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The
Atonement
of
Reconciliation

by
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PREFACE.

In presenting this little booklet to the public, I beg to say that my object is to do all the good that I can and if the people will read it as carefully and as prayerful as I have been in preparing it I will be satisfied.

C. A. WHEELER.

The Atonement of Reconciliation.

We regard the subject of Reconciliation as being very important and one that we think not well understood by many religious people of this age and one about which there is a good deal of controversy. We, therefore, wish to examine it in the light of the Bible. As a starting point I submit the following Scripture: 2 Cor. v, 18-21: "And all things are of God who hath reconciled us to Himself by Jesus Christ and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation, to-wit, that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their tresspasses unto them and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation, now then we are ambassadors of Christ, as though God did beseech you by us, we pray you in Christ's stead be ye reconciled to God."

This connection sets the subject of reconciliation clearly before us. But notwithstanding it so clearly shows that it is the world that is reconciled to God. There are many religious teachers in this age who tell us that God must be reconciled to us, and that it was for that purpose Christ died. And the doctrine that God is to be reconciled to the world gives rise to the modern prayer system of conversion. Those that advocate this system of conversion proceed upon the principle that God is not at this time willing to save the sinner, but that through the prayers of the sinner himself

and the prayers of christians for him that he can be so far influenced as to become reconciled to the sinner or willing to save him. But in the connection that I have read the Apostle said that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself. Here the Apostle teaches that it is the world that must be reconciled and not God. And again, Rom. v:10: "For if when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his son, much more being reconciled we shall be saved by his life."

Again, Col. 1:21-23: "And you that were sometimes alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled in the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy, and unblamable and unreprouvable in his Sight."

Now, since the above Scripture teaches that it is the people that are to be reconciled to God, it follows then that the modern prayer system of conversion is wrong. Now in order to learn how sinful men and women are to be reconciled, we ask what does the word reconciliation mean? Webster says that it means a renewal of friendship, after disagreement or enmity, and this we take as the true meaning. When persons or parties that have once been friends have disagreed and are at enmity and friendship is restored they are then reconciled.

Sometimes parties are at variance when there is nothing to prevent them from approaching each other and proposing terms of reconciliation to each other and in that way becoming reconciled. But again, it may occur that parties may be at variance

when the circumstances are such they can not consistently approach each other and be reconciled in that way. And then in order to reconciliation there must be a mediator that can remove all obstacles out of the way and thus reconcile them.

But what is the office of a mediator? Webster says a mediator is one who interposes between parties at variance, to reconcile them. A mediator then must have certain qualifications in order to be successful. In the first place he must not be a party concerned or in any way involved in the difficulty. He must be also one that can approach each party on an equal footing with them, not being superior or inferior to them, and then he can influence both parties.

Sometimes parties are at variance when they are equal with each other. Then it is not difficult to find one that can mediate between them. But it may be that parties may be at enmity when one party is greatly superior to the other, then it is more difficult to find one that can act as mediator between them. He must be one that can approach the superior party upon an equal footing with him and one that can assimilate himself to the circumstances of the inferior party and approach him on an equality with him.

Parties may be at variance when one party is innocent and the other wholly in the wrong. In that case the innocent party has the right to propose the terms of reconciliation to the guilty party; and if a mediator is necessary it is the right of the inno-

cent party to send the mediator to the guilty party to remove any obstacle that may intervene and to present to him the terms of reconciliation offered by the innocent party. And if the guilty accepts and complies with them, the parties are reconciled but if he rejects them the enmity is continued.

It is just such a case as we have last described that we have to do with in this investigation.

God and man are the parties, and it will be conceded that God, the Creator, is far superior to man; and that God is innocent and man is wholly in the wrong. Man has become alienated and an enemy to God by wicked works, and we now ask who could be mediator between God and men? Could any man act as mediator? By no means—for all men are concerned and involved in the difficulty and no man can approach God upon an equal footing with him.

Could angels be mediators between God and man? We answer by no means. For they are not equal with the Great Jehovah, nor can they assimilate themselves to the circumstances of fallen men, so as to approach them on an equality with them. We see then that no man on earth nor angel in heaven could be the mediator between God and man. We then in great earnestness ask who could be mediator?

The Great Apostle to the Gentiles has found the answer. 1 Tim. 2:5: "For 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 ”

We learn from this that Christ is the Mediator and that there is but one. And the question comes up: Does he possess all the qualifications requisite of a mediator. Let us see Phil. 2:5 9: "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God. But made himself of no reputation and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even the death unto the cross."

Here it is said he thought it not robbery to be equal with God, and therefore, could approach him on terms of equality. And again, Col. 2:9: "For in him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily."

This being true, there is no one in heaven that is superior to him, and therefore, he could approach the court of heaven without infringing on the dignity of that court. But as there is such a vast difference between God and men, could he humble himself to all the circumstances of fallen humanity; so that he could approach them on an equal footing with them so as to act as mediator at the court of men on earth.

