

UNEQUALLY YOKED

"Be not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial [Deut. 13:13]? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God. . .

Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty."—2 Cor. 6:14-18.

This command, not to be unequally yoked with unbelievers, is very generally quoted with reference to the subject of marriage. And it is properly so applied, being a general principle applicable in a variety of cases. But the Apostle is not here referring to the marriage bond, but to the bonds of friendship and communion, which should be sacred among the saints, and which should not exist between believers and unbelievers. Through this and the preceding chapter he has been discoursing about the doctrine of Christ. He has been preaching the gospel of redemption and resurrection, and of the privilege of being new creatures in Christ, and showing that, having by faith received the blessed gospel, we are ambassadors for Christ and co-workers together with him in making it known to others; and that as such we should be faithful to our commission, and under no circumstances allow the truth to be mixed with error. The idea is not that the saints should be unkind or unneighborly to the unbelieving; on the contrary, they are to be kind to all men, to the thankful and to the unthankful, to the believing and to the unbelieving (Luke 6:35; Gal. 6:10): but it is that they should not be friends in the sense of having communion and fellowship.

To be "yoked" together with another signifies more than a mere passing friendliness or neighborly kindness. It signifies an intimacy, a companionship, a fellowship of spirit. If two are bound together with the same yoke, they must of necessity walk together; and if they cannot agree to walk together, they must sever the yoke, whether it be a literal wooden yoke, or a yoke of friendship. Friendship is more than a passing kindness, and never exists without some bonds of fellowship. With a loyal and faithful Christian the bonds of fellowship or friendship can be none other than those of a common faith and hope. He has renounced the world with its ambitions and aims has lost its spirit, and has received instead the spirit of Christ with all its new and heavenly aspirations and hopes; consequently, if he be true to his profession, those earthly things can no longer constitute bonds of fellowship with him: he cannot submit to be yoked with those who are of the world. He has also renounced all the vain philosophies of human invention and has taken for his guide, and has found his delight in, the infallible Word of divine truth; consequently, if he remain true to his profession, the theories and speculations of men can constitute no bond of fellowship with him; for he has no sympathy with them. And, further, his commission as an ambassador for Christ (2 Cor. 5:20) not only precludes the possibility of fellowship on those terms, but it also arrays him, as a defender of the faith once delivered to the saints by the Lord and the Apostles, in opposition to every other form of doctrine.

The Apostle's questions are therefore significant: "What fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness?" None whatever: the man who is righteous cannot approve or agree with the unrighteous; they cannot walk together, either under the one yoke or the other, and they naturally drift apart, because there is nothing to hold them together. "And what communion hath light with darkness?" Can the natural light and darkness abide together? No more can the light of truth in one heart and the darkness of error in another draw them together in fellowship and sympathy. They are repellant and not attractive forces. They cannot assimilate. The light may come where darkness reigns and chase it away, and then there can be communion in light; but when the darkness opposes the light, and instead of giving place to it, seeks to overwhelm it, there can be no communion except the light suffer an eclipse and go out in darkness.

And "what concord [what harmony] hath Christ [the body of Christ, the true church] with Belial [with those who say, "Let us go and serve other gods"—See Deut. 13:13]? Those who agree with and fellowship such, have not the spirit of Christ, and are none of his, no matter how loudly they profess to be. "Or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel," an unbeliever? Is there any bond of fellowship there? "And what agreement hath the temple of God [the church, the body of Christ] with idols?" Can the spirit of God and the spirit of idolatry dwell in the same heart? God will not share his temple with another. We must be wholly devoted to him, or we are not acceptable to him. Therefore, every other idol must be banished from our hearts, Christ alone enthroned, and only his true and loyal subjects fellowshiped.

"Wherefore, come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean, and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty."

