

A CRITICISM.

The following, from Bro. R. Wakefield, was written to assist a weaker brother caught in the meshes of no-ransom sophistry, and stumbling into one of the worst forms of infidelity. Bro. W. sent a copy of the same to us also, which we publish for the benefit of any who may be caught in the same snare of the adversary.

DEAR BROTHER J.: – I have read carefully and critically, as you requested, Mr. Adams' book, in which, under a pretense of harmonizing the Bible, he labors to undermine and overthrow its entire teachings. Before I mention some of the conclusions at which I have arrived relative to your author's teachings, I may say that I have found in the book so many departures from the truth, that to give an answer to every point would be nothing less than to write an answer to the entire volume. I shall study brevity, however, and try not to impose too much upon your patience. In answering this writer's doctrine, you will observe, too, that the same will apply to several other no-ransom theories which differ from this only in a few minor points.

Let me begin, then, with almost the last pages [R1297 : page 57] of the book. On page 322 your author says, "Man is not yet created: but is in the creative process." On page 202, "Man is yet in the grub condition (the *grub*, as contrasted with the *butterfly*) – a mere tadpole, unfinished, crude, in the rough." On page 97, "Adam at his creation was in this unfinished condition. He was *not* created in God's image!"

Now what saith the Scriptures? Gen. 1:26: "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: – And God created man in his own image: in the image of God created he him: male and female created he them. And God blessed them." This is repeated twice in Genesis. In 5:1: "In the day that God created

man, *in the likeness of God* made he him." And 9:6: "In the image of God made he man." In the New Testament the same fact is re-affirmed. In 1 Cor. 11:7: "For man is the image and glory of God;" and James 3:9: "Men are made after the similitude of God." To argue against such unqualified statements of fact, and to try to make them mean something else, is, in my estimation, a wresting of the Scripture. When you read "And God blessed them," you might as well say God did *not* bless them, as to say, as your author so complacently does, that Adam was not created in God's image.

On page 100 "the creative process" is more particularly stated. "God's creative work only began in Eden: redemption, resurrection, judgment, probation, are simply steps and stages in the same creative process: and man, as yet, is only passing through one stage of his creation" (page 202). The first stage of the creative process is to be followed by the second, or finishing stage; the first is the animal, the second is the spiritual. And in the *finishing* stage the entire race is to be elevated to the glorious spiritual condition of our Lord Jesus, who is "the *restored*, perfected man" (pages 158, 165). They are to come forth from their graves unto the *beginning* of the spiritual stage of creation, and when they shall have passed through their probation, when the thousand years are finished, then they will have reached the same spiritual life as the elect: having attained to the possession of the divine nature they will live in the true sense, "the life that is life indeed" (pages 163, 275, 276). "Thus will be accomplished God's original purpose, to create a race of intelligent beings in his own image, divine, Godlike, as himself" (page 101).

A single text of Scripture will show the utter fallacy of this fanciful theory. Jesus is retained in the heavens until the times of "the *restitution* of all things spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began." (Acts 3:21.) If God set out at the beginning to create such a "divine, Godlike race," and if he *finishes* his work, as your author describes, wherein comes

the *restitution* or *restoration*? According to his plan, Jesus, at his resurrection, was not in any sense a "*restored*" man – he was "*finished*" according to the original design; and so, too, if God bestows upon "every member of the human race" the divine nature, which they never had, and so had never lost, to call that restitution, or restoration, is simple nonsense. The idea of a "new creation" is likewise excluded, since the consummation of the work is but the *finishing up* of "the creative process."

