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TO WHOM WAS IT PAID?

“Jesus died and paid it all;
All the debt I owe.”

We live in a day when the wherefore and why are sought on every question. It is, therefore, to be expected that when the grand old doctrine of a *ransom* for sin is being attacked and scoffed at, those who hold the doctrine should not only be required to give a “thus saith the Lord” on the subject, but also that when asked to prove the reasonableness of the statement, and show how, and why, and by whom, and to whom, and on what account the *ransom* for sins was given, we should be ready to show it.

While it should be to all saints, and is to us, SUFFICIENT that God’s Word declares that we were “*bought* with a price,” “*redeemed* with the precious blood of Christ,” *ransomed* “from the grave” by Him who “gave himself a *ransom* for all,” etc. Yet it is gratifying to us that we are *able* to “give an answer to every one that asketh” on this important subject.

Let us bow before the statements of Scripture, and let us also see that they prove *logically*

“How firm a foundation ye saints of the Lord
Is laid for our faith in his excellent word.”

Our opponents in an endeavor to make the *ransom* look unreasonable, ask and answer as follows, viz.: To whom can it be claimed that this ransom sacrifice of Jesus was presented or paid? To God? Surely God delights not in blood and death. God is love, why should the loving Jehovah need to be propitiated? (See “Propitiation” in July TOWER.) Was it presented to release man from death?—then it should have been presented to ‘Him that hath the power of death, that is the devil.’ (Heb. 2:14.) Did Jesus present the *ransom sacrifice* to the devil?”

By such questions and suggestions it is sought to ridicule the ransom, and thus to turn some from the plain statements of the Word. Before giving a solution of these queries, let us see how shallow is this method of reasoning. Suppose we did not know, and could not answer to whom the sacrifice of Jesus was *offered*, would that disprove the fact that he “was once offered to bear the sins of many?” (Heb. 9:28,) or the statement made by Jehovah that his was a “sacrifice for sin,” “a

propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world?" (1 John 2:2.) Surely not, *ignorance* of reasons or causes is no argument against *facts* in any sane mind.

If you were asked to give a full explanation of the power and agencies which hold this world in order while revolving in space, or of any other fact the philosophy of which you imperfectly understand, would you be obliged to *disbelieve and deny the FACTS* because you could not *explain* them fully? So with the doctrine of RANSOM. Is it sensible or reasonable to ask any child of God to disbelieve the plain statements of God's Word *because* he cannot fully explain its every reason in detail? You believe that a grain of corn grows when planted. You do not understand and cannot explain fully, *how and what* the process, but do you therefore deny the fact?

Let it not be forgotten either, that some of our opponents desire to *seem* to hold fast to the Scripture, and hence sometimes use and quote the word *ransom* in such a manner as to leave the impression with some that they are in harmony with the Scripture where it occurs, but they have never yet defined the word, nor explained the texts in which it occurs with the context. Beware of such deceitful handling of the Word of God.

Now we come to the questions. Let us consider them in the reverse order: Was the ransom-sacrifice of Jesus presented to "Him that hath the power of death, that is the devil?" We answer, No, assuredly not. Satan's power, though willingly exercised by him, could not be exercised were it not *permitted* by the great Supreme Jehovah. And Jehovah would have permitted Satan's power and the great calamity to be inflicted upon man, had it not been that by sin he had brought it upon himself as the *penalty* of Jehovah's violated law.

Hence Satan's power, like that of a hangman, is a *delegated* "power of death." The hangman is merely the servant of the Law to execute its penalties. And Satan as the servant of the Law laid down by the Supreme Judge of all creation, *permitted* and used for a time as the executioner of the sentence pronounced: "The wages of sin is death," "Dying thou shalt die."

If a prisoner's ransom or fine was to be paid, it would not be offered to the Jailor or Executioner, but to (the clerk of) the *Court* whose law demanded it. So likewise the ransom for sin should not be paid to Satan the executor of the penalty, but to the power which condemned sin, made the penalty, and *ordered* the execution of the guilty.

Thus we have already suggested the answer to the first question—Was the ransom-sacrifice presented to God? Yes. Not only as above shown is it *reasonable* to say, that the sacrifice for sin *should* be presented to the one whose laws were violated, but we shall now offer scriptural proof that Jesus did present his sacrifice to God.

