

## QUESTIONS ON SUBSTITUTION.

Ques. If Jesus was man's substitute in death, why should men continue to die since his substitution of his life for ours? Is it not an argument against his view that men continue to die? For, if God be just, he could not hold both the sinner and his substitute for the same Adamic sin.

Ans. It is not only a scriptural statement that Jesus "died for our sins" as our representative or substitute, but also that "He bought us;" and, to appreciate the matter fully, we must give this its weight also.

Jesus was man's substitute in the sense that he met in his own person the penalty which God's broken law had charged against us. Consequently, God no longer CONDEMNS, because Christ died (See Rom. 8:34). This much, then, is settled – the condemnation. But now comes the question, if the Law is satisfied why is not the executioner, who has the power of death (the devil – Heb. 2:14), stopped at once? To solve this question, we must remember that while all the work and will of Christ is that of the Father, yet, in the legal aspect of the case now being considered, we see that men are not now amenable to the Father, but to His Son who bought them. The fact, then, that the enemy is not interrupted in his work is in no way chargeable to injustice of Jehovah; and as to the purchaser, Jesus, while he has announced his intention to exercise his authority and release all in his own due time, yet, who shall find fault with Him who bought for us a right to life, if he does not bestow it immediately. Surely we may know that he has some good reason for the delay, even if we cannot know the reason; for we remember that he loved and pitied us; for "greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friend."

But while we could trust his wisdom and love in ignorance of the wherefore, as thousands of our brethren in past ages have done, yet, we thank God that we are living in the time when it is pleasing him to reveal to us more of his plans, and to show us why death is permitted still to reign, even after Jesus has legally conquered it, and has "the keys (power to open) of death and hades" (Rev. 1:18).

It is because God has purposed, not only the restitution of mankind to the perfection of their nature as it existed before marred by death and its cause – sin – but also the selecting out from among men of a "little flock," who, by a change of nature from human to divine, should be "new creatures," like unto Christ Jesus the Lord in his exaltation, and sharers of his work and glory – especially in that of restoring mankind.

Now, all can see that this little flock – the Bride, who shall share his throne and work – must be selected FIRST, before "the times of restitution" begin, else she could not share. And if Jesus, immediately on having redeemed men, had begun to restore them – as soon as he had (the keys) "all power given unto him," (Matt. 28:18) – then it would have precluded the selection of the chaste virgin to be his Bride and helpmeet in the work.

We are glad, very glad, that it was in the plan of God that Jesus should delay using his great power, trusting that, by the grace of God, when he shall take to himself his great power and reign, we too shall be glorified together with him and share in the exercise of his power as he has promised, saying, "Greater things than these shall ye do," referring to his miracles which were mere shadows of the coming restitution of all things.

It might be asked, Why did Jesus not delay his first coming until the Bride had been selected and the restitution work had become due? As it is closely connected with our previous question under discussion, we here answer it:

Not only was it needful that we should sacrifice with Jesus the human nature, in order to share with him the divine nature and glory, but our human nature, being imperfect and already condemned through Adam, it was necessary that it should be redeemed, or bought from the condition of condemnation, before it could be an acceptable sacrifice for Jehovah's altar – upon which must come no blemished offering. It will be seen, then, at a glance, that the sacrifice of Jesus, as our ransom from sin, was necessary BEFORE the call could come to the Church to share his sacrifice and glory.

Notice further, that it was not only needful that time should elapse between the ransom and restitution, in which time the little flock may share in his sacrifice, but it was necessary that, during this time, EVIL should rule. Consider for a moment, that if our Prince were ruling now, and right-doing were rewarded and evil-doing punished, etc., it would be impossible for the little flock to be tried and tempted by evil, hence impossible for them to sacrifice themselves for truth and right. So, too, with Jesus' sacrifice; had it not been for the reign of evil, his witnessing for truth would have needed and brought no reproach, rejection, thorns, or cross, or death.

In the Millennial age, under the reign of Christ, it will be no longer possible to "overcome evil with good," for the dominion of evil will be ended and the reign of righteousness begun.

Those who regard the putting away of sins as the sacrifice (the discontinuance of evil practices, drunkenness, profanity, etc.) will not appreciate our position. But those who see sacrifice to be something far beyond – the surrender and sacrifice of human rights, privileges, comforts and welfare – will appreciate the statement that such sacrifice can only be accomplished while there are evil conditions making them possible.

It is thus that the Gospel age is termed "The acceptable year of the Lord." It is the time during which God will accept of all sacrifices

properly presented. No such opportunity was offered before this age except in type. It was not possible, because the ransom was not yet given; all were yet legally under condemnation of death as sinners. True, some believing God's plan of favor, looked forward, discerning the better sacrifices for sins, and in faith accepted the results. But that God did not treat sin as actually cancelled until Jesus had finished his sacrifice for sins, and presented it as the ransom price of our sins, is evident from the fact, that even the disciples of Jesus were not accepted by Jehovah as sacrifices until then – until Pentecost.

Jesus was an acceptable sacrifice, because in him was no sin. Those during this age, who accept of his ransom, share now in the benefits of his sacrifice, and are reckoned free from sin and its condemnation. Such, being made free from sin, may also become acceptable sacrifices – acceptable through the beloved – so long as the "Acceptable year of the Lord" lasts. When the "little flock" – the Bride, the Lamb's wife – has been selected according to this law of purifying and sacrificing (or justification and sanctification), then the special call to change nature by sacrifice, termed our high-calling, heavenly-calling, etc. – will cease.

The conditions of trial during the next age will be much easier than now, and the crown, though gloriously grand, will be less so than the one for which **[R486 : page 7]** we are running. Their aim, the perfection of the human nature; ours, the perfection of the divine – one a heavenly, and the other a glorious, earthly image of it. For the glory of the heavenly is one thing, and the glory of the earthly is another thing. The glory and dominion given to the first man (and his Bride), which is to be restored, placing him again but a little lower than the angels (Psa. 8:5), will but feebly illustrate the superior glory of our Lord – the second Adam (and his Bride) – made so much superior to angels, that to him every knee shall bow and every tongue confess. (Compare Psa. 8:5; Phil. 2:9,10; Heb. 1:4 and 1 Cor. 6:3.)

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