

THE PHILOSOPHY OF THE RANSOM

WATCH TOWER readers can bear witness of the fact that this Journal has always encouraged the study of the Scriptures and the attainment, so far as possible, of an intellectual appreciation of God's Word. We have, however, always insisted that Divine Revelation was intended, not to puff us up with mere knowledge of Divine mysteries, but to build us up in the character-likeness of our Redeemer and of our Father. Hence our frequent reiteration of St. Paul's words, If I had all knowledge and understood all mystery, yet had not love, it would profit me nothing. – I Cor. 13:2.

We should steer clear of the two extremes: –

(1) Of those who lay all stress upon the heart and feeling and ignore a study of the Divine Word and its mysteries.

(2) Those who study the Bible from curiosity, or from a desire to shine before their fellows, and who ignore heart-development and a sympathetic entrance into the spirit of the Divine Plan.

Doubtless many of our readers understood fundamentals of the Gospel of Christ before they came in contact with the DAWN-STUDIES and their elaboration of the philosophy of the Divine Plan. We are sure that many would be inclined to say, "No, I never understood anything whatever respecting Ransom, Restitution, Justification and Sanctification until I read THE WATCH TOWER publications; my previous Christian experience seemed hazy, like a dream in comparison with present realization of the length and breadth and height and depth of Wisdom, Justice and Love Divine."

But no, dear Brother, we remind you that even your hazy ignorance of the philosophy of the Ransom did not hinder you from mentally grasping and appropriating to yourself the great general fact that "Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures" (I Cor. 15:3), and that we have "redemption and remission of sin through his blood." On the basis of that faith and without philosophizing you had "peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." More than that: you possibly had some appreciation of having made a consecration to the Lord, turned over a new leaf, etc. – however vaguely you realized this. And you had learned lessons in the School of Christ along certain lines, even though you did not know that you were in School preparing for the great work of the future – the judging of the world. You knew something about self-sacrifice, too, even though you did not appreciate the philosophy of how you were to share "in the sufferings of Christ" as a member of his Body.

It is well that we call these things to mind for two reasons:

(1) The remembrance of them will make us more considerate of fellow-Christians, whose eyes of understanding have not yet opened to the philosophy of the Divine Program.

(2) It will keep us from becoming excited when some poor fellow-traveler, falling asleep, has the nightmare and shouts, "Wake up! Wake up! THE WATCH TOWER has denied the Ransom, the Mediator and the New Covenant, and has been doing so for thirty years." The poor brother who is thus excited should consider his own mental state and realize that he has never seen a philosophy of the ransom presented in any other publication. If he can produce it we will be glad to have him cite it to us – volume and page. The difficulty has been superficiality. He never comprehended the philosophy of the ransom – or possibly he did and has become blinded to it.

Faith in the Atonement is the important matter. But the more accurate our knowledge, the stronger and firmer and more intelligent will be our faith. If the brother who thinks he is waking up when he is really going to sleep will sit down and connectedly attempt to put together a philosophy of the Atonement he will do himself a great service, for he will soon discover that in picking out a few threads of argument from our presentations, he has spoiled his philosophy entirely. He will find himself unable to lay down systematically, logically, reasonably, the Divine Plan of the Ages, tracing it from the promise made to Abraham to the close of the Millennial Age.

It is one thing to pick a quarrel, to dispute and object and to quote a text here and there on a subject, and to "throw dust"; but it is quite another thing to systematically map out the Covenants, their mediators, their time, their place, the types, the antitypes, etc. Any of us may [R4578 : page 92] take a narrow or a comprehensive view of a subject such as the Ransom. One time we might say broadly and truthfully, "Everything was secured by the death of Christ." Or, more accurately and minutely we might proceed along the Scriptural lines to note the various steps of the Divine Program in our Lord's leaving the glory of the heavenly condition to be born a babe – in his boyhood experience; in his consecration at Jordan; in his death at Calvary; in his ascension; in his appearing as the Advocate of the Church before the Father; in his pouring out of the Pentecostal blessing; in his dealing with the Church during this Gospel Age, developing an elect "little flock" and also a "great company" to the spirit plane; in his Second Coming; in the uniting of his members, his Bride, to himself; in his sealing the New Covenant for Israel – and for the world through the privilege of becoming Israelites; in his Millennial reign of glory and the end thereof, when "he shall see of the travail of his soul and be satisfied." – Isa. 53:11.

