

The Ransom Price Paid for Sinners

Guarantees a

Millennial Age of Restitution

"Times of Restitution of all things which God hath spoken by the mouth of all the holy prophets since the world began."—Acts 3:19-21.

"There is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time."—1 Tim. 2:5-6.

At another time we may consider the forepart of this text, but on this occasion I invite your attention to the last clause, which explains that our Lord's sacrifice was for all mankind, and that in due time this great matter will be made known to all people with a view to their being blessed by and through the fact and the knowledge of it.

The Doctrines of Christ

Perhaps I should take a moment here to answer a question which I understand is frequently raised in respect to my preaching, namely, Why does Pastor Russell give so much more attention to doctrinal questions than do other ministers? Why does he not give more attention to scientific matters, politics, moral reform and practical living? My reply is in the words of our Saviour, "After all these things do the Gentiles seek"—all these are worldly matters while the doctrines of Christ and the apostles are peculiar to Christians. Hindoos, Confucians and Mohammedans have a common interest in the affairs of the world and its moral, physical and political welfare, but the Christian minister is divinely directed to "Preach the Word," and the Word ignores worldly science, politics, reform, etc., and deals especially with doctrines. I am, therefore, merely following the example of Christ and his apostles, and the reason why this seems peculiar is, that the majority of the ministers largely neglect to heed the Scriptural injunction and the apostolic models. When they do occasionally touch upon doctrine, they, alas, too frequently "teach for doctrines the commandments of men," from the creeds of the past five centuries rather than from the inspired words of the Lord and his apostles.

It may be well here to notice briefly the value of doctrines—the value of those teachings which differentiate true Christians from the remainder of mankind. The ignoring of the doctrines of Scripture and the substitution of the doctrines of men during the "dark ages" have brought the world to the place where all doctrines are tabooed and distasteful, because said false doctrines from the "dark ages" are unreasonable and repulsive to the growing intelligence of the world. Instead of ignoring doctrine, however, the people of God should seek and find the proper interpretation of the Bible, which is everywhere reasonable, logical and harmonious with itself and with sanctified common sense. This, then,

is my apology for so frequently discussing the "doctrines of Christ" and of the prophets and of the apostles.

Christ a Ransom for All

Our text declares a great fact, which Christian people generally ignore, if they do not deny—the fact that our Lord Jesus' death was a "ransom price," whose scope covers and includes the entire family of Adam. The fact that the Scriptures do speak of a specially Elect class which is being gathered out of the world during this Gospel Age, and which is promised joint-heirship with Christ in his coming Millennial Kingdom—the fact also that the great mass of mankind at the present time and throughout the six thousand years of the past have been "without God and without hope in the world," because without a knowledge of "the only name given under heaven and amongst men whereby we must be saved"—these facts have led many to the erroneous conclusion that our Lord's death had not been and never will be a "ransom price" or "offset price" for the cancellation of the sins of mankind in general. Their reasoning has, indeed, certain logical features; for if the world in general has not and if in future it never will receive a blessing at the Lord's hands it seems the logical conclusion must be that justice did not receive and will never receive a full ransom price for Original Sin. In seeming harmony with this erroneous thought is the fact that only a comparatively small proportion of humanity has been specially favored of the Lord with an opening of the eyes of their understanding, and the privilege, through faith, of coming back into harmony with their Creator.

Seemingly supporting this view also are the Scriptural statements respecting the present "narrow way" and "strait gate" which "few" can find, and the many references to the Elect as constituting only a Little Flock. Building upon this erroneous conclusion, our forefathers of the "dark ages" and since have proceeded to give various explanations of the eternal torture of the world of mankind—the non-Elect—those not favored by the Almighty with a knowledge of the only name given under heaven and amongst men whereby we must be saved. These false doctrines built upon the "traditions of the elders" have had a nauseating effect upon intelligent minds: They therefore contradict the Scriptural declaration that God is just, loving, wise and all-powerful. What we need to correct the nausea, to refresh the hearts, to re-inspire a love and zeal for the Lord and his Word, is to see with clearness what are the true doctrines of the Scriptures respecting these matters.

This is no ordinary tract. Read it!

