

## **OUR CONTEMPORARIES.**

We mean those with whom we have had recent discussions on the nature of our Redeemer and of the redemption which he has effected. These contemporaries seem to be puzzled by the six simple questions recently propounded to them in these columns, and doubtless feel annoyed because of the weakness of their theories, which will not permit an answer to them without showing to all their readers their untenable position, and in fact that their theories make void the plain statements of Scripture relative to our ransom and purchase with the precious blood of Christ – which scriptures they quote frequently and thus prevent the lameness of their theories from appearing too prominent.

These theories, however different in some respects, are alike in that they ignore the ransom, which we have already noted as being the coming and fast-growing form of infidelity among Christians, which Satan seems to be stirring up in these last days. Another paper has recently been started in defence of this no-ransom theory, called The Millenarian. This is the third paper in advocacy of this error started within a year and a half. Our Adversary seems able to supply both talent and money for the promulgation of such blasting and blighting heresies. But his power shall continue only for a little season – "He knoweth that he hath but a short time," for

"He who was slain on Calvary's mountain,  
Soon shall reign a thousand years."

Now, since they cannot answer our questions in a straightforward manner without showing their theories in their true light, they endeavor to turn the attention of the flock away from the real issue – the importance of the truth in question – by seeking to enlist sympathy, as though they were being personally abused. And

one throws out the inference that it is a martyr, and [R495 : page 6] that it is more difficult to hold its peace than to reply, but says it will answer the question, on which they have already been deliberating for months – in time.

We answer, that if a man be suspicioned of any crime and be questioned regarding it, if he is innocent, it is his duty to state the facts, to answer the questions, that thereby he might clear himself. And what would be thought of such a one if, instead of answering, he should claim that he could answer, but thought it more noble and martyr-like to stand accused, merely claiming that the accusation was untrue, but refusing to give the evidence and so clear himself by plain answers? We answer, that to the mind of every right-thinking person he would stand justly condemned as guilty. Who would crown such a one with a martyr's laurels? But if such a course be condemned in an individual matter, what shall we say of a periodical which attempts to be a religious teacher, a feeder of the flock of Christ, who is accused of mixing poison with the children's meat?

Regarding personal attack, we would say that we have been no more personal than were our Lord and the Apostles, and that it would be impossible to so point out the error and danger that all the flock may be able to recognize it, without plainly mentioning the periodicals containing those errors. The names of the editors have never been mentioned, though if it were necessary for the truth's sake, we should not for a moment hesitate. Our personal solicitude for these is as great as for any of the flock, though we greatly fear the baneful tendency of their present course and error on themselves. It is a fearful thing to deceive others, but it generally begins in self-deception and then progresses in blindness. We believe that all these errors originate with the great Adversary; therefore we claim that "We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities,

against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places" – places of influence.

We have mentioned pointedly your Adversary (the devil) and those whom we believed to be forwarding his cause by publicly spreading error. His servants ye are to whom ye render service. (Rom. 6:16). Among others we have mentioned Mr. Ingersoll, the out-spoken denier of the RANSOM, and Mr. Henry Ward Beecher, *The Day Star*, and *The World's Hope*, and *The Millenarian*, as those who quoted scriptural phrases and arrayed themselves thus in a "garment of light," while they really made void the doctrine of the Ransom by their unscriptural theorizing. These are all public teachers, and the flock of Christ could in no way be guarded against their wily twisting of Scripture, without mentioning them so as to be unmistakably understood. The truth, and especially this truth, the Ransom, never needed more to have the sword of the Spirit unsheathed in its behalf by every true soldier of the cross than now, and by the grace of God we hope to fight a good fight until called higher.

And now, relative to their claim that they will answer these six troublesome, yet simple questions, in time, we feel that it will be in the interest of truth for us to tell their readers how we interpret this: It means that when they think their readers have forgotten the points of the questions and their relationship to each other, then they will take them up one at a time, and devote a whole article to each little question, weaving the web of sophistry (false reasoning) around them, so that when they have read it none will be quite sure just what is meant. Their expressions will be so carefully guarded that none could find a single quotation which would show their true position. We thus judge from the past.

We protest. This is not the right way to deal with any subject, much less a religious one. A child, a babe in Christ, who had nothing

to cover or conceal, nor any theory to sustain, should be able to answer those questions in one column or less. That the fundamental character and simplicity of these questions may be remembered, we repeat them here, at the same time declaring that by the grace of God we will agree to answer any six questions which they will propound on the fundamental doctrines of Christianity. And on any more advanced subject we are willing to give A REASON for the hope that is in us with meekness, in our OWN WORDS.

The questions were as follows:

- (1.) Why did Jesus die?
- (2.) How does it affect our sins?
- (3.) How did he put away sin by the sacrifice of himself?
- (4.) In what way did he give "himself a ransom [Greek, antilutron – an equivalent price] for all"?
- (5.) In what way was he a "propitiation [satisfaction] for our sins"?
- (6.) In what sense were we "bought with a price"?

