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REPRESENTATIVE OR SUBSTITUTE?

A BROTHER inquires whether the following may not be considered a fair statement of the truth as presented in the Scriptures; viz.: –

"The human race was tried in Eden in the person of Adam its *representative*. His failure was the failure of those whom he represented, and hence the whole race was sentenced to death. Again, God purposed another trial, and this time put Christ Jesus as man's *representative*. Christ's obedience was perfect; and hence not only did he thus secure everlasting life for himself, but the same also for all the race whom he represented in his trial. Is not this the correct, the Scriptural view? If not, wherein is it at fault? Please answer through the WATCH TOWER."

We reply: No; this is an incorrect and unscriptural view, and a very misleading one.

Christ's death was man's ransom (corresponding price), substituted for Adam's death; and hence applicable to all who lost life under his sentence. Christ's *death* being substitutionary was of course a representative death, *for* or *instead of* the dead race of Adam; *i.e.*, a corresponding price in exchange for a purchase, which makes possible their release from the death penalty, in God's due time. But during the thirty-three years before he died, Christ represented not the world but *himself*: and since his resurrection he represents, before the bar of divine justice, not the world but *believers*. "He *died* for all;" and will bring *all* to a knowledge of this truth: but he *represents* or advocates for only "the household of faith." "*We* have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous."

Instead of saying that Adam *represented* the race in trial, let us say that he was tried *individually*, and that the race in his loins (as part of himself) shared his sentence and all that he actually (not representatively) entailed upon them – mental, moral and physical decay – death. Adam's trial, even if passed successfully, [R1601 : page 371] would not have entitled anyone but himself to *everlasting life*. His children would each have been obliged to stand an individual trial before being adjudged worthy of either *everlasting life* or *death*.

Similarly, Christ's trial was an individual trial. His faithfulness proved *him worthy* of everlasting life. It in no sense proved any one else worthy of everlasting life; and no one gets everlasting life as a consequence of his obedience.

But divine mercy and justice had arranged that another great transaction should be accomplished by the same act of obedience (the surrender of his life) which proved our Lord's love of the Father to be perfect. That other thing was God's acceptance of that death as a sacrifice, a ransom, a substitute, *a corresponding price* for the life of Adam and the race which lost life *in* him. This *substitutionary* (not representative) sacrifice of our Lord, by meeting the claims of justice against Adam and his race, sealed the New Covenant and made divine mercy possible.

Now, that the claim of God's justice against the race has been met, it may hope for mercy at the hands of him who bought all with his own precious blood. [R1601 : page 372]

What will Christ do to those whom he purchased, – the dead, the sick, the dying, the ignorant, the weak, the blind – the mentally, morally and physically dead or dying.

We answer, In full harmony with the divine will, he purchased all, for the very purpose of granting to each member of the race an impartial *trial for* everlasting life. All worthy ones

will be proved and granted "the *gift* of God, eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord." All those proved unworthy will be destroyed by the second death.

When will this trial take place?

It comes to all men proportionately as each comes to a knowledge of the truth. But during this age only the Church of believers comes to a sufficiency of light to make the trial complete, with a final verdict. All others, the masses of mankind, will receive their trial later on – in the blessed Millennial age, the great "day of judgment" (or trial) which God has graciously ordained. – Acts 17:31.

Is Christ now, or will he ever be, the representative of all men?

No; he bought all, but he does not represent all. He represents only those who "come unto God by him" – faithful believers. (Heb. 7:25). It is also clearly stated by John that Christ's sacrifice is the propitiation for the sins of all, but that only *we* (believers) have him as our advocate or representative. (1 John 2:1,2; Rom. 3:25.) Having mediated and ratified the New Covenant, he has opened the door of its blessed provisions to all; and all shall come to a *knowledge* of the truth. Then any and all who accept the conditions of the New Covenant are represented before justice by the value of the "blood of the New Covenant," which speaks pardon for all of their weaknesses and shortcomings, in proportion as these are not wilful.

Whenever any member of the race enters, by faith in the ransom-sacrifice, into the provisions of the New Covenant, that moment he has a reckoned standing before God, a reckoned covering of his sins, which continues so long as he continues under its protecting, sheltering mercy. That covering is Christ's meritorious sacrifice (made once for all), applied for all in a

general way by the New Covenant provisions, but *especially* only for those who come under that New Covenant's terms, all of whom are *represented* by their Redeemer before the bar of justice as *perfect*, – reckonedly.

This covering by the provisions of Mercy under the New Covenant, and this representing of the mercy-covered ones by Christ, will last as long as it will be needed – until all of the weak and fallen race who thus come to God through Christ, desiring divine favor and seeking to render obedience, shall have attained *perfection* – mental, moral and physical: which will be at the close of the Millennial age. Then this covenant will cease; for *perfect* beings require no mercy. Perfect beings can render perfect obedience to the perfect law; and mercy or any excuse for failure could not be granted. When Christ has finished his work at the close of his Millennial reign, he will first have destroyed the reign of sin and death, begun by Adam's fall, will have granted each member of the human family a full and gracious opportunity of reconciliation with God, under the terms of the New Covenant, and will have destroyed all wilful sinners (Psa. 145:20; Heb. 10:26,27; Rev. 21:8); – and then all the remainder he will present before the Father, *perfect* and *unreproveable*. – 1 Cor. 15:24; Col. 1:22.

This New Covenant of *mercy*, under which God accepts those who approach him, in the merit of Christ, is therefore for the very purpose of permitting the work of restitution. Under its provisions, the fallen but penitent sinner is accepted *as* though he were perfect, and is treated as a child of God during the period of his reformation of character and constitution – during the period in which, under the Lord's supervision, he is being restored, with added experience, to all that was lost in Adam.

What we have described relates to the world in general. Now ******let us look at the Church under the New Covenant. Her

relation to the New Covenant is during the Gospel age. But to her the covering mercy of that Covenant is not to permit time for reaching physical, mental and moral perfection by a process of restitution, but to give her a standing before God [R1601 : page 373] where she can offer herself unto God a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God through the merit of Christ – under the merciful provision of this New Covenant.

The *call* of the Gospel age is for the Bride class. The condition of that call is – obedience, faithfulness, self-sacrifice in God's service, even unto death. But only *perfect* ones are eligible to such a call, even as no blemished animal could be laid upon God's altar during the typical Law dispensation. So, then, **the New Covenant is absolutely necessary, with its provision of covering of our sins by the merit of our Redeemer's sacrifice. All who come under the blessed provisions of that New Covenant are *acceptable* as sacrificers during "the acceptable year of the Lord" – the Gospel age, until the foreordained number shall have made their calling and election sure. Then the call to *sacrifice* and its very high reward of spirit-nature and joint-heirship with our Redeemer, being at an end, the New Covenant will thereafter, during the Millennial age, shield all of the remainder who may desire to benefit by it and thus to return to divine favor and everlasting life.

Thus we answer, at length, that the idea of Christ's representative work as set forth by the Brother's question is wholly incorrect. **Our Lord gave himself a ransom, a corresponding price a substitute for *all*, but he represents before the bar of justice since his resurrection, *only those* who come unto God by him under the gracious terms of the New Covenant, sealed or ratified by his death.

Adam's trial was a personal one and not a representative one; and so was our Lord's trial a personal and not a

representative one. *As* the effects or results of Adam's failure were inherited by those *in* him, *so* the results of Christ's obedience will be shared by all who *believe* INTO him. – Rom. 5:18,19; John 3:16.