How explicit and positive is the command, and how blessed the promise to the obedient. Every word of the command is full of significance:—

The first word—"Wherefore"—calls up the forceful argument preceding, *i. e.*, in view of the fact that it is impossible to serve two masters or to have the spirit of Christ, and still have fellowship with the opponents of Christ; in view of the fact that we must either be true and loyal to him, or else be none of his—"Wherefore, come out from among them [from among the enemies of Christ, whether the avowed or the deceitfully cloaked, who, although professing to be light-bringers and truth-seekers, love darkness better than light, because their hearts are not right; whose conduct shows that they do not love the Lord and the truth, and who only seek to entice the faithful away from the narrow path which God has marked out]; and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean."

To be separate does not mean to be friends and companions, or to be in fellowship on any grounds. It means that we are to make a clean-cut division between ourselves and all the unclean, the impure in heart, as manifested by their disloyalty to the truth, and thereby to God, its great Author; and that this separation is to be so marked that the disfellowshipped one will be sure to know it, and that none can mistake our obedience and loyalty to the Lord and his truth. There is to be no trifling or half-way obedience in this matter; for we are not only to be separate in spirit from the enemies of the Lord, but we are not to *touch* the unclean. As the Apostle elsewhere says we are to "avoid them"—to have no part or lot with them.

It is only on these conditions that we have the Lord's promise—"And I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you; and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." We are thus brought face to face with the alternative of making a definite choice between the Lord and his truth on the one hand, and the enemies of the Lord, whether open or covert, on the other. The command is, "Choose ye this day whom ye will serve." There is no neutral ground; and no half-way compliance can realize the blessed promise—"And I will receive you," etc.

It is the spirit of the world, and not the spirit of Christ, which considers such a separation from the ungodly and the apostate a hard service. The loyal heart cannot admit to its communion and fellowship those who have not the same loyal disposition. What would be the natural conclusion of a husband, if he saw his wife, who professed loyalty and devotion to him, making a special friend or companion of his enemy, either secret or open? or of the wife whose husband found pleasure in fellowship and communion with one who is an enemy to her, or who in any way treats her with discourtesy or disrespect? And should we not be equally loyal to our heavenly Bridegroom and our heavenly Father? and equally sensitive and quick to discern the opposing spirit which seeks to undermine and destroy the faith and loyalty of God's elect? Would not true loyalty and devotion count the injury or the blessing done to a friend as done unto us? So the Lord views the matter when he says, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." (Matt. 25:40) And so also the Psalmist teaches, saying, "Do not I hate them, O Lord, that hate thee? and am not I grieved with those that rise up against thee? I hate them with perfect hatred: *I count them mine enemies.*"

To thus come out from among the unclean, and to be separate from all the deceitful, as well as from the open, workers of iniquity, may often leave us quite alone in the world; but the truly loyal heart will prefer to be alone with God, rather than to have the friendship of those who are untrue to him. Even if the Scriptures had nothing to say on the subject, such would be *natural* to a devoted heart.

It is therefore all in vain that some testify of their love to God while they keep company with his opponents. Their actions speak louder than their words. It is in vain also that they urge the plea of charity when the Lord says, "Be ye separate, and touch not the unclean."

Many, and very plain and positive, are the warnings of the Word of God against the "evil communications" that "corrupt good manners." (1 Cor. 15:33) The Apostle Paul's counsel (Acts 20:28-30) to all the elders of the church was, "Take heed, therefore, unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over which the holy Spirit hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood: for I know this, that after my departing shall *grievous wolves* enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of *your own selves* shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them." And Jude said, "Beloved, remember ye the words which were spoken before of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ, how that they told you there should be mockers in the last time, who should walk after their own desires. These be they who separate themselves [from the truth and its spirit], sensual [minding earthly things, and gratifying the ambitions and tastes of the old nature], having not the spirit. But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying with a holy spirit [a spirit of loyalty and devotion to God], keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life."—Jude 17-21.

Thus we are put on guard against the enemies of the truth, and it is made obligatory upon all the faithful to be on the alert against them, and to be prompt in discerning and in dealing with them, so that the flock of Christ may be spared. The Apostle Paul grows very earnest in urging this matter, saying "Now I beseech you, brethren, *mark them* which cause divisions and offences *contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned*, and *avoid them*: for they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own desires; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple [of those not on the alert for the encroachment of error]." (Rom. 16:17, 18) Again, says the same Apostle (2 Tim. 2:16), "*Shun* profane and vain babblings; for they will increase unto more ungodliness."

