

VIEW FROM THE TOWER.

THE RANSOM STILL THE TEST. – MORE ARE FALLING AND YET MANY MORE TO FALL IN THIS "EVIL DAY." – DR. LYMAN ABBOTT'S REJECTION OF THE TRUE GOSPEL. – DR. EDWARD ABBOTT'S DEFENSE OF THE TRUTH. – THE PRESBYTERIAN BANNER'S FAITHFULNESS. – THE LESSONS OF THE HOUR. – THE QUESTION CANNOT BE AVOIDED. – WHO IS ON THE LORD'S SIDE?

For the past eleven years, faithfulness to the Lord and his Word and the welfare of his sheep has necessitated an almost constant contention for the ransom, as the very center and foundation principle of true Christian doctrine.

During this time we have seen and faithfully proclaimed that it is upon this point of doctrine that the great test of the close of this age is to come. It is written, "He shall be for a stone of stumbling and for a rock of offence to both the [nominal] houses of Israel." (Isa. 8:14.) To the Jews, Christ crucified for our redemption was, as Paul testifies, a cause of offence – "They stumbled at that stumbling-stone." (Rom. 9:32,33.) And so also the nominal spiritual Israel is likewise stumbling. Every year, we might almost say every day, gives increasing evidence of this stumbling. Any one whose attention has been drawn to this subject of the present falling away of Christian people from the true foundation of Christianity must observe that, one after another, ministers and religious journals of all denominations and shades of belief are abandoning this foundation. They claim that the death of Christ was either for himself, or as an exemplification of fidelity to principle which would benefit his disciples and the world, not as a *sacrifice for their sins*, but as an example of how

each must *save himself* – salvation by works, observe, and not by faith in the precious blood of Christ shed for our redemption.

Thank God for the privilege of being traduced and misrepresented by the world and by "false brethren" for the sake of this cause. All have our witness on the subject. We are not surprised at the sweeping strides the error is making. The Scriptures indicate, too, that the great stumbling and falling away from this all-important doctrine is only beginning. Before the sifting ends a thousand will fall to one who will stand. (Psa. 91:7; Eph. 6:11-13.) Christian people generally hold the doctrine of the ransom, but only in a blind way. They have no clear, definite views as to how or what it was. They are all, therefore, very susceptible to this latter-day snare of the Adversary.

As an evidence of the spread of this false doctrine, which, as another gospel, seeks to displace the true, we cite the case of Dr. Lyman Abbott, from whose gifted pen we have heretofore made quotations. It seems that he, too, has denied the faith. The new views are known as the "*New Theology*," while ours is the Apostolic, or Old Theology.

We clip the following from the *Presbyterian Banner*, and must compliment its editor upon his courage as a champion of the now waning cause of the *cross* of Christ, which is yet to the "orthodox" a stumbling-block, and to the worldly-wise foolishness. The *Banner* article runs as follows: –

SETTING ASIDE THE SACRIFICE OF CHRIST.

"Dr. Lyman Abbott, successor of the late Rev. Henry Ward Beecher in the pastorate of Plymouth church, Brooklyn, and editor of the *Christian Union*, has for a time been somewhat noted, as a commentator, preacher and editor, for announcing sentiments and doctrines contrary to what are generally held by orthodox evangelical Christians. His most noted departure

appeared in an article in the *Andover Review*, last November, which has been the occasion of a fraternal correspondence between him and his brother, Dr. Edward Abbott, published in the *Christian Union*, July 3d. The article in the *Andover Review* was an effort to set forth that the historic interpretation by the Church that the sacrifice of Christ was an atonement for the sins of his people has been an entire mistake; that we are to be saved, not by what Christ did or suffered eighteen hundred years ago, but by the nature of God transmitted to us and entering into us through Christ; and that the main object of Christ's sacrifice is to keep us from committing sin now, not to save us from the guilt and punishment of sin.

