

AN INCONSISTENT CONTEMPORARY.

We have not an inch of space to waste, nor a moment of time to devote to *mere* contention or argument, hence omit many of the moral reform topics which though good, are not vitally important to our readers, the majority of whom we trust are past the necessity for such exhortation. In any event these themes have abler advocates than us, to set forth their claims.

But as we long since (1880) pointed out, a great and severe trial of faith coming with increasing force upon the church – "the fire of *that* day" which "shall try every man's work of what sort it is." We saw that this fiery trial then coming, aimed to destroy the very foundation of Christian faith and hope, the first principles of the doctrine of Christ – "How that Christ *died* for our sins according to the Scriptures" (1 Cor. 15:3) and that he *thus* redeemed, ransomed, bought us with his own precious blood. And because truth on this subject is the "meat in *due season*" for the household of faith now, as well as because there are few to publicly champion this truth which is now being attacked on every hand, therefore, we feel that time and space spent in criticizing and exposing the arguments and sophistries of those who would make the Cross of Christ of none effect, is most necessary. Hence if to any there seems to be an excuse or apology necessary for the pointed and critical analyzing of the utterance of contemporaries on such subjects, our apology is, our zeal for the truth; that its force may be seen in *contrast* with error: and for you, that you may be strengthened, prepared, and armed against all the wiles of the devil, and that thus, many may be able to answer and refute his sophistries; thus helping and strengthening themselves and others also.

The recent issue of a contemporary devoted to the NO RANSOM theory, presents in its leading Editorial some glaring inconsistencies, in its effort to make use of Scripture phraseology, and at the same time to discard the doctrine of redemption and remission of sins

through [R709 : page 2] the blood of the cross. We were about to say – and at the same time maintain its theory – but conclude that its theory, severely pressed for arguments, is changing and it would be difficult now to state what the exact theory is, except that the unchanged purpose is still plainly evident – the denial of the ransom.

Before pointing out its sophisms, we place some of its open and palpable contradictions side by side, thus: –

"We not only claim that He was Lord when He gave himself a ransom; or when he "bought us with a price," but we also claim that an appreciation of His divinity and lordship as the express image or manifestation of the Father's substance is necessary to a *just estimate of the nature and value of the great atoning sacrifice which he made*. The advocates of the theory that the divine law was satisfied with the substitution of *one* mere human sacrifice *instead* of the billions of human beings must have strained ideas of equity and justice; must ignore the statement that man cannot "redeem his brother nor give to God a ransom for him." Psa. 49:7....

"The extremely literal materialist may exclaim in horror, *Can* Divinity die? Oh no! it cannot die, in the sense in which *you* are thinking of death. He cannot lose his existence. But your *idea of death* is at fault."...

"The GROSS MATERIALIST could he but revise his theology and open his eyes, might see a sublime truth in this mystery of life *imparted* instead of *extinguished* by means of death. THIS is the *grand* MYSTERY of the cross of Christ."

"It seems as if the idea of God accepting an *innocent* substitute for the

life of the *guilty* criminals is so grossly inconsistent with both love and justice that instead of winning to God it must have repelled many thinking minds from Him. It places God in the attitude of demanding all men *owe*, instead of in the gracious attitude of extending mercy and forgiveness to the helpless sinner. What is fully paid for, cannot be accepted as an expression of the Father's love and grace."

In a former issue the same contemporary gave the following explanation (?) of the nature and value of the death of Christ, viz.:

"Christ died to the *old relation* which he had COME INTO *by Adam's sin.*" "The blood which must be shed, *without which* there is no remission of sins, IS *that* which is the evidence of the death of the ENMITY WITHIN US – death to sin."

If this contemporary had more than one editor, we should suppose that they were of opposite minds, and that by some accident, the writings of the two had gotten mixed. But the mixture is the more deplorable, as it gives evidence of a fierce struggle between a theory and Scripture, in which the former has the control. Judging from the conflicting arguments advanced and tried, our contemporary's plan and policy seems to be: – Any argument to get rid of the RANSOM – as a "*corresponding price.*"

Extreme indeed must be its need of supporting argument, when it finds it necessary to claim as above, that life is *imparted* instead of *extinguished* by death. The very meaning of the words is the reverse. Does this contemporary endorse Satan's lie in Eden and contradict Jehovah? (Gen. 3:3-5). And then call it: "a *sublime* truth" – "the *grand* mystery of the cross of Christ" – "this mystery of life *imparted* instead of extinguished by means of death." Would it claim that DEATH is a great blessing and that Satan by whom it was introduced and "who has the power of death" (Heb. 2:14) is really the one who *imparts life*, instead of *extinguishing* it? If so it should at once

claim that Satan is the one by whom all the families of the earth shall be blessed!