"Tasted Death for Every Man"

The Scriptures declare that our Lord Jesus "by the grace of God tasted death for every man." They show conclusively that his death "was a propitiation for our sins (the Church's sins); and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." (I John 2:2.) But to appreciate these statements, to see how they can be and are true, it is necessary to know that the Scriptures nowhere declare that the present Gospel Age is the only period of divine favor, the only period for the forgiveness of sins, the only period of reconciliation with God, the only period of opportunity for being taught of God and of obtaining his blessing and favor, lost through original sin in Eden. As soon as we grasp this great fact our eyes begin to open to other facts:

(1) That prior to this Gospel Age, during the Jewish Age and previously, all the world except that one little nation were aliens, strangers and foreigners from God and his promises, "without God and without hope in the world" (Eph. 2:12); (2) that the Scriptures clearly indicate a "world to come," a future epoch, in connection with the affairs of this world, under new and better conditions than now prevail; (3) that that future epoch is called the "Day of Christ," the "Day of the Lord." It is indeed the Millennial Day, the thousand years of Christ's reign for the very purpose of blessing and uplifting the world of mankind, for whose sins his death was the atonement price and who are to be healed by his stripes. (4) We find that every invitation and injunction of the Gospel Age is with a view to the selection of an "Elect class," who shall be joint-heirs with Christ during that Millennial Age, to share with him in the great work of general human uplift.

At this point many good people laboring under a degree of blindness, from the "smoke of the dark ages," feel disposed to object and to insist that there can be no future probation. If we ask them why, they reply that the entire Scriptural teaching contradicts the thought of a future hope beyond the tomb. We reply that this is an error—that the very reverse is true, as we shall show. We ask them for a single Scripture on their side of the Scripture subject. To their amazement they find none, but as a last resort quote from Ecclesiastes the words, "Where the tree falleth there shall it be." (Eccl. 11:3.) A very slim text, indeed, to raise up as a barrier against the entire voice of the Scriptures, against all the demands of reason and logic as well. This Scripture is in full accord with what we claim, namely, that a tree when it is fallen is lifeless and powerless, and cannot raise itself up, so is man in death—under the sentence and wage of Original Sin. The Scriptural argument is that the whole race of Adam was thus dead—without life, without power to raise itself out of its fallen condition, without any claim upon eternal life or divine favor in any sense; but, as our text declares, our Lord Jesus "gave himself a ransom for all"—for Adam, the transgressor, in particular and for all of his race who shared in his penalty. And the all redeemed is the same all which shall have the blessed opportunity for release from sin and death bondage.

It was because man was in this helpless condition, dead, powerless to revive himself, that God went to his relief through Christ, and caused the great ransom-sacrifice to be made nearly nineteen centuries ago. Our text assures us that that ransom-sacrifice finished at Calvary was on behalf of all mankind, and is consequently to bring a blessing to all mankind.

Salvation by a Resurrection

We are not arguing that all who have died have gone to heaven; quite to the contrary. We stick close to the book, the Bible, in its declaration that the "dead know not anything"—that a resurrection is necessary to any future living. We hold with the Scriptures that at the end of this age, the First Resurrection will take place—the resurrection of the "blessed and holy"—those who have pleased God both by their faith and obedience. These, the Scriptures declare, will be "kings and priests unto God, and shall reign on the earth." The object of their reign will be to bring blessings of knowledge and opportunity to "every creature." These participants in the First Resurrection are the "Seed of Abraham," our Lord Jesus, the Head, and his Church, the members of his Body. Thus the Apostle declares, "If ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's Seed, and heirs according to the promise."—Gal. 3:29.

The promise to which Christ and the Church are heirs is that they shall be God's instrumentality for the blessing, instruction and uplifting of all the willing of the world of mankind. To be heirs of this promise made to Abraham, that in his Seed all the families of the earth should be blessed, would be a meaningless farce and jest on the Almighty's part had he not purchased or ransomed all men and provided a time and means by which his blessing should accrue to the world. Thus we perceive that he has arranged a time for granting the world a trial for life—a trial respecting their willingness to abandon the ways of sin and death and to walk in the ways of righteousness under the enlightenment of the Truth, which, we are assured, shall shine forth as the sun, and whose beams shall heal humanity. (Mal. 4:2.) The means for the blessing we see provided in Christ, and his Bride, the "Elect" Church of this Gospel Age; but the guarantee of the whole is fixed beyond peradventure in the fact that "Jesus Christ, by the grace of God, tasted death for every man," or, as our text declares, became the Mediator between God and man by giving himself a ransom for all.