"In his correspondence with his brother, in defense of his position, he says: 'The New Testament does not seem to me to afford ground for the opinion that Christ died either to induce God to pardon, or to enable him to pardon.' 'The question is, How can the suffering of the innocent one avail, not to purchase a pardon for the guilty, but to purify and perfect him?' This is simply to set aside the expiatory character of the sufferings and death of the Lord Jesus Christ, and to deny the plain teachings of the Word of God with respect to it. He appears to go even so far as to admit that parts of the Scriptures must be blotted out in order to meet the view he has presented. And he does not shrink from advising this. For he says that his interpretation of the sacrifice of Christ makes it necessary 'to erase a great deal from the New Testament,' and to 'blot out a great deal from the consciousness of the Christian Church,' and he is confident that this should be done. Surely the wildest latitudinarianism could ask nothing more. This robs the Gospel at once of that which the prophets, the apostles and the saints of all ages have most undoubtedly believed, upon which they have most firmly rested, and which Christ himself most certainly taught.

"The reply of Dr. Edward Abbott is conclusive. He calls attention to the fact that Christ said that he laid down his life for his sheep; that Paul and Peter and John had clearly taught the doctrine of the expiation of sin by the death of Christ; and that it has been the belief of the Church from the beginning, 'that in some way an atonement, an expiatory atonement, a vicarious atonement, was operative,' whatever may have been the difference as to its philosophy. He asks these and other equally pertinent questions:

"Is, or is not, this plainly the doctrine of Scripture, whatever may be our own opinion about it?' 'Has not the substance of this truth been the very fiber of the Church universal?' 'Can it be possible, if there be a holy Spirit, that the Church should have been so deceived and deceiving?' 'Is it safe to erase as much from the New Testament as it is necessary to erase, and to blot out as much from the consciousness of the Christian Church as it is necessary to blot out, before your theory of the blood of Christ can be accepted?'

"The teachings of the Old and New Testaments, in many forms, that Christ gave himself a sacrifice to save us from the guilt and penalty of sin, are the most precious words God has spoken to us. If Christ did not die for us, then are we indeed without God and without hope in the world. No present obedience and righteousness, even if they were possible, as taught by Dr. Lyman Abbott, could by any means remove the sin that previously had separated us from God and brought us under condemnation. Christ 'hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows;' 'was wounded for our transgressions, bruised for our iniquities;' 'was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification;' and 'being justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath [R1256 : page 1] through him.' 'There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ

Jesus.' Dr. Lyman Abbott's gospel is 'another gospel, which is not another,' but is a perversion of the Gospel."

Let no one suppose that we take pleasure in the announcement of the falling from the faith of Dr. Abbott, or any other man. On the contrary, it is a source of painful disappointment to us, that such a one should be lost to the cause of the cross, and become an opponent of the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world. Nor would the exercise of that loving sympathy which would hide his fall from public notice be proper; for he is more than a brother fallen from grace – he is a teacher exercising an influence which will affect others and cause them to stumble, also. Our *love* must be exercised first toward God, in fidelity to his Word, and second, toward those still in harmony with God and his truth, to guard them against the erroneous view. Let God be true, though it show every man to be in error. Let God's character and plan be upheld, no matter who must be shown up as proclaimers of another gospel. This is what is signified by the injunction to "contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints."

We are the more disappointed in Dr. Abbott because his influence heretofore has been growingly in harmony with the Truth. And yet, while we can no longer recognize him as a brother in Christ, because he has abandoned the only foundation upon which Christian brotherhood can stand, we can and do recognize his honest, manly statement of his position, and honor him for it. He is too candid to attempt to quibble and to deny the true and only meaning of the words (*ransom*, etc.) of our Lord and the apostles, and to continue the use of the word *ransom* as a blind, merely to deceive people and seek to be in favor with all classes. He comes out honestly and plainly and admits that his theory requires him "to *erase* a great deal from the New Testament."

Because few are so candid as Mr. Abbott, the Truth has the severer battle, and the deception is the greater. During the past ten years, in discussing this subject and combating the error as the snare of the enemy, we have had the underhanded ones to oppose, who use the words *ransom* and *redeem*, and yet deny their true and only meaning, in order to deceive some of the sheep. In Mark 10:45 and Matt. 20:28 the Greek term rendered *ransom* is *lutron anti* (a price to offset or to correspond), and in 1 Tim. 2:6 it is the same expression reversed, *anti-lutron* (a corresponding price).