No, says the ungodly policy of this evil day of compromises and of disloyalty to "the faith once delivered to the saints," we cannot walk by this strict rule: we dare not recognize and admit the real character of a wolf in the sheep-fold, if the wolf be attired in sheep's clothing; we must accept his professions, notwithstanding his words and his actions to the contrary. We cannot believe that of *our own selves*—right in the midst of the company of the consecrated—any will arise to "pervert the truth" and to "draw disciples

after them;" and we dare not "mark" any as such, and "avoid them," or "shun their profane and vain babblings," as the Apostle suggests, for it would be uncharitable, unloving.

Of late we hear a great deal in favor of a broad-minded charity which gives loose rein to the enemies of the doctrines of Christ—a charity which can affiliate with every form of belief or unbelief; that makes no claims of superiority for one religion over another, be it heathen or Christian or anti-Christian; and that freely fellowships all and bids all God speed, utterly heedless of the Word of the Lord which says, "Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God." and "If there come any unto you and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed; for he that biddeth him God speed is *partaker of his evil deeds*."—2 John 9-11.

The warning here is not against those who never knew the truth, but against those who have known it and have been blessed by it, and who have afterward turned away from it; of whom the Apostle Peter speaks, saying, "If, after they escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning [they are worse than those who have always been of the world]. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them. But it is happened unto them according the true proverb. The dog is turned to his own vomit again, and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire." Why do they do so? Because the dog and the sow nature and disposition are there still, and only wait for opportunities and circumstances to prove it. So also says John: they that go out from us—who desert the truth and its interests—do so because they were not of us (2 Pet. 2:20-22; 1 John 2:19), because the old fleshly mind and disposition are still there.

The love or charity which goes out toward the enemies of the cross of Christ—those who have been once enlightened by the truth and have turned away from it—is not the right kind of love. We are commanded to "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world," and told that "If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him" (1 John 2:15); and, again, "*This is love, that we walk after his commandments*."—2 John 6.

"And as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God."—Gal. 6:16

NEWS FROM FOREIGN FIELDS

MY DEAR BROTHER RUSSELL:—It is to me a great pleasure to inform you that the Lord, the Keeper of Israel, brought me back home safely, and that I found all my family well. On Saturday the 19th inst., I was, by the grace of God, able again to bear the name of our precious Lord Jesus before a multitude of Jews, who were very glad to see me again among them at our meeting-house. Blessed be God, which hath not turned away his mercy from me.

I feel very much obliged to you and dear Sister Russell for the Christian love and kindness shown to me by you both during the two days of my stay with you at your house. I am thankful to the Lord for that pleasure, which I never thought to obtain. I believe that our sudden meeting and talking about the kingdom and the harvest truth shall have a good reward for us both. (Prov. 24:14) Now, just after all what the Lord gave me to see, to hear and to comprehend in your country, I am holding my peace, to-wit, whether the Lord had made my journey prosperous or not; but I can tell you, that the best place of America, and the time when my lungs breathed good fresh Christian air, was the two days of my stay in Allegheny. There I was surrounded by good earnest men, who are happy indeed in their blessed hope to sit down soon with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven. There I was strengthened about the hope of the promise made of God unto our fathers, the hope of Israel,

much more than in other places. O our Father which art in heaven, thy kingdom come. Amen.

John is preparing an answer to your kind letter to him I, jointly with my wife and children, send to yourself and to your dear wife our Christian love and best wishes. We are every evening praying for you both, that the Lord may preserve you for a long time to serve for his kingdom and glory.

Remember me to all our dear brothers and sisters in the Lord, who belong to your honorable congregation, especially to brother Wm. L. Campbell, who bestowed much labor on me. Believe me, I am yours truly in Jesus Christ.

