

JUSTIFICATION – WHAT? WHEN? HOW?

JUSTIFICATION really means only one thing, viz.: a making right, making just. Justification may be either partial or complete. In Abraham's case it was partial. He was justified to fellowship with God because of his faith and obedience, but was not justified to life, because such a complete justification could not be accomplished, except by the redemptive work of Jesus, which had not been and could not be accomplished in Abraham's day.

The justification of the Gospel Church is an instantaneous work. "It is God that justifieth." But the basis of this justification is the sacrifice accomplished by Jesus, finished at Calvary. Before the Savior will impute to us the merit of His sacrifice, we must know *of* Him and trust Him and accept His terms of discipleship and consecrate ourselves fully as His disciples, even unto death. The moment He imputes the merit of His sacrifice to us, covering our blemishes, we are acceptable to the Father, received into His family by the begetting of the Holy Spirit, and thus, thereafter, members of the Church of the Firstborns, whose names are written in Heaven.

The world's justification will not be an instantaneous one, but will progress during the thousand years – the Millennium. The world might then be said to be tentatively justified through the Mediator and His Kingdom, but their justification will be accomplished only in their absolute perfection at the close of the Millennium, when they will be presented to the Father and accepted by Him. "It is God that justifieth," and He receives to everlasting life and to His family on any plane of existence only those who are perfect.

CLEANSING OF FLESH NOT JUSTIFICATION

A person desiring to turn to God during this Gospel Age finds Him gradually. First, he finds that God has made a provision whereby He can be just and yet be the Justifier of sinners. Next he finds that the death of Jesus is the way which God has provided. Next he finds his own weaknesses and sins – the defilements, and properly seeks to put these away. He may and should considerably cleanse himself from the filthiness of the flesh, but this does not justify him, does not make him perfect, because by heredity he is a sinner, imperfect, and can be cleansed only by the Divine application of the merit of the Sin Offering. After washing at the Laver – putting away the filthiness of the flesh – the believer approaches close up to the door of the Tabernacle and "ties" himself there – obligates himself by consecration vows, devoting himself fully to the Lord and His service, whatever that may be.

All the foregoing steps of the person desiring fellowship with God are proper steps, as outlined in the Word. We describe the person who has taken this course as being tentatively justified; that is to say, he is in the right course, doing what he is able to do to attain justification. While in this course, he would have blessings of mind and heart and the approval of his conscience, and would be favored of the Lord in the sense that Divine providence would open up before him a knowledge of the proper course to take for his justification – pointing out to him the necessity for the steps enumerated, including the devotion or tying of himself at the door of the Tabernacle. The sinner approaching God can do no more. It is now God's time to act. God's mercy toward the sinner is wholly through Jesus, who has been appointed the "great High Priest." It is the part of Jesus to accept the devoted one (the goat) and to sacrifice him. And those whom Jesus, as God's High Priest, accepts are accepted of the Father, and such are begotten of the Father to the Divine nature, etc. That moment when Jesus, and when Divine

Justice, through Jesus, accepts the sinner is the moment of justification.

From the moment the sinner turned his back upon sin and began to seek the Lord and to walk as best he would be able in the ways of righteousness – putting away the filthiness of the flesh – from that moment this person has a new mind or will, different from the mind or will which he had when he loved and served sin. This new mind is a new mind of the flesh, because he has not yet been begotten of the Holy Spirit. At the moment that the High Priest accepts him, imputes His merit, and the Father begets him of the Holy Spirit – at that moment this one with the new mind is justified and begotten of the Spirit; he is then a New Creature. The New Creature is not to be justified, because the New Creature has done no sin and would have no sin to be justified from. It was the new-minded old creature that was justified, and at the moment of justification it dies sacrificially. The New Creature [R5960 : page 281] might be spoken of as justified in the same sense that Jesus was spoken of – "justified in spirit,...received up into glory." (1 Tim. 3:16.) In *this* use of the word justified, the thought is "proved right" – "proved perfect"; not *made* right.

PEACE PROPORTIONATE TO PROGRESS

To this class, fully consecrated, justified, accepted of the Father by the begetting of the Holy Spirit, the Apostle's words apply: "Therefore, being justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." (Romans 5:1.) But this Scripture would not apply to any who have not come to the point of consecration and acceptance and who are merely approaching through the Court. These do, however, have a measure of peace, in proportion as they progress. A certain measure of peace and joy comes from finding that there is a way back to God through the endeavor to put away sin and to draw near to Him; but the peace of the Church, mentioned by the Apostle in this text, can apply

only to those who have come into the condition of Sons of God. God is not at peace with any others.

It would not be possible for any one during this Gospel Age to have exactly the same experience given to Abraham, because of the difference of conditions. Abraham fully believed God, and so far as he understood, apparently was fully consecrated to do God's will, even unto death. In other words, if Abraham had been living during this Gospel Age, he would have been one of the fully consecrated, fully justified, spirit-begotten ones; but living before the Gospel Age, before Christ had died for our sins, his consecration could not bring him into the *fulness* of justification and its privileges.

Some confuse themselves by thinking of justification as of two parts – legal and actual. We know of nothing in the Bible to make any such division of justification. It is legal and it is actual at the same instant. It could not be actual and illegal; it could not be illegal and yet actual.

Our justification, represented by the "Wedding Garment," put on when we are accepted of the Lord, covers not the New Creature, but merely the flesh, which is legally reckoned dead, sacrificially. In other words, justification does not signify a *process* of being made right, but a right condition already attained. The putting on of the "Wedding Garment," signifies our entrance into the family of God as members of the Church; the putting of it off would mean our rejection of the grace of God, and would imply Second Death.

Justification to the world, as already explained, will be attained differently. It might be said that the world's [R5960 : page 282] justification, under the Great Mediator, will be a gradual one – a gradual making right as each individual will come into harmony more and more with the Divine requirements and receive more and more of restitution perfection. Nevertheless, it must be remembered that "It is God that justifies," and that the world will

not be in God's hands until the conclusion of the Millennial Age. Then all approved of the Father and accepted of Him to eternal life will be justified in the full sense. That will be an instantaneous act.