Those who deny that our Lord Jesus gave himself a *ransom* (a corresponding price, a substitute) for all deny the gospel of Christ and the apostles, whatever else they may believe. And the clearer it is presented, and the sooner they realize it, the better for such as are being *blindly* led into the error. The sooner the line of division is clearly drawn, the better it will be for the Lord's sheep. It is a good sign, however, of the real loyalty of the deceived ones, that the false shepherds are obliged to use words (ransom, redeem, etc.) which do not represent their views, in order to deceive and to hold the sheep.

We need not expect that such will confess that they are deniers of the ransom any more than we need expect a staunch Romanist to admit that the Papal system is Antichrist. By their doctrines, and not by their professions, both show their real position.

It is time, dearly beloved, that each for himself shall definitely settle this one question which lies at the *foundation* of Christian faith: Do you accept the Bible teaching that the death of "the man Christ Jesus" was our *ransom*, or *corresponding price*, by which a "propitiation" (satisfaction) of the divine law was effected (1 John 2:2; 4:10; 1 Tim. 2:5,6), or do you not believe it? Be honest **[R1256 : page 2]** with yourself and with

others. Be not ashamed of your honest convictions. If honestly in doubt as to God's teaching on the subject and meekly desirous of being shown the path of life, you are of the sort he is ready and willing to lead into the truth. Such may truly and confidently look to God and say, "Thou wilt show me the path of life," remembering the promises, "The *meek* will he guide in judgment, and the *meek* will he teach his way." (Psa. 16:11; 25:9.) "All the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth unto such as keep his covenant and his testimonies." – Psa. 25:10.

It will not answer to say, Yes, of course I believe in Christ as the ransom – and yet indifferently neglect to give consideration and weight to the meaning of the word *ransom*. You do not *believe*, in the true sense, anything of which you are wholly ignorant. We exhort all, therefore, to awake to the importance of the subject, so as to study this foundation doctrine of true Christianity.

To acknowledge the Scripture teaching, that the death of the *man* Christ Jesus was the *corresponding price* which sufficed to meet and to cancel the first Adam's sin and penalty, is to acknowledge the following clear line of reasoning from the Scriptures: –

(1) When the beloved Son of God left the glory which he had with the Father before the world was, to become our Savior, he was "made *flesh*," became "a *man*," "a little lower than the angels," for the very purpose of tasting death *for* every man, as the ransom or *corresponding* price for the first *man* through whom the loss and condemnation had come. (Heb. 2:9.) Since he was the corresponding price, it proves that the man Christ Jesus corresponded exactly with the first man.

(2) It proves then, that the first man was all that God declares that he made him – a *man*, an earthly being in the image and likeness of his Creator. – Gen. 1:27.

(3) It proves that a *fall* occurred, from that perfect manhood, into sin and death, as witnessed by the degradation and dying under which the world in general is groaning and travailing today, longing for deliverance. This is also witnessed by the grand superiority of "the *man* Christ Jesus who gave himself a ransom" or *corresponding* price; for as he (aside from the special divine power imparted to him at his baptism) *corresponded* to Adam, it shows how greatly Adam's race has fallen from that real human perfection.

(4) It shows distinctly what is implied in the promise of a restitution or restoration to that which was *lost* in Adam and redeemed for all in the ransom-sacrifice given by "the man Christ Jesus." – Acts 3:21; Matt. 18:11; 1 Tim. 2:5,6.

(5) It distinguishes clearly between *restitution to the world* of the lost earthly possessions and those human perfections which the first Adam possessed but lost by sin, and which the Lord took for a time *for the purpose* of giving himself as man's ransom (Heb. 10:4-10), and *the high calling of the Gospel Church* to the divine nature, to which our Lord was exalted at his resurrection, because of his obedience to the Father's plan for our redemption.