The *new* mixture is shown in the left column; and as we have heretofore shown the views of the other column to be unscriptural, we now merely note the expression above – "What is fully PAID FOR *cannot be accepted* as an expression of the Father's love and grace" – and remark that if our contemporary *cannot accept* of the Father's grace and love and gift, in and through the ransom sacrifice of Jesus, we fear it can never accept it at all, for "there is none other name, under heaven, given among men whereby we must be saved." (Acts 4:12.) In *this* was manifested the love of God, that he sent his Son to be the propitiation [covering] for our sins. (1 John 4:9,10.)

We now pass to a hasty review of the expressions of the left column. The idea that it was necessary for a God to die, as the "great atoning sacrifice" for a man's sin, cannot be called new, even if it should by some be considered light. It is the commonly held, inconsistent, *unscriptural*, and "mysterious" view of the atonement, handed down from the dark ages, which we thank God we got rid of years ago.

The peculiarity of fallen human nature to go from one to the other extreme like a pendulum is remarkably illustrated in the treatment of this subject – it either wants to say that there was *no* ransom necessary, and *none* given, or else, that the penalty was so great that nothing short of the sacrifice of a God could be an "atoning sacrifice" for human sin.

In its confusion our contemporary says both. (See the contrasted statements of the two columns.) Would to God it had the courage and humility to acknowledge its confusion and accept the favor of God in His appointed way.

How contrary to this is the teaching of Scripture, that the penalty of human sin was the forfeiture of HUMAN EXISTENCE, and that in order to be man's ransom and give a "CORRESPONDING PRICE" it

was necessary that Jesus should become a man, that as by MAN came death, by a *man* ALSO the resurrection or restoration of the dead might be accomplished. (1 Cor. 15:21.) And therefore, He who ransomed us, left his former glory and spiritual "form of God," and humbled himself to our nature and was "MADE FLESH," (Phil. 2:6-8, and John 1:1-3,14), and gave himself a ransom for all. And the apostle distinctly tells us, that "the MAN Christ Jesus" who "gave himself" was *therefore* highly exalted, and given a "name above every name" – Lord of all. Phil. 2:5-11.

This fact, that Jesus' right, and power, and control of men as their Master and Lord, was gained by his sacrifice as a MAN, hence not as claimed above, is clearly stated by the apostle, thus: "For to this end, Christ both died, and revived, and rose, THAT HE MIGHT BE LORD both of the dead and living." Rom. 14:9.

The statement above concerning one MERE human sacrifice, is not a quotation from the columns of the TOWER. Our contemporary does not thus favor us. The expression, "MERE man," would convey to many minds the idea of an imperfect man; hence we would not use it. When Jesus "WAS MADE FLESH" it was neither on "the lowest round of the ladder," nor on any other than the very highest, a glorious perfect image of God, in the flesh. Had he been one whit less perfect than the first perfect man, he could not have been the Redeemer of what Adam lost for himself and his race. Had he been one whit higher than PERFECT MAN, he could not have given himself as "a corresponding price." *See* YOUNG'S GREEK HEBREW and ENGLISH CONCORDANCE for definition, under head of *Ransom*, 1 Tim. 2:6 – *antilutron* "a corresponding price."

By reason of the "fall" of its representative, Adam, the whole race is now depraved, imperfect, ungodlike, and all condemned to death; HENCE all being under the same condemnation, "None can by any means REDEEM his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him." (Psa. 49:7.)

This text is most too much for the views presented in the right-hand column. If it means anything, it proves that God's law did demand a RANSOM, that he would not excuse sin in the way that can be "*accepted*" by our contemporary "as an expression of love and grace." No, he will by no means clear [excuse] the guilty." (Exod. 34:7.) But when the guilty had proved the futility of their own efforts to redeem and cleanse themselves, God in great mercy and love *ransomed* us by giving His Son to be a propitiation [covering] for our sins – "In *this* [way] was manifested the love of God." (1 John 4:9-10.)

At the time of his consecration, at baptism, Jesus offered up himself – a man to redeem men – and there he received special power from on high, by which he was enabled not only to carry out his consecration by a life of self-sacrifice even unto death – even the *death of the cross*, but by which also, as a foretaste of his future power [as a partaker of the DIVINE nature, by which he could restore all things, and have all power] he was ennobled to do the "many wonderful works" with which those three and a half years abounded.

