

“THE RANSOM”

(Discourse by R. H. Hirsh, 1916 Convention Report, starting on page 41.)

“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)

“Righteousness and Justice are the Foundation of Thy Throne.”—Psalm 89:14, R. V.

The first text shows an absence of harmony between God on the one hand and men on the other. It introduces too, a Mediator of the existing difficulties between the Creator and His erring creatures.

St. Paul was an eminent Jurist, and he has done much to clarify mysteries which hitherto seemed impenetrable. Four thousand years of estrangement had widened the gap between God and mankind.

It was “in due time Christ died for the ungodly;” and as Jesus said, *all* were ungodly —“none righteous, no, not one”; “none good, no not one.” We inquire, Whence came the change, since God had once pronounced man “very good”?

Jehovah’s Government

As man has various forms of government for his well-being, so God has a form of government for His good and for that of His creatures.

Government means organized control, and so far as we know, God’s government extends to the utmost bounds of creation, except in this little province known to us as Mother Earth.

God’s government, or kingdom, was established here at the time man was placed on the earth, and for a time flourished without interruption.

Family discord is a most dreadful thing, and yet few homes have been free from it to any great extent. God’s family is no exception to this rule. His family, both in Heaven and on earth, has been a scene of the wildest disorder, conspicuous example of which we have along the battle-grounds of Europe and in the anarchy which has prevailed for several years in the Republic of Mexico, to the south of us. In fact, the history of man is a succession of pages written in blood.

God's Methods of Discipline

It is not necessary to detail to this audience, the particulars of this far-reaching sedition in the family of God, both in Heaven and on earth; suffice it is to say that it began among the angels and was extended to this planet by means of the most monstrous lie of all history—“Thou shalt not surely die,” in the face of the express declaration of Jehovah, “Thou shalt *surely* die!”

The punishment of man was swiftly administered. Driven from his Edenic home and obliged to battle with thorns and thistles, degradation was rapid, and as man did not longer like to retain God in his mind, God has let him do practically as he pleased. And what an awful condition the world presents today—a vast slaughter-house, destined for a time to grow even worse; so terrible that “unless these days were cut short, no flesh could live.”

Withholding to impose immediate punishment upon the instigator of the rebellion in Heaven and on earth, resulted in 1600 years in vast additions to the ranks of the Arch-conspirator, Satan.

The Flood of Noah’s day was timed to perfection to accomplish the imprisonment in earth’s atmosphere of the fallen hosts of Heaven, Satan being “Prince of the power of the air,” “the god of this world,” “the prince of this world.”

Principles of God’s Government

The Scriptures inform us that the foundation principles of the Divine Government are Righteousness and Justice, and that “all the wicked will God destroy.”

Satan’s doom is sealed forever, and he knows it. The Divine delay in the execution of the culprit is due only to the fact that Jehovah designed that the activity of the evil principle should be permitted for 6000 years, and that 1000 years shall then be devoted to the undoing of its evil effects—all this that both men and angels, might learn by experience the terrible effects of sin—that “the end of sin is death,” and that the aches and pains and all the ills of mankind are accompaniments of death.

There has been some measure of excuse for man’s wayward course, which would call for the exercise of consideration and permit the operation of Divine Love; but none in Satan’s case, and none will be granted, for none would be accepted.

“Mercy Rejoiceth Against Justice”

The Jewish Law, for 1600 years, taught the exact measure of Divine Justice—“a tooth for a tooth, an eye for an eye, a man’s life for a man’s life.”

The willful breaking of the Law of Heaven by the perfect man naturally required the full measure of punishment—the life of the law-breaker. If Divine Wisdom could detect any occasion for the exercise of Divine Love in the case, mercy would be extended.

In the case of Adam unerring Wisdom decided that there were extenuating circumstances regarding his sin, and although Justice decreed death for the crime, Divine Mercy would rejoice against Divine Justice “in due time.” In other words, Divine Mercy would supply a willing Substitute—a Corresponding Price—in the hands of Divine Justice for Adam and thus release him and his posterity from the sentence of death—“whosoever will.”