The sacrifices for sin, under the Law, were sin-offerings *unto Jehovah*. See Lev. 4:3,4,23,24,27,31,34 and 35; Exod. 30:10; Lev. 5:11,12 and Lev. 9:2,6,7, and 2 Chron. 29:7-10,20-24. These were but shadows and types of the true sacrifices for sins by which the Lamb of God taketh away the sin of the world, putting away sin by the sacrifice of himself, and presenting himself without spot *unto God*. (John 1:29, Heb. 9:26; 1 Pet. 1:19; Heb. 10:4-9.)

The same thought is taught inductively by the following scriptures, Deut. 32:17; 1 Cor. 10:20; Psalms 68:20 and Rom. 12:1.

Having thus established by scriptural testimony, the fact that there was a ransom-sacrifice, and that it was presented to God, let us notice the objections implied in the question. Did God require blood as a satisfaction or propitiation for human sin? We answer, yes: and if Christians could take larger and fuller ideas of God and see the perfection of each of his attributes as well as the harmony of them all, the matter would appear perfectly clear and plain.

It is because Justice, Wisdom, Love and Power are all *imperfect* in us, that we are not quick to notice the perfect operation of these qualities in our Heavenly Father. In the fallen race Justice, Wisdom, Love and Power are continually antagonizing each other, but not so with our Father in heaven. With Jehovah, Wisdom first surveyed the field and laid out the best plan, Justice, Love and Power consenting to it, fully. Under Wisdom's direction man was placed at once, under a Law the penalty of which was the forfeit of his existence, and all the train of woes accompanying death. Wisdom foreknew man's FALL through inexperience, but felt justified in view of beneficial results—lessons, etc.

When man disobeyed, JUSTICE stepped forward, drove him from Eden and delivered him over to Satan to be buffeted by evil circumstances that the FULL PENALTY of the violated Law might be inflicted—"dying thou shalt die." While the Justice element of God's law (and character) was dealing with man, the Love element was not indifferent, but it was *powerless* for two reasons: first, it could not *oppose* Justice, and secondly, it could not *at first* relieve man by satisfying Justice and providing a ransom-sacrifice for sin, because that would have been in opposition to the plan marked out by infinite Wisdom: hence Love moved not to man's relief, except to encourage and instruct through promises and typical sacrifices, shadowing forth its future work. Thus was Love employed while awaiting the auspicious moment when under Wisdom's direction it might act.

Finally that moment came. It was in "the fullness of time" (Gal. 4:4,) and in the "due time" (Rom. 5:6) that God sent forth His Son, "that he by the grace [favor, love, bounty] of God should taste death, for every man." (Heb. 2:9). *Herein* was MANIFESTED the Love of God, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for the ungodly." (1 Jno. 4:9, Rom. 5:8).

Love, because exercised in harmony with the Law of God was not in conflict with Justice. Love's method was not an attempt to overrule and oppose the sentence, nor to interfere with its full execution, but to provide a substitute or ransom for man. By meeting for man the penalty inflicted by Justice (death,) Love forever releases mankind from the Adamic curse (death) inflicted by Justice. This was Love's triumph no less than the triumph of Justice. Its triumph was in the offering of the acceptable ransom-sacrifice which Jesus presented to *Justice*—the element of God's character which enforces his righteous decree and penalty.

But Love's triumph was not yet complete, Wisdom had marked out a course which not only should thus *redeem* man, but by which he should be lifted back to perfection, and that under circumstances favorable to his *everlasting* continuance in well doing.

The plan was no less than the selection from among the *redeemed* ones of a "little flock" which through much tribulation and severe trial should be "accounted worthy" to be associated with Jesus in the work of *restoring* mankind to its original and perfect state. Hence, Love is still at work and soon, aided by the Power of Omnipotence, will in the Millennial age, complete its work in the resurrection, restitution, blessing, of all the families of the Earth.

Thus it is seen, that in our Father's plan all his attributes take their proper part and place, and the *result* will be a grand triumph of all, demonstrating to angels and to men that His Justice, Wisdom,

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Love and Power are *each* infinitely perfect and that together they work out harmoniously His benevolent designs.

Ye fearful saints, fresh courage take;
 The clouds ye so much dread
 Are big with mercy, and shall break
 In blessings on your head.

Judge not the Lord by feeble sense,
 But trust him for his grace;
 Behind a frowning providence
 He hides a smiling face.

Deep in unfathomable mines
 Of never-failing skill,
 He treasures up His bright designs,

And works his sovereign will.

His purposes will ripen fast,
Unfolding every hour;
The bud may have a bitter taste,
But sweet will be the flower.

Blind unbelief is sure to err,
And scan His work in vain;
God is His own interpreter,
And He will make it plain.

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— November, 1884 —



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