

HOW READEST THOU? – CAREFULLY?

DEAR BROTHER RUSSELL: I am perplexed by what I have read in the January 1 issue of the TOWER, respecting the bullock sacrificed for the Levites and the goat for the other tribes, – p. 11. Am I right in understanding you to teach that Jesus redeemed the Church and the Church is to redeem the world? If so how could this be harmonized with these Scriptures: (1) "Jesus Christ...tasted death for every man"; (2) "As all in Adam die, even so all in Christ shall be made alive"; (3) "He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world"; (4) and that "he gave himself a ransom for all."

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We reply: No, dear brother, you have misread and misunderstood the article, considerably. You have never read in any of our articles or books or sermons the statement that the Church *redeems* any thing or any body. Quite to the contrary: we have often been accused of making a hobby of the ransom doctrine, – that our Lord Jesus "tasted death for every man," "gave himself a ransom for all." Surely no other writings ever more zealously upheld the *ransom* as the very center of Christian faith.

The trouble, dear brother, is that you have read into our article things which are not in it. This over-brilliancy is a fault common to many of us. Do we not see it illustrated in all of our experiences with the Word of God? Which of us has not had his principal difficulty along this line of reading into or out of the Word of God enough to confuse us? We cannot, therefore, chide you for misreading our message.

Reading the article in question more carefully you will perceive that it is not discussing the *Redemption*, but the *Sin-Offering*, which is a different view of the great transaction. Briefly examining the texts you quote we find: (1) They teach that the death of Christ is the *foundation* upon which the hope of every man's salvation rests. Whatever blessing ultimately shall come to every man must result from the *death of Jesus*, however others may subsequently be associated with him in the work. (2) The grand truth that none can ever have eternal life except by relationship with Jesus in no way hinders the Lord from using the Church as his assistant and agent in bringing the world into that blessed state. (3) Truly our Lord is already the propitiation for the Church's sins, because he "appeared in the presence of God *for us*." It is also true that the satisfaction of justice which he effects will ultimately be extended to all mankind at the close of this age and the opening of the Millennium; but this does not hinder our Lord from accepting the Church as "members of his body" and sacrificing them as such during this antitypical Atonement Day. (4) Our Lord truly gave himself "a ransom for all" eighteen centuries ago, but evidently he has not yet applied the benefits to any except "the household of faith." And meantime what difference does it make to the world if by the Father's plan our Redeemer reckons to adopt the Church as "members of his body" and allows these to participate in the sufferings of Christ in this present time and thus also to share coming glories?

Summing up the matter: We, believers, have no personal standing before God nor share in the sacrifice of the sin-offering. It is only those who are "beheaded," and thus cease to be themselves and are accepted as *members* of the Anointed One – the Christ – only these share the sufferings or the glory of Christ. *Jesus the Head does all the sacrificing*. All of the under priests are represented in the High Priest as his members. They

all are associated, but the Head is the recognized representative of all.
