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"RECONCILIATION OF THE WORLD"

B. I have called as we arranged, to continue our talk, and would like if you are at leisure to inquire, concerning the reconciliation of God to man. How can he be said to have become reconciled to the world if he *always* loved the world?

A. I am always glad to talk on these precious subjects, and always have leisure for them. Let me in answering your question, ask you, what work did Jesus come to do?

B. He came to make atonement for the sins of the whole world.

A. I hope you get the force of the word atonement. Mr. Webster defines it as meaning, not only satisfaction for the debt incurred, but also reconciliation between the offended parties—an at-one-ment, as the word indicates. Two persons can only be entirely *at one* when in perfect harmony of mind and will. Man broke God's righteous law and though the debt incurred has been paid by his substitute, yet having degenerated morally, mentally, and physically, he is not inclined to be in harmony with God. As "God is of purer eyes than to behold evil," sin became a barrier between God and his creatures, interrupting communion and fellowship—and though still loving mankind, God hates their sin.

As sin led the first sinners to hide from God's presence, so it has ever since tended to separate them, and thus we see God and the sinner arrayed as opponents. God, from his very purity and holiness the opponent of sin. Man, from the degrading influences of sin, the opponent of holiness.

The means by which these opponents are again brought together and into harmony and communion, is called in scripture—*reconciliation*—*atonement*. As we saw at our last interview, God was not reconciled by permitting his *mercy* to overrule his *justice*, thus excusing sin, but by providing Christ as the sinner's *substitute*, so that "You who were ... *alienated* and enemies in mind by wicked works, hath he *reconciled* in the *body of his flesh* through DEATH." (Col. 1:21.) So we see that the reconciliation is complete from God's standpoint ever since Christ made "reconciliation for iniquity," (Dan. 9:24.) in his *death*.

And now, God makes overtures to the sinner, sending word by his apostles telling, how he was reconciled to them all, and beseeching them to return to fellowship and communion with him. But while God *is now reconciled*, man, except the "little flock," is not *at one* with, or reconciled to God.

B. You say that only the "little flock" are reconciled to God; how does this harmonize with Paul's statement that "God was in Christ reconciling the *World* unto himself"—not the little flock only. A. If reconciling and making *at one* means the bringing into perfect harmony of mind and will, it must be evident to you that only the little flock are yet so reconciled to God's will and to God's way as to *prefer it* to their own, consequently only these are perfectly *at one* with the Father. The saints only can truly say: "We have received the *at-one-ment*" Rom. 5:11. We and our Father are in full harmony and communion. B. Do you hold then, that the *reconciling* of the *World* is a future work?

A. I do: We who are now reconciled, have now "committed unto us, the ministry of reconciliation." As soon as fully reconciled ourselves, we join with God in telling the *world* of His love and "reconciliation to them by the death of His Son." We are thus "ambassadors of God, as though he besought through us," we call "Be ye reconciled to God."

As many as have ears to hear may hear, but our work of proclaiming this grand message does not end with this present life, for we find that in the new heaven and new earth (next, or millennial age), we, as the Bride of Christ, carry on the work of ambassadors, for then "The Spirit and the Bride say come." (Rev. 22:17.)

B. If you believe in the full reconciliation of the World, does it not amount to Universalism?

A. No, I think not, although I do expect that the majority of the race will ultimately be saved to the lesser salvation. That the *benefits of the cross* to mankind are as *far-reaching* as was *the curse of sin*, is certainly Paul's argument in Rom. 5:15,16, and 20,21. And where sin reigned unto death, grace (God's favor in Christ,) did much more abound. And as by *one man's* (Adam's) *disobedience*, many were made sinners, and death passed upon all; so also by one man's (second Adam's,) *obedience* ("He was obedient even unto death.") the world is justified unto life, or may live again.

B. But to be justified to life by Christ would not imply reconciliation to God, would it? Are they not simply brought back to natural life by Christ's death, and will they not be resurrected in exactly the same condition of mind and body as when they died?

A. You seem to forget that mankind lost more than we now as natural men possess; You are correct in saying that Christ's death justified their return to *natural life only*: But what is *perfect natural life*? It has been enjoyed by but one of the race thus far, the first Adam. He was created *perfect* and *upright*. He was perfect *mentally* and *physically*, but when sin entered, it robbed him of those perfections.

