

**"YE ARE BOUGHT WITH A PRICE."**

**– 1 COR. 6:20. –**

WHAT different sentiments these inspired words awaken in different hearts! To the heart of the natural man these sentiments are very objectionable; but to the heart fully in harmony with God and the divine plan they are precious words, full of comfort and joy. The unregenerate heart, full of pride, convinces itself that it did not need to be bought; that it did not need to be redeemed; that it had no very serious ailment of sin. It is perhaps ready to admit, and would surely find it difficult to dispute, that it is imperfect; that tried in the balances of justice it would be found wanting; but to itself these lacks of perfection are very slight, and deserving of but trivial punishment of some kind, and that punishment it expects to bear and believes that it does bear to the full in earthly troubles. The natural heart believes in a Great First Cause, of some kind, which it calls God: it believes also in certain laws of nature which it holds are irrevocable and unalterable. It denies that there is forgiveness. It is therefore wholly out of harmony with the gospel proposition of a "Sin-offering," a "ransom for all," and consequent forgiveness of sins under the terms of the New Covenant, to whomsoever will accept the conditions.

This class of unbelievers is in many respects the most hopeless; because they have a sort of worldly-wise philosophy which so fills their minds that it hinders them from seeing the beauty of the true Bible philosophy. They are usually blind to the very simplest logic that could touch this question as presented in the Scriptural declarations, "The wages of sin is death," and "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." While they cannot and do not claim perfection, it seems never to have occurred to them that all imperfection is unrighteousness, sin, and that the judgment of a perfect God would properly and naturally be the destruction of that which he does not approve, and the blessing and perpetual continuance of those things only which are acceptable in his

sight, perfect things and perfect beings. Not until this view is grasped are any properly prepared for the message of the gospel – the message that God is operating in Christ for the reconciliation of the world unto himself. Only as the natural man learns that "the wages of sin is death" does he appreciate the fact that eternal life is a gift of God through Jesus Christ, our Lord; so that "he that hath the Son hath life, and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life" eternal. – 1 John 5:12.

But our inspired text gives offense to the natural man, and to the man fallen from grace, in another respect; it hurts his pride. It implies that he is being treated as a mere slave, or chattel, to be bought and sold. What could be more galling than such a thought to the proud, unregenerate heart?

Nevertheless, this thought is kept up throughout the Scriptures, and the meek, the humble-minded, alone are able to appreciate it. They hear the apostle's statement that all were "*sold* under sin" (Rom. 7:14), and they realize the truthfulness of the declaration. They find abundant evidence in themselves and in the entire race that all mankind are "slaves to sin;" they find "the law of sin in their members" and in others. They find the power of Sin so strong that it cannot be broken by any; that, although it may be fought against, nevertheless it holds over all mankind a mastery which the enslaved ones cannot fully overcome. They see thus, in the apostle's words representing Sin as a great task master ruling the world, a very grim but very [R2097 : page 32] truthful picture of the facts. They inquire of the Word of God, How comes it that God, himself good, pure and perfect, has brought forth human children under such a bondage to Sin through imperfection? They inquire, Do not the Scriptures declare of God, "His work is perfect?" Why then this imperfection, why this subjection to the power of Sin? An answer can come from one quarter only – the Word of God; and that answer is the only satisfactory answer, the only one which meets all the requirements of the conditions as they are known to men.

That answer is, that, although God's work was perfect in the creation of man, yet the creature, being endowed with free moral agency, rebelled against the law of his Creator and thus by self-will, self-gratification, brought himself under the sentence previously prescribed, – "Dying thou shalt die." This deliberate act on the part of our first parent not only brought himself under this penalty, but since his posterity proceeded from himself, all of his posterity shared in his subjection to death, and in the slavery to Sin consequent to his alienation from God and his failing powers as he gradually passed under the power of death. So then the fact that father Adam *sold* himself and the posterity yet in his loins to Sin, for a momentary gratification of self-will, meant not only his own enslavement, but also that all of his posterity would be born in such slavery to Sin. And such are the facts of the case: all of his posterity can say with one of old, "I was born in sin and shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me."