(6) It shows, too, how the Gospel Church, the Bride of Christ, though belonging to the condemned race and requiring and receiving a share in the *ransom*, has been invited to share with the Redeemer in sacrifices which shall fully test her love and devotion and fitness, under God's conditions, to share her Lord's nature and glory; and how she can do no *needful* work, such as her Lord's, in the way of *ransoming* others, since his work was the full, complete ransom for the one man in whom all had been sentenced, and hence was, as stated, a "ransom for all."

(7) It shows at once the error of the opposing claim of "another gospel," which affirms that our Lord Jesus never gave

himself as a *corresponding* price (a ransom) for all; that death is not a penalty to be ransomed from, but a *step of progress* in a plan of evolution, by which the divine nature is to be attained by all; that the fall of man is myth – that "if he fell at all he fell upward;" that man never was perfected as man, but that he began to exist in a very crude and imperfect state; that he never had God's image, and could not, therefore, have *lost* that or any other good quality, nor in any sense have lost himself, and hence needed no corresponding price, no saving from a lost estate, no redemption from a fall, no restitution to an original perfection and image of God.

The ransom may thus be seen to be the very center of the Word and plan of God, and the most thorough *test* that can be applied to any theory, to prove at once whether it is of God or of men. Whatever is found out of harmony with this foundation principle of the Gospel, preached by Jesus and the Apostles, should be let severely alone. To tamper with that which you perceive to be off the only foundation for faith, laid in God's Word, is dangerous. To allow either yourself or others for you to devise and arrange *another* plan of salvation than that which God reveals, is to trust to your own or their blind reasonings and to abandon the lines and points which God has marked for our guidance in his revelation. You cannot trust your own reasoning faculties or those of others outside those lines and points which God has furnished. To go outside them is to get lost in a mental maze in which all is speculation and uncertainty, because outside of the fixed lines provided for our restraint by our loving Creator.

The Lord's invitation, "Come, let us reason together," implies that we are to reason *with* Him, inside these lines which he has erected for our preservation from error, and not that we should abandon his Word to reason for ourselves. And the subject upon which we reason and the lines which must limit our reasonings are indicated in the words which follow the invitation

to reason – "Though your sins be as scarlet they shall be white as wool." Here is an acknowledgement of *sin*, and of a fall, and of a just condemnation. It is also an admission that the sins are scarlet – [R1257 : page 2] of a deep dyed and fast color – that we cannot wash them away ourselves, and that God proposes to cleanse them away for us through the blood of the Lamb slain for our redemption.

The difficulty with Eve was just this which is now to test the Church, the second Eve. (2 Cor. 11:3.) Eve knew the lines which God had placed, she knew the liberty which the gracious Creator had bestowed, and she knew the limit of that liberty – that she must not partake of the forbidden tree; but she chafed under any restriction. The restrictions would probably have been removed in time, but Eve was not submissive to the Lord's plan, and lent an ear to the suggestion of the tempter that she should assert and use her liberty, and not recognize God's superior wisdom and yield willing obedience. As she forsook all the other trees of the garden, so beautiful and so good, to partake of the forbidden one, so now the Church is tempted to forsake all the exceeding great and precious and harmonious truths of God's Word, our garden of delights, and to seek other wisdom which will as surely carry them away from the true gospel as Eve's disobedience led out of Eden.

If our first parents, with perfect reasoning faculties, needed the Lord's direction, because of their inexperience, how much more necessary it is for us, who not only lack experience, but also lack perfection of mental capacity and balance, to stay close to the Word of the Lord and carefully avoid even an attempt to reason *outside* of its defined lines, or in opposition to its clearly expressed doctrine on this subject of the ransom, which, like a finger-board, distinguishes the way the Lord planned and directs from all other ways.

WHO IS ON THE LORD'S SIDE?

