

THE SPIRIT OF ANTICHRIST.

While the world and its spirit are quite contrary to Christ and the Spirit of Christ, and might therefore without impropriety be termed anti-Christ (*against* Christ), yet this term as used in Scripture is never applied to the world, but *always* to professed Christians who have turned aside from the truth, and who, by becoming advocates of error, are in Christ's name opposing him, his followers, and his doctrines.

We are well aware that many regard it in a contrary light, – considering the term antichrist as belonging to worldly opponents of all who profess Christ in any manner – infidels, heathens, Mohammedans, etc. That this view is incorrect we can prove readily by citing here every text in the Bible containing the word antichrist, and pointing to some statement in the context which unmistakably *fixes* it upon some professing to be Christ's followers. This is an important point, as it overthrows completely a wide-spread belief, and opens our eyes to look for antichrist in a quarter in which many may not have thought to look hitherto. In fact, the prefix *anti*, signifies more than *against*, it contains the double thought of *instead* and *against*.

The word antichrist occurs five times, 1 Jno. 2:18,22; 4:3; 2 Jno. 7. The class meant is easily discerned from the general tenor of John's epistles and from the following pointed statements: "They went out from us, but they were not of us." They are [really] of the world [though professing otherwise], therefore speak they of [or according to the spirit of] the world, and the *world* heareth them." (1 Jno. 2:19; 4:5.) Other scriptures mention and describe the same class, but by different names. Paul in 2 Thes. 2:3, following the same vein of thought as in Rom. 6:6, *personifies* the system of error which he saw would arise, and speaks of it as the "Body of Sin," counterfeiting and opposing the "Body of Christ," naming it here as an organized body, "The man of Sin." He makes no reference to a sinful individual; for there are and

have been in the past, and were in and before Paul's day, horribly depraved creatures of the human race, than whom worse could scarcely be conceived of; and the Apostle was not passing all these by to speak of some individual pre-eminently vile and vicious. No, he sees and tells us of a system of evil and error, the embodiment of evil, the opponent and counterfeit of the Body of Christ, – the antichrist Body. But only those who have learned that the true church is the "Body of Christ" can appreciate how the counterfeit nominal system, the "Man of Sin," is the antichrist. But we refer to this merely to note the fact that the Apostle Paul mentions that this "Man of Sin" system arises in the church, and professes to be in and of the true temple – the Church of the living God (Compare 2 Thes. 2:4 with 1 Cor. 3:16,17; Eph. 2:21.) and not of the world. He declares this to be an *apostasy*, a falling away from the truth.

But it is not our purpose here to discuss antichrist: this we have done heretofore and may again, but now we simply call attention to one point of antichrist's erroneous teaching which is very injurious as a *source* of many other errors. This point of error is particularly pointed out to us by John, the Apostle who specially *represented us* who are alive and remain unto the *parousia* (presence) of our Lord (John 21:22.); and he tells us that it is common to every theory and class claiming to be Christ's followers and soldiers of the cross, who are *really* opponents to and counterfeits of the true body of Christ. Remember that the individuals *in* these great counterfeit systems, and *bound by* their errors, are not all *of them*, and do not all properly belong to them, and hence it is, that by the *truths* now being uncovered and presented to such, as "meat in due season," God is calling *his people* out of those systems to which they do not *really* belong, saying "Babylon is fallen! Come out of her, *my people*."

But what, you inquire, is this one notable point of error upon which all antichrist systems agree, and which blinds many to other truths, and opens the way to errors? Surely, we answer, it is a point long and deeply covered under hoary traditions which are esteemed venerable and sacred. The adversary buried this first and deepest,

realizing the necessity for keeping the truth out of sight and of arousing prejudice against it. This being the case, prepare yourselves to find it a test which you would never have thought of had the Apostle not pointed it out, but which, once clearly seen, proves to-day, to be an oracle in the light of which every system of doctrine may be quickly tried, whether it be of the spirit of truth or of the spirit of error, the spirit of antichrist.

The passage to which we refer is found in 1 John 4:3, which in the oldest and the most correct, the Sinaitic MS. reads thus:

"Every spirit [theory, doctrine] that confesseth not that Jesus the Lord is come in flesh, is not of God: and this is the spirit [theory] of antichrist, whereof you have heard that it cometh; and even now already is it in the world."