Farther on in the same article, after the query – "Does not 'redeem' 'ransom' or 'price' imply substitution?" – it answers that question thus: – "The terms are commercial in common usage, but have also another use not uncommon. The *means* NECESSARY to secure any end are commonly and properly spoken of as the *cost*, or *price* of the object thus gained. The pioneer *labors* to secure a cleared farm; the *cost* is great, but he will be well repaid. The son *costs* his mother labor and pain, but his true manhood is her joyous reward. The *means* are the *price* and are adapted to secure the desired end."

Very good! But cannot all see that the *cost* of each item had to be *substituted* or given up for each result specified, before it could be had? The same *principle* is involved whether you pay a dime [R710 : page 2] for a loaf of bread, or pay a year's labor for a clearing. This is nothing short of the commercial and *only* usage of the word *bought*.

The *cost* is whatever is NECESSARY to procure the thing desired, whether it be a son, a farm, or a race. Jesus bought us with his own precious blood [his sacrificed life] whatever may have been the attendant circumstances, by which this result was accomplished [such as leaving the heavenly glory, humbling himself to become a man, etc.,] the fact remains, that all those incidentals were not the *price*; they merely enabled, or were the necessary preparation, for giving the price. The price was his *death* – He "suffered [*death*] the just for the unjust TO BRING US TO GOD. (1 Pet. 3:18.)

The question arises, Did Jesus give *too much*? Did he give *more* than was needful to procure the results attained – the liberation of man from sin and death. To say that the sacrifice of Jesus – his death – was *not* necessary, is not only to charge him with folly, but to deny those Scriptures which state that the giving up of his life was the *price* of one ransom.

If the thing given was the *price*, then our price or cost of our liberty from death was Jesus' *death*. Now follow the train of reasoning – The *reason* he died, was that we as a race were all under the dominion of death and his aim was to set us free from sin and death. Why did he not set us free without becoming a man? Because Jehovah's just penalty, death, rested upon us all, and his justice is as unalterable as his love. Why did not Jesus die as a spiritual being without becoming a man? Because it was *men*, who were condemned and God's law demanded a *corresponding* price. Why then did Jesus become a man? It was that he by the grace [favor, love, kindness] of God, should taste *death* for every man. Was this an equivalent or corresponding price for an entire race? Yes, when God condemned *all* because of one man's transgression, it was in order that as a result of *one* man's [Jesus'] obedience even unto *death*, he might deliver the race from condemnation which was upon all through one man's sin. Was not the death of Christ an example of resisting evil? It was that, but it must have been more; for many prophets and righteous persons resisted evil unto death, and they would have answered for examples, if nothing

more had been needed. What more was needed than to be shown by a good example, to refrain from sin? Much more, for even if it were possible for all men to live spotlessly, still there was the penalty of sins that were past – which came upon all and continued upon all until Jesus "bare our sins in his own body on the tree." Could not something else meet the requirements and lift from men the penalty? No, without shedding of blood there is no remission of sins. Heb. 9:22.

So then, Jesus gave none to great a price, but one which corresponded exactly, with the penalty, viz.: – man's death. "*Wherefore* God also hath highly exalted him and given him a name [power, and authority, and honor] which is above every name." "He [now] is Lord of all." Phil. 2:9; Acts 10:36.

Again we quote our contemporary: "Paul says that Christ redeems us from all iniquity (Titus 2:14). Now, if to redeem from death means to give death a substitute, then to redeem from iniquity means to give iniquity a substitute. Will any one claim that Christ gave himself a substitute for iniquity?"

Such sophism is not really worthy of refutation. Sin and iniquity are two names for the same thing. When death passed upon the race, it brought with it depravity – a liability to sin – an inability to refrain from sin. It brought in a word not only physical disease, but also moral degradation – iniquity – hence, in redeeming us from death, it was at the same time a redemption from iniquity of which death was the wages or penalty. The *price* or *cost* of iniquity was *death*, and to redeem us from its dominion, Jesus, as *our substitute*, paid that penalty, that in due time we *might* be made free from it. He made his soul [his being or existence] an *offering* for sin, to redeem us from all iniquity.

And now in view of the many sides of this question which this contemporary advances, arguing in one column that there is no ransom, no price, no substitution, and in the next column of the very same article that there was a price, a ransom, &c., but a *spiritual* and divine one, we candidly and seriously advise it to either abandon

its *various* theories of no *corresponding* price being given in man's redemption, or else discard the Bible altogether as a text book; for the crudity and inconsistency of the above statements must be apparent to the most obtuse, not to mention the effect upon intelligent Bible students.

