

RECONCILED AND SAVED.

"If when we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more being reconciled we shall be saved by his life." – Rom. 5:10.

The misunderstanding and misrepresentation of the at-one-ment, or reconciliation Jesus effected between God and man by his death on the cross, have been fruitful sources of error and repulsive ideas of God; these have made an orthodox hell possible, instead of death, as the wages of Adam's sin, and the blood of Jesus a necessity to satisfy the wrath of God, instead of a substitution of his life in death for the forfeited life of the world: thus orthodoxy says,

"Jesus Christ who stands between
Angry heaven and guilty men
Undertakes to buy our peace."

Such a representation of the "God (who) so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son," is so abhorrent and revolting that it has had the effect of driving some to other extreme and equally false theories; among whom we may cite H. W. Beecher, who gave expression to his belief on this subject in a sermon preached before the Cornell University, on June 1st, published in the New York Herald of June 2d, viz.: "Christ's work on earth was not to restore a lost race – a fallen one – but to carry forward and upward a sinful one. He did not suffer in man's place nor mend a broken law and make it honorable. The conception that Christ came into the world to suffer for sinners is monstrous. He came to benefit a miserable race by making known the supreme idea of a God of love."

If Christ's work on earth was to carry forward and upward a sinful race, instead of to restore a fallen one, man must have been at creation worse rather than better than he now is, and therefore there never could have been a fall. But how did he become miserable and sinful? he could not have made himself so if he never fell. Did God make him as he now is, or worse? If Mr. Beecher is right, God cannot be other than the author of all man's sin and misery, and being therefore, the author of sin, he would undoubtedly be evil himself. In this view of the case, what was "the supreme idea of the God of love," and in what way did Jesus make it known? How Mr. Beecher can preach this God as a God of love, a great and good being, we cannot understand; but it is written, "The wisdom of their wise men shall perish and the understanding of their prudent men shall be hid" (obscured). (Isaiah 29:14.) Paul says, "Through one man sin entered into the world (in whom all sinned) and through sin death; so also death passed upon all men." (Rom. 5:12. – Diaglott.) Therefore, these men cannot be right and God's word true; one or the other must be wrong. But the time has come "when they [the people] will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts [desires]...heap to themselves teachers having itching ears, and they [teachers] shall turn away their ears [understanding] from the truth and shall be turned unto fables" (2 Tim. 4:3,4), and "denying the Lord that bought them shall bring upon themselves swift destruction" (2 Pet. 2:1).

Every law, human or divine, must have a penalty attached to its transgression, otherwise it is no law, lacking force; the law of God demanded as a penalty the life of the transgressor, and Adam through disobedience having incurred this, all his posterity are heirs of death – life being forfeited. Therefore indeed as through one offence "sentence came on all men to condemnation (condemning all to death) so also through one righteous act (of Jesus) sentence came on all men to justification of life (justifying

their living again)." Rom. 5:18. – Diaglott. "If one died for all, then were all dead" (2 Cor. 5:14). And "as in [through] Adam all die, even so (to the same extent) in [through] Christ shall all be made alive" (1 Cor. 15:22).

If, therefore, through one man and one offence, sin and death entered the world and passed upon all men there must have been a fall, and mankind is now in a fallen condition, and if by one righteous act of the man Christ Jesus judgment, decision or sentence came, that all men should be justified to life, or justly entitled to life, i.e., raised up from the fall – resurrected – we ask what one act of Jesus could have accomplished this if not his death on the cross? The penalty, as we have seen, was death, not torment; therefore, he need not give more, nor could he give less; not only so, but it was because of his "obedience unto death – the death of the cross – that the Father hath highly exalted him." – Phil. 2:8.

There is, however, a marked distinction between the death of Jesus and that of other men, and this distinctive feature is **[R677 : page 5]** not in the mode of death, but in the degree of life possessed by him. "In him was life" (John 1:4); not a deathless life, which could not die, but life everlasting, so that he would not die, had he not laid down his life. All other men are in bondage to corruption, and have no life in them by nature, but he being a perfect and sinless man, was not liable to sin's penalty – death; therefore, he could say, "I lay down my life,...no man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself; I have power (right) to lay it down." (John 10:18). Previously the "Jews sought to take him to put him to death," but "no man laid hands on him, for his hour was not yet come" that he should be put to death "the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God." 1 Pet. 3:18. He commenced the sacrifice of his life at baptism, but had it not been completed in death, as it was on the cross, when he cried, "It is finished," all the rest would

have been valueless, for "without shedding of blood is no remission," And when he said, I lay down my life, he immediately added, "I have power to take it again." Surely he could not have meant he had power (right) to take again the sacrifice of his life from baptism to the cross; this would be withdrawing his consecration to the will of the Father. Besides, how could he do this? Nor did he mean that he would take again the same condition of life – flesh and blood – to do this would be to undo the atoning sacrifice and take back our ransom price; but, thank God, he gave his life – parted with it forever on the human plane and was made alive on the spirit plane.

He was "put to death in the flesh." (1 Pet. 3:18) not to pacify divine fury against sinners, nor to mend a broken law and make it honorable; it did not need this; but he vindicated the justice of the law and satisfied its claims upon us by giving himself as our substitute, flesh for flesh – his life for the life of the world. If, however, he had been of the divine nature as he now is, he could not have laid down his life, for "Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him" (Rom. 6:9); and if he had been a spiritual being under cover of flesh he could not have given his life for man, because his real life would be spirit, and therefore it would not be as required an equivalent or substitute for man.

That he did exist, a spiritual being with the Father, and that all things were made by (through) him, and without him was not anything made that was made (John 1:3) is evident, but he left – gave up the glory he had with the Father and "was made (became) flesh." (John 1:14.) Why should it be any more incredible that Jesus' nature was transformed from the spiritual to the human without retaining his former nature under cover than that the Church "shall...put on immortality" (1 Cor. 15:54) and yet not

retain the flesh and blood nature? for "flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God." (1 Cor. 15:50.)

Then, while we were yet "enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his son." (Rom. 5:10.) Reconciliation for the sins of the whole world was made (Heb. 2:17) for "he died for all," but all have not yet accepted the reconciliation through faith that they may be "saved by his life." "In due time," soon, we trust, the redemption and consequent reconciliation "shall be testified to all" – all shall "come to the knowledge of the truth" and to appreciate the precious redemption: and when they do, may we not reasonably infer that nearly all will accept the glad tidings and come into harmony with God? We have good ground to hope that the majority will be "saved by his life," as all were "reconciled by his death."

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