

::R0162 : page 8::

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Q.—Does the Scripture to your understanding teach, that Saints who constitute the bride of Christ, will be made perfect as natural beings before being “*changed*” to spiritual bodies?

A.—We do not so understand the Scriptures. You cannot find a text in the Bible which says that the Saints will be restored to *perfection* of the flesh. We were reckoned as justified to life by Jesus’ death, but this life to which we were entitled, we covenanted to give up and make a sacrifice of. Are we to take back that which we sacrificed? By no means. God’s arrangement with us is, that if we give up the natural a sacrifice, He will give us instead, the spiritual. We accepted the conditions, have already received a spiritual mind instead of the natural, and are now only waiting for the change of our natural body to the spiritual—the completion of God’s promise. Read carefully article—“*Restitution for whom?*”—in August (1880) No. of Z.W.T., page 4.

Q.—Bro. R., please explain the baptism of the Holy Ghost and fire. Matt. 3:11-12.

A.—The baptism of the Holy Ghost is treated of in an article in this paper. To understand John’s words we should reflect that he addressed mixed classes of the Jews. “There came out to him all Judea and Jerusalem to be baptised.” The scribes and pharisees also came. John came as the introducer of Jesus and the gospel, and looking forward he prophetically foretells the result. Some will receive Jesus, and these will be baptised with the Holy Ghost: Others will not receive Him and their house (Jewish) will be left desolate and baptised with *fire*—the judgments which did come upon them as a people after their rejection of Jesus. Verse 12 is but a repetition of the same thing in other words. He says of Jesus—“whose fan is in his hand and he will thoroughly purge his floor.” This shows the work of Jesus during his three and a-half years ministry. As a winnower he separated the wheat of the Jewish people from the chaff. “He will gather the wheat into His garner [gospel dispensation] but burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire”—the dreadful trouble which wiped them as a people from national existence.

Q.—I read with deep interest an article in last month’s paper, called “*Anti-Christ,*” and heartily agree with it. Now I want to inquire whether we can, properly speaking, call *any church* the church of Christ which does not possess the gifts of the Spirit as we are told the first church had them?

A.—Among the gifts of the Spirit mentioned by Paul is that of *Apostles*. Now this gift was never

intended to be continued to the church except as we have it, viz: We have them present and teaching the church now through their writings. But there were only to be *twelve apostles*, and they are promised [when the Kingdom takes possession of Earth] *twelve thrones*; none but the twelve are to rule over the twelve tribes of Israel. Again, Jesus said when addressing them, that he had chosen them who were witnesses, as the apostles of the church. Then none since Jesus' day could be apostles, since none but they were witnesses of His resurrection, &c. When Judas lost his place as one of the twelve, Peter found the scripture (Acts 1:20-25,) which stated that another should take his place (Bishopric—office of bishop or apostle) and the eleven met together and selected one who had seen Jesus, etc., as a witness of his resurrection. They cast lots upon two and selected Mathias to be one of the twelve apostles. But they evidently were mistaken in their actions [the spirit was not yet given]. Jesus had his own plans for selecting the twelfth apostle and fulfilling the prophecy. Jesus chose Paul and ordained him to be an apostle (Rom. 1:5.) and since all of the apostles must be eye witnesses of his resurrection, Paul was caused to see him—"last of all he was seen of me also ... who am not meet to be called an *apostle*." [1 Cor. 15:9, see also, 2 Cor. 11:5, and 12:11, and Gal. 1:17 and 19.] Thus we see that God never recognized any but twelve apostles. And that it was never designed there should be any more, we see from Rev. 21:14, where the names of the *twelve* apostles (no more) are mentioned in connection with the foundations.

The apostle tells us that there are differences of administration, but the same Lord. So we see it to be; for instance, as to the apostles' method of teaching the church. God has seen fit to continue, to some extent, these gifts. We have in the church "teachers, evangelists, pastors," &c., but many of those gifts have passed away under a "different *administration*." Tongues prophesyings, &c., have ceased, as Paul said they should (1 Cor. 13:8), probably, because not now necessary.

The church is, to our understanding, one body, from Jesus, the head, down to the last member bearing the same fruit of *the vine*. Its life lasts on earth during the gospel age and until every member is clothed with its heavenly body. While on earth, any two or three of the members may assemble themselves as *the body*—the church—and will be so recognized by the head, who says He will meet with them.

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— November, 1880 —



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