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and his posterity all partake of this degeneracy, so that now man is "prone to sin as the sparks to fly upward," and even when "begotten by the word of truth," he finds "a law in *his members* (his fallen humanity,) warring against the law of his mind, so that the good he would do, he does not do, but that evil which he would not do, that he does." Rom. 7:7,19. If then all since *Adam*, are more or less depraved, his is the only sample of *our nature* undepraved. He was the *natural man*. Our condition is imperfect and *unnatural*. It is to this condition of perfect natural life, that Christ's death enables *the world* to return.

B. Will they rise from death perfect man like Adam?

A. By no means; Probably they will not rise maimed, blind or otherwise deformed, but with that degree of life which we *now term*, health, yet they will not be *perfect beings*, for it requires all of the Millennial age to accomplish fully the work of "restoring all things." It is therefore the restitution age, or "times of restitution." The one who restores is the Second Adam—Head and body—"The Christ." The fall was gradual, and the restoring will be gradual also. A prophetic symbolism referring to this work, says: "The leaves of the trees were for the *healing* of the nations"—teaching that the healing is a gradual work.

B. Then will all men be thus restored?

A. It will be the *privilege* of all men to go in and possess, all that was once enjoyed by Adam, except those who in the present life have committed the unpardonable sin. But from Rev. 20:7-9, we have reason to believe that *all will not* even then, when God's love is fully manifested; when the knowledge of the Lord fills the whole earth, and when the paths of righteousness are so plain that "The wayfaring man though a fool, need not err therein." (This is not the case now you know.) Some even under such favorable circumstances *will not* avail themselves of the *privilege* to become *reconciled* to God, but prefer sin—such die the *second death*. But then unlike the present time, the sin of one will not be permitted to sink others as well as himself, but "The soul that sinneth (person) *it shall die*."

B. You said that Adam was the only example of a perfect man? Was not Jesus as perfect a man (in

his human nature) as Adam?

A. No: Jesus was undefiled, being "born not of the will of the flesh, but of God"—"begotten of the Holy Ghost," he was uncontaminated by sin.—"Holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners," yet, in his human, physical being, He was not *perfect* and consequently not like Adam, who was perfect. Remember that "Jesus took upon Him the likeness of *sinful* flesh." Rom. 8:3. B. One more question: Will *the World* ever come to a higher plane than that of *perfect humanity*? Will they ever become spiritual beings like the Angels, and like the "little flock" which has the promise of being resurrected *spiritual* bodies?

A. I know of no scriptures which teach that any but the "little flock," or bride company, and the company who come out of the great tribulation (Rev. 7:14,) will ever be given spiritual bodies. It certainly is not included in "restoring all things," for that only can be *restored* which was once possessed and lost. Adam never had a spiritual body; it could not therefore be restored. Nor are we told that any promise of spiritual bodies or any existence other than as a *man* was ever God's design for him. "The creature shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the children of God." Rom. 8:21. They will be freed again from bondage to sickness, pain and death, mental ailments, and will enjoy the *liberty* of life in common with all God's creatures on every plane of existence.

This same "liberty and freedom" was enjoyed by Adam before he sinned. The liberty which he lost from the lack of the knowledge of good and evil, the restored race may keep, because they will have that knowledge. But mark me, I only say that *I know of no scriptures* which teach us that a spiritual life was intended for the world. What God may do in future ages we know not. "Who hath known the mind of the Lord?"

We can know of His purposes only as he reveals it and revelations, yet given reach only to the Restitution age.

A. I have received some new ideas on reconciliation and atonement. I see that the work is great, and God's preparation for it, large and ample. From my heart I thank Him that the

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news of his being reconciled to me, and His readiness to receive me into communion and fellowship, ever reached me, and I greatly rejoice that I am privileged here feebly, and hereafter with power to declare unto my fellow creatures the unsearchable riches of his grace, and as an ambassador, to beseech men "Be ye reconciled to God."

As I see more fully "to what I am called" and "what is the hope of my calling." I intend by His help to make my calling and election sure. "With this hope in me, I'll purify myself even as he is pure," and "lay aside every weight, and run with patience the race set before me, looking to Jesus." Good night.

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— October, 1879 —



Jeżeli zauważyłeś błąd w pisowni, powiadom nas poprzez zaznaczenie tego fragmentu tekstu i przyciśnięcie *Ctrl+Enter*.