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"REMEMBER LOT'S WIFE."

IT WAS in connection with our Master's prophetic warnings respecting the trials of the present day that he used the words, "Remember Lot's wife" (Luke 17:32); and their significance should be comprehended by all who are walking in the light.

The lesson is that those who, under the special guidance of the Lord, are now fleeing for life to the mountain of the Lord's Kingdom, will be held to a much stricter account than others. Lot and his family were not accused of sharing the evil practices of the Sodomites: his wife's outward fault was merely that of looking back; but we may reasonably suppose that this implied a heart out of harmony with her deliverance and in some degree sympathetic with the evil things and evil people which God had condemned as unworthy of life. She at heart clung to the accursed things, even though she did not outwardly return to them, but fled from them; and therefore God brought her no further. She became a monument of the folly of sympathizing with evil-doers after knowing that God has given them up.

Quite a number now need to have their attention called to the antitype of this incident referred to by our Lord as typical. Quite a number are disposed to sympathize and fraternize with those who are under divine condemnation now, and as such sentenced to the second death, destruction, typified by the destruction of Sodom, which we are directly told was "set forth as an *example*" or type. – Jude 7.

Those who assume to be more gracious and long suffering than the Lord make of themselves opponents, who, instead of being students of the principles of righteousness, attempt to be judges and teachers of Jehovah. The proper attitude of heart accepts God's conduct as not only wiser, but more just than our own; and consequently when we see any who have ever enjoyed the light of present truth abandoned by the Lord and led into outer-darkness, [R1860 : page 203] we are to conclude

that before being thus abandoned there must have been in them "an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God." "He is faithful who hath promised," "If any man will do my Father's will, he shall know of my doctrine." Whoever therefore loses the doctrines of Christ after once having had them, has surely done more than get his head confused. His heart had separated from the Lord's ways previously; for as long as we abide in him as his "elect," it will not be possible for any of the snares of this evil day to entrap us, and none shall pluck us out of the hand of the Lord our Shepherd.

It is proper for us to be watchful of each other's welfare doctrinally as well as otherwise. When we see a brother walking contrary to the Lord's instruction into the snare of the wicked, we are to "have compassion," and while praying for him we are to use our best judgment as to how to help him, "making a difference" according to the circumstances of the case. Some should be dealt with energetically – "pulling them out of the fire." (Jude 22,23.) But while we should always be on the alert to render assistance whenever needed, to convert a brother from the error of his ways (James 5:19,20), we should make no such effort for him as would tend to make us fall from our own steadfastness into the error of the wicked. – 2 Pet. 3:17.

When we see others walking in forbidden paths, in the way of transgressors, we are not to follow them there in order to help them out; but to show them the right path by keeping in it and calling to them. When we see some confusing themselves with doctrines and teachings of men, when they know that they are *fundamentally* wrong, we are not to wade through those doctrines in order to help them out; but we are to remind them that the study of any doctrine which will not square with the *foundation* is not only a misuse of consecrated time, but that all trifling with that which we know to be error is wrong and dangerous, as all violations of conscience and principle are dangerous.

For instance, at the very foundation of all Christian doctrine lies the doctrine of *the ransom*. It implies that God is holy and man a sinner.

It implies that God is just as well as loving. It implies recovery or restitution, as well as a fall into sin and death. Any teaching, therefore, which either openly denies, or quietly ignores, the "*ransom* for all, to be testified in due time," must be a doctrine at variance with the doctrines of God's revelation, whether it be old or new, whether advocated by friends or foes, the learned or the unlearned, in the name of evolution or in some other name. Our attitude toward it should be prompt and decided opposition. If others waver we who have learned that this is the test by which all things are to be proved need not waver. If friends get into the quicksands of no-ransom errors, whose name now is legion, and which are growing continually, we should lend them a helping hand to get out, "pulling them out of the fire," by reminding them of the Rock Christ Jesus, whereon our feet of faith are firmly established, and throwing to them the rope of divine promises throughout which is woven the scarlet thread of the ransom, and exhort them to come back to the rock and not attempt to find another rock at the bottom of the quicksands. And we must use great plainness of speech in showing them their danger and in pointing out their way of escape.