JOSEPH RABINOWITZ

There is now a great railway system in the course of construction, which will girdle the Holy Land from one end to the other. A French company has secured a concession for a line from Beyrout to Damascus, and has already commenced work on a narrow-gauge road. An English syndicate is now building a railway from Haifa to Damascus, which will be about 140 miles long. The road will border on the southern shore of Galilee, and almost without a curve along the famous wheat region, biblically known as the plains of Bashan. This road will undoubtedly prove of the greatest interest to Syria in an agricultural and commercial way, finding a means for placing upon the eastern market the rich products in which that section abounds.

—Selected

THE TRUE FOLD NOT A PEN

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A QUESTION CONCERNING THE RANSOM

"Suppose that some one held, as a doctrine, that Christ during the Gospel age is giving the *ransom* for the church and expiating her sins; and that during the Millennial age he will give a ransom for the world and expiate its sins: Would it be right or truthful if I, in speaking of such a teaching, were to say of it—'It claims that our Lord is now making the ransom, that ever since his ascension he has been

expiating the sins of the world in heaven, and that the work of ransoming will not be finished until the end of the Millennial age?'—Please answer in the *TOWER*, as it is claimed that I *thus* misrepresented this latest *no-ransom* theory."

In reply: It is our judgment that you stated the matter most fairly: more reasonably than the party you mention stated himself. What nonsense it is to talk about *ransoming*

the church and expiating her sins during the Gospel age. After we are accepted of God, in Christ, to be his church, we need no *ransom*, having no sins to *expiate*. It was while we were yet sinners [children of wrath, even as others,—parts of the world] that Christ died for us, and by the one sacrifice of himself once for all, expiated the sins of all the ungodly. (Rom. 5:6, 8; Heb. 10:12) "He is a propitiation [satisfaction] for our sins and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world."—1 John 2:2

The suggestion that Christ *will be* a satisfaction for the sins of the Church during this age, and *will be* such for the world during the Millennial age is a portion of outer darkness, so thick and dense that it is not likely to mislead any who give ear to the voice of the Shepherd in the Word. He is our propitiation, and the propitiation for all the world besides, ever since the great sacrifice was ended and the Ransomer cried, "IT IS FINISHED."

To this the Apostle also attests, saying: By *one sacrifice he hath perfected forever them that are sanctified—all*; and thus will include all that ever will come unto God by him,—whether they come during this age or during the next age.—Heb. 10:14.

But such non-sense is not worthy of the name of "teaching" it violates logic, contradicts reason, and wrests the Scriptures. Reason and logic would ask, What is Christ *doing* during the Gospel age or what will he *do* throughout the Millennial age to *expiate* sin? What is he *now giving* and what *will he give* during the Millennial age as a *ransom* for mankind? The Bible answers that it knows of nothing that remains to *do*, or to be *given*, to meet man's penalty;—that all has been done;—that the man Christ Jesus [more than eighteen centuries ago] *gave* himself a RANSOM [a corresponding price, a substitute] for ALL.—1 Tim. 2:6.

But this correct reasoning will not convince those to whom you refer; because, to suit a theory, they have attached a new meaning to the words *ransom* and *expiate*. They use these words, improperly, to mean *deliver* or *release*. But only those thoroughly blinded to the commonest kind of common sense, or thoroughly ignorant of the common words of the English language could make such a blunder.

That neither *ransom* nor *expiate* means *release* or *deliver* can be easily proved. We quote from Webster's Dictionary:

Ransom. To redeem from captivity, punishment or for-

feit, by paying an equivalent; to buy out of servitude or penalty; to rescue [by giving a ransom]; to deliver [by giving a ransom] as, to ransom prisoners from an enemy.

Expiation. The act of making satisfaction for an offence; atonement; satisfaction."

The party to whose teachings you refer claims to be a believer in the *ransom*; but from this you see he does not believe in it. He is therefore not a Christian Brother—not one of the sheep, in any sense, because it is this faith in Christ's death as our *ransom sacrifice*, and naught else, that justifies sinners, renders them, at consecration, acceptable as the Lord's sheep. To believe a *stone* to be *bread* will not render it nutritious and life-giving; neither will believing *deliverance* to be the *ransom*, the *expiation* of our guilt justify such a believer. God will not be mocked by any such miserable twisting of language; neither will any of the sheep who heed the Shepherd's words and *prove* all that they receive as truth and hold fast only that which stands the proof. And this subject of the *ransom* is most important of all, because it is the standard by which all faith and all doctrines are to be proved *true* or *false*.

