

KEEP BALANCED

Avoid extremes. The bible is so written that men are apt to stumble, because it states truth apparently, opposites. As for instance, the doctrines of „Election” and „Free Grace;” and it requires caution and a knowledge of the general plan to enable us to plan the scripture, and see the harmony. The same care is essential in regard to the relation between the natural and the spiritual, and the two features of the work of Christ. Extreme views are held by many on all these and many other points. The seeming opposites are often but different parts of the same great truth. An extremist takes one side of a truth, will not look at any other; he defends himself with the scriptures, and calls hard names and anathematizes all who cannot see as he does, or who see from the other side. There is a great deal of intolerance and quarrelling among honest men in this world of ours; and it seems that intolerance is the leading characteristic of the Beast of Rev. 13. The attitude of many professing Christians toward each other, is much like that of the two soldiers who came to deadly blows over the color of a shield. Why would they not learn until sweltering in their blood, that the two sides of the shield had different colors?

The *relation* between faith and works as *cause* and *effect*, if understood

might bring Paul and James together in the minds of the extremists; one class contending for faith, and the other for works. James does not contradict Paul when he says Abraham was justified by his works and not by faith only. Paul did not say Abraham was justified by faith *only*. „By *faith* Abraham *obeyed*” is Paul’s statement which shows the harmony. Heb. 11:8. It is not only true that faith is *manifested* by works, but also that by works is faith *made perfect*. James 2:22. Justification by faith and justification by works are only different sides of the same truth.

The natural and the spiritual in God’s plan are in many respects the cause of stumbling. Some see one, and some the other, both failing to see the relation between them. For this reason we have extreme literalists and extreme spiritualists. Because it can be shown that much of the old testament history is allegorical; some ignore the history entirely, and see only that of which it is the allegory. Adam and Eve represent Christ and the church; why need we for that reason ignore the history of Adam and Eve? Because of this extreme others cling to the story, and admit no spiritual significance. The same extremes are common concerning, Abraham, Isaac and Rebecca; Moses, Aaron and their work; Israel, their bondage, deliverance, journeying and their inheritance; and all that pertains to Jerusalem, its temple and its worship. Jerusalem is to be restored in the

coming age: No matter, says one, Jerusalem is only a type of the Heavenly and so we will only look for the New Jerusalem. Just as if Jerusalem were not a fact as well as a type, and as if a *restoration* of the old would militate against the manifestation or descent of the New. Another class are afraid of the spiritual, and must have it that the New Jerusalem is nothing more than the old one *restored*, built up on its old site, to be the capital city of God's Kingdom in the Age to come, and are thus compelled to bring Christ and all his glorified ones down to inhabit an earthly city. Why not admit what the bible clearly teaches: that there are, in God's plan two Jerusalems, one Earthly and the other Heavenly, adapted to the restored Jew and the glorified Saint? Why ignore either one? All the promises of *restoration* must refer to the earthly, and prove that there will be such a city in the future; and yet that Abraham saw beyond the glory of the earthly is evident, for he desired a „*better country, i.e., heavenly.*” Heb. 11:16 and „he looked for a city which hath foundations (twelve—the Apostles) whose builder and maker is God.” Ver. 10. The relation between the earthly and the heavenly will thus be perpetuated when they are *both* in existence.

That in the case of the present and future bodies of the saint, there is a development or *change from* the natural to the spiritual is true. But this change into the spiritual life, whether reckoned as beginning at conversion or from resurrection, can in no proper sense be called a restoration, as the idea of restoring is a bringing back something that was *lost*, and there is no *bible* evidence that Adam in his best estate, as Head of the earthly race, ever had by creation, either what men receive at conversion or resurrection. Hence so far as relates to man, *Restoration* can only bring back *natural* life, as that was *lost*, and is the only kind of *life* that was lost by Adam's transgression. The natural life being lost and being the basis from which alone higher development is possible its *recovery* is a necessity. And that Christ took the seed of Abraham, „flesh and blood” for the express purpose of destroying the Captor—the Devil—and effecting the deliverance is clearly taught by Paul in Heb. 2. The same want of balance referred to above is manifested among two classes on this subject.

Because Jesus is clearly represented in the bible as the second Adam or Head imparting *spiritual* life, and giving his flesh for meat and his blood for drink in order to its support, some ignore the *restoring* work of Christ, with as much earnestness as if Christ had no literal flesh and blood; as if he did not actually die,

::R0030 : page 5::

and through *death* destroy the Devil and *deliver* the captives. On the other hand some can only see the *physical* salvation, and belittle the Headship of Christ. Again I ask, Why not admit them both? Christ is the Restorer as well as Head, and these two parts of his work are so related to each other, that to ignore either one mars the beauty of the whole. The ransom or price paid and the consequent work of restoring, came from the nature of what was lost, and only refers to the

natural; but we can also see the beauty of using the natural terms by figures in relation to the spiritual life. To say that God „*as distinct from his Son*” raises the dead to natural life, because God raises the dead, is no more in harmony with facts, than to say that Christ is not the Saviour at all, „because we trust in the living *God*, who is the Saviour of all men, but specially them that believe.” God is the Fountain and Christ the channel, from and through which *all* salvation comes.

The beauty and glory of the spiritual are not marred by the fact that Christ has a *double* work; but the *foundation half* of the gospel of Christ is lost sight of if his *death* is either belittled or ignored. There is reconciliation by his death, and salvation by his life. Rom. 5:10. It may be necessary to admit that there is a *double* to the *Atonement* as well as other features of God’s plan, in order to keep balanced. One thing more let me say, that while we are seeking for truth it becomes us to be humble; occupying the position of learners and brethren, and not that of „lords over God’s heritage;” but ever treating with tolerance and kindness all who cannot see what seems plain to us.

We are not infallible, and have found it necessary to *modify* some statements and opinions of the past, as a clearer view of God’s plan comes to us. May we ever remember that for whatever of truth we have we are indebted to God the giver, through Him who is the Way, the Truth and the Life. He *uncovers* his truth or *we* could not see it. Not unto *us* but unto *Him* be all the praise.

J. H. P.

=====

— September, 1879 —