A passive interest in this question is not sufficient: an active interest is what the importance of the question, fidelity to God's Word and interest in the saints in the trial now in progress demands. This is no time to shirk the question or half-heartedly to watch the battle between truth and error, content to know that you yourself see the truth clearly and favor it in your heart. This is no time to fear to own the cross, lest its growing unpopularity should rupture some earthly ties and bring you the disapprobation of those you have loved and esteemed. It is a time, on the contrary, to be esteemed and used as a precious occasion for showing our dear Redeemer our loyalty to him and his Word, and our willingness, if need be, to break every tender tie, except that which binds us to him. The present is such an emergency as develops strength and courage in the true soldier of the cross, who appreciates the opportunity of enduring scoffs and misrepresentations for Christ's sake.

In the history of the nation of Israel, which typified the Church of Christ, we find that when a battle raged between Israel and those who typified errorists now, those who "went not up to the help of the Lord against the mighty" were cursed or condemned instead of praised and blessed after the victory had been won (Judges 5:23), even though they took no active part in opposition to God's cause. So in the present conflict: those who fail to lift up heart and pen and voice and every talent possessed, on the Lord's side of the question, will not be reckoned among the overcomers who get the victory under the Lord's direction.

Awake! Put on the whole armor of God and follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. – Rev. 14:4. **[R1257 : page 2]**

TRUTH IS STRANGER THAN FICTION.

This old proverb seems to find illustration in the subject before us. To those who disregard the Bible account of man's origin and destiny, the Bible doctrine of a fall from an original perfection seems less in harmony with existing conditions in comparison with the past than does the theory of evolution, or gradual progression from a very low beginning.

One cause of this seeming discount of truth, to some minds, lies in the fact that though man has been gradually deteriorating from the original perfection, his surrounding conditions have been gradually improving, the gain of experience compensating to some extent for the loss of native ability. Besides, we should remember that we are considering and comparing the achievements of a comparatively few men in earlier times with those of today, which are the results of the combined experiences of millions of men based upon the record of the experiences and experiments of many more millions now dead, all working together in the same general cause – to overcome surrounding obstacles and disadvantages. Thus considered, we see that it is only reasonable to expect what we do find, that circumstances are so much more favorable to-day, that men of small capacity and greatly fallen from the original image of God can, under present advantageous circumstances, accomplish much more than Adam, who had that image, or than any of his more immediate posterity. To contrast properly the individual *ability* of to-day with that of the remote past, imagine yourself and wife wrecked upon a desert island, out of reach and out of hope of reaching or communicating with others; imagine every article of commerce lost, and your memory of the past, of your own experiences and reading, etc., all blotted out; and then think how long it would probably take you and your wife and children to formulate language, to establish the arts and sciences and to invent telegraphs, railroads and all the machinery of the present day. The strong probabilities

are that, instead of thus rising, you would gradually become more and more degraded, and instead of handing down such a race as Adam's your children within two hundred years would be savages. Had God started our race in such a pair, the earth never would have had the civilization of to-day – aside from some direct interposition of providence. And this brings us to –

A SECOND REASON

why the truth – the Bible declaration of a fall – seems to the worldly mind stranger, or less credible, than the fiction of evolution, or gradual progression. It is because the fall of Adam's posterity was so rapid that the world speedily became degraded to semi-barbarism, except that family (Seth, Enoch, Methuselah, Noah and Shem) which alone continued to have any particular degree of divine likeness, and which sought to retain God and his will in their hearts. After the flood the same degeneracy continued among Noah's posterity – except in the one line of Abraham's family (Israel, God's covenant people); and even in this family the tendency to forget God and to follow witchcraft, idolatry, etc., like the nations around them, was continual, and was only prevented in a measure by the Lord's bringing upon them famines, pestilences, etc., according to the provisions of their covenant, to turn them back from the tendencies of their fallen natures.

