

[R689 : page 5]

RANSOM AND TESTIMONY: WILL THEY BECOME CO-EXTENSIVE.

1 TIM. 2:1-6.

The writer of this epistle was a large-hearted man. There was a special place in his heart for special believers, and another for his kinsmen according to the flesh, and room to spare for all other men without exception. "I desire (says he), that first of all supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men." His heart expanded with the right feeling, because his eye was fixed on the right model. "For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior; who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge, of the truth." And that he had the right conception of the right model was to him clearly demonstrated in the most matter-of-fact way. "For there is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time." It is this matter-of-fact proof that God "will have all men to be saved," which at present demands the utmost attention. It is comprised of two parts – first, the fact and its meaning; and second, the testimony which is to be given respecting it.

I. The Fact and its meaning. The fact is one of our foundation facts – the death of Christ. The meaning of the fact is that he "suffered for our sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God" – he "died for our sins according to the Scriptures" – or, as here expressed, he "gave himself a ransom for all." At this point it may be asked, –

1. What is a ransom? It means the price paid to redeem from captivity or punishment. It is something which has been paid for

something which has been forfeited; and the one is considered to be the equivalent of the other. Here another question arises, –

What was forfeited? To answer this question, we revert back to the cradle of our race. Adam, we are told, was "the son of God." He has no human father – he derived his life direct from its source. He was made in the image or likeness of God; and to him was given **[R690 : page 5]** dominion over all the earth and all that it contained. Head of the human race and Lord of its home, he was pronounced by the highest authority "very good." He was placed under law. It was plain and positive, and its penalty – death. He broke that law, and immediately came under its penalty. The life thus forfeited was not his own individual life merely, but being the head of the race, the life of the entire race was forfeited in him. Human life then being the forfeit, and its extent universal, –

What of the ransom? It was equal to the forfeit, human life, and its extent universal. Every particular in which Adam was different from his progeny, Jesus was his equal. He was born of the virgin, Son of God, image of God, Lord of earth, federal head, the holy from his mother's womb. Here analogy between the two Adams seems to end. When tempted, the first Adam fell, and involved all mankind in his degradation and punishment. **[R690 : page 6]** When tempted, the last Adam resisted – resisted unto death, even the death of the cross, and involved all mankind in his righteousness and self-sacrifice. The most unimpeachable testimony was given to his sinlessness. He was "holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners," and "without spot" he offered himself to God. This was giving life for life – human life for human life – untainted human life for untainted human life. This was paying an equivalent price. Justice demanded this. It demanded no more. It could accept no less. The pre-existence of Christ is not forgotten, any more than his present existence, but

these are not our present theme. It was not angelic life that was forfeited. Nor was it divine life (were that possible). It was human life. For this special purpose He took part of "flesh and blood:" and the demands of justice were fully met when the "Holy One" tasted death for "every man." Some have asked, –

2. How can the death of one man be equivalent to the death of every man? We may ask another question: How can the sin of one man be equivalent to the sin of every man? The answer to the one question will be the answer to the other. We know of only one way in which these questions can be answered. These two men – Adam and Jesus – were equal. They were federal heads; and the only two men who ever occupied that position. Through the sin of the one death fell upon our entire race, and through the death of the other that dread penalty was exhausted. By the one act the old Adamic account was opened, and by the other that account was closed. The account now stands square – the engagements on the one side being equal to the liabilities on the other. It is true that some of the engagements have not as yet matured, but, thank God! they are of such a nature that not one of them can fail. This is no human theory. There is no truth more plainly stated in the Divine Word. Paul is specially strong and clear on these points. "Wherefore as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, in whom (margin) all have sinned. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous....That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. 5:12,19,21). Another question arises here:

3. As the ransom of man has been paid, why do the living continue to die, and the dead remain dead? Because the resurrection hour has not come yet. In God's plan there is a time

for everything. "When the fulness of the time was come God sent forth his Son;" "in due time" he paid down the price of man's redemption; and when the appointed hour comes round he will claim his purchased property. "Marvel not at this: for the hour cometh in which all that are in the tombs shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done ill unto the resurrection of judgment." R.V. (John 5:28,29.) "I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death: O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave, I will be thy destruction." (Hosea 13:14.) Yet another question on this part of our subject claims an answer:

4. Seeing that Christ died a ransom for man, how was it that he did not remain dead? By rising again, did he take back the price of redemption? If he did, there is no hope for us. But he did not, thank God! he did not. The life forfeited was human life – flesh and blood life. The life given in ransom was the same. That was never taken back. Peter makes this point very plain. "For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God; being put to death in the flesh, but quickened in (R.V.) the spirit." (1 Peter 3:18.) Had he been quickened in the flesh, as some contend, there might have been the appearance of taking back the ransom. But he was not. He was quickened (made alive) in the spirit. The Apostles had known Christ "after the flesh," but a time came when Paul wrote, "even though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now we know him so no more." (R.V., 2 Cor. 5:15.) At his resurrection he became the "first-born" of a new race. On one side of his grave he was "like unto his brethren" – flesh and blood, and on the other he is "the Lord the Spirit," "a life-giving Spirit," and so on. There is no ground here for reasonable objection, doubt, or even uncertainty. The ransom paid was equal to the forfeit; and having been once paid, it remains always paid. It is for those who have

not as yet accepted this glad message to welcome it to their hearts now. You have no guarantee that ever you will hear it repeated; and it is for those who are not obeying "the Lord that bought them" to yield to his paramount claims now. No other lord has any such claim upon you. "Ye are not your own, ye are bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's." This brings us up to the other part of our subject, –

II. The testimony respecting this great fact. The Apostle says, it is "to be testified in due time."

1. What is to be testified? That Christ gave himself a ransom for all. That great fact was never intended to remain a secret. In the divine plan means were devised for establishing it beyond the possibility of reasonable doubt, and for publishing it to all concerned. In the immediate context the Apostle writes, "whereunto I am ordained a preacher, and an apostle...a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and verity." As an Apostle, he bore witness to the fact; as a Preacher, he proclaimed the glad tidings based upon it; and as a Teacher, he expounded its meaning. These are some of the different aspects in which the same thing is viewed. To say that this fact is to be testified in due time, is, in other words, to say that its gospel is to be preached in due time, or that its doctrine is to be taught in due time. There are some six, or more, words used by the Apostles, each setting forth a different aspect of this one and the same thing.

2. Who is to testify it? It is sometimes called "the testimony of God," and sometimes "the testimony of Christ." Sometimes "the Spirit's" testimony, and sometimes that of the Apostles and Prophets. It originated in God, it was given in the power of the Holy Spirit, and its words were uttered by the Christ, the Apostles, and the Prophets. It varies as to time, and manner, and agent, and accompaniment, but it never varies as to origin. It is God's

testimony. Hence John argues, "If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater ...he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son" (1 Jno. 5:9,10). It is well for man that it is God's testimony. This not only puts its credibility beyond a doubt, but it makes it certain that it will reach every one for whom it was intended. Referring to the word which goeth forth out of his mouth, God has said, "It shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it." (Isa. 55:11.)

3. Why is it to be testified? Because the testimony is as necessary as the fact itself. Without the testimony the fact would remain without any moral result. Physical results you can have without information, but to have moral results, information is absolutely indispensable. That the man Christ Jesus gave himself a ransom for all, is a stupendous fact; but it has no moral power except where it is known. Paul puts this matter beyond a doubt. "Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? and how shall they preach except they be sent?... So then, faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." (Rom. 10:13-17.) There are, of course, other effects produced by the death of Christ than those to be found in the mind, heart and character of man, but the purpose of God in that death can never be fully accomplished until man is brought intelligently under its saving influence.

4. To whom is it to be testified? The obvious answer to this question is, to whomsoever it may concern. The ransom being for all, all are vitally interested in it, and therefore it is to be testified to all. Universal ransom and universal testimony are twin-

elements of one scheme. Limit either of them and the scheme is mutilated. Formerly, many limited both. Now many admit the universality of the ransom, and deny that the testimony concerning it will ever become universal; but the two must stand or fall together. This point, however, is not to be settled by any inferential reasoning. The question for us is, what saith the Scriptures? and our quotations will be of the most familiar description. **[R691 : page 6]** In the preceding verse Paul says God "will have all men to be saved and to come unto the knowledge of the truth." (1 Tim. 2,3,4.) This being so, the truth must be preached to all men. How else could all men come to a knowledge of it? In a succeeding chapter he says, God is "the Saviour of all men, specially of those that believe" (4:10). Here faith is the dividing line between all men and a class, testimony always precedes faith, therefore testimony must be given to all men. In writing to Titus, the same Apostle says, "the grace of God that bringeth salvation to all men hath appeared" (2:11). It being characteristic of the grace of God to bring salvation to all men, and that grace having appeared, it can never disappear until it has accomplished its mission. "Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people." (Luke 2:10.) The angel of the Lord says, that the good tidings shall be to all the people. Who is man, and what is he, that he dare say that the good tidings shall not be to all people? "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth will draw all men unto me." (John 12:32.) This, of course, is figurative, but the teaching is plain. Jesus says that he will draw all men unto him, men cannot be drawn until they hear of him, therefore, all men are to hear of him. "That was the true light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world." (John 1:9.) This, too, is figurative, and the teaching is equally clear. Jesus is the true light which lighteth every man, he cannot be light to any man until he has heard of him, therefore, every man is to hear of him. Whether,

therefore, we appeal to Paul, or to John, to the angel of the Lord, or to the Lord himself, the evidence here given only in sample, is plain and conclusive. And as the words which are used proving the extent of the testimony – "all people," "all men," "every man," and so on – are the same as those which are used proving the extent of the ransom, the conclusion is inevitable that ultimately the testimony will become coextensive with the ransom.