We must not accept their invitation to join with them in exploring what men can say or write which would tend to make the Word of God of none effect, which would claim that God has all along been the sinner and man his dupe; or that the hope of mankind is in their own evolution and not in the ransom and restitution of Scripture; or that he who redeemed will not be the same who will, as the Good Physician, restore and bless all who will accept his grace "in due time." If, after kind and faithful remonstrance on your part, they still persist in exploring and delving into such *evident contradictions* of God's Word, let them go. Remember that there must be something wrong at their hearts, else they would have no pleasure in the unfruitful works of darkness, but would rather reprove them; and their delight would be in the great divine plan of the ages. (Psa. 1:1-6.) Remember, too, that God has promised to keep and guide the minds of those whose hearts are loyal and true to him. We should, therefore, conclude that if the Lord

is either thrusting any one out of the light, as unworthy of it, into the outer darkness of the world, or if he is permitting unfaithful ones to be seduced by the great enemy, it is not our mission to follow them into the outer darkness in conversation, reading, etc., but to remain with the Lord and with those who walk in the light, and to seek others to take the places and the crowns of those who deny or ignore the precious blood of the covenant wherewith once they were sanctified. – Rev. 3:11; Heb. 10:29-31.

Neither are we to waste sympathy upon those who depart. If we can neither persuade them nor pull them out of the fire, we must let them go, and should turn at once and render aid to others more worthy. When the Lord has put any one out of the light (Matt. 22:13,14), we cannot hope to bring them back. Had it been proper for them to stay in the light he would not have permitted them to be put out of it.

We do not here refer to slight differences in understanding which should be patiently dealt with, and explained or overlooked, as all the children of one school have not [R1861 : page 203] attained to the same "step" or degree of knowledge; but we do refer to those radical differences, all of which may be quickly proved by the test of the *ransom* doctrine. If they agree not with this, it is because there is no light in them. And such are to be to us no longer brothers in Christ, but should be considered and treated as of the world – "as a heathen man or a publican." Such are not to be numbered among our friends; for the friendship of such is enmity against God. We are not to receive or entertain such at our houses, nor to bid them or their work God-speed in any manner. (2 John 8-11.) Some [R1861 : page 204] who have neglected the plain statement of God's Word on this subject have suffered spiritually for their disobedience.

Let us more and more be of one mind with the Lord. His friends only must be our friends; his enemies only our enemies. If we affiliate with the Lord's enemies we will at least get into a lukewarm condition towards him and his friends; and the lukewarm he will spew out of his

mouth. And we want to cultivate warmth of heart toward all who trust in the precious blood and are consecrated to our Redeemer as the only Lord. There must be no lukewarmness there. Whatever their peculiarities according to the flesh, we cannot be otherwise than "brothers" to them in spirit, with all that helpfulness and sympathy which brotherhood in and with Christ implies.

But we will not, must not, cannot have *any* fellowship with the ungodly, the sinner against light and truth, nor the scorers of the grace of God. Whoever are our Lord's enemies must be our enemies, because enemies of the light, the truth, the way: and although if they are destitute we should feed them (Rom. 12:20), yet so long as they are the opponents and adversaries of the Lord's cause, of which Christ and his cross are the centre, they are our adversaries and we theirs. The Lord loves positiveness with harmlessness, and of us it should be true, as it is prophetically written of our Lord and the true members of his body in Psalm 139:16-24.

Whoever therefore is being led of the Lord's messengers to the place of safety, as were Lot and his family delivered from the destruction of Sodom, let him "remember Lot's wife" and not look back or otherwise manifest sympathy with those whom the Lord has condemned and abandoned to destruction.