Here we come to the thought which was evidently in the minds of some of the early reformers when they promulgated the doctrine of Total Depravity, which is held by many at least theoretically, but from which we must dissent. We hold with the Scriptures that as a result of Adamic transgression there is a *general depravity* which extends to every member of the human family, so that "there is none righteous, no, not one;" but we deny that this depravity is a *total* depravity; we deny that any individual of the human race is totally, hopelessly, in every particular, wholly without anything that is good or commendable. The only sample of total depravity of which we have any clear knowledge is Satan himself, – the father of lies and of every wicked work.

But general depravity is general enough; and, being general, no man should have any difficulty in finding to some extent the portion of it which he himself has inherited, as well as discerning it in others. True, although the depravity is general, it is not alike general. Some are more depraved than others; some have the original moral likeness of

God less blurred and defaced than others. In harmony with the Scripture statement that we are born in sin, every discerning person whose eyes have been opened to what depravity is can note the evidences of it even in childhood. Self-will and passionate obstinacy are often to be noted in infants but a few weeks old, and very patient should the parent be, as well as very attentive and thorough the correction of his child, when he remembers that the very traits which need correction have come down to the child from himself. Thus the Christian parent should be not only the most thorough in the matter of training up a child in the way it should go, but also the most patient, considerate and kind in giving this correction.

We have then before our minds the fact and general prevalence of sin and whence it comes; and we see the force of the apostle's words when he personifies Sin as a tyrant master, and represents mankind as his slaves, to whom he pays his wages – death. "The wages of sin is death." We have seen that God is not blameable for this enslavement, but, as the Scriptures declare, it was by one man's disobedience that all were brought under the power of Sin and subjected to the wages which it pays. While the extreme wages only are mentioned – death – yet, before the payment of the full wages, we all received, incidentally, many of the aches and pains and difficulties, mental, physical and moral, imposed by this great task master, Sin. And as a groaning creation travailing in pain together under this hard task-master and suffering from his cruel lashes, all long for deliverance, and some of us have cried out to God for help – for salvation from sin and death, into righteousness and life.

God wishes us to learn very thoroughly the lesson of the "exceeding sinfulness of sin," of its gall and bitterness, and of the hopelessness of any deliverance, except that which he will provide. Personal experience has proved to us that we cannot deliver ourselves from this slavery, that, in order to overcome the wicked one and his wiles and arts, which take firm hold of us because of the weaknesses of our flesh and through the fall, we need a power that we do not by

nature possess. Finding ourselves powerless to help ourselves, we would naturally look to each other for aid; and indeed might get some aid from each other; but we all know how little aid can be given or received from natural sources. And when we learn the lesson which the Scriptures teach that *all* are slaves, that all were sold under sin, that "there is none righteous, no, not one," then we see the utter helplessness of our condition as a race. All who realize the situation and feel the bondage and seek deliverance may thus see that the only hope is in God. If they reflect that it was God himself who pronounced the sentence of death, and that he could not annul his own sentence nor transgress his [R2097 : page 33] own laws, let them reflect also that as he has superior power to ours, he has also superior wisdom, and that he may know how to do that which to us would seem an impossibility.

And this was the case: When there was no eye to pity and no arm to deliver, then God pitied and his arm (power – in Christ) brought salvation. (Psa. 69:20.) But how? How will God deliver? How can God himself continue to be just and yet release his condemned [R2098 : page 33] creatures from the sentence of his own law? Our text answers: God provided that these slaves of sin, sold into slavery by disobedience of their father Adam, are to be delivered by a great savior, who first of all would purchase them and afterwards set free all who will accept freedom upon his terms and conditions.

The price in the original sale was disobedience, and its sentence death; the price of the purchase was obedience unto death. Not only so, but, this is expressed in the meaning of the word "ransom," a corresponding price: the redemption price by which the race is purchased must correspond in all particulars to the original sentence. The purchase price, the ransom price, must in every sense of the word correspond to that which was forfeited by the transgression. Adam was perfect as a man before he sinned, hence, whoever will be his redeemer must be a perfect man. A perfect angel would not do, nor would a perfect arch-angel be a suitable price; they would be as inadequate as a sacrifice to meet the conditions, as an imperfect man would be, or a

lower animal. God has placed the matter in such a form by his own law and sentence, that only a *perfect man* could be a ransom, a corresponding price, for the perfect man who sinned, and in whom the whole race of mankind had been sold under Sin and under its penalty, death.