Ah! you say, that is not a test, for all Christians and all theories, even the worldly, confess that. Not so, we answer; you do not get the *depth* of the Apostle's statement; your view of his words would make them and him foolish indeed. The world does not confess Jesus to be "Lord;" so that shuts the world out; and as we examine closely we will find few of the professed Christian systems ready to confess that Jesus, our Lord, *came in flesh*. To do so, would contradict their creeds old and new. it is the general view, that the *real man* is not flesh, but a *spirit* being which lives for a while in a body or house of flesh; hence by such the *flesh* is no more recognized as the person, than the garments put on and off. Moreover it is claimed by many, that in our Lord Jesus' case, *he* was really and truly the Father, Jehovah, who thus for a time *appeared in flesh*, but that *he* himself was not flesh; that he appeared to be tried and tempted in all points, but was not really tried at all; that he appeared to suffer and die, but did not actually suffer, nor did he *really die* for our sins, but merely dropped the flesh as a garment remaining really alive as before, for, they say, God is immortal and *cannot die*, and their claim is that in leaving the *glory* which he had with the Father before the world was, he did not *become* flesh or

"come in flesh," but still remained a spirit being and came *into* a flesh body and only appeared *like* men, *like* the seed of Abraham, though all the while really was the almighty immortal Jehovah. They say that it was the **God** Christ Jesus who appeared to or pretended to die for our sins, and contradict the Apostle's statement that it was "the *man* Christ Jesus" who gave himself a ransom, a *corresponding* price [Greek, antilutron] for all. (1 Tim. 2:6.) Yet we see some go to a further extreme and hear them sing –

"Well might the sun in darkness hide
And shut his glories in,
When **God the mighty Maker died**
For man the creature's sin."

But in this poetic slip only a few can recognize the inconsistency. Some even going so far as to deny God's immortality, claim that it required the death of a **God** to atone for the sin of man, not seeing that this is contrary to scripture which demands not a God's life for the life of a man, but a perfect man's life, as a *ransom* or substitute for the forfeited life of the first perfect man – a *corresponding* price.

Still others, anxious apparently to get away from the straightforward, simple doctrine of ransom, figure the dying out of their way by saying that the real, spiritual Christ died *to sin*, and let his flesh body die as an example of how we should do the same. They do not stop to account for the uselessness of such an example, to those who cannot avoid dying.

But all these, with their various shades of difference, stand firmly, shoulder to shoulder, on the one point mentioned by the Apostle – they deny that Jesus the Lord "*came in flesh*" or "*was made flesh*," as the same writer elsewhere states it. (John 1:14.) That his body was flesh and bones cannot be denied directly, hence their claim that the spirit being came *into* the flesh, but was always separate and distinct, and *not flesh*. But this does not fit: the Apostle does not say *into* [Greek *eis*] *flesh*, but "*in* [Greek *en*] *flesh*" and "*was made flesh*" [Greek *sarx*

egeneto – literally, "became flesh."] (Jno. 1:14). So we see that the test of believing that Jesus the Lord came in flesh, i.e. *became* flesh, would draw the line outside of *so called* "Orthodox" doctrines. The theory of Universalists and Unitarians, as generally held, is likewise opposed to Jesus being "*made flesh*," for they generally claim that our Lord had no existence before, and that he was born after the ordinary manner of men: these, then, make no confession which would imply a pre-existence of our Lord in order to be *made* flesh or to *come* in flesh. Swedenborgians, Spiritists, etc., etc., all come in on the same side of the question – all deny that the Lord Jesus was "made flesh," "came in flesh" – *became flesh*.

Next notice that all these are not only without Scriptural sanction for their theories, but are positively and directly contradicted by the Apostles. We need not again quote the many passages in which our Lord and the Apostles declare that the Father and the Son are not the same person, etc., but notice the fact that the death, even the death of the cross, was the death of the real person, and not a pretended death of a body, while the real person or being slipped out alive and watched the proceedings. Every text touching on the subject, in both the **[R981 : page 3]** Old and the New Testaments, treats it in the most positive manner, declaring that our Lord made his soul (his being, himself,) an offering for sin (Isa. 53:10), that he poured out his soul (being, existence) unto death. (Isa. 53:12.) They declare that his soul was in *hades* (the state or condition of death) three days and not left there longer; that he *died*, that he was *dead*, and that on the third day *he* was raised to life by the Father's power. Our Lord himself said that he came into the world to give his *psukee* (being, existence,) a ransom, a price, for all [for the *psukee*, the being, or existence, of all men]. Speaking of what he gave for the life of the world, he represents himself in a parable as giving *all that he had* to purchase the field (the world) with its treasure – all those whom he will bring back into harmony with God, chief and a first fruit, forever pre-eminent, being his Bride.