A point I want to emphasize here is that the giving of this ransom price and the acceptance of it by Justice imply divine intention for the blessing of all mankind, in full accord with the various testimonies of the entire Scriptures. Why should a ransom be given for all if it was not intended of God that all should benefit by it, or at least have an opportunity of benefiting by it, which would be virtually the same thing? We hold that it is beyond dispute that the giving of a ransom for all and the divine acceptance of it, in harmony with the divine promise, are the sure guarantee that ultimately a blessing must come to every member of Adam's race as a result.

The fact that this knowledge has not yet reached all mankind in the past and is not reaching all mankind to-day, but, on the contrary, only a small minority, and the fact that knowledge of God's favor and an intelligent acceptance of it on faith and a reasonable obedience in harmony with that faith are the demands of the divine Word, require no proof. Proof could be given on almost every page of the Scriptures that faith, and endeavor to obedience in harmony with that faith, are necessary to salvation, but we will content ourselves by mentioning a few citations. The Apostle Paul says, "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God." "How shall they believe on him of whom they have not heard." (Rom. 10:14-17.) "Without faith it is impossible to please God." (Heb. 11:6.) "All that are

in their graves shall hear the voice of the Son of God," and "the knowledge of the Lord shall fill the whole earth as the waters cover the great deep." (John 5:28; Isa. 11:9.) "All the blind eyes shall be opened and the deaf ears shall be unstopped." (Isa. 35:5.) "They shall no longer teach every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord."—Jer. 31:34.

"To Be Testified in Due Time"

Our text is in full accord with all these statements of the importance of knowledge, declaring the fact that our Lord Jesus gave himself a ransom for all is to be testified in "due time." The present time is the due time for the Church, the household of faith, to hear the voice of the Son of God; and they who now hear live, pass from death unto life—to newness of life, to begetting to newness of nature. By and by, when the present class of "called," "Elect" ones, shall have been glorified with their Lord, all the remainder of mankind shall hear, "All that are in their graves shall hear his voice" and come forth for this very purpose—that they may hear, may understand, may appreciate and may be assisted to obey the voice of him that speaketh from heaven—the great Ransomer, who, in that day, will be King over all the earth and will bind Satan and will put down every opposing influence, to the intent that all may come to a full appreciation of God and his righteous laws and to full obedience thereto.

This is the Apostle Peter's declaration in Acts 3:22, 23: He points us to the fact that Moses was a type of Christ—Jesus the Head and the Church his Body—and this antitypical "Priest" God is raising up from among his brethren—raising him up to the glory, honor and immortality of the divine nature, and to the power and authority of the Kingdom—to the intent that, as the Seed of Abraham, this great Messiah shall "bless all the families of the earth" with knowledge and every opportunity for return to all of divine favor and blessing that was lost in Eden. And of those who will refuse to hear that great Prophet, Priest and King during the Millennial Age—what of them? The Apostle answers, "It shall come to pass that the soul that will not hear (obey) that Prophet, shall be utterly destroyed from amongst the people"—cut off in the Second Death, from which there will be no hope of recovery, no resurrection.

"Times of Restitution"

In full accord with all this view is the Apostle Peter's statement respecting the blessings that are to come to mankind during the Millennial Age, following our Lord's second advent and the glorification of his Church to joint-heirship with himself. The Apostle calls that period "Times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord, when he shall send Jesus Christ," at his second advent. The Apostle declares that in the meantime the heavens must receive him, must retain him, "until the time of restitution of all things which God hath spoken by the mouth of all the holy prophets since the world began." In other words, he assures us that these restitution times or years of uplifting of mankind will follow as a result of the Lord's second coming and the establishment of his Kingdom in glory and in power.—Acts 3:19-21.