Thus in these, as in many other places, your author convicts himself of falsehood, according to his own rule. He says (page 41), "Truth out of place becomes falsehood: instead of upbuilding it is misleading." On page 116 it is admitted that "most of the epistles are directed to the elect, who are chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world." And yet in numerous [R1298 : page 57] instances, language thus addressed to the elect he applies to the entire race. Thus on page 101 Paul's declaration: "As we have borne the image of the earthy, so shall we bear the image of the heavenly" (1 Cor. 15:49); and "Ye are God's workmanship" (Eph. 2:10); "Ye are God's husbandry" (farm, margin); and "Ye are God's building" (1 Cor. 3:9), are all made to apply to "God's work in the creation of a race like himself." On page 164 also, the text 1 Cor. 1:30, "But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption," is made to apply to "every member of the race." On page 239 he says: "Bear in mind that it is God who is creating the race in his own image and likeness – man's probation is a part of the creative process; and for its accomplishment [R1298 : page 58] God's own honor and credit are at stake." And he quotes, "Being confident of this one thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you, will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ." (Phil. 1:6.) What greater perversion of language could there be than this of applying to the race the divine assurances of interest in, of care for, and of faithfulness toward, "them that are sanctified in Christ

Jesus," "called saints," "whose hope is laid up in heaven?" And these are but samples of many misstatements of the truth.

Another example of your author's crookedness is found in his treatment of the statements that "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself;" and, "As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive:" insisting that nothing less can be meant than the ultimate exaltation of *every member of the human race* to that glory and immortality to which Christ has attained, and to which he has called his saints, "the elect:" and then, on page 307, admitting that there will be some "who shall *not* inherit the kingdom of God," and who "shall *not* obtain the high-calling." And here he makes reference to Phil. 3:18,19, where the Apostle says, "Many walk (according to the flesh) who are enemies of the cross of Christ, whose *end* is destruction." Of the same class of evil workers the same Apostle says (Rom. 6:21,23), "the *end* of those things is death." "For the wages of sin is *death*, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." And it is positively certain that this death is not the death of *the sin* in the sinner, so that he may be transformed into a saint, but it is the death of "*the enemies* of the cross of Christ." In this connection your author, arguing against the popular doctrine of eternal torment, says very truly that the Scriptures never use any such terms as "*eternal* death," or "*endless* punishment." But why does he use those very terms in laboring to establish his own theories? Commenting on Psa. 9:17, he says, "What is there in Scripture, take it how you will, to prove that future punishment *is endless?*"

What is there indeed! Had he been willing to put that test fairly before his readers, I imagine he would have found in it a death-blow to his fanciful interpretations, and his theories of the ultimate salvation of every individual member of the human race. "The wicked shall be *turned* into hell." The word, literally rendered, is "*turned back*," "returned." Turn to Gen. 3:19 and read, "Till thou *return* unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken; for dust

thou art, and unto dust shalt thou *return*." And to Psa. 90:3,13: "Thou turnest man to destruction; and sayest, *Return*, ye children of men." "*Return*, O Lord, how long?" etc. Now if Psa. 9:17 affirms that the wicked shall be "turned back," or "returned," into *sheol*, several things are self-evident: First, to be in *sheol* is to be in a condition of "destruction;" second, in order to be *returned*, those who are in *sheol* must first be brought out: this will be the coming forth of "all that are in the graves," when *hades* or *sheol* "shall give up the dead which are in it." If then, after being thus brought forth, the wicked shall be "turned back" into "destruction," since there will be "no more a sacrifice for sin" (Heb. 10:26), it would certainly seem that their punishment is final, and beyond the hope or possibility of reversal.

A similar line of thought is suggested in connection with your author's treatment of Matt. 25:46. We can readily admit that the passage gives no support to the hideous dogma of endless torment, against which he makes such a vigorous fight; but the question remains, What is the true teaching of our Lord in this place? Is it, as your author says, that the punishment indicates a course of "correction, discipline, improvement," so that the "goats" shall be ultimately turned into "sheep," or is it *something else*? Turn to verse 41 and read, "Depart, ye cursed, into the *aionion* fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." If the "end" of the devil is that he shall be "destroyed" (which your author admits on page 233), why should his "angels," "messengers," "servants," fare any better? If the Lord intended to teach that the fire should ultimately prove a *blessing* to those servants of the wicked one, is it not most singular that he should send them into it under a *curse*? In verse 46, the "*aionion* fire" of verse 41 is defined as signifying "*aionion* punishment." Now, what is the punishment? The [R1298 : page 59] word is "*kolasin*," and signifies primarily "to cut off," as "lopping off branches of trees, to prune." These, the goats, "shall go away into *kolasin aionion* [the *cutting off enduring*]; but the righteous into *zoen aionion* [the *life enduring*].