The grand *results* or *effects* of the ransom given, once for all, eighteen centuries ago, will be DELIVERANCE: partial deliverance to God's saints, now, from Sin, the great enslaver,—full deliverance to the faithful of the same class at the end of this Gospel age. Its grand results or effects will ultimately be extended to *all the families of the earth*, in that it will secure to all a full opportunity for deliverance from sin and death, upon similar conditions to ours (faith and obedience), but under the more favorable circumstances of the Millennial age. But to have faith in a *deliverance* and to call it the *ransom* is not a proper or saving faith: it proves on the contrary that those who so hold do not believe in the real *ransom sacrifice* finished at Calvary.

Our advice to all readers is that when once they have *proved* any teacher (or journal, or book) to be *wrong* on this important doctrine, the foundation of all Christian faith, they need do no more *proving there*; for if the foundation is bad, the entire structure built thereupon must be pernicious,—dangerous. Have nothing more to do with such teacher (or book or journal). You may be sure that God did not send him to you as his mouth-piece, else he would have seen to it, first, that he had the correct foundation.

OPINIONS OF BAPTISTS NOT BAPTIST DOCTRINES

Exception has been taken by several of our friends (who are or were connected with the Baptists) to our statement of Baptist doctrine relative to water immersion. They hold that we are in error in supposing that Baptists lay stress upon *water immersion as essential to salvation*. They claim that they never did so believe, even before getting the fuller light of present truth upon this and other subjects; that many able writers amongst the Baptists have held, and clearly stated, that it is *not essential*; that intelligent Baptists everywhere so hold; and that merely amongst the ignorant does the view prevail that only those immersed in water will be saved;—thus dissenting from other Christians, who hold that it is *essential*, and who therefore give attention to the matter with infants.

We are glad to make this statement public. Before doing so we verified it by having a representative interview with five Baptist ministers (three whites and two blacks). The colored ministers understood that salvation and the *new birth* were secure to those only who, *after reaching years of accountability*, have been immersed in water—interpreting thus the statement, "He that believeth *and is baptized* shall be saved." The other three ministers denied that water-immersion is essential to salvation. Two of these declared that it attests that the mind, the heart, is submissive to the will of the Lord, and is the outward answer of a good conscience toward God. The other one held substantially the views presented in the WATCH TOWER publications—that a full *consecration of the will* is the true immersion into Christ—into death with him to self and the world, which is symbolized by the water-immersion. And this one confessed that he had recently read MILLENNIAL DAWN.

These ministers were also sounded as to their faith in Christ, not merely as an exemplar or model, but also as man's *ransom-price* before God's law; as the one "who gave himself a *ransom* [a corresponding price] for all." Two of them (one white and one colored) were clear and strong upon both features of our Lord's work—the ransom and the example; and both of these had read MILLENNIAL DAWN; two others (one white and one colored) confessed faith only in our Lord's

example as his saving power or influence over sinners, and ignored the ransom without specially opposing it. The fifth utterly repudiated the *ransom*, declaring that to him it was absurd to think of Christ's death paying man's debts in any sense. He scoffed at the sentiment of that precious and Scriptural hymn:—

"Jesus died and paid it all,
Yes, all the debt I owed."

Christ to him was a noble example of how to live. He did not say if he considered that he or others had ever lived or could live according to that example, and thus be justified before God by their own right-doing. When asked, Do not the Scriptures declare that "Christ died for us?" he answered, Yes; but so also did the heroes of the Revolutionary war die *for our liberty*. But he did not and could not explain how it came (if Christ died *for us* in the *same sense* that the Revolutionary heroes died *for us*) that the death of the latter affected only the present life and welfare, while the Bible clearly states that Christ's death was for our sins and that it affects the *future life*; and that by his stripes we are healed and have access to God, being no longer reckoned and treated as enemies under wrath and condemnation, but received to God's favor as sons. Surely it does not require a very astute mind to see that Christ died for us in a *very different* sense from what the Revolutionary heroes died for us.