Similarly we might speak of the Ransom – that "Jesus gave himself a Ransom for all, to be testified in due time." Undoubtedly that was the Divine intention. But the *application* of the Ransom during this age to the Church and during the next age to the world is a further elaboration, showing the relationship of the "due time" to the great fact of a Ransom Price and its broad application, ultimately for all.

What constitutes a *faith* in the Ransom, and what constitutes a *denial* of it, are proper questions, proper studies. Irrespective of perfect or imperfect philosophy, a true believer in the Ransom is one who acknowledges –

(1) That the reconciliation to God has already been effected and that the basis of that reconciliation lay in the merit of Christ's sacrificial death.

(2) To deny the Ransom is to deny one or both of those propositions directly or indirectly. For instance, for anyone to claim relationship with God on the ground of his own perfection or meritorious works, *aside from Christ's sacrifice*, would be a denial of the second proposition. For anyone to claim that he is not reconciled to God through the death of his Son is to claim that he has not yet had experience with the blessings secured through the ransom. It means a denial or rejection of his share in the ransom – a denial of At-one-ment between him and the Father. Hence those who claim that they need a mediator are denying the At-one-ment as between God and themselves – and this means, so far as they are concerned, a denial of the effectiveness of the ransom. A ransom which did not *at-one* for sin and bring the sinner back into full fellowship with God would not be a ransom.

We are not hereby claiming that those who say that Jesus is their Mediator are knowingly denying the ransom. We assume that many of them are merely confused and will ere long, under God's providence, see matters more distinctly. We are merely

pointing out that theoretically and logically such deny the finished work of Christ on their behalf, when they claim that he is the Mediator *between* them and God. It seems remarkable that any could become so confused as to imagine that, as New Creatures, they ever sinned or were ever alienated from God. It was not as New Creatures that we needed ransoming. It was the natural man fallen through sin whose sin needed to be atoned for by the death of the Man Christ Jesus and the application or imputation of the merit of that sacrifice.

The application of our Lord's ransom merit "*for us,*" when he ascended up on high, had the effect of immediately cancelling all of our sins and bringing us into direct at-one-ment with the Father the moment we by faith accepted the Lord's terms and presented ourselves living sacrifices. Not even for one moment did Jesus stand *between* us and the Father. The very moment that he applied to us his merit was the same moment in which the Father received us as New Creatures begotten of the holy Spirit, "Sons of God without rebuke." (Phil. 2:15.) Our Lord Jesus was made unto us wisdom, justification, sanctification and will yet be made unto us deliverance; but it was God that drew us, that called us. "It is God that justifieth." (Rom. 8:33.) It is God that sanctifies us to himself and that will by and by raise us up also by Jesus to the glorious perfection of the divine nature. Our Redeemer is *our Advocate* who, covering us with the robe of his own merit, presents us at once and directly to the Father, without any one *between*.

Note, in contrast, how differently the Ransom merit will affect the world of mankind during the Millennium. It will not similarly cancel their sins and instantly turn them over to the Father. To do so would mean their ruination, for the Divine Law would instantly condemn them to death again; because, carnally minded, rebellious, not subject to the Law of God. The merit of the Ransom will be applied for the world *indirectly* in the sealing

of the New Covenant with Israel, so that all the world under that Covenant provision and under the great Mediatorial Kingdom of Righteousness, for a thousand years may have fullest opportunity for the opening of the eyes of their understanding, for the changing of their stony hearts to hearts of flesh, to human love and sympathy. During that age none will be introduced to the Father; the Mediator will stand *between* God and man until he shall have *perfected* the willing and obedient – until he shall have *actually* justified them. All will be under the judgment of the Royal Priesthood after [R4579 : page 92] the order of Melchizedek for disciplining and uplifting. During that age all those who refuse to heed that Great Prophet, Priest, King, "Mediator between God and men" will be utterly destroyed from amongst the people in the Second Death. (Act. 3:23.) Not until the end of the Millennial Age (not until mankind shall have reached absolute justification or perfection) will the full results of the ransom be theirs. Then they will be introduced to the Father blameless and unreprouable.

In a word, then, the efficiency of the Ransom Price of our Lord's sacrifice comes instantly to the consecrated believer through *faith-justification and obedience of sacrifice*, while the merit of that ransom will properly be gradually bestowed upon the world during the entire Millennial Age.

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