

GLORYING IN THE CROSS OF CHRIST

– *JULY 30. – 1 CORINTHIANS 1:18-2:2. –*

THE CROSS OF CHRIST NO LONGER PREACHED – REDEMPTION DOCTRINE FALLING BEFORE EVOLUTION THEORY – THESE TWO THEORIES ANTAGONISTIC – FEW UNDER THE BANNER OF THE CROSS WITH JESUS AND THE APOSTLES.

"Far be it from me to glory, save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ." – Galatians 6:14.

ONE can dispute that the preaching of the Cross of Christ is dying out. Those who still preach it give the impression that at the most it means renouncement of sin and the incidental self-denials. Rare indeed would it be to find a minister in our day preaching the necessity for the Cross of Christ – the necessity for Jesus' death as the Redemption-price for the sins of the world. – 1 Timothy 2:5,6; Matthew 20:28.

Why is this? Some would answer that they have become Christian Scientists, and no longer believe that there is such a thing as sin, and no longer believe that there is such a thing as death; and that hence they could not believe that Jesus died for sin. Others would answer that they have gotten too wise to believe any longer that in the Divine Plan the death of Jesus was necessary for human redemption and reconciliation to the Father. Their view is that the Apostles and Jesus, in setting forth the Cross, were laboring under the delusion of the darker time, which present-day education shatters under a brighter light. Still others would say that they have become Evolutionists and Higher Critics, that they no longer believe the Bible at all, and that they adopt the opposite theory to that of the Bible – namely, the Evolution theory.

From the standpoint of Evolution there could be no justice, no propriety of any kind, in a Ransom-sacrifice by a Redeemer. Why? Because, according to the Evolution theory, man is merely developing, and is not yet perfect and not yet ready for trial along perfect lines; he is merely merging from a brute to an intelligent creature. Evolutionists would claim that without any redemption or any interference whatever upon God's part the process of Evolution will continue until by and by there will be a family of mankind that will reach an aristocracy of wisdom, efficiency and power which will enable them to live everlastingly by their own wits.

Small comfort is there in this for Evolutionists of today or of the past. If they boast of their children of the future and of the everlasting life to which those children will be gradually evolved, they admit that personally they have nothing beyond the tomb – that any future life on their part will be representatively in their children. And as for their parentage, they have nothing to boast of there, although some of them seem to boast of their ancestry, after all – that their forefathers were monkeys, frogs and, earliest of all, simply protoplasm.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE CROSS

These theories are the products of human wisdom, and indicate a misunderstanding and neglect of God's Word. How beautiful is the Gospel of the Cross as compared with any other! It assures us that God made man in His own image and likeness; and that man's fall from that perfection to his present condition of demoralization came as a result of disobedience to Divine Law and of the enforcement of the Divine penalty – "Dying, thou shalt die." (Genesis 2:17, margin.) For six thousand years our race has been dying, not only physically, but also mentally, which includes the moral qualities. With all the experiences of the past and with all the education of the present, nobody has hope that our race can be lifted up out of its present unsatisfactory condition back to perfection. All

that we can do is to combat the evil in ourselves, combat disease and death, and help others along the same lines.

But meantime, God had from the very beginning planned the blessings of the Cross – planned that in due time He would send forth His Son, who would die for human sin, "The Just for the unjust," and thus open up the way for man's return to Divine favor and everlasting life. Thus it is written: "As by a *man* came death, by *a man* comes also the resurrection of the dead; for as all in Adam die, even so all in Christ shall be made alive – every man in his own order." – 1 Corinthians 15:21-23.

For four thousand years the world waited for the redemption accomplished at Calvary. For nearly two thousand years the results of that redemption have been confined to a special class of humanity, under a special call, or invitation, to be the Bride of Christ – "the Church of the First-borns, whose names are written in Heaven." (Hebrews 12:23.) The Scriptures assure us that this selected company is to be associated with Jesus in the great Kingdom of God, which the Bible everywhere shows is to roll away the curse and, instead, bring back favor.

The Kingdom cannot come until the Royal Family is ready to take the Throne. Jesus, indeed, has long been ready; but in harmony with the Father's Plan He has waited and has been doing a work in the preparation of the Church, His brethren, who are to be His joint-heirs in the Kingdom – otherwise styled "the Bride, the Lamb's Wife." (Romans 8:17; Revelation 21:9,10.) Then for a thousand years the Restitution privileges will be open to the whole world of mankind. It will no longer be necessary to preach; for all will know the Lord, from the least unto the greatest, and unto Him every knee shall bow and every tongue confess. (Jeremiah 31:34; Philippians 2:9-11.) All this is to come as a result of the Cross.

EARTHLY VS. HEAVENLY WISDOM

No wonder the Apostle makes the Cross of Christ the center of his preaching, declaring: "Without the shedding of blood there is no remission" of sins! (Hebrews 9:22.) [R5920 : page 203] As the Prophet hath declared, "By His stripes we are healed." (Isaiah 53:5.) Our lesson quotes briefly the Divine prophecy that the worldly-wise would not appreciate the Divine Plan, and especially the center of that Plan – [R5920 : page 204] the Cross of Christ. Worldly wisdom would look in an entirely different direction.

However, God is not seeking the worldly-wise, but those loving righteousness, full of faith and obedience. Hence the majority of mankind, including the majority of the wise, are still to be found on the side of the world; and only comparatively few have come properly and truly to the Lord's side, accepting the Wisdom from Above. These, in the eyes of the world, are foolish; but in the eyes of the Lord, they are wise. The wise, the great, the noble, the rich, the learned, are so well satisfied with what they have that they are not hungering nor thirsting, nor seeking after the Divine arrangement. Hence those who accept the Lord's arrangement are usually the poor, the unlearned, etc., who realize their lack of wisdom and seek it from the Fountain of Wisdom and through the channel of Wisdom – the Bible.

The whole world is perishing because of Original Sin; and to nearly all of the world the Cross of Christ is foolishness. We who believe God's Message are said to be saved – to have passed from death unto life – because we have come into relationship with the great Life-giver "through faith in His blood." To us the great Redeemer is the Wisdom of God personified, and that Wisdom is shown in the Master's course in sacrifice. When we accept this, He becomes our Justifier; and being justified by Him, we are granted access to the Father, who receives our consecration sacrifices, and imparts to us a begetting of His Holy Spirit. Our salvation continues

as day by day we abide in the Lord and grow in grace, knowledge and the Holy Spirit. Eventually our salvation will be completed; as it is written, our salvation shall be brought unto us at the glorious appearing of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. – 1 Peter 1:13; Titus 2:13.

When the Royal Priesthood shall have entered into the Heavenly glory, then will begin the New Dispensation of Messiah's Kingdom, which will utterly scatter the errors of worldly wisdom and cause all the world of mankind to hear "the still, small Voice" of God. The Lord will then turn to the people a pure Message, that they may all call upon Him and serve Him with one consent. (Zephaniah 3:8,9.) Then, during the Millennium, will be the world's trial time; as now, during this Gospel Age, is the Church's day of trial, testing and preparation for the fulness of Jehovah's favor and for everlasting life.

With such an appreciation of the value and the necessity of the Cross of Christ, we can join heartily with the Apostle Paul in the Golden Text of this lesson: "Far be it from me to glory, save in the Cross of Christ."

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