Strictly speaking, there is no such thing as "Baptist doctrine," because there is at present no such thing as a Baptist Denomination. There are hundreds of congregations calling themselves Baptists, but they profess to be thoroughly independent of each other. Each congregation decides what it believes and what it will require in faith and practice from its members and its minister. As a consequence, for one to tell you that he is a Baptist assures you of nothing respecting his faith, except that he is a believer in water-immersion.

Nevertheless, we have much sympathy with this spirit of independence. But we would carry it farther, and insist that the different congregations should not make doctrines and practices (including water-immersion) *tests* of membership—except those practices of morality enjoined by our Lord and

the apostles, and the doctrine of faith in Christ as the *ransomer* of sinners, and consecration to his will as expressed in the teachings of the Scriptures. But such congregations would have no further use for the name Baptist; for baptism would no longer be the standard and test of fellowship among them. The name *Christian* would then be preferable; and faith in Christ as the sin-bearer, and full consecration to his service, being the only tests, would be implied by the profession of that only name. Such was and is the Lord's will on this subject, and such is the practice of many WATCH TOWER readers.

While Baptist congregations have for centuries maintained their independence of each other and of the Baptist Ministers' Association, evidence is not lacking that instead of the tendency being toward individual (as well as congregational) liberty of faith (which would be the proper thing, as above pointed out), it is gravitating (as with Congregationalists), year by year, toward denominationalism; and we shall not be surprised to find Baptists a united body before long.

The spirit of the world is in the direction of union and combination. The world is always willing to compromise personal liberties and principles "*a little*" for the sake of prosperity; and this class is fast becoming the majority, and as such will rule: and the minority, instead of standing fast in the liberty of Christ, and withdrawing so as to preserve their individual freedom, will generally be persuaded that it is their duty to submit and not cause a disturbance. They falsely think that submission to the wrong of the worldly majority is part of the grace of patience enjoined by the Scriptures.

The tendency toward denominationalism and a common confession of faith comes chiefly from the Baptist Ministers' Association, which wields a mighty influence and practically moulds the faith of the Baptist people. Through it Baptists are practically a denomination now; for it is Baptist *usage* that a congregation desires a pastor, but unable to fully sup-

port him, shall apply to the Association; and, if not yet "ordained," have him "ordained" at the hands of its members. And this Association will not recommend, nor ordain as a pastor, any one not in harmony with its *standard* of faith—one therefore who would co-operate with them in teaching the people according to the faith-standard of the Ministerial Association.

These associations are in themselves an evidence of the tendency toward denominationalism; for they are of recent institution—beginning about fifteen years ago. Already they exercise great power—a money power as well as a clerical power. Their general secretaries collect monies for home missions: these monies are at the disposal of the Associations. Any new Baptist congregation unable to raise a sufficient salary to support a minister can, by giving its allegiance to the Baptist Ministers' Associations, get a minister. The association pays the minister, and the congregation contributes what it can to the Association funds. Thus both minister and flock are bound to the Association's rules, etc. Ministers are yet further bound to the Association, because the latter undertakes to care for the widows and orphans of its deceased members.

Nevertheless, Baptists have much of the spirit of true Christian liberty; and generally they are not aware that they are so rapidly drifting into denominationalism, and already they are sectarian, in that they make water baptism a test of Christian fellowship—that is, they refuse to admit to their communion table Christians who have not been immersed; and frequently they refuse also those who have been immersed, but not by a regularly ordained Baptist minister. As a class of people they are therefore better prepared than others to receive present truth; and should be a fruitful class amongst whom to do harvest work. Let all who have opportunity thrust in the sickle of truth—and do it quickly, "while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work."—John 9:4.

THE RESURRECTION

IV. QUAR., LESSON VI., NOV. 5, I. COR. 15:12-26.

Golden Text—"Thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."—I. Cor. 15:57.

