with Him.

We believe that the time for the world's trial will soon come; but we do not think that the door of the Kingdom is yet closed. Of course we have no special information on the subject; for the Lord does not say that the door to the High Calling will close as soon as the Times of the Gentiles are ended. The door will be closed when the last member of the Body of Christ shall have been gathered, shall have been found faithful, shall have finished his course and passed beyond the Veil. "Those who were ready went in with Him to the marriage, and the door was shut." It will be closed then; for none thereafter can be added to that elect number. We believe that this time is not far distant.

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