

## A WORD OF WARNING.

We live in a time when it is considered discourteous, and a sign of narrowness and bigotry, for a speaker or writer to criticize the teachings of others, no matter how erroneous they may be. This common sentiment has grown out of an attempt on the part of the various Protestant denominations to effect an outward union, or at least an agreement not to antagonize each other, by *ignoring* doctrinal differences, instead of harmonizing them by an appeal to the Bible. And it has been nourished by independent thinkers both in right and wrong directions who have come to differ from their denominations, and yet because of sectarian popularity have desired to stay within the pale of the nominal church. These, when called to account, to defend their position, raise the cry of "bigotry" and "narrow-mindedness," against those who attempt to call them to account for their deviation from their ordination vows to the sect under whose name and auspices they hold forth.

The worldly who predominate in every sect, favor the newer and so called *liberal* views, and those who hold firmly to a doctrine, true or false, fear the epithet, bigot, so much that they yield, and think and act as quietly as possible.

To such an extent is this true, that the leading pulpits of the leading sects are filled with men who though brilliant and able, not only act a lie regularly every week, (for they would not profess to believe or teach the doctrines of the sect they represent) but what is even worse, some of them do not even claim to believe the Bible, nor the plan of salvation therein set forth. They take a text from it as a matter of form and custom, but quote its statements in the same breath with quotations from Shakespeare with evidently the same ideas concerning the inspiration of both. They teach openly what others teach privately, that the plan of salvation is a step in a general process of evolution. They deny a fall from and loss of innocency and perfection, and life, on the part of a

representative, Adam, and also the *ransom* of all from that loss, by the DEATH of Christ Jesus, man's second representative. (Rom. 5:17-19. Matt. 18:11.) One of these openly declared to his congregation, "If you believe the old scheme of theology that men fell in Adam, then you have not any room to believe anything I am telling you and my preaching is idle."

They thus construct out of evolution, or as they term it, progressive development, a new gospel, a new different hope from that which Jesus and the Apostles preached (1 Cor. 15:21,22. Heb. 2:9), [R881 : page 4] – a salvation to be accomplished by a resurrection, and brought about by the death of Jesus a *ransom* for all.

Yet these utterances go almost unchallenged, because, first, "Orthodoxy," so called, furnishes no clear cut, sharp, powerful arguments, among its various and clashing creeds, which could successfully meet these infidel heresies: and secondly, because these anti-scriptural evolutionary theories, are popular among the rich and cultured and fashionable, who constitute the "back-bone" of each denomination; and the opposer would in any event be considered a narrow-minded bigot, an obstructor of reform and progress.

We thank God for liberty of conscience, for freedom from the stake, for reform and progress in the study of his word, for ability to rightly divide its precious truths, and for the light now shining from it, exposing traditional errors and revealing the divine plans. But as for that Liberal Christianity now so popular, which counts the Christians of the world at 350,000,000 and includes in that number every shade of belief and unbelief in the Bible and out of the Bible, and confessedly "includes all the speckled and streaked" characters of christendom, thank God we have knowledge enough of his word to utterly repudiate it as opposed to his teachings. And he that by silence or action biddeth God speed to any error, or its advocates, is a partaker in the evil.

This same false sentiment prevails in religious journalism, though to a less degree, for the same reason. There are to-day numbers of

journals whose doctrines, though moral, are like those above referred to – evolutionary and in opposition to the Scripture Gospel of a restoration from a FALLEN state by the payment of a *ransom* or corresponding price for all, in the death of our Lord Jesus.

We claim no liberty to deal with the personal affairs, or the private character, of any of our contemporary editors, but we do claim the fullest liberty to criticise their public teachings, and accord to them the same liberty. And while we would not harm them personally, but rather do them good, we will use our best endeavors to knock to pieces, and show up to God's children their sophistries, and to expose the deceitful and ensnaring manner in which they would set aside the *ransom* and the cross of Christ, in its place leaving the idea that we are reconciled to God by our own *death to sin*, as they are pleased to call it – each upon his own daily cross.

To frame an argument, they say, Adam *died to righteousness* and Christ *died to sin*, and we become acceptable to God by following Christ's example and dying to sin. Thus they form an argument which few can see the weakness of, because death is sometimes used in a figurative, as well as in a literal sense by the Apostles. If some of their readers enquire whether then they believe that Jesus was a sinner, that he could die to sin, as Adam died toward righteousness, they quickly quote the Scripture which declares that "In him was no sin," and leave the argument there safely, because few can see through their sophistry; and thus they go over and over the same thing, admitting in one breath that Jesus had no sin in him, and claiming in the next that he died to sin in the same way that Adam died to righteousness, and that we should die to sin *as* he did.

We can scarcely believe that these teachers are deceived by their own sophistry, and unable to see that since in Jesus was no sin, his dying to it in [R882 : page 4] any figurative sense would be a totally different figure from that of our death to sin; for in the sense in which we become dead to sin, we were alive or active in sin once. Consequently if Jesus

never was alive in sin, he could not die to sin in the same sense that we may be said to die to, or cease to live in sin.

Suppose for argument's sake we should admit their claim, and say that Adam died toward righteousness when he began to live in sin; it would surely imply that he was alive toward righteousness before he could die, or cease to live in that condition; and since our Lord Jesus was never alive in or toward sin, is it not evident to all that he could not die to sin in the same way Adam died to righteousness? – in the sense of leaving or abandoning it? Hence it is evident that such an argument instead of being logical is sophistical – a deceptive arrangement of words to convey a false idea and cause it to appear reasonable.