At the same time Divine Justice will always hold the life of one perfect human being on account of Original Sin, and thus continue satisfied for the outrage perpetrated against the foundation principles upon which our God always acts.

Since Jesus gave himself a Corresponding Price, it will be the humanity of Jesus which will forever be held by Justice as a lasting lesson of its severity and an enduring Monument of the Love of God—Jesus at Jordan being begotten to the Divine Nature and later born upon the Divine Plane in his resurrection. As he said,—“My flesh I will give for the life of the world.” (John 6:51.) “Jehovah hath laid upon Him the iniquity of us all.” (Isa. 53:6) Thus “Mercy rejoiceth against Justice.”

It is more and more dawning upon the human mind, particularly upon those who are deep students of the Bible, that God has permitted the entrance of Sin as an object lesson for both men and angels—that they might learn from experience as well as by theory the attributes of His character—Justice, Love, Wisdom, Power.

While the violation of Righteousness and Justice incurred a penalty which was enforced without apparent leniency for 4,000 years, since then the predominant attribute of the Divine character has been conspicuously brought into play—namely, Divine Love, for “God is Love.”

“What Is Man?”

Never has there been anything to compare with the Love that has sought us and bought us!

“Such Love was never known,
Such Pity never shown!”

It is written, “God *so* loved the world that He gave His *Only* Begotten Son.”

From the time of the Fall of man until the Redemption-Sacrifice was offered, promise after promise of recovery of the erring was given. From the time the animals were slain

and the skins provided a covering for our first parents—representing the Greater Sacrifice 4000 years later, and the Robe of His Righteousness thus furnished, there were hearts that never grew sick and hope that never grew faint among the people of God.

The Light of Truth always burned, even though it was not held by so many at times. “The path of the Just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more.”

What must have been the thought of Mary, mother of our Lord, as she was covered by the Power of Heaven and the Glory of God shone round about her!

How her heart must have burned as she communed with her cousin Elizabeth, who three months later gave birth to John the Baptist. How her heart must also have magnified the Lord as she journeyed the highway to Bethlehem and later as her baby Boy lay in the lowly manger wrapped in swaddling garments!

Hear her own words during the time of her visitation: “My heart doth magnify the Lord; I rejoice in God, my Savior!”

“What is man that Thou art mindful of him, and the son of man that Thou visitest him? Thou madest him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honor. Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of Thy hands; Thou hast put all things under his feet.” *“But yet we see not all things put under him.”*

“We See Jesus”

“But we see Jesus, who also was made a little lower than the angels, *for the suffering of death*, likewise crowned with glory and honor, that he, by the grace of God, should taste death for every man.”

Yes, “We *see* Jesus!” We *see* him in the animals sacrificed extending over 4000 years, most of them upon Jewish altars; we see him in the promises of God extending over the same period.

We see him in the nick of time leaving the glory which he had with the Father when he was “in the form of God.” We see him meditating not a usurpation of Divine authority and power, but we *see* him “made flesh” and *see* “his glory, the glory as of the Only Begotten.”

We *see* him in the manger lowly. We *see* the Angel Gabriel on the Judean plains saying, “We bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be unto *all people*; for there is born unto you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.”

We *see* the Heavenly hosts hastening to the delivery of the greatest Message yet given to man, and we *see* them burst into song—“Glory to God in the Highest, on earth, *Peace*, Good Will amongst men!”

We *see* in the right hand of Him who sits on the Throne of the Universe a book written on the inside and on the outside (“The Divine Plan of the Ages”), and sealed with seven seals.—Revelation 5:1-5.

And we *see* a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, “Who is worthy to open the Book, and to loose the seals thereof?” We *see* St. John weeping much, because no man was found worthy to open and to read the Book, neither to look therein.

