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ZEAL ACCORDING TO KNOWLEDGE.

"The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up." – John 2:17.

The correctness of our interpretation of Scripture, set forth in these columns thirteen years ago, relative to what would be the ground of the *testing* of God's people during this harvest time, is year by year more fully demonstrated.

We then showed that the prophecy which declares, "He shall be for a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence to both the houses of Israel" (Isa. 8:14), refers to *Israel after the Flesh* and *Israel after the Spirit*; and that as the *testing* and *sifting* of the fleshly house came in the end or "harvest" of their age (the Jewish age), so the testing and sifting of the spiritual house is due now, in the end or harvest of this age (the Gospel age).

And we showed, to the satisfaction of ourselves and the majority of the TOWER readers, that the testing of the spiritual house (strange though it seems) will be upon the same question of faith with which the fleshly house was tested – namely, the *cross* of Christ. Not that any now doubt, nor that any in the Jewish harvest doubted, the *fact* that our Lord died, or that he died upon a cross; for that fact cannot be questioned. The test with the Jews was whether or not they would accept the sacrifice there finished as the ransom-sacrifice which paid the penalty of their sins and justified the believer. This they refused to believe; and thus they made the cross of Christ of none effect, of no value. The Apostle states this pointedly of them, saying: "We preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling-block." – See 1 Cor. 1:17-24.

Similarly the nominal Gospel Church is now to undergo a test upon this same subject – whether each accepts the work of Christ as the full *ransom* (corresponding-price), the complete

"propitiation [satisfaction] for our [the Church's] sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." And, the Lord's Word for it, the vast majority will stumble, and only a faithful remnant will stand the test. The Lord's tests are very simple, but very thorough.

It may be said, This is the last issue upon which a testing might be expected, since all "orthodox" Christians have held it tenaciously, even during the dark ages. Yes, we answer, this is one item of truth which has been constantly held, even though surrounded in every case with various contradictory errors: it has thus been held unreasonably, held in unrighteousness, held without being fully appreciated, but nevertheless *held*. And it is because this doctrine of the ransom has been *held*, and that as the foundation of faith, that even in the dark ages, and in the midst of great corruption, the nominal church has been recognized of God at all, or been worthy at all of the name "Christian."

Had the doctrine of the *ransom* been held intelligently and reasonably, it would have hindered its holders from falling into any of the great errors with which the doctrines of Christendom abound. With a correct view of the *ransom* (a *corresponding* price), where could the doctrine come in which claims that the wages of sin is *everlasting torment*? Was the [R1452 : page 292] suffering of eternal torment the ransom-price which our Lord gave for all? or was his *death* our ransom? What saith the Scriptures? It would have settled the question of *natural* immortality of man beyond dispute. It would speedily have settled the question of the Trinity. The holding of the *ransom* is the key to every truth. It is the center or "hub" from which all other truths must radiate to the circumference of the divine plan for salvation.

Because this truth is generally held unintelligently, and in the midst of various contradictory errors (in unrighteousness),

therefore, now that the testing time has come, and God is bringing it as an issue or "stone of stumbling" before Christendom, the large majority are willing to cling to the errors and let go the ransom.

And those who reject the errors of eternal torment, and who are inclined to go to the opposite extreme, and to hope for the everlasting salvation of all men, would be saved from that error, too, if they would but hold to the *ransom*, giving it its full signification. For, if the Scriptural account be admitted, that condemnation of death resulted from Adam's wilful sin (Rom. 5:12), and that the death of our Lord Jesus, finished at Calvary, was the *ransom (corresponding price* – See the definition of "ransom," *Greek, antilutron*, in Young's Analytical Concordance), then it must also be admitted that whoever will fail in the *new* trial, and hence be condemned in that judgment, will be subject to the *same penalty* that was originally inflicted upon all in Adam. This second trial results directly, under God's grace, from the ransom-sacrifice; and God has appointed that the world's Redeemer shall be the Judge, in that Millennial judgment-day. (Rom. 14:9; Acts 17:31.) Because it is the penalty of the second trial, this sentence is Scripturally called "Second Death." And it is not difficult to see that if God's law was such that he could not clear the sinner without giving a *ransom* for the first transgression, so also if any were ever to be released from Second Death (which God has not even hinted at), it would require a ransom for *each one* tried, found guilty and sentenced. [R1453 : page 292]

But as some are so anxious to hold to eternal torment that they will let go of the *ransom*, when they see the two doctrines to be in conflict, so others, when they decide that they *want to believe* in the everlasting salvation of all men, and find the doctrine of the *ransom* contradicting them, they feel that the doctrine of the *ransom* must be gotten rid of, and they drop it. The

Scriptures show that only such can have everlasting life as come willingly into oneness with Christ and his laws, when the full knowledge and opportunity are offered; and that this opportunity will end with the Millennial age, beyond which sin and sinners cannot go to mar, or even to endanger, the felicity of eternity.