VERSES 12-19 call attention to the great importance of the doctrine of the resurrection, presenting it as the twin of the other great doctrine which the Apostle set forth "first of all" (verse 3)—"how that Christ DIED for *our sins* according to the Scriptures," to which fundamental doctrine it stands related as effect to cause. So important is this doctrine in the estimation of the inspired Apostle, that he emphatically declares that, if it be not true, then there is no hope for any man beyond the present life; the preaching of the gospel is in vain, and those who preach it are false witnesses; the death of Christ was for naught; the faith of Christians is vain, and their hope delusive; and their life of sacrifice, in view of the resurrection and its rewards, merely robs them of what little enjoyment and advantage they might gain in the present life, which is all they would ever have; and those who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. Such indeed is our sad plight if there be no resurrection. If this, which Christ died to secure, is not guaranteed to us, to be realized in due time, we are yet in our sins and under the death penalty, without a ray of hope. And more: if there be no resurrection, although the price was paid to secure it, then God is not fulfilling his part of the contract.

While verses 12-19 declare the great importance of this twin doctrine of the ransom—the resurrection—verses 20-26 emphasize its truthfulness. The resurrection of Christ, attested by many infallible proofs (verses 5-8; Acts 1:3), is the guarantee that all those whom he redeemed by his precious blood shall have not only an awakening from death, but an *opportunity* to attain a complete resurrection to all the blessings and favors lost in the fall. *That* was the assurance which God gave to all men (Acts 17:31) that the ransom for the sins of the whole world given at Calvary was acceptable, a full satisfaction of the claims of Justice against our race, so that now he can be just, and the justifier of all that believe in Jesus.—Rom. 3:26.

In verse 20 let Christians observe what the various creeds of Christendom ignore, and what is in direct antagonism to their teachings, viz., that the risen Christ was "*the first fruits of them that slept*"—that he was the first one to experience a resurrection in the full sense of the term, viz., to perfection and everlasting life. True, some before him were temporarily awakened, again to relapse into death; for example, Lazarus, Jairus' daughter, the son of the widow of Nain, the Shunammite's son, etc., but those were only partial illus-

trations of resurrection, to assure men of the divine power to fully accomplish it in due time—in the day which God has appointed. (Acts 17:31) Now mark the logic of this fact: If Christ was the first one resurrected, none were resurrected before him; and if, as shown in the preceding verses, those who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished, except they be restored to life by a resurrection; and if those who die in Christ, "sleep in Jesus," until Christ's second coming, it is plain that none of them went to heaven when they died. They were dead, they slept in Jesus, they rested in hope, they were destroyed, and must remain so until the time appointed for their resurrection—at the second advent of Christ when all those *that sleep in Jesus* will God bring with him. (I. Thes. 4:14) David hath not ascended into the heavens (Acts 2:34): Daniel must wait, and he shall stand in his lot at the end of the days (Dan. 12:13); Abraham must wait his time for the possession of the promised land, of which he never yet owned so much as to set his foot upon (Acts 7:5): Job must tarry until the wrath of this evil day is overpast (Job 14:12-15, 21); Stephen must wait the realization of his dying vision (Acts 7:56); and Paul, and with him all those that love the Lord's appearing, must wait the fullness of time when the reward of their faithfulness will be due.—II. Tim. 4:8

All this Scripture teaching is in perfect accord; but it is in irreconcilable conflict with the current theology of so-called Christendom, in whose theories there is no place whatever for the doctrine of the resurrection, logically considered. If a man goes to heaven when he dies, and is glad to shuffle off this mortal coil, which some call his prison, although he loves and cherishes it and stays in it as long as possible, why, in the name of reason, should he hope for a reunion with his body? The position is illogical, unscriptural and untenable.