It was in order to prepare the great sacrifice for sin, and in harmony with the divine wisdom and plan, that the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth, full of perfection, submitted himself to the Father's will, that he should humble himself to (without dying) be transferred or translated from his high and glorious nature and condition to a lower nature and condition, lower than that of the archangel, lower than that of ordinary angels, down to the condition of man; – not to the condition of sinful man, but to the proper condition in which God had created man (in which Adam was before he sinned). Obedient to this arrangement, our Lord Jesus "was made flesh," became of the same nature as the race which had gone into the slavery of sin, but he did not share in its sin nor in its imperfections. The apostle's declaration is that, in harmony with this divine purpose, our Lord, the only begotten of the Father, left the glory of his original nature and "was made flesh" and dwelt among us, and that for the purpose "that he, by the grace of God, should taste death for every man." When, therefore, our Lord appeared in this humble condition, divested of the glories of his original spirit nature, – humbled to human conditions – it was not that he had died to his previous spiritual condition, for, although he came to die, he had not yet died. It was the *man* Christ Jesus who gave himself our ransom in death, and not the spirit being who previously became the man: the humbling from spirit conditions to human conditions, laying aside of the glory which he had with the Father before the world was, and becoming poor for our sakes, was only incidental to his great sacrifice begun at Jordan and finished at Calvary. But the man Christ Jesus was the same one who previously had been rich in spiritual nature and glory, and who could and did say, "Before Abraham was, I *am*" – thus particularly

emphasizing the fact that he had not ceased to exist at any time in the transfer of his being from the higher to the lower condition.

Had our Lord been born as the son of Joseph, or received his life from any other human source, he would have been a partaker of the sentence upon our race, and of the weaknesses of the fallen flesh, and of the slavery to sin through that weakness. And the Scriptures are very careful to point out to us that his life did not come through such a channel and that it had none of this imperfection, declaring that "in him was no sin." He was holy, harmless, separate from sinners; although partaker of human nature, he was not a partaker of a fallen human nature, but of its perfection. If it is inquired whether he did not receive contamination, sinful nature, etc., through his mother, we reply, No; and we are ready to support the testimony of the Word of God by showing its reasonableness upon philosophical principles. But for this phase of the subject we must refer our readers to an article under the caption, "The undefiled One," in our issue of July '90.

He who came to be our Ransomer, our Purchaser, to pay for us the debt on account of which we were all made slaves to sin and death, was in fullest sympathy with the divine purpose, and made haste so that at the very earliest moment possible he began the work which the Father had given him to do. Since Adam at the time of his transgression was a perfect man, and since under the law manhood was reckoned as beginning at the thirtieth year, therefore, it was needful that our Lord should delay the work of sacrifice on our behalf until he had become, in the full legal sense, the *man* Jesus; then he began the work by consecrating himself even unto death, baptism in water being the symbol of this; and during the three and a half years which followed he was but carrying out that covenant of [R2098 : page 34] death, dying daily; and at the close of three and a half years he could say upon the cross, "It is finished."

What was finished? the release of the slaves of Sin? No; the slaves of Sin for whose redemption he gave his life were still in bondage, their

slavery was not finished. What was finished? The sacrifice was finished, nothing more; it was not yet even accepted. The presentation of that sacrifice on our behalf and its acceptance by the Father did not take place until nearly fifty days after he who redeemed us had been raised from the dead by the Father's power, thus giving assurance to all that his work was well and satisfactorily done, and that it would be accepted in due time. And he ascended up on high, and, as the High Priest, appeared before the Father and applied his merit on our behalf as believers. The sacrifice offered, the price paid, is sufficient; it covers every member of the human family. For, since all men came under the slavery of Sin and under the sentence to death through the transgression of Adam, now that the *corresponding price has been paid for Adam*, it implies full satisfaction for all the posterity of Adam, the sharers of his sentence. The race had been bought; and, more than this, the world had been bought, including the earth itself, because the earth was given to man as his inheritance, and when he himself became a slave, all of his possessions passed with him into the slavery of Sin, and so the curse has rested upon the world. And now that Adam and his race have been bought, how could it mean less than the redemption also of the earth from the dominion of the curse?

