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THE SATISFACTION OF JUSTICE

LAST year we answered questions on the above subject sent in by one of the number. We have been requested to present our reply in the columns of the WATCH TOWER, that others might be profited as well. We do so as follows:—

With the first and second paragraphs of your letter I agree quite well. The first point of objection is found in the third paragraph.

(1) Your statement reads, "Now to purchase for Adam a right of release, it would be necessary for some one to pay to Justice the exact equivalent of what he forfeited, give a ransom for him." I agree to that part, but disagree to the next statement, namely, "This Jesus did." Jesus died for all, he laid down his life as a ransom for all, but he did not give it or pay it over to Justice for all. He deposited the merit or value of it all in the hands of Justice as security or guarantee for the redemption of the whole world, but he applied only a portion, not for the world, but solely for those who would now exercise faith in him. It is as though a man conducting a large enterprise went to a banking company and, after securing the said bank against loss, got it to underwrite his scheme, and in connection therewith appropriate a certain amount of his deposit, leaving the remainder to be paid in later on, according to terms and conditions mutually agreed upon.

That this is the divine plan is shown in various ways in the Scriptures:

(a) We are distinctly told that our Lord Jesus ascended up on high, there to "appear in the presence of God for *us*"—not for the world in general, but for believers. The Scriptures in various ways indicate a marked distinction between the divine arrangement for us and the divine arrangement for the world. For instance, "Christ was a propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." This statement shows a distinct differentiation between our sins and the sins of the whole world. The one sacrifice is the basis of both these propitiations, yet they are separate and distinct in order—in time. The application of the Lord's grace is first to the Church, to believers, to the household of faith. He appears before the bar of Justice during this Gospel age to make satisfaction "*for us.*"

(b) Not only have we those statements to the effect that the atonement is effected thus far only for "the household of faith," but additionally we have the demonstration of this in the fact that the holy Spirit was shed forth only upon the Church, "the servants and handmaidens." The same is attested by the statement of the Apostle that we believers "have escaped the condemnation that

is on the world." The condemnation is still on the world, but it is not on us, because our High Priest has applied the merit of his sacrifice "on *our* behalf." Thus also the Apostle again states, "Ye are washed, ye are sanctified." Likewise he declares that the children of believers are similarly washed and cleansed, justified, and that the children of unbelievers are still "unclean."—1 Cor. 7:14.

If the atonement had been made, applied on behalf of the world, the world would no longer be unclean, children of wrath under condemnation, etc. Because the atonement was made for the household of the priest, therefore all the members of the household of faith are justified, cleansed, washed in the precious blood.

(c) It is in full accord with the foregoing that we find the Apostle distinctly declaring that it is the privilege of the Church to "fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ"—to "suffer with him," to "be dead with him," etc. Thus the teachings of the New Testament agree with those of the prophets of the Old Testament, who "spoke of the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow." The glory has not yet been revealed. When "revealed all flesh shall see it together." We are glad to trust that we are in the dawning of the Millennial day, that the glories of the great Messiah will soon be manifested to the groaning creation. This will be a manifestation of the Son of God, and also of all the sons of God graciously counted in with him as suffering with him, sacrificing with him, dead with him as members of his body, participators in his sufferings and sacrifice, sharers with him in his glory to be revealed.

(d) In accordance with the foregoing is the testimony of the Tabernacle Shadows which fits and binds together every feature of the glorious plan and shows us that the first sacrifice of the Day of Atonement, the sacrifice of the bullock, was for and on behalf of the body of the priest and his household, the house of Levi, the household of faith. It shows us that the sacrifice of the goat, representing the sacrifice of the body of Christ, is a part of the atonement work, though the merit rests entirely upon the first sacrifice—of the bullock. From this we see how the Lord is accepting "us" as sacrificers, because we are Christ's and not on our own account.

(e) We see further that this second part of the Atonement Day sacrifices will not be complete until the last member of the body of Christ has suffered with the Head. The type shows further that when this shall have been accomplished, the full ransom-price *for the world* will be presented to Justice and be accepted forthwith; and that as a result the great High Priest shall come forth clothed in glory and in blessing power and that the result will be the lifting of the curse, the removal of all divine wrath and the pouring of the holy Spirit upon "all flesh."