The answer to these six simple questions would promptly decide the matter of our contemporary's faith or lack of faith in the ransom. It must not forget that it is on trial before its readers, and it must have little confidence in the intelligence of its readers to suppose that they will not discern the weakness of its policy. In the light of facts we can call its dealing nothing but policy – such as is indeed common among secular papers on political subjects, but which should not be once named among you as becometh saints.

The few changing expressions of our contemporary in its recent issues we cannot regard as an indication of reform on this subject. We could have no confidence in a reform unaccompanied by an acknowledgment of past errors. The retraction should be as

public as the original statements. This appears to be God's unalterable law. Until it shall make a full, clear, unequivocal statement of its position, such as the answer to the questions propounded would involve, we must question whether the recently changed expressions mean anything more than that it is more guarded as to its phraseology since our criticism.

We quoted from its teachings in our last, and now we give some extracts from its very first issue (October, 1882) as proof that its teachings did deny that the Lord bought them; did deny that we were bought with a price, even the precious blood of Christ. Under the heading ATONEMENT it sneers at the doctrine of substitution, claiming that it places our Father "in the UNGRACIOUS attitude of demanding the full payment of the sinner's debt before he will forgive." Is this an attempt of our contemporary to appear more gracious than Jehovah, who says he "will by no means clear the GUILTY," and who for this very reason "sent his only begotten Son that he should BE A PROPITIATION [satisfaction] for our sins," and who "by the grace [favor] of God tasted death for every man"?

Our contemporary continues to sneer at what it terms "the gross injustice of transferring the consequences of sin from the guilty to the innocent, allowing the innocent to suffer instead of the guilty." We answer that we are thankful that Satan has led us into no theory which would incline us thus to contradict the word of His testimony who bought us, who redeemed us, who "died the just FOR the unjust." My soul, come not thou into their secret who call good evil, and who find it needful to traduce the Almighty's character for justice in order to prove their theory, that we were not bought with a PRICE; which they claim has too much of a "commercial idea" to suit their aesthetic tastes and theories, and who deny and make light of those precious words:

"Jesus died and paid it all,

All the debt I owe."

Now, hear its own statement of its faith. Our contemporary continues: "Repentance – complete change of heart and life – and forgiveness are the Lord's cure for the difficulty [sin]; and when this is accomplished 'the enmity' [see Eph. 2:16] is surely destroyed and the man RECONCILED TO GOD." No one can mistake this statement; and what is it? It is another and a different gospel from what the Apostles delivered. (See Gal. 1:8.) THIS gospel has no need of the death of Jesus as our ransom from [R496 : page 6] the wages of sin. It has no place for Rom. 5:18,19: "Therefore, as by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so, by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous." It claims that repentance is the thing which saves men – that if they repent God will FORGIVE, and it calls this the Lord's CURE. We call this a man's remedy and theory, and in the name of Jehovah declare that

"These for sin could not atone;  
Christ must ransom, he alone."

This was the "Apostles' doctrine," viz.; that Jehovah laid upon Him (Jesus) the iniquity of us all – and "by His stripes we are healed.

Notice again that in the above statement of its faith, our contemporary says that repentance and forgiveness destroy the enmity, but note how contrary this is to the teaching of Paul, who says that the enmity was destroyed by the cross. It declares further that man is reconciled to God by repentance and forgiveness, but Paul says: "When we were enemies we were RECONCILED TO GOD by the death of His Son" (Rom. 5:10.)

Truly the justice, rather than the love of God is manifested by His rewarding sin with death – but the LOVE, the great love

wherewith he loved us, even while we were yet sinners and under proper condemnation of his just laws, is manifested by the death of his Son to release us from that just condemnation – opening up a way by which God could still be just yet the justifier of sinners who believe in Jesus as their ransom. "In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him" (1 John 4:9).

The child of God who can feel an indifference on this most vital point of all the Gospel, this attempt to ignore, deny, and remove the very foundation upon which the entire temple of God fitly framed, is builded, shows either that he does not appreciate the importance of the question, or else that he possesses so little of the spirit of Christ as not to have the zeal for the Lord's house and work and Word swallowing up all other considerations and interests. An appreciation of the value of the death of Christ is all important as a basis of entire consecration; hence the prominence given it in the Word. It is very important as a part of the truth without which we cannot be sanctified.

We commend to all a careful study of chapters VI and VIII, in "Food for Thinking Christians" as a help on this subject.

In conclusion – we have done our duty by those of our readers who are also readers of our contemporaries. "He that hath an ear, let him hear"; and we feel convinced that only such will hear with proper force and power the Word of the Lord on this topic. We have dealt with this subject at the greater length because we believe that this, which now assails those of "this way," is but a ripple of the mighty wave of unbelief in the cross of Christ which is even now beginning to sweep over the entire nominal Church. It is clearly described by the Apostles as the form of error which would be prevalent in the last days of this age. Our hope has been and is, that by clear, forcible and plain statement, we might help some to

forearm themselves for the conflict – putting on Christ as their helmet, breastplate and shield.

---