What then is the meaning of the statement of Rom. 6:10 "In that he died, he died unto sin once?" We answer, He did die for [or because of] sin once, not however metaphorically but actually, really and on a literal cross – as a sacrifice for or because of our sins. And when we realize the completeness of the price thus paid, and that in rising from death he did not take back that price, but was raised by the Father to a new nature, we are prepared to realize that we who were under the condemnation of death, are fully redeemed from that penalty, and that by a resurrection we will regain life. And realizing this *now*, by faith we may reckon ourselves as though we had passed through the ordeal which our Lord passed – as though we had died, and had then been made alive by God. (Rom. 6:11.)

As a matter of fact, the wages of sin is total extinction, but Christ having paid our penalty, has assured us a life from the dead. Thus, so far as we are concerned the effect is the same as though God had repented and remitted our penalty, and after having taken life from us according to his threat, had relented and restored us to being, and to his favor.

The effect, we say, is the same so far as we are concerned, but it has been accomplished in a just and righteous way on God's part. God could not thus violate his own laws and decrees: to do so would indicate

imperfection, change, vacillation, and injustice. But he gives us the same blessed results, and maintains the honor of his just law – Yea, says Paul, the just law of God is *magnified*, and shown as unalterable and grand, while his love and wisdom are also displayed by the method used in the recovery of the lost and condemned – through the ransom.

But says one, Do you not teach that it is the privilege of believers to present themselves living sacrifices, and to become dead with Christ? Yes, truly; it has been largely our aim and work to set before the Church her joyful privilege of filling up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ, and becoming dead *with him*, if she would live *with* him. This we have repeatedly shown to be the high-calling of the age just closing, a distinctive feature which marks and distinguishes this from the past and future ages and dispensations of God's plan. We have shown it not only from the apostles' words, but also from the types of the Jewish service. But we always claimed, and have proved repeatedly, from the apostles and the law, that all members of the Adamic race are sinners under the curse or penalty of sin – death – and imperfect and unacceptable before God. Our claim and proof has been that the *ransom* which our Lord Jesus gave for all men, provides a full release for all, from all that was lost through Adam's sin; and that *we who now* accept it in this age, are reckoned of God as perfect and spotless, covered with the *imputed* righteousness of Christ as with a robe, and that BECAUSE of this *justification*, those who during the "*accept-able* time" presented themselves as sacrifices and became dead with him were accepted of the Father as the Bride and joint-heir of Christ Jesus our Lord.

And this it is, which our contemporaries have taken up, and they are attempting to make the sacrifice of each individual, *the price* of reconciliation with God, and Jesus' sacrifice of no value except as it *set an example* of how all men should sacrifice and make themselves acceptable to God.

This, at very most, is what the Jews sought to do for over eighteen hundred years, and failed. They attempted to justify themselves and become holy and acceptable to God by works. And then what? do they place a higher standard upon sacrifices of the Church than we teach? Nay, verily, but a lower standard; for their claim is that in *dying to sin* it is the sins merely that they are crucifying. It is their sins and sinful desires that they place upon the altar before the Lord, but the stench is surely an abhorrence. Alas! this has ever been the tendency; the things which are condemned of God, the sins which they have no right to keep or indulge, these they place before the Lord and call it *sacrificing*. So Saul brought the flocks and herds he was commanded to kill; of these he would make a great sacrifice to the Lord, but they were not acceptable. So, too, the poor Jew would bring the Lord the blind and lame and weakly, but they were not acceptable. Cain did better even than this: not the weaknesses and imperfections did he attempt to offer to God, but his first fruits of the field, symbolic of good works. He was not acceptable, because, first of all, the lesson must be taught that a death was needful (typical of Jesus' sacrifice) to redeem us and open up communication with God, so that our good works would be acceptable.

Our sacrifice must be one without blemish; not our filthiness and sins can we offer; we must be justified freely from all things and be "*holy*" through the cleansing that is in the blood of Christ, if we would be acceptable to God," (Rom. 12:1) and then we may offer ourselves and be acceptable sacrifices.

But note again the inconsistency of their position: they claim that Christ is the example of how to thus die to sin; or, as they call it, sacrifice. Was he? did he put away his sins and offer them to God, if he had none? What inconsistency! what absurdity!

What, then, is our position? We answer: Sins and weaknesses, and the self-denial of things which are *wrong*, (sinful things) and which, therefore, we have no right to, were not at all a part of the sacrifice of our Lord Jesus, nor are they a part of our sacrifice, as his followers and

imitators. His sacrifice consisted in self-denials of rights, privileges, comforts and liberties, in the service of God's plan, and the crowning feature of all, and the end and completion of it all, was the surrender of existence, to which he had a perfect right, because in him was no sin. And so with the body of Christ, the little flock, who now unite in sacrifice and death with him, that they may share also in his glory and in dispensing to the world the blessings which his ransom-sacrifice made possible. They deny themselves lawful pleasures, liberties, etc., in the present life, and in death they lay down an existence to which, through Jesus' ransom, they have a right. They lay down human nature and all its privileges forever, as the Master showed them, and have his assurance of awakening in his likeness, which is the express image of the Father's person – the divine nature.

Thus the adversary seems to grasp and attempt to turn against the truth, every point of truth as it becomes due. Truly it has been said that he transforms himself into an angel of light [truth]. His methods vary but his principles are always the same; and since it is the children of light whom he seeks to stumble and ensnare, he selects the best of them that he can get to be his agents and to forward his cause.