That these times of restitution signify years of restitution, I need not state; nor need I point out that here the thousand years of Christ's reign are re-

ferred to. The word "restitution" is, or ought to be, familiar to everybody, nevertheless I remind you that it signifies to put back or bring back something to an original or primary condition. The Apostle is speaking of humanity, and hence the suggestion is that the work of Christ and his Church in glory during the Millennium will be to restore mankind to the condition and privileges and blessings and favors enjoyed before sin entered the world—before the "curse" passed upon all by one man's disobedience. (Rom. 5:12.) Evolutionists would have little sympathy with the Apostle's statement here, for, according to their erroneous theory, "restitution" to original condition would be the last thing for humanity to desire or hope for, or for God to promise as a blessing. But we are not consulting Evolutionists in this matter—we are taking the Word of God, which liveth and abideth forever. In harmony with his promise we are to anticipate, therefore, that as the world of mankind has been in a fallen and falling condition, with ups and downs, especially downs, for six thousand years, and that when the Lord's time shall come and "times of restitution" shall begin, the present downward or fallen conditions will give place to upward conditions, to restitution times—for the general uplifting of all mankind.

Because "Christ Died for Our Sins"

We have just seen that the great ransom sacrifice finished at Calvary is the basis upon which God can be just and yet be the justifier of those who believe in Jesus (Rom. 3:26) and release them from the sentence of death, which was justly upon them as the imperfect posterity of the fallen Adam, unworthy of life eternal under divine conditions. The more we look into this matter the more logical, reasonable and satisfactory we see the divine plan to be. The first man perfect, the image of God, sinned with deliberation, and received as a penalty a death sentence; after waiting more than four thousand years, God sent a Redeemer in the person of his Son. Since man was not a spirit being but a human being, therefore, the Apostle declares, Christ took not hold upon the nature of angels, but humbled himself and came to the still lower plane of humanity and became the "man Christ Jesus"—"holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners." Then, as "the man Christ Jesus," "he gave himself a ransom for all," as our text declares, "to be testified in due time." The testimony has already been in the world for nineteen centuries, and it has selected the very class which God foreknew and foretold—a Little Flock of footstep followers, who are to be joint-heirs with their Redeemer and Lord. Next in order will come the testimony to the remainder of mankind—first, to those who have not yet gone into the tomb, and, secondly, to those who have already gone into the tomb, who will be awakened for the very purpose of receiving this testimony and being tested by it. In accord with this the Apostle declares that the Church is a "kind of first-fruits unto God of his creatures." First-fruits implies an after fruitage.—James 1:18.

Here we notice the difference between the blessing God designed for the Elect Church he is selecting during this Gospel Age and the blessing he purposes for the obedient of the world of mankind in general. The Church's blessing is not "restitution," and in harmony with this we see no evidence of restitution anywhere about us. The restitution work waits for the restitution time, which begins with the establishment of the Kingdom.

Believers of this present time, indeed, have a faith equivalent to restitution, in that they are reckoned as

having their sins covered with the robe of Christ's righteousness, of being reckoned as having passed from the sentence of death in Adam to a share of a life in Christ, reckoned as having received again fellowship and communion with God, lost in Adam through his disobedience in Eden. All this in a sense serves as an equivalent to the restitution which is to come to the world in its "due time." But the world will not get these things by faith, but will get them actually, gradually attaining to them more and more during the thousand years, until at its close all who shall have appreciated God's favors and obeyed the voice of the great Prophet, Priest and King, will be actually perfect—as perfect as was Adam in every talent, quality, power and capacity, and with increased capacity through increased knowledge.

Heavenly Reward for the Elect Only

Not so the Church of this Gospel Age. She gets none of these restitution blessings actually. She merely has them by faith, and this for a special purpose—to sacrifice them—to permit her to present her body a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, her reasonable service—her participation in the sufferings of Christ that she may be accounted worthy to participate in his glories of the heavenly nature and his Millennial work. The Gospel invitation to the Church is to lay down her life, to exchange these earthly privileges and blessings bought by the precious blood of Christ for heavenly privileges offered to her as a reward of obedience—"To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I overcame and am set down with my Father in his throne." Glory, honor and immortality—the divine nature—will be the great "change" from present earthly conditions to heavenly conditions, far beyond anything possible for the natural man to appreciate, and seen, even by the saints, as through a glass obscurely. This great change which is to come to the Lord's faithful Bride by her participation in "his resurrection," the "First Resurrection," the resurrection to spirit perfection, is the great hope and ambition set before us, dear brethren and sisters. It is for this that we are exhorted to lay aside every weight and every besetting sin and to run with patience—sacrificing earthly things and treasures that we may have this better treasure, this pearl of great price, this participation in the Kingdom with our dear Redeemer.

