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Correspondents Questions.

Answers by the Editor.

We have many more questions than we have space to answer at once – have patience.

QUES. Do you think all willful rejecters who do not now, accept of Jesus as their savior, though having the opportunity of hearing the gospel preached, will have a chance to gain eternal life in the "ages to come?"

ANS. Our humanity has become so depraved that many cannot hear the gospel, or see its beauty. Their eyes are blinded by sin and their ears are dull of hearing – "He that hath an ear to hear, let him hear."

Then too, even those who can hear and see some little, hear such confused sounds, all called Gospel – good news (some of it terribly bad news) that we cannot wonder if they stray. Unless they follow the Shepherd closely, they are sure to lose their way. The only ones who have no hope in the future are such as have come to "a knowledge of the truth" (not error) and have "tasted of the good word of God (not a bad word said to be God's word) and been made partakers of the Holy Ghost." – Heb. 6:4 and 10:26. With but few professing christians is the case such, and only such commit the unpardonable sin. They become open apostates, (are not merely "overtaken in a fault.") Such do despite to the "Spirit of Grace," and by their act or word "count the blood of the covenant wherewith they were sanctified an unholy thing." For such there is no hope. This sin "shall never be forgiven, neither in this world, (age) neither in the world (age) to come." Matt. 12:32. "I do not say that ye should pray for it." 1 Jno. 5:16. "Christ died for our sins" once "but he dieth no more." Those who do not accept when once they

have a full opportunity, die the second death from which we are told of no recovery – no ransom.

Q. You say "We do not preach a second chance." If many who now have the Bible, etc., have a chance in the future, is it not a second chance?

A. We think that few have a full chance now. If they have and reject, they crucify the Son of God afresh &c., and are without hope. The chance of the present time – Gospel dispensation – is to become a part of the Bride company, "joint heirs with Jesus" and members of the God family. The chance or opportunity for this high calling closes when the Bride is complete. (Probably very soon.) In the future men will have a chance to become perfect men, in harmony with God – reconciled – but still MEN; perfect natural bodies but not spiritual beings. Can this then be called a second chance, since the offers are entirely different?

Q. Do you believe in a monster personal devil? I do not.

A. There are many who argue that the word devil, is always used as a synonym of evil and is merely the personifying of a principle. The many scriptures which speak of him as a person, they explain away to their own satisfaction. Their principle objection to believing in a personal devil, is that they think it a slur on God's character to suppose that he permitted such a being to interrupt his plans and bring sin among his creatures. This reason for wishing to figure away a personal devil vanishes if our views of "Why evil was permitted" (Aug. No.) be received as correct. God is justified in permitting evil or devil, if He so arranges that it finally results in the creature's good.

That the word devil is sometimes, used to personify evil principles and evil governments, none can gainsay. (The Roman Empire is called the dragon and the devil. Rev. 12:3,9 and 13:2, also 20:2.) But the same argument which would permit the word devil to be

always interpreted as a principle, and not a person, could be used with equal force to prove that there is no personal God, and that when the word God is used the principle of good is personified. I do not believe him to be immortal however. God never gave any being a life which He (God) could not take away when the end of its being and usefulness has been attained. God only has that life which never had a beginning and can never end. 1 Tim. 6:16. Ultimately God will have a clean universe. No more death and consequently no more sin to require that penalty. "For this purpose Christ was manifest, that He might destroy death and Him that has the power of death, that is the Devil." Heb. 2:14.

Q. Do you think that 2 Pet. 2:1 refers to some teachers of our day who deny that Jesus bought our right to life by taking our place in death, as our substitute? It reads: "There shall be false teachers among you who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them." Is there anything in the Greek which would properly transpose this so as to make it read – denying that the Lord bought them. If there is, it seems to me that this text would apply very aptly to some teachers of our day.

A. I find that the words "that bought" in this text are from the Greek word – agorazo, which word is properly translated "having bought." This is the word for word translation of this in the "Emphatic Diaglott." So corrected the text would read – "Even denying the Lord having bought them." There is certainly similarity enough to justify the question. "Many shall follow their pernicious ways by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of."

Q. (Continued.) If it will bear this rendering, do you think – denying that the Lord bought them – would be a parallel to or the equivalent of "counting the blood of the covenant wherewith they were sanctified an unholy (or invaluable) thing," (Heb. 10:29), which Paul describes as a part of the unpardonable sin?

A. Far be it from us to judge of the hearts of our fellows: God only knoweth the heart. We each should judge our own hearts, however, and very carefully. Do I deny the purchase value of the blood of Christ, as my ransom and the ransom of the world from death? Am I still under "the blood of sprinkling, which speaketh better things than the blood of Abel." [It speaks pardon and life.]

I once counted myself as justified from all things by the blood of Christ (the covenant) as sealed, marked, sprinkled by that blood. Shall I give up the sealing of the blood and the justifying by the blood and take instead somebody's theory? Will the first-born be passed over unless the blood of Christ, our passover, is sprinkled on the lintels and door posts of our hearts? Is the blood an unvaluable thing? No. Jesus took upon him the likeness of sinful flesh, and the weaknesses of sinful flesh; therefore, "The flesh profited nothing." All the power expressed through his fleshly body was power of "The Father," as he claims. But his life was unsullied, He knew no sin, and death had no dominion over him. Therefore, Jesus had something to offer viz: a pure, unspotted life. He gave it for the flesh life of the world which was forfeited. His leaving the heavenly courts was not the sacrifice which put away sin, but as Paul says: (Heb. 9:26.) "He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself." Since He appeared to make the sacrifice, the sacrifice for sin must be made after he had appeared and was not the act of appearing.

Yes friends, count as a very valuable and holy thing, the blood (life) of the covenant, wherewith ye were sanctified. As to the sin which hath never forgiveness, let each of us be careful that we do not commit it. I have long believed that only the little company, far advanced in truth could commit it.

An apparent approach to such a position would come in the denying that "He bore our sins in his own body on the tree." After having once proclaimed to the world that it was all powerful and

justified, to turn about and say – No, he bore nobody's sins there, would, before the world be denying the crucified one, and saying "He saved others, himself, he cannot save." He was obliged to die on his own account.