And then we *see* one of the Elders speaking unto St. John and saying, “Weep not, Behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah hath prevailed to open the Book and loose the seals!”

“Worthy Is the LAMB!”—“A Ransom for All”

Next we *see* him upon Jordan’s banks and with his face turned Heavenward we hear him saying, “Sacrifice and offering [typical] Thou wouldst not, but a body hast Thou prepared me!”

And then, with that Heaven-provided body, he declared, “I came to do Thy will” with it. He thus taketh away the first sacrifices, the offerings of bulls and goats, which would never take away sin, and establisheth the second, “the better sacrifices”—those of Jesus the Head, and the various members of the Church “which is His Body.”

His mission was well expressed when he declared, “The Son of Man came not to be ministered unto but to minister and to give his life a Ransom [*lutron-anti*—a price to correspond] for many.”—Matthew 20:26.

And also by the inspired St. Paul, who respecting the Master said, “He gave himself a Ransom [*anti-lutron*—a corresponding Price] for all—to be testified in due time.”

While the foregoing statements are the only Bible ones we have to prove to perfection the exactness of correspondence between Adam and Jesus, there are many texts which show the nicety of the philosophy of Divine Redemption—the operation of Divine Justice—Love—Wisdom—Power.

The Scriptures point out clearly that Adam and in him a race as yet unborn were placed on trial for life or death. The provision of the trial were: “Obey and thou shalt live!” “Disobey and thou shalt surely die!” The teaching of man the foundation principles of

the Divine Government was begun immediately after his creation. “Righteousness and Justice are the foundation of Thy Throne.”

And so the philosophy of Redemption is shown in the providing of a corresponding substitute in death for the first man, after the Law had pronounced Jesus perfect. Thus God’s Law is upheld—He continues to be Just and yet the Justifier of all those who obediently believe in Jesus.—Rom. 3:23-26.

Many corroborative texts might be presented respecting the Plan of Redemption, but we will content ourselves with only a few:

“As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive; but every man in his *own* order—anointed the first-fruits, afterward they that are Christ’s during his presence” of a thousand years.—1 Corinthians 15:22, 23.

“For as by one man’s disobedience many *were made sinners*, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.”—Rom. 5:19.

“The wages of sin is *death*; but the gift of God is Eternal Life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”—Romans 6:23.

“By man [Adam] came *death*; by Man [the Man Christ Jesus] comes the resurrection of the dead.”—1 Corinthians 15:21.

“He is a *satisfaction* for our sins [the Church’s sins], and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.”—1 John 2:2.

In view of this no wonder the apostle declares, “There shall be a resurrection of the dead—*both* of the *just* and of the *unjust!*”—Acts 24:15.

Ransom and Restitution

When we attach the Scriptural meaning to the words Ransom and Resurrection, we have no difficulty in comprehending the Divine Plan of the Ages.

The word Ransom in the Bible, as we have seen, implies not only a price laid down, but the recovery from death of all for whom the price is furnished. Thus it is said, “God is the Savior of all men,” that is, “whosoever will.”—1 Tim. 4:10.

The word Resurrection is not in Scripture applied to any brought forth from the tomb before Jesus, but is first applied to him because, as he declared, “I am he who was dead, but am *alive forevermore.*”—Revelation 1:18.

In the case of Lazarus, Jairus' daughter and the son of the widow of Nain, while they were likewise brought forth from death, even prior to Jesus' resurrection, they were unlike Jesus in that they were not perfect and were still in a dying condition.

Hence the word Resurrection is properly not applied to them by the Lord. They were not lifted up out of sin and death—to all that was lost for them by Adam and redeemed for them on Calvary by Jesus' death. The resurrection of the just will be in a moment, while that of the world will require long centuries of individual effort after they shall have been awakened from the tomb.

What Means New Testament or Covenant?

