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QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Bro. R., Do the Scriptures teach that we shall have perfect *physical restitution*, before the twinkling of an eye change?

A. No. We have never seen any Scripture which teaches that those who become *new creatures* will ever be restored to the perfection of the old or human nature. By nature we are depraved human beings. Since Jesus has paid our ransom price, he that believeth is justified—or *imputed* to be *perfect*; in this reckoned or imputed perfect condition, he is invited to present his “body a living sacrifice” to God’s service and will, and is assured that it (though *actually* imperfect) will be “acceptable to God,” who *reckons* us as justified. Now if we accept this invitation and *sacrifice the human* (will and body) what shall we have? A perfect *human* being restored to us? Oh no; something far better is promised, viz: In the resurrection such shall be like unto the angels—Like unto Christ’s *glorious* body.

Restitution, is promised to the world, and we rejoice that the time for their receiving it is even now at hand and that they shall have so grand a blessing as to be made *perfect men*, but to those who can walk by faith (not by sight) and *can* during this Gospel Age realize their *justification* by the precious blood of Christ and who then consecrate and crucify the *human*, (with all its prospects here and hereafter) to such, God has promised the *divine nature* and image, which is a prize so much greater, as not to be comparable.

Such as have started on the “narrow way” for the *divine* are going in exactly the opposite direction to the *perfecting* of the human. The divine can *only* be obtained by the *death* of the human. But “*few* there be that find it.” Alas, too many are striving for the perfecting of the flesh, hoping thereby to reach the divine nature; but just as soon might a man living in Utica, N.Y., expect to reach Albany by walking toward Chicago—it is the *opposite* direction.

When we covenanted that we would suffer with Jesus that we might reign with him—become *dead* with him that we might live with him on the higher spiritual plane, we started by reckoning the *flesh dead* and the *Spirit alive* as a *new* creature. This was right and must be fully carried out until the death is no longer reckoned but actual and until the SPIRITUAL LIFE *is perfected*.

We that are in this (earthly) tabernacle do groan, not that we would be unclothed, but clothed

upon with our house which is from heaven (our spiritual body). But we don't want and have no need of a perfect house of earth and none is mentioned as being for us.

"Having begun in the Spirit are ye now made *perfect in the flesh*?" (Gal. 3:3.) Having begun to reckon ourselves *new* creatures shall we change our hope and be *perfected as human* beings? God forbid.

To your second question, "What will be the power of the perfect church and how exercised?—we answer, that being begotten of the Spirit we shall if we follow on be *born* of the Spirit. The spiritual seed will have "a spiritual body," the natural seed "a natural (human) body"—"To every seed his own body." Speaking of the *change* coming to those who have part in *the* (first) resurrection, Paul says, It is sown mortal, in dishonor, and weakness, a natural body; it is raised in the power of glory, honor, and Immortality—a spiritual body. (1 Cor. 15:38,42-44) So giving us a faint glimpse only, of the perfected spiritual church's *power*.

Their work as members of the *spiritual "seed"* is to bless all the families of the earth. (Gal. 3:29.)

Q. Bro. R., If your exposition in last number, of the passage—"We shall not all *sleep*"—is correct wherein consists the *mystery* mentioned? (1 Cor. 15:51.)

A. It is so great a mystery, that *few* seem able to realize, that if a member of the body of Christ die *now*, instead of sleeping even for a moment, he is changed to a spiritual body in an instant—in the twinkling of an eye.

It is of these *only*, that the words "O! death where is thy sting? O! grave where is thy victory?" (1 Cor. 15:55) are fully applicable.

In the case of Jesus even, the grave had a victory for nearly three days, and death had a sting which made our dear Lord cry in agony—"My God My God, why hast thou forsaken me?" And death has had a sting and the grave a victory all down through the age until *now*. Now the grave will get no victory over us, for into it, will merely be dropped the robe of flesh—the used up "earthly *house*," while we (as spiritual *new creatures*) shall not *sleep*, but will be "changed in a moment."

Thus also the *sting* of death is all removed; for, of the class mentioned, it will be true that—

"Death is the gate to endless joy."

O death where is thy sting? O grave where is thy victory? "*Blessed* are the dead who die in the Lord *from* HENCEFORTH."

The whole church and finally the world get "victory" over the *grave* by a resurrection. And all will have the *sting* of death withdrawn "through our Lord Jesus Christ." But behold I show you a *mystery*—over us "who are alive and remain" the grave will not have any victory, no not so long as "a moment" or "a twinkling of an eye."

Dear Bro. Russell, I want to make an inquiry relative to the thought advanced in last number of the paper, viz: That all the members of the *body* of Christ must die physically; and that the *translation* takes place in the "moment" of death. [And I must say, that it seems reasonable, and in general harmony with the Scriptures so far as I have studied.]

My question is, Does not this application interfere with the Elijah type, at which, for some time we have looked with interest? Elijah did not die; and if he *is a type* and we the antitype, it would seem to teach that we should not die.

A. "Ye, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit;" and if Elijah is a type (as we feel sure he is) his actions, translation, story, etc., must be typical of us as spiritual—*new creatures* (and not of the old *human* creature).

Thus considered, you will find the type in perfect harmony with our deductions. We as *new* creatures, are to be "caught away" from earthly conditions, earthly body and all—"changed" to perfect spiritual bodies "in a moment." Elijah was certainly not in any sense a type of the *natural* man. We must not forget to count ourselves as God counts us, viz: New creatures, partakers of the divine nature (already dead as *human beings* and already alive toward God and only waiting to have our existence perfected as spiritual beings by being clothed upon with our heavenly body.

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— December, 1881 —



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