But since they are very anxious to propagate their views, it becomes necessary for us as true under-shepherds to point out the fallacy of their position, to those sheep who have an ear to hear the voice of the Chief Shepherd, and to follow him. They perceive that the issue is well taken, and hence make every effort to "get around" the difficulty. To do *this* they are all agreed; and hence they are in this respect in sympathy and fellowship, no matter how different their theories may otherwise be, and make common cause against the WATCH TOWER publications, which defend the doctrine of the *ransom*.

As a matter of fact, each party (represented by a journal) tries to dodge the ransom in a different manner. One, totally ignoring the meaning of the word *ransom*, claims that it refers to the *forcible deliverance* of men from death; another says the *ransom* was given by our Lord when he left the heavenly glory to become the man Christ Jesus; another says that the living example of our Lord while among men was the *ransom*; and another now comes forward claiming that our Lord is *now* making the ransom, that even since his ascension he has been expiating the sins of the world in heaven, and that this work of ransoming will not be finished until the end of the Millennial age. – This last twist becomes the wretchedly thin foundation for another "no-ransom" journal, just started, called "*The Herald of Glad Tidings*." It is no better and no worse [R1453 : page 293] than the others – "*The World's Hope*," "*Spirit of the Word*" and "*Herald of the Morning*."

What wresting and twisting and dodging! one way and another, to avoid the real issue, and to get around the many plain statements of Scripture to the effect that "Christ *died* FOR OUR SINS;" that it was "the *man* Christ Jesus who GAVE HIMSELF a *ransom* [a corresponding price] for all." The thought of these people seems to be, *any* argument or theory is good that sets aside or gets around the Bible statements that the ransom for sinners was "finished" (John 19:30) when our Redeemer died on the cross at Calvary.

We denominate all of these as "*no-ransom*" views; for although they all use the word *ransom*, it is only to blind, to confuse, and to lead the minds of their readers away from the real and only ransom-sacrifice, and from the real and only meaning of the word *ransom* (*antilutron* – a corresponding price).

Let those who seek to serve the Lord know that his truth is his representative, and let them cast their influence, all of it, on the right side of this momentous question which is now the testing, the stumbling question, to all those who are not loyal soldiers of the cross and followers of the Lamb. *Show your loyalty* to him who gave himself a *ransom* for all. (Tit. 1:13; 2:15.) Leave no doubt with any as to just where *you* stand. However much others may seek to dodge and evade the truth on this subject, let us be true to God and his Word. (1 Pet. 2:19; Matt. 5:16; Rom. 3:4.) As soon as we see that any teacher (or would-be teacher), whether a human being, or a paper published by a human being, is wrong on this one, central and vital point – *the ransom* – evading, misrepresenting and misapplying the word and doctrine to some other sense than the true one – "a corresponding price" for all – we should have nothing further to do with such person or journal until it fully and openly acknowledges the error and retracts it heartily.

The Lord's instructions to us are very pointed on this matter, and leave no doubt as to the course of duty and loyalty. The Apostle Paul says (Rom. 16:17), "Brethren, *mark* them which cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned [from inspired sources]; and *avoid* them." Surely, among all the doctrines taught us by Christ and the apostles and prophets, no other is of so vital importance as the doctrine of the ransom. Hence those who reject the Scriptural statement that our Lord Jesus gave himself a *corresponding price*, a *substitute*, a *ransom* for all, are to be rejected from recognition as Brethren, and even to be *avoided*.

The Apostle John says: "Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in *the* doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you [man or paper, professing to be a teacher], and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds." (Compare 2 John 9-11; Gal. 1:8,9; 2 Tim. 3:5; Titus 3:10.) Thus it is evident that we who would follow closely the way marked out for us have not much liberty or choice in our attitude toward those who deny the very foundation of our faith – however much they may desire to company with us. Compare also the rules respecting immoral persons who desire fellowship (1 Cor. 5:11; Eph. 5:11; 2 Thes. 3:6-14), although there is generally less danger from such than from those who become doctrinally corrupted.

The present King commands his faithful servants who have not cast off the "wedding garment" of his imputed righteousness (faith in his blood [sacrifice] for the forgiveness of sins), concerning those who reject it, saying, "Bind him hand and foot [*i.e.*, restrain his influence by thoroughly answering his arguments], and cast him into outer darkness." (Matt. 22:13.) Reject such a one from any fellowship which would mark him or

her as a Brother or Sister in Christ. Soon such will be in the outer darkness of worldly confusion and uncertainty, called Agnosticism, saying, "I *don't know* surely what is truth."

It is not the question whether this course is worldly-wise, but whether or not it is in conformity with God's Word. The wisdom of [R1453 : page 294] men and the policy of men and the theories of men are all foolishness with God. It is the essence of wisdom to obey God. Let us do it.

In all this we advocate no harshness, no bitterness, no unkindness; but *firmness* for God and for the truth. Let the spirit of *love* rule in our hearts – love which is first of all true and loyal to God, his truth and his Church. "The zeal of thine house [Church] hath eaten me up."