St. Paul says, "Where a Testament [bequest] is, there must be the death of the Testator" before the Covenant (bequest) becomes effective.

The question often arises as to what Jesus had to give. It is evident that he had not Divine life to give; that, only the Father gives. Therefore, Jesus is not the Father of the church; the Scriptures say He is not ashamed to call us *brethren*.—Hebrews 2:11.

Jesus said that no one could take his life from him—"I lay it down of myself." He had human life to lay down in the interest of mankind and the merit of this is what he has as an asset, so to speak, on deposit in the Father's hands to bequeath to the world.

According to the Divine Plan, Jesus (before he gives to mankind the right to human life which he laid down for them) continued his sacrifice, according to the Father's arrangement, throughout this Age by the addition of the Church which is his Body, the total number of which is 144,000.

Since the Head of the Church has been exalted to the Divine nature, it is only reasonable to suppose that "the Church which is his Body" will, when glorified together with him, likewise possess the Divine nature. It would be a strange spectacle to behold the head of an individual having the Divine nature and the body possessing the human nature—would it not?

Thus in order to make the offering of the Church acceptable as joint-sacrificers it is necessary that the merit of Jesus' sacrifice be imputed (counted) to them, that they also may be enabled to "offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness"—Malachi 3:3.

According to this arrangement, while Jesus' right to human life is held in reserve for the world, it is used now as a covering—a robe, so to speak—for his body, that "God may be just, and yet the Justifier of all these who believe in Jesus."

St. Paul's Graphic Account

St. Paul, in the 15th chapter of 1 Corinthians, verses 53 and 54 presents to us one of the briefest and yet sublimest word-pictures of the completion of The Christ of many members, and the work of a thousand years following, and of the success of that work over sin and the tomb.

He tells that when the work of clothing us as New Creatures with immortality shall have been completed, then (during the thousand years following) we shall be associated with Jesus in fulfilling prophecy respecting the swallowing up of death in victory—in giving back to Adam and his race the life which he forfeited by disobedience; in other words, giving to Adam and his children the human life which Jesus obediently laid down for them, according to the Plan of the Ages which God formed for that and other purposes.

Ransom – Sin-Offering – Atonement

A great many of the Lord's dear children have had difficulty in distinguishing between the Ransom, the Sin-offering and the Atonement. If we will only keep well in mind the fact that the word Ransom of our text relates only to a Price of a Corresponding character, and implies the recovery eventually of those for whom it was provided, we are then in a good position to see with clearness the difference between the Ransom and the Sin-Offering and the Atonement.

The Sin-Offering, or in other words the offering for Sin, reveals the Divine Method by which the benefits of the Price are derived. Again, the Ransom relates to the Price—the Sin-Offering to the course pursued leading up to and including the paying of the Price—Atonement, to the acceptance of the offering and the ultimate restoring of harmonious relationship upon an enduring basis between God and man—At-One-ment.

The dear brethren following me have topics allotted to them with which I must not interfere—namely, “Jesus Paid It All”; “On Deposit”; “Imputation”; “Application.”

Philosophy of Divine Plan Summed Up

Now we see with clearness, we believe, good and sufficient reasons for The Ransom given—The Corresponding Price. We see in it the scales of justice balancing perfectly—Perfect Man for Perfect man. We see that Justice And Righteousness were violated by the one Perfect Man. We see that alienation resulted therefore between Creator and creature.

We see that in “due time” Divine Love stepped in and offered a Substitutionary Sacrifice—a corresponding Substitute for the perfect man Adam and for all who have been

subjugated to sin and death through him. And we see that this one “who gave himself a Ransom for all” in this process becomes the Mediator between God and men. But at the same time we see that the exercise of the duties of his office as Mediator awaits the completion of the sacrifice of those who shall engage with him as his glorified Body in the great work of reconciling the world to God.

What a victory for Love it will be when the work of the thousand years of “Restitution” shall be finished! “God *so* loved the world!”