Yes, the Apostle says:

"He took upon him the form of a servant and was made in the likeness of men, and being in fashion as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient, even unto the death of the cross."

Here then is one like God and like

men, for he was the "brightness of his father's glory and the express image of his person"

He was also in the likeness of men and was not involved in the difficulty. So he passes all the qualifications necessary to enable him to act as mediator between God and men. And as God was the innocent party and man the guilty party, it was, therefore, every way consistent for God to propose the terms of reconciliation to man and that he should send the mediator first to the court of man that he might remove all obstacles out of the way that prevented man from returning to God and being reconciled to him. For it is man that has strayed away from God and not God from man. Therefore, man must come back to God. God does not propose to come to man. But when man departed from God and transgressed the law of God and placed himself under the government of Satan there arose such obstacles between him and God that he could not return to God until those obstacles were removed, and he was not able to remove them. Hence the necessity of a mediator that was able to remove them. The greatest difficulty in this investigation is to find just what those obstacles were; and now we will look and see if we can find some of them. Sin is evidently one of them.

Isa 59:1-2: "Behold the Lord's hand is not shortened that he cannot save, neither his ear heavy that he cannot hear. But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear."

We see from this that sin and iniquity separate man from God; and therefore, sin must be removed before man can come to God and enjoy his blessings. Now, we ask: Did Christ provide for removal or remission of sins?

Answer: That Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures.

1 Cor. xv:3: "For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust that he might bring us to God"

1 Pet. iii:10: "For this is my blood of the New Testament which is shed for many for the remission of sins."

Matt. xxvi:28: "But if we walk in the light as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin."

John i:1: "Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you forgiveness of sins."

Acts xiii:38 from there and many other passages we see that the mediator has made it possible for all that will believe and obey him to obtain the forgiveness of sin, and that he has thereby removed that obstacle out of the way.

Another obstacle is that the people are under the power of Satan, and his power is greater than theirs, and they cannot come to God unless the mediator has overcome that power. Has he done this?

Answer, Heb. ii:14: "Inasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of

the same, that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage"

1 John iii:8: "He that commiteth sin is of the devil, for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested that he might destroy the works of the devil."

From this we see that Christ has destroyed the works of the devil so that men may be delivered from his power and translated into the Kingdom of God's dear son. See Col. 1:13.

So the mediator has removed that obstacle out of the way. But death was in some sense a barrier that intervened between God and man and the devil had the power of death before Christ came.

As we read in Heb. ii:14: "For as much then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same, that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is the devil, and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage."

From this we see that the devil had the power of death, but that Christ has destroyed him and taken that power from him and that Christ "hath abolished death and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel."—2 Tim. 1:10 "And he now has the keys of death and of Hades."—Rev. 1:18 (Revised Version.)

So the mediator has removed that bar-

rier and then the righteous law of God which man had transgressed was another obstacle in the way of man's approaching God and being saved

Law can show no mercy, can extend no pardon, but requires that the transgressor shall be punished to the extent of the penalty of the law and as all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.—Rom. iii:24. So all are exposed to the law, and this is a very serious obstacle. For the justice, righteousness and strength of the law of God must be maintained and the honor and permanency of the divine government must be sustained. Has the mediator removed this barrier? Let us see. He, Himself said, "Think not that I am come to destroy the law nor the prophets. I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill for verily I say unto you till heaven and earth pass one jot or tittle shall in no wise pass from the law till all be fulfilled. Matt. 5:18. Christ here teaches that when the law has been fulfilled—had attained its end, then it would pass away. Christ kept the law and fulfilled all its requirements, so that in Him it attained its end, and he was the true representative of the race of man. He magnified the law and made it honorable as said the prophet. Isa. xlii 21. And he "took it out of the way nailing it to his cross. Col. ii 14. And again the apostle in speaking of the Jews and Gentiles says: "For he is our peace who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us, having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained

in ordinances for to make in himself of twain, one new man, so making peace"—Eph. ii:14.

The middle wall of partition here was the law and the 3d chapter of 2d Cor., shows clearly that the law is done away. And when the law was done away there was no difference between Jew and Gentile. The Gentile had sinned and come short of the glory of God, as well as the Jews, and were ransomed by Christ

"For he gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time."

All that had transgressed the law were under the curse. "For it is written, cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the Book of the Law to do them." And unless something could be done to save them from the curse they must all have suffered the penalty of the law. But we read that Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law being made a curse for us; for it is written, cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree.—Gal. iii:10-14.

From this we see that Christ has removed that difficulty out of the way. And when he had thus finished all his work as mediator at the court of man, the time was come that he must return to the court of heaven and appear in the presence of God for us. But he was not willing that the cause of God should be left unpleaded at the court of man in this world. So he chose his Apostles and constituted them his ambassadors and committed the word of reconciliation and sent them to the court of man to trans-

act business with men in his name.