Now if the life of that age, or of the ages, is to be an endless life, by the same rule, and of necessity, the *cutting off* from that life, which is the punishment, must also be endless, perpetual.

And here your author makes a fatal mistake. He applies to these wicked ones, whom the Judge cuts off from life, the idea of pruning for their good, and ultimate blessing. Let the Lord explain and defend himself. Turn to the 15th of John and read: "Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he *taketh away*; and every branch that beareth fruit, he *purgeth it*, that it may bring forth more fruit." Here then is the whole truth. The branches that are "taken away" are "*cut off, removed.*" The word carries with it the sense of "to destroy, to kill;" but the *fruit-bearing* branches are "pruned, purged," that they may be yet more fruitful. Thus, according to his own rule, by putting "truth out of place," your author makes himself a teacher of "falsehood."

But glaring as is this perversion of the truth, your author is still more deeply involved in his treatment of Jesus as the Savior of the world. The "precious blood," of which the Apostles all make so much account, has no place in his plan of salvation. On page 137 we read, "The death of Christ on the cross, without the gate, was the fulfilment of that part of the type of the sin-offering that pertained to the disposal of the dead body without the camp, after it had been slain and its blood poured out to make an atonement." "Thus does it appear that the sacrificial death of Christ was *not* his death on the cross, but previous to that, since his death on the cross was the antitype of the disposal of the *already dead* carcass of the sin-offering;" for Christ, he claims, "was in a condition of death while here in the flesh." On pages 132 and 133 it is set forth that the sacrificial death of Christ was the death that he suffered when "he laid down" his "pre-existent life" in order to be made in the likeness of sinful flesh. And this erroneous doctrine concerning the sacrifice of Christ is based on a manifest perversion of two texts of Scripture. (John 10:17,18, and 2 Cor. 8:9.) Your author claims

that the correct rendering of John 10:17,18 is, "I *laid* down my life; no man *took* it from me, but I *laid* it down of myself:" making the laying down of his life an act *already in the past*, and applying this to his pre-existent life. The verb *taketh* in verse 18 he declares, should be *took*, as in the margin of the revised version: putting it in the past tense.

Now to discover the fallacy of all this, it is only necessary to read the Scriptures. In verse 11: "The good shepherd *giveth* (literally, *lays down*) his life for the sheep:" is *giveth* in the past tense? In verse 17: "I *lay* down my life:" is *lay* in the past tense? The word is not *laid*, but *lay*, and it is correctly rendered. The word *taketh* also, in verse 18, is correctly rendered. In the Diaglott the text reads, "No man *takes* it from me, but I lay it down of myself." This is an entirely different thing from saying, as your author does, "I have *already laid it down*" (page 180). The Lord was speaking of something he was about to do, not what he had already done. The word *giveth* in verse 11 is "*lays down*" in the Diaglott; it is also "*lays down*" in the Variorum Testament; and Young gives the meaning, "to put, set, place."

In perfect harmony with this is the Lord's saying in Matt. 20:28: "The Son of man came *to give* his life a ransom for many." O, says your author, that was his pre-existent life, that he had already laid down! Was it? You will please notice that the Son of God *did* NOT *die* in order to come here in the likeness of sinful flesh. He said to the Jews, pointing back into the past, "Before Abraham was, *I am*." The Father sanctified the Son, and sent him into the world, and he did *not die on the way*. He was alive before he came, and he was alive when he came: there was no death, nor cause of death in him! He was not a dead carcass, as your author says, page 137, but he was the living representative of the living Father who had sent him. (John 5:26; 14:9.) And even if he had laid down his pre-existent life, it would have been worthless in the way of making atonement. Was there any blood-shedding in