The effect of the Lord's restraints upon that nation, Israel, are manifest from the fact that in the zenith of their national existence, in the days of David and Solomon, they excelled all other nations. That people shed a *light*, and by example arrested to a large degree the downward tendency in the surrounding nations. They set them an example in literature, in the Psalms of David and the Proverbs of Solomon, which the poets and wise men of other nations afterward copied but very imperfectly. From the promises made by the Lord to Israel through the prophets, of

future blessings, in which peace and plenty and beauty for ashes should fill the earth, sprang the songs and legends among other nations of a coming golden age, which helped to lift their minds from sensuality. And from a promise that this blessing should come through a great deliverer, Messiah, we can trace the ambition of a Cyrus, an Alexander, the Caesars and others to acquire universal dominion, fulfil the prophecy and organize the strong government promised. **[R1257 : page 7]**

Thus to the light of God's people, and of God's promises to them, is attributable the fact that all the adjacent nations were superior to those farther away from that influence, who were at that time in barbarism and savagery.

And so, too, since the Gospel began, the light of God's promises and the teachings and example of our Lord and his apostles have exerted an influence in favor of purity, enlightenment and freedom, notwithstanding the gross counterfeit (Papacy) which sprang up and usurped the name and influence of the true Church, endeavoring to throttle freedom, and substituting for it superstition, almost choking the light of truth under forms and ceremonies.

Meanwhile God permitted Antichrist to hinder the influence of the doctrines and example of the true Christ and his true followers, and to becloud the true light for a time, ushering in "the dark ages" from which the reformation movements of the past three centuries have only in part released men. This view of the matter, and no other, is in harmony with the Apostle Paul's explanation of how the Gentile nations came to be so degraded as we find them in various quarters of the heathen world. He says it is "Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful, but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise they became fools.... Wherefore God gave

them up....And [R1258 : page 7] even as they did not care to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind to do those things which are improper; being filled with all unrighteousness, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, etc." (Rom. 1:21,22,25,28-31.) Thus the Apostle sums up the degradation from the image of God, which more or less we see all about us in civilized as well as in heathen lands. And this brings us to – **[R1258 : page 8]**

THE THIRD REASON WHY

the error seems better supported than the truth by existing facts. It is because recent discoveries and inventions cast so brilliant a light upon our day that all the centuries past seem grossly dark in comparison. Yet many forget that there are lost arts, such as the making of elastic glass, the tempering of copper, the making of Damascus steel, etc., which have not yet been re-discovered, with present light. And let us not forget that with all the scientific instruments and mechanical skill known to-day, it would be a monster undertaking to construct such a building as the Great Pyramid of Egypt. The bringing of its immense stones long distances would tax the ingenuity of the skilled engineers of our day, and the placing of such immense stones in such a building would be considered a marvelous feat with all of our present day's powerful machinery. The exactness of the fitting of such immense stones probably could not be equaled by our best stone-cutters of to-day with every help of modern instruments; and the exactness of the orientation of the building could with difficulty be equaled to-day by our learned astronomers with their exact and delicate instruments. And remember that this is only with present skill and machinery, and that fifty years ago, with all the skill known, that Pyramid could not have been duplicated; and it is doubtful if it could be to-day. So, too, with the immense

stones of Solomon's aqueduct at Jerusalem, recently unearthed: though they represent the masonry and genius of twenty-five centuries ago, their trueness and size and durability excite the wonder of modern architects and masons, who doubt if we have to-day machinery capable of handling stones so immense. Then tell us not of the inferiority of the ancients who could do and did do, without the machinery, etc., of our late day, what we can only now do with it all.

The solution of the riddle that is puzzling men to-day – why our day has produced so much more of invention and discovery than the past – is found only in the Bible. It announced the present period of invention over two thousand years ago. (Dan. 12:4.) It pointed out, that far in advance, that with the year A.D. 1799 "The Time of the End" would begin, and that the present "Time of the End" would be the "Day of God's Preparation" (Nahum 2:3) for the incoming Millennium of blessing. It is, therefore, to the fact that God is now lifting the veil of ignorance and letting in the light, which is of him, and not by human evolution, that present progress is attributable. Those who hold to God's version of the fall and the ransom and the restitution may be laughed to scorn now by the worldly-wise and heady, but they will be kept by the power of God – by the power of his truth – from many injurious errors which will stumble thousands on every hand. Abide in him, and let his Word abide in you.