But these were not mediators, but the ambassadors of the mediator. The work of a mediator is to go from party to party, but these ambassadors were only sent to one party. They were not authorized to go to the court of heaven to transact business. This was the work of the mediator. All men that were ever commissioned and sent by the authority of God to transact any business were sent to their fellowmen and not to God to transact business with him. So there are no human mediators between God and men. And now the mediator having finished his work on earth and having given his last charge or commission to his ambassadors, ascended to heaven and sat on the right hand of God and was made both Lord and Christ. He then sent down the Holy Spirit and imbued his ambassadors with power from on high and they went out by his authority with the word of reconciliation to present to all nations, fully qualified for the work assigned to them and was able to present it to every nation in their own language.

But we must learn what the word of reconciliation is from the commission that Christ gave them and from the record of their preaching under the commission. We will first look at the commission as it is rendered in the English Revised Version, Matt. 28:19: "And Jesus came to them and spake unto them, saying, all authority hath been given unto me in heaven and earth. Go ye therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the

Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you, and lo I am with you always, even unto the end of the world."

Mark 16:15: "And he said unto them, go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to the whole creation. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be condemned."

Luke 24:46: "And he said unto them, thus it is written that Christ should suffer and rise again from the dead the third day and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name unto all nations, beginning from Jerusalem."

From these records we find that the disciples were sent to all the world and required to preach the suffering and resurrection of Christ and repentance and remission of sins in his name, and thus make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, with the promise that he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, and the threat that he that believeth not shall be condemned. And when we look at the record of the preaching of the Apostles under this commission, as recorded in the Acts of the Apostles, beginning with the 2d chapter, we find they preached the facts concerning the life and miracles, death, resurrection, ascension and coronation of Christ, and when the people believed these facts they commanded them to repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and promised them

that they should receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

These things, together with the good confession with the mouth, that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, constituted the word of reconciliation that the Apostles presented to sinful men and women. And all that accept this word of reconciliation and obeyed its requirements were afterwards spoken of as reconciled, justified and saved. They were represented as disciples, saints, children of God, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, as being delivered from the power of darkness and translated into the Kingdom of God's Son, as having redemption through his blood and forgiveness of sins.

But these ambassadors have finished their personal labors and gone from earth, and there are no ambassadors of Christ on earth now. How then is the word of reconciliation to be presented to the people now? The ambassadors after they had so presented it to the nations of earth, that many thousands, both Jews and Gentiles had received it and the church had been permanently established in the world, committed the word of reconciliation to record and left it with the church, and the church is now through her ministry to sound out the word to the world and exhort them to receive it.

In view of the many Scriptures that has been brought to bear in this investigation we see that the Bible as positively teach that faith, repentance, confession and baptism is the terms of reconciliation to be complied with by the people, as it does

that God made the world. And how the denominational preachers will try to approach the throne of God with their prayers asking God to come down or send converting power and convert sinners instead of giving the terms of reconciliation as the Apostles did, I cannot understand. Still they do it, knowing or should know that no apostle or ambassador for Christ ever prayed for God to send down converting power. They prayed and begged the people to accept the terms and be reconciled. And when the people accepted the terms the Lord added them to the church. And the same process that made them christians made them members of the church. The church of the New Testament is entirely a different thing from the denominational churches. That church is a spiritual body over which Christ is the Head and in which every christian is a member, because he is a christian. No one can possibly be a christian and not belong to the New Testament Church, for the reason that the same process which makes one a christian adds him to the church in the New Testament sense.

The truth is that the denominational churches, such as Baptist, Methodist and all other denominations known to me are not once named in all the Book of God. And when we think about it right it takes as much or more money to run denominationalism than it does the government. And the strangest thing to me of all is that after taxing the common people with this vast amount of money to run their churches Then the preachers, to be liberal and popu-

lar, will tell the people that they can become a christian and live the christian life and finally get home to heaven without being a member of any denomination. Now if the people can be saved without belonging to any of these denominations, and the preachers says they can, why spend our money and time in trying to keep up such things? Who ever read of an ambassador of Christ going before the people with the terms of reconciliation and then acknowledge to the people that they can be saved without it. The gospel that they preached and the terms of salvation that they offered are things that the people could not be saved without believing and obeying. Then would it not be far better for the people to abandon all denominational religion that they can be saved without, and uniting their forces, time, money and talent in persuading dying men and women to preach and practice that that we can't be saved without? And just simply be Christians as they were in New Testament times? Now, kind reader in conclusion, I have investigated this subject as honest as I know how and in the fear of God, and that we may all be able to so steer our frail barks as to reach the port of eternal felicity is my prayer.

Time is winding us away to our eternal home,

Life is but a winter's day—a journey to the tomb.

Youth and vigor soon will flee; blooming beauty loose its charms,

All thats mortal soon shall be inclosed in deaths cold arms.