VERSE 21 antagonizes the current theology with equal force. It declares that since *by man* came death, *by man*—*the man Christ Jesus*, who gave himself a ransom for all—came also the resurrection of the dead. Current theology says that our redemption is secured by the sacrifice of a God, not a man: but the Scriptures are very explicit in pointing out an exact equivalent, a human substitute for the human head of our race, whose redemption secures the redemption of his posterity, on precisely the same principle that his fall and condemnation entailed sin and death upon us. It was the man Christ Jesus, who, after he had left the glory of his previous spiritual existence and was made in the likeness of sinful flesh, said, "A body hast thou prepared me for the suffering of death," that accomplished our redemption by the sacrifice

of himself—his flesh, his humanity, and that in consequence of that sacrifice has been highly exalted, even to the divine nature—“Wherefore, God also hath highly exalted him and given him a name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven and things in earth, and things under the earth.”—Phil. 2:8-11.

It was *after the resurrection* that he said, “All power in heaven and in earth is given unto me.” And if this exaltation and power were granted to him *as a reward for his sacrifice*, then it is manifest that, however rich he was in spiritual glory and power before he became a man, he was still more bountifully endowed at his resurrection, after he had sacrificed his humanity, being made a partaker of the divine nature and the express image of his Father’s person. (Heb. 1:3) When the man Christ Jesus gave “his flesh [his humanity] for the life of the world” (John 6:51), he gave it up never to take it again: for it was the price *paid* for our redemption. And consequently, when he was raised again, his existence was in a new nature, that thus our benefits might not be interfered with, and also that the abundant power of the divine nature given unto him might be exercised in actually reclaiming from the thralldom of sin and death those whom he had legally rescued by his death.

VERSES 22, 23 show that all who are Christ’s—by faith in his sacrifice—are to receive the benefits of his death in full resurrection to the perfection and lasting life forfeited in Eden. The order of resurrection is to be Christ the first fruits, which includes not only Christ Jesus, the head and high priest of our profession, but also all the members of his body—“Blessed and holy are all they that have part in the *first resurrection*” Then, after the resurrection of this glorious body, follows the resurrection of all that are his at [during] his [Christ’s] presence”—Greek, *parousia*, presence, not coming.

The time of his *presence* is the entire thousand years of his reign. During that period *all that are in their graves* [good and bad, the just and the unjust] “shall hear his voice and shall come forth: they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of judgment”—Greek, *krisis*, judgment, not damnation. (John 5:28, 29) The former class enter immediately upon their reward of full resurrection—human perfection, while the latter class awake to a judgment, or trial for ever-

lasting life, which it will be their privilege to gain if they become Christ’s by fully submitting themselves to his discipline and control. Otherwise their trial will be cut short at a hundred years and they will die the second death, from which there is no recovery. (Isa. 65:20) None out of Christ will be made alive, fully resurrected, though all experience the awakening from death, which is the first step in the process of resurrection, and a trial to prove their worthiness or unworthiness of the fullness of resurrection, which is actual perfection and everlasting life. “He that hath the Son hath life, and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.” (I. John 5:12) “He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life, and he that believeth not the Son *shall not see life*, but the wrath of God *abideth* on him.”—John 3:36.

VERSES 24, 25 assure us of the victory of Christ, and in what that victory will consist—that it will consist in the complete subjection of every opposing power and authority, and in the putting of all the enemies of this, his purpose, under his feet, whether those enemies be evil conditions, principles, powers or individuals. He will banish all evil conditions by permitting first a great time of trouble (Dan. 12:1), and then by causing conditions of righteousness and peace to supplant them. He will forever banish the evil principles by flooding the world with his light and truth and by effectually renewing a right spirit in the hearts of all the willing and obedient. He will completely overcome every opposing power by the exercise of his own almighty power for their complete and final overthrow. And he will put down every opposing individual by cutting him off in the second death, from which there shall be no recovery.

“He must reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet;” and the limited time of that reign is a thousand years (Rev. 20:6-10), at the expiration of which time all opposing individuals, and the devil who deceived and led them, are to be cast into the lake of fire, *which is the second death*. (Rev. 20:7-15) The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death—not the second death into which the opposers have been cast, else the language would be contradictory, but the Adamic death, which Christ came to destroy by liberating all its subjects, which, to fully accomplish, will require all of his Millennial reign.

In the words of our *Golden Text*, “Thanks be to God who giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ.”