

IS FAITH IN CHRIST NECESSARY?

REV. John H. Barrows, D.D., President of "The World's Parliament of Religions," held in Chicago in 1893, has returned from his visit to India. He recently wrote an account of his experiences there, in which he tells that he was asked by the Hindoos, whether or not he believed that "all men will finally be saved." He states the answer he made them, as follows, – "I replied, My Master does not encourage me to cherish such a hope. *I do entertain a hope, however, for some who have never heard of the historic Christ.* There are minds, like that of Socrates, *naturally Christian.* If I do not meet Socrates in heaven, I think it may be because I have not kept the right road myself."

Dr. Barrows' views are a fair sample of the views of a rapidly growing class of Christian people – all except those recognized as "old foggies;" – all the "learned" and "intelligent," both in pulpit and pew. What does it mean? It means that these people have repudiated the only gospel taught by our Lord and his inspired apostles and have made for themselves another gospel which omits all the prominent features of the New Testament good tidings.

(1) The center of the New Testament gospel is that, whereas Adam sinned and fell from the divine likeness, Christ Jesus died for man's sins, redeeming Adam and his posterity by the sacrifice of his own life as "a *ransom* [a corresponding price] for all." The new, false gospel denies this, declares that Adam never was in the divine image and could not fall from it; but that he was more nearly a monkey's image and has been constantly rising out of it for the past six thousand years: and from this basis it is forced to deny that our Lord's death was in any sense a ransom for man; for if man has been evolving grandly out of monkey conditions, the progress would not be a sin and would require no atonement. If *original sin* is denied, a *sacrifice for that sin* must be denied and is denied, logically, by all Evolutionists.

(2) The essence of the New Testament gospel is the offer of pardon and reconciliation to God, to all who will accept the blessings secured by the ransom. The new, false gospel, denying the ransom and all need of one, necessarily denies the offer of *forgiveness* and *reconciliation*, claiming that the race never was alienated from God, denying that we were born in sin, denying that father Adam ate the sour grape of sin, and that in consequence the teeth of all his children are set on edge. – Ezek. 18:2.

(3) The first requirement of the New Testament of all who would share its blessings is *faith*. God's grace provided the atonement, and Christ's death was the means or channel through which he provided it; but he most specifically declares that sinners may avail themselves of this grace *only* by the exercise of faith. As the Apostle declares, we are *justified by faith*, and by it also we enter into all other favors of the divine provision. (Rom. 5:1,2.) Nor is this required faith a general faith – a faith in anything we may please, or in nothing in particular: quite to the contrary, it is a faith in God and in Christ Jesus. It goes still farther and demands that the faith shall be in Jesus' death as the sin-offering and in his resurrection as the Savior from sin, and from death the wages of sin, through the Kingdom of God which he will establish at his second advent.

The new, false gospel plainly declares a union with Christ by living faith, or any other kind of faith, unnecessary. Mark the words of Dr. Barrows italicised above. Alas! we fear that, as the Doctor suggests, there is great danger that he has lost "the way, the truth and the life" now set before the overcoming Church. He certainly, and many in his company, "have not kept the right road" to the Kingdom, as marked out in the Scriptures.

But we are glad to hope that Dr. Barrows and some others, equally well intentioned and deluded, will by and by, after the Kingdom is set up, get the eyes of their understandings opened, and see and *truly believe* and be blessed. There, too, they will meet Socrates, for "all that

are in the graves shall hear the voice of the Son of Man and come forth;" and there, under the blessings of the Millennial Kingdom, "all the blind eyes shall be opened," and then "the god of this world [Satan]" who now *blinds "the minds of them which believe not."* shall be bound for a thousand years "that he should deceive the nations no more." (2 Cor. 4:4; Rev. 20:2,3.) But the favor then opened to believers will be the earthly paradise restored, not the heavenly Kingdom and the divine nature now held before the Gospel Church as the prize of her high calling, to which, by faith and obedience, she is to make her calling and election sure. (2 Pet. 1:10.) Hear the word of the Lord: – [R2220 : page 279]

"The Scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by *faith* of Jesus Christ might be given to *them that believe*. But *before faith came* we were kept under the Law, shut up unto [waiting for] the *faith* which should afterwards be revealed." – Gal. 3:22,23.

"It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save *them that believe*....We preach *Christ crucified*, ...the power of God and the wisdom of God." – 1 Cor. 1:21,23,24.

"We believe that Jesus died and rose again." – 1 Thess. 4:14.

"These [testimonies of John's gospel] are written, that ye might *believe that Jesus* is the Christ, the Son of God: that *believing ye might have life* through his name." – John 20:31.

"Neither pray I [Jesus] for these [apostles] alone, but for them also which shall *believe on me through their word*." – John 17:20.

"He whom God raised again saw no corruption. Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that *through this man* [Christ Jesus] is preached unto you *the forgiveness of sins*, and by him *all that believe are justified* from all things." – Acts 13:37-39.

"When they *believed* Philip preaching the things concerning the Kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized."
– Acts 8:12.

"Ye were not *redeemed* with corruptible things,... but with the precious blood of Christ...manifest for you who by him do believe in God, that raised him from the dead and gave him glory." – 1 Pet. 1:18-23.

"I have not shunned to declare unto you the whole counsel of God." "So we preach and so ye *believe*." – Acts 20:27; 1 Cor. 15:11.

"That is the word of *faith* which we preach; that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved....The Scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed....For whosoever *shall call* upon the name of the Lord shall be saved."

"How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard?"
– Rom. 10:8-14.