But we see not yet the earth's release from the curse, we see not yet mankind delivered from the slavery to Sin, we see that still the race is going down daily into death; "Dying thou shalt die" is still written against the race of Adam. Why is this so? The Scriptures, and the Scriptures only, answer this question. They declare that God is at present selecting the "royal priesthood" and "joint-heirs with Christ," who shall by and by share with him in the Kingdom which shall break off the shackles of sin and open the prison doors of death and set free all the captives who long for freedom upon the divine conditions. This, we remember, was our Lord's declaration on this subject: He declared at his first advent that the ultimate result of his work would be "to proclaim liberty to the captives and the opening of the prison to them that are bound. (Isa. 61:1; Luke 4:18.) As we gladly accept the divine arrangement and realize it to be best, so we must also accept the divine



times and seasons, and realize that they are wisely ordained; and indeed all whose eyes are anointed with present truth may already see much of this wisdom.

While all mankind, therefore, have been bought, so far as our Lord Jesus' sacrifice is concerned, it being once for all, nevertheless, the only ones who are yet received of the Lord, who are yet brought into relationship to him through Christ, are those who recognize his sacrifice, and who, whether they understand the subject philosophically or not, believe what the Scriptures so distinctly declare, that we were bought with a price – the precious blood of Christ. It is this class that the apostle addresses; these who realize that they were slaves of Sin, and who now realize that they have been bought with the precious blood of Christ, and who having accepted of him and his power to save, are no longer yielding themselves as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin, but are seeking to yield themselves as servants of righteousness unto God. It would be useless for the Apostle to address any others than these in this manner, but pertinent and forceful is his argument to those who realize the true situation, and who are clinging to Christ as their Redeemer who shall ultimately be their Deliverer. To these he says, – "Ye are not your own." Your time, your talent, your influence, your money, all that you consider precious or in any degree valuable, all properly belongs to God. It was not only his by right, in that it originally was his creation, because all that we have that is valuable in any sense of the word, has come from the heavenly Father; but now it is his in a second sense, in the sense that he has redeemed or bought it back from the destruction to which by sin our first parent delivered it.

The apostle uses this argument as though it should be a conclusive one with all who are right-minded; and so we believe it is. And those who are rightly exercised by this knowledge of divine grace in Christ not only accept the forgiveness of sins with thankfulness and joy, and with meekness and humility acknowledge that they were slaves of Sin and that they were redeemed therefrom, but they also gladly

acknowledge the new Ruler, the Purchaser, and that to him they owe all they have and all they ever hope to be. **[R2099 : page 34]**

Personal responsibility to the Redeemer who purchased, and to the heavenly Father who provided the gracious arrangement, lies at the foundation of all true consecration to God in Christ. As soon as the believing, grateful, justified one hears of the blessing that has come to him, he properly inquires, – Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? He finds that the new Master does not wish for any except voluntary servants, and that, having provided them release from the sentence of death, he nevertheless would permit them, if they chose, to go back and become again voluntarily the servants of Sin, and to receive the wages of sin, the Second death, as the reward for their voluntary submission again to that task-master. He learns that to be the servants of the new Master is a great privilege, **[R2099 : page 35]** a privilege that is enjoyed by all who have the proper spirit. Such hear the words of the Apostle, "I beseech you, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, and your reasonable service." They see the apostle's own example, how, laying aside not only the works of the flesh and the devil, but also laying aside earthly ambitions, aims, prospects and hopes, he gave himself, his time, talent, influence and all he had to the service of the new Master, the Redeemer, and thus to God. They read in his living epistle, in his trials and triumphs through faith in Christ, lessons which some of them at least heartily accept; and as a consequence there have been throughout this Gospel age some who have been glad to own themselves as the bond-servants (slaves) of the Lord Jesus Christ and of our God, whose representative Christ is.

At the opening of the new year, what lesson could be more important to us than this one, that we are not our own, but belong to another; that we are not, therefore, to seek to please ourselves, but to please him, nor to seek to serve self but to serve him, nor to seek or obey self will, but on the contrary his will. This means holiness in the most absolute and comprehensive sense of the word (not only

separation from sin to righteousness, but separation from *self* to the will of God in Christ).

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