The Apostle Peter declares that he was our price, that he *redeemed* us, purchased us back out of death. Paul assures us not only that we were "bought with a price," (1 Cor. 6:20,) but in 1 Tim. 2:6, he tells us all about the purchase, saying "There is *one* God [not three] and *one* mediator between God and men, the *man* Christ Jesus." It was something that this *man* did that mediated between the race of sinners and God, something that no one of them could do for another because all were sinners, and as such, each one himself condemned to death. As a spirit being, as our Lord was before being "*made flesh*," he could not have mediated between God and men, because under God's arrangement *a ransom*, a CORRESPONDING *price* for the first sinner who precipitated the trouble, was the only way out of the difficulty. Neither an angel nor an arch-angel could give what he did not possess. They could not give a *human* nature in *exchange* for that which Adam had forfeited, for they had not human, but angelic, spiritual nature. So then, our Lord also a *spirit being*, with the Father in glory and honor before coming into the world, could not give the price of our redemption. In order to be able to give the price he must *become flesh*, must be a *man*: not imperfect and sinful as the fallen race has become, but perfect and sinless as the original of our race was before he sinned. Hence he "came in *flesh*" – "was *made* flesh" – "became flesh," in order, as the Apostle expresses it (1 Cor. 15:21), that "as by *man* came death, by *man* also should come the resurrection of the dead." He became flesh (holy, undefiled) in order to pay the price or penalty against us, – death. The Apostle urges (Phil. 2:7,8) that though the obedience implied in becoming *a man*, in being made flesh, was great, yet the trial was severer still when our Lord found himself man and learned that the divine plan by which he was to prove his entire submission to the Father's will would lead him to death *as* and *for* the sinner – even the ignominious death of the cross. But he was obedient even to the full, and died for us as our ransom: *Wherefore* God hath *highly exalted* him, giving him station, dignity and authority *far above* angels, and far above the glory and honor which he had with the Father before the world was created.

What our Lord gave is clearly stated by Paul; for continuing the above quoted testimony, that "There is *one* God and *one* Mediator, the *man* Christ Jesus," he tells us how he mediated, what he gave for us. He says – "Who gave *himself* a [R981 : page 4] ransom for all." This settles the matter that our Lord was *flesh*, a *human* being, and a perfect one at that, for as usual with Paul he expresses himself in unequivocal terms. He uses the Greek word *antilutron* which signifies *a corresponding price*, where in English we have the word ransom.

Now consider well the import of this, and you will see that it contradicts every antichrist system; for Paul shows that before sin entered the world there was no death, (Rom. 5:12) hence the one (Adam) who first sinned was a *perfect human being*, and if our Lord gave a corresponding price, he must have been a perfect human being *when* he gave himself *for* Adam and all who shared in Adam's sin and penalty.

John recognized the tendency or spirit of antichrist in his day. Though the system had not organized, some were already going out from them because not of them, denying Jesus "*in flesh*," claiming, with the heathen, an impersonation, that the real one was inside the seen one, and preparing themselves by this error to deny their Lord, their Master, the man Christ Jesus who gave himself a ransom for all. To-day, after centuries of triumph over the words of our Lord and of the Apostles, and over reason and common sense, this doctrine or spirit of antichrist known as that of the Trinity, is so firmly entrenched in the hearts of many, that they prefer to *deny* the Master's words – "The Father is greater than I," and the Bible teaching that Christ came in flesh and gave himself a ransom – prefer to deny anything rather than this theory of antichrist, which twists and disjoins every truth of Scripture, so long as it is held.

Note then the test of every spirit or doctrine, the test which will prove whether or not any faith is *well* founded, *surely* founded on the

ROCK, the true and only basis of faith, of which the Apostle declares "Other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, Jesus Christ." This test is given in few words, as we have seen, and can be easily and quickly applied to every doctrine or spirit with which you may come in contact. If it will not stand this God-given test you may be sure it is error and at once set it aside. If it agrees with this test you have *proved* it to be on the right foundation, and you may go on proving all its details. This test, 1 Jno. 4:3, in the oldest and most exact Greek MS., the Sinaitic reads: –

"Every spirit [theory, doctrine,] that confesseth not that Jesus the Lord is come in flesh [become flesh] is not of God: and this is the spirit [theory,] of antichrist, whereof you have heard that it cometh; and even now already is it in the world."

Remember that many *good* people, many of God's children, have been blinded by the errors and sophistries of Satan, and while not *anti* or opposed to Christ at heart, have been beguiled by the great deceiver's falsities, promulgated even in the Apostle's days and fully headed up and brought to a climax in Papacy and only partially gotten rid of by the Reformation. Now, in the "harvest" of this age, God causes the light to shine more clearly, for the reason that he is making the truth his "*sickle*" by which he will separate wheat from tares completely and finally. Therefore, put on the whole armor of God, that you may be *able* to stand – that you be not among the thousands to fall in this time of trial. – Psa. 91:7,11,12.

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"BE CONSTANT in what is good, but beware of being obstinate in anything evil; constancy is a virtue, but obstinacy is a sin."

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