All the Holy Prophets Foretold This

The Apostle declares that these "times of restitution" which are coming are spoken of "by the mouth of all the holy prophets since the world began." We should like to take up this subject in detail, and scrutinize the testimony of all the prophets to know the accuracy of the Apostle's statement, and this we may do on some other occasion. Suffice it now that we take the Apostle's word, calling to mind merely the various statements and promises of the Law and Prophets, pointing out these glorious good things for the world of mankind—that are delayed only until the completion of the "Elect" Church. The prophets speak of the restoration of Israel to divine favor, of how their blind eyes shall be opened, that they shall see in very truth that he whom they pierced was the Messiah indeed who gave his life for

their ransom. The Apostle clearly points out in Romans, ninth and tenth and eleventh chapters, that not only was the falling away of Israel foretold in the prophets but also their regathering—their restoration to divine favor; but this, he points out to us, will be after the completion of the Gospel Church—Spiritual Israel. Again he declares, that "they shall obtain mercy through your mercy." The glorified Church, with Christ at her head as the great King, is to dispense the mercies of God to the Jew first and also to "all the families of the earth."

Let us, dear brethren and sisters, hold fast to the doctrine of Christ as set forth in his own teachings—that he "came to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19:10); that he beheld mankind as a treasure in a field and bought the whole field that he might develop the treasure. Let us note that the same Gospel is set forth also in all the declarations of the apostles and of "all the holy prophets since the world began." While the doctrine of men would be inclined to lead us away from God—to make us think of the Almighty as unjust and cruel, heartless, loveless and powerless—the doctrines of the Scriptures open the blind eyes and give us to see the King in his beauty—the glorious majesty of the God of Love, the God of Wisdom, the God of Justice, the God of Power. They give us to see, as declared by the Prophet, that "As the heavens are higher than the earth; so are God's ways higher than man's ways, and God's plans higher than man's plans." From this standpoint of greater enlightenment respecting the divine character, we will have greater desire to serve and to please him, esteeming it a great privilege to lay down our very lives in his service, counting all things as but loss and dross for the excellency of the knowledge of Jesus Christ our Lord—that we might know him intimately and be found in him, as his members, and be made sharers in his resurrection—the First Resurrection—to the change of nature, to glory, honor and immortality.—Phil. 3:8-11.

"None Other Name Given"

We appreciate the tender sympathy which leads to the hope that dear friends and relatives and the heathen, who have died out of Christ are "safe in the arms of Jesus." True, they are safe in the care of him who died for all. He will not torture any of his enemies even to all eternity, as once we feared but now find to be unscriptural. But let us see that, while the Scriptures teach that the worst that can befall any of his enemies will be "everlasting destruction" without hope of a future life, there is a grand hope taught for the ignorant—that all such shall be saved from their ignorance and be "brought to an accurate knowledge of the truth that they may be saved"—in God's "due time." (I. Tim. 2:4-6.) Let us recognize the truth of the Master's words and build a proper faith in accordance with its statement—"He that hath the Son hath life; he that hath not the Son shall not see life"—eternal. (John 3:36.) God's salvation is by knowledge and not by ignorance—"through faith in the precious blood" and not in ignorance of it—by a resurrection and a Millennial Kingdom in which we are invited to share with our Redeemer as his Bride and joint-heirs to accomplish the uplift of all who will then prove willing and obedient.

We have prepared a pamphlet which every Bible student should possess, and which thousands would not sell for many dollars could they not procure another. It is styled, "*What Say the Scriptures About Hell?*" It sells for 10c a copy, but we have a magazine edition of it which we will offer for a little while free on postal-card request.

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