connection with the laying down of that pre-existent life (supposing that [R1298 : page 60] he did lay it down)? Certainly not; it was a bloodless offering; and "it is *the blood* that makes atonement" (Lev. 17:11); and "without shedding of blood there is no remission." (Heb. 9:22.) Redemption is "through the blood." (Eph. 1:7; Col. 1:14; 1 Pet. 1:18,19.) It is "the blood that cleanseth from sin." (1 John 1:7; Heb. 9:14; Rev. 1:5.) It is "the blood of the cross" that makes peace. (Col. 1:20.) [R1299 : page 60] "By the blood we have access to the Father." (Heb. 10:19; Eph. 2:3.) "The Church of God he hath purchased *with the blood* of his own Son." – Acts 20:28.

So it was by his death on the cross, in the shedding of his precious blood, that Christ made atonement for the sins of the world, and through it men obtain forgiveness and salvation.

In 2 Cor. 8:9 your author thinks he finds proof of *the sacrifice* of Christ's pre-existent life. But the unanswerable disproof of such a notion is found in the careful reading of the Diaglott rendering of the 8th and 9th chapters. The idea of *sacrifice* is not even hinted at, much less is there any allusion to Christ's pre-existent *life*. The Apostle was making an appeal to the Corinthian brethren for liberality in their contributions to the fund which the churches were making up for "the supplying of the wants of the saints" (9:12); and to strengthen his appeal he reminds them of the favor which the Lord Jesus manifested toward them, in that, "though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich." Evidently he hoped by this reference to the gracious act of our Lord to excite them to generosity in helping on the benevolent work in which he was engaged. Thus once more, by putting "truth out of place," your author convicts himself of "falsehood."

Your author's rejection of the ransom by the blood of the cross is certainly of vital consequence. On page 139 he says, "The real

sacrifice and death of Christ was when he gave up the glory which he had with the Father before the world was, and entered the condition of fallen man." And, page 141: "This was *the* sacrifice and *the* death of the atonement;" – "His death on the cross was *not* his sacrificial death:" It had no more significance than the death of a martyr; and it was only "the antitype of the burning of the *already dead* carcass of the sin-offering." Now notice: perhaps for the sake of maintaining an appearance of consistency, your author is obliged to admit that it was *the blood* of the sin-offering that *made atonement*, but in the great antitype of the sin-offering, the "*precious blood*" is utterly and contemptuously ignored. He says, "The ordinary view belittles the whole affair, making the sacrifice and death of Christ simply one among thousands of such events. *The* great sacrifice, and the *one* death that could bring about atonement, was the laying down of his pre-existent life." – Pages 132, 133, 140.

Was it indeed? We have already seen that even if he had laid down that life, the shedding of blood in connection therewith was an impossibility; and equally impossible was it to have made atonement *without* the shedding of blood.

Thus your author ranks himself with the "enemies of the cross of Christ," and with the despisers of "the blood." No words can be plainer than those which declare that Christ gave his "*life a ransom:*" – "*The life* is in the blood." "He *poured out* his soul unto death." "*The blood of Christ*, who offered himself without spot to God." He gave "*himself a sacrifice* and an offering *to God.*" "He bare our sins in *his own body on the tree.*" "Ye are bought with a price:" purchased with the blood of God's own Son. He was "*the man* Christ Jesus" who gave himself a ransom for all; he was not a man in his pre-existent condition, and only a man could be *a ransom* or corresponding price for man.

Say, beloved, both you and I have known too much of the value of the "precious blood" to permit ourselves to be seduced away from following our Lord and Redeemer in his own appointed way of life. Have we not together rejoiced in the privilege of entering "into the holiest by the blood of Jesus Christ?" Have we not known that "the blood of Jesus Christ," God's own Son, "cleanseth us from all sin"? How often have we feasted together in heavenly places, and on heavenly things in Christ Jesus, and rejoiced in the knowledge that the "cup of blessing" was to us "the communion [R1299 : page 61] of the blood of Christ"? And when at last we shall "Fall at his feet, and the story repeat," will not the burden of our song of praise and thanksgiving be, "Thou hast washed us from our sins in thine own blood"? This is the testimony that I would blazon on the very heavens in characters of living light, so that all the world might see and read, and if they will, believe and live!