5. And when is it to be testified? According to the A.V. the apostle says, "in due time;" but according to the E.D., the R.V., and other authorities, the word rendered "time" is plural; and therefore we ought to understand Paul as saying, "in due times, or seasons." Those times are partly past, partly present, and partly future. The Apostle Peter refers to prophetic testimony given respecting the redeeming work of Christ before he appeared in the flesh, (1 Peter 1:10,11.) God Himself more than once in an audible voice bore witness to His Son in connection with his work. And Christ himself, while upon the earth, testified respecting it. On leaving the earth he spake of other witnesses who were to continue this testimony. "When the Comforter is come, whom I will send you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, He shall testify of Me; and ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning." (John 15:26,27.) In the plenitude of the Spirit's power given unto them, the apostles prosecuted their mission while they lived. Several of them sealed their testimony with their own blood, and bequeathed it as their legacy to their children in the faith. Since the last of the twelve fell asleep, up to the present hour, this testimony has been repeated with varying success; and we expect a similar repetition of it up to the end of the present age. The question arises here. And what after that? Does this testimony end with the present age? We cannot believe it. Some tell us that testimony is being given in the "intermediate state," only they give us no evidence of its

possibility; so we only look to the resurrection state for the completion of this testimony. Ransom is for all men; that is "to be testified in due times." A very large proportion of mankind have died without hearing the testimony; they cannot hear it when they are dead, and therefore they will hear it after they are raised from the dead. The "due times" began when this testimony was first given to our redeemed race; they have been going on ever since, and they cannot end until every man has heard the gladsome sound. "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me bless His holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits."

III. In conclusion, permit a few words of caution and discrimination. First, as to the ransom:

1. Those who say that Jesus was literally "the son of Joseph," "tainted with sin," had to "offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins and then for the people's," and so on, should pause and ponder well their position. Were those and kindred propositions true, the ransom would not be equal to the forfeit, and therefore it could not in justice be accepted.

2. When men teach that Jesus rose as he died – "mortal," their doctrines seem to imply that the price paid for our redemption was taken back again. Were that so, it would leave us entirely without hope, as much so as though Christ had never died. Then as to the testimony:

3. Were the testimony respecting the ransom to end with the present age, that would prove the Gospel to be a failure. It cannot be shown, so far as I know, that more than one in 150, or one in 140 at most, of those for whom the ransom was paid have even so much as heard of it. If it is to end so, what else could it be than a failure? Let us take care lest we put arguments into the mouths of infidels, as to the love, the wisdom, or the power of the Most High.

4. Affirming that the testimony will ultimately become co-extensive with the ransom is no foundation for "Universalism." Sin is universal, death is universal, and the testimony will become universal, but there is no evidence to conclude that the acceptance of the testimony will ever become universal. On the contrary, history, experience, and prophecy, all prove that as it was in the beginning, it is now, and ever will be – when the testimony is given to all, some will accept and others will reject it.

5. Contending that those who never heard the gospel before death will hear it after resurrection is no encouragement to rejecters of, or triflers with it now. It does not bear upon their case. We do not say who among the present hearers of the gospel are rejecters of it, but it cannot be too carefully noted that there is no evidence whatever to conclude that any deliberate and wilful rejecter of the gospel here will ever have its blessings offered to him hereafter. To all present hearers of the Gospel, now is their "due time." "Behold now is the accepted time; Behold, now is the day of salvation."

6. And as to our position generally. It affords – more than any other that I am aware of – harmonious views, not only of the justice, but also of the wisdom and the love of God. I well remember the time when I first heard of "the universality of the atonement." What peace and joy it brought with it. And I well remember another time when I was worried with doubts and fears as to the possibility of the universal atonement being universally applied: and the latter well nigh counteracted all the blessedness of the former. Now, thank God! both are plain, as plain and clear as anything relating to the future can be. This is an unfailing source of peace and joy, and I invite all, more especially those who have been harassed as I was, to share its blessed assurance. On this position we seem to be most in unison with some of the

grandest of old prophetic and apostolic utterances. "My [R691 : page 7] thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts." "O the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!"

– Joseph Moffit.