(f) This in no sense signifies that merit of the Church has accomplished anything that could not have been accomplished without her co-operation. It shows on the contrary that all the merit was

in the Lord Jesus and in the sacrifice which he gave. Any sacrifice which we make is based upon his merit imputed to us and continued in our sacrifice. It is the sacrifice of “his body,” in the larger sense of the word his Church, that will thus be completed. It will be the Christ, the great Prophet, Priest and King, of many members, with one Head, raised up from amongst the brethren. It will effect all this great blessing, and all the members of the body must recognize the honor of the Head and maintain the same; and all of them will be glad to acknowledge that without him we could do nothing, and that without him our sacrifices would not avail anything, and that hence to him belongs all the glory of the great salvation.

(1) I still affirm, as in the past, that as we all shared in Adam’s condemnation, any price which will avail for him must be sufficient to purchase deliverance for all that were in him—the whole human race: that the death penalty was such that if one were paid for, all would be paid for: that in harmony with this Jesus gave himself a ransom for all. But the giving of himself into death as “a ransom for all” or “a corresponding price,” must

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not be confounded with the paying over of that price to Justice after our Lord arose from the dead. He has the entire merit of his sacrifice at his command, and all of it pledged on behalf of Adam and his race, but only a portion of it is applied, namely, to the household of faith.

JESUS APPROPRIATED ON BEHALF OF BELIEVERS

(2) To say that the Lord paid over to the Father or to Justice the full amount, and that the Father accepted the same for all, would be to contradict the plain statements of Scripture which we have just examined. Justice is properly represented as being blind, and hence if the Lord’s merit had been applied *for all* Justice would

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not be at liberty to discriminate and to select first of all a little flock and withhold for a time the blessing of the remainder. Justice must be impartial, and if she accepts the price must at once release all claim upon the captives. We have shown that this is not the case, that Justice still regards the world as “children of wrath,” “under condemnation,” “unclean.” This proposition is, therefore, fallacious—manifestly so.

(3) When our Lord “ascended up on high” he led a multitude of captives. In the prophetic sense we might speak of the whole world as already released, but not in the actual sense. From the standpoint that our Lord’s life is a sufficiency to meet all the requirements of Justice whenever

applied, we may think and speak of the world as being no longer dead but merely asleep. Indeed our heavenly Father spoke of mankind from that standpoint of his purpose centuries before the ransom price was paid at all.

The entire work of redemption is properly viewed as one with a beginning and ending, just like the Day of Atonement. It was all one Day of Atonement, but there were two parts of the work of that day. And so there are various features or stages of the work of “leading captivity captive.” It began with our Lord’s own personal release from the captivity of death; it continued subsequently with the reckoned release of believers, and further development is found in their actual release in the First Resurrection. A still further development will be found in the awakening of the world and the restitution processes of the Millennial age. The absolute fulfilling of this leading of captivity captive will not be realized until the close of the Millennial age, when death will be literally, actually, fully “swallowed up in victory.”

OUR LORD’S SACRIFICE WAS SUFFICIENT

(4) There was no need of anything being added to the Lord’s sacrifice so far as Justice was concerned; but the Apostle tells us that God foreknew us also by Jesus,—that, in the divine plan formulated before the world began, the Lord foreordained the Church, Jesus’ Bride or associates; and in order for us to share with him in his glory it was necessary that we should also share with him in his sufferings. And because his sufferings were by divine arrangement applied as the atonement for the sins of the Church, therefore, by this divine arrangement, any sufferings that the Church may experience are counted in with those of the Lord as “sufferings of Christ;” and all the sufferings of Christ were atonement sufferings, not for personal sins, but for the sins of the world.

If any of the Lord’s people suffer stripes as punishments for partially wilful sins, such sufferings are not part of the sufferings of Christ, but are stripes for discipline. The sufferings which we have with Christ are of the same nature as his, namely, because of our loyalty to him and the principles of righteousness for which he stands.