Let me now briefly notice your author's doctrine that "All things are of God." That includes (page 53) "absolutely *all* things, the bad, as well as the good; all the crime, and sin, and wickedness. All things include *evil things*, and we shall find that these are of God, as well as those things that we call good" (page 55). The case of Joseph, which is first given to illustrate how *evil things* are of God, will sustain this doctrine as applied to every other case, or else it will prove your author's teaching a blasphemous falsehood. Joseph's brethren were jealous of him: their *jealousy* quickly turned to *hatred*, and hatred developed into *murder*. Envy, hatred, murder, are evil works of the flesh: they are of the devil, for "he that committeth sin is *of the devil*." (1 John 3:8.) They are "enmity against God." – Rom. 8:7.

Your author says, "Evil things are of God, as well as those things that we call good." And he further says that "There is no evil but moral evil" (page 225). Now the question affecting Joseph's brethren is, Did God work in them those *evil passions*, and lead

them on through envy, jealousy and hatred, to the commission of murder? for in heart and purpose they were murderers. If he did, then he violated his own laws and the moral principles that he enjoins upon his creatures, and lifted his hand against himself. "Thou shalt do no murder," is his law; and *hatred* is the moral quality that is equivalent to *murder*. Did God incite Joseph's brethren to hatred and murder? Listen! "Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted of evil, neither tempteth he any man! But every man is tempted when he is drawn away of *his own lusts*, and enticed." (James 1:13,14.) Here then is an unqualified and authoritative statement of the truth that "evil" is *not of God*. The evil passions of men, "their own lusts," lead them on to the commission of evil deeds, and they are not of God, but of the devil.

If God incited evil passions in men, and led them on to the commission of evil deeds, he would simply convict himself of lying and hypocrisy, for he constantly forbids and denounces such evil things; and to pronounce men guilty, and punish them under such conditions, would be to declare himself an unprincipled despot. Your author says, page 208, "It is absolutely certain that man is *not* a free agent (actor);" and on the preceding page – "Man goes the way that *God* desireth: his steps have been prepared beforehand, and are all ordered of the Lord." Where, then, does man's responsibility come in? But, if as he shrank from the results of his own teaching, he takes pains to explain, as in Joseph's case, and that of Abiathar, which is quoted to show how evil things are of God: "The awful deeds of wicked men are of God in such a sense that he makes them conducive to the carrying out of his own plans, and brings good out of them in the end" (page 57). Yet over and over again he declares that absolutely *all things*, evil things, crimes and wickedness of every kind, as well as what we call good things, "are of God," literally "out of God," and man (all men, every man) goes the way that God desires, and has marked out beforehand for him.

In Eph. 2:2, the prince of the power of the air is said to be the spirit "that now works in the children of disobedience." To say, as your author does, that God controls and overrules for good, and for the accomplishment of his own purposes and plans, the evil doings of evil men, is an infinitely different thing from saying, as he also does, with constant repetition and emphasis, that "absolutely all things, crime and sin and wickedness, as well as good things – absolutely *all* things are of God." The former is truth; the latter is a blasphemous falsehood.

As to the declaration of Jehovah, "I make peace and create evil;" and "Shall there be evil in a city and the Lord hath not done it?" – take such Scriptures as Jer. 21:10-14; 25:29; 26:2-6; Ezek. 14:12-23; Amos 4:4-11; 9:8-10, and study carefully their connections, **[R1299 : page 62]** and you will find that the *evil* the Lord creates and does is the calamities and judgments that he visits upon the ungodly nations – "the sword, famine, pestilence and noisome beasts" – on account of their abominable iniquities; and that it is always in opposition to, and in condemnation of, the *evil of sin*, which is an abomination in his sight.

R. WAKEFIELD.