JUSTICE DEALS ONLY WITH THE MEDIATOR

(5) It would not be the correct thought to say that the life of Adam forfeited through sin is to be given back to him by Justice, because Jesus redeemed us. The thought rather is that Adam and his race had forfeited their rights to life and had no such rights at the bar of Justice, and that Jesus sacrificed his human life on man’s behalf, so that the dead world might receive life *through him*—life from the dead.

It is in harmony with this thought and in opposition to the other that the Lord speaks of himself as the Bread which came down from heaven, of which a man might eat and not die. Thus in the celebration of the Lord's Memorial Supper, in partaking of the bread we represent our faith in his redemptive work and our justification to life through the life which he laid down for us.

The same thought is also presented in the Scriptures when referring to Christ as the "Everlasting Father" of the world in the future. He sacrificed his life, and is by divine authority granted the privilege of applying its equivalent to Adam and all of his race as he may please. He does apply a portion of that merit now to us who believe, and eventually he will apply sufficient of his merit to bring a blessing to all the world of mankind. Hence we have the promise of the Scriptures of a future time of restitution: the restitution to life of Adam and his children by virtue of their acceptance of that life as a gift—which Christ secured for them by the laying down of his life on their behalf. This our Lord designates regeneration. The world was generated once through Adam and all lost life through his disobedience. Christ has died that he might assume the place and rights and privileges of headship to our race, the privilege of fatherhood. He proposes a regeneration of all the children of Adam—so many of them as will accept the terms and conditions for returning to the full life and perfection of perfect human nature.

MIGHT NOT THE CHURCH BE MERELY "RECKONED SACRIFICERS"?

(6) The "reckoning" of Scripture is merely that of justification, making up for our inherited deficiencies and weaknesses. There is no reckoning of sacrifice. Being blemished by nature we have nothing whatever to sacrifice unless first we are counted or reckoned as justified,—made whole, cleansed. Such the Apostle urges, "I beseech you, brethren, by the mercies of God [in your justification] that ye present your bodies living sacrifices, holy, acceptable to God, your reasonable service." The sacrifice must be an actual one of a body reckoned perfect, but actually very imperfect. We cannot be reckoned to suffer with Christ if we do not suffer with him, and hence there is nothing in the Scriptures to this effect. On the contrary, "If we [actually] suffer with him, we shall also be glorified together." It will not do, therefore, to figure away these plain limitations of the Scriptures. Whoever does so is in a dangerous position, wresting with the Scriptures.

On the Atonement Day the blood of the bullock was sprinkled seven times, as representing fulness, completeness, efficacy—efficacy for the thing for which it was sprinkled or applied, namely, on behalf of the High

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Priest's body and household. Similarly, subsequently, the blood of the Lord's goat, the second offering of the Atonement Day, was sprinkled seven times, representing similarly perfection,

fulness, completeness, efficacy, for the purpose it was applied, namely, on behalf of “all the people.”

PERHAPS JESUS DIVIDES THE CREDIT WITH HIS CHURCH

(8) It is wholly contrary to the facts and Scripture to say that Jesus divided the *credit* of the atonement sacrifice with his Church, but not the deed. It is the deed that he requires, and without the deed there will be no participation. It is not the less his deed, as already shown. We could have neither part nor lot in the matter except as members of his body and under the influence of him as our Head, who works in us to will and to do of his good pleasure—to fill up that which is behind of the sufferings of Christ.

(9) Yes, we use balances to represent divine Justice. Adam’s disobedience forfeited his life to satisfy Justice; the unmerited death of Christ would balance or offset Adam’s penalty, and when applied will give him the right to regenerate Adam’s race on appropriate terms and conditions.

(10) To say that “The Church sacrifices her life-rights to become sharer in the great reward of Christ,” yet to reject the clear testimony that God accepts this as a part of the sufferings of Christ, guided by him as the Head, and finally to be applied by him as a part of his own, is inconsistent and unreasonable.

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— February 15, 1905 —



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