

The Wednesday Word, May 16, 2018: A Substitute Found

There is an ancient saying, "The Judge is condemned when the guilty is acquitted." Alas, guilty people are sometimes set free in our judicial system, but this never happens in God's Courtroom. If a person is justified (acquitted, found not guilty), it is because God is just (Deuteronomy 32:4). God has declared the person not guilty and has done so in strict harmony with His rule of Law and Justice.

But, how, is this possible?

How can a sinful person be accepted in the sight of a God who will by no means clear the guilty (Exodus 34:7)?

Man is a sinner and the penalty upon sin, as announced by God, is death (Romans 6:23). And that will be his lot unless a sinless substitute can be found to die in his place.

A certain man on the Malabar Coast of Southern India had enquired of various Hindu Holy men how he might make atonement for his sins. He was directed to drive iron spikes, sufficiently blunted, through his sandals and walk about 480 miles to a place of pilgrimage wearing the spiked shoes. He undertook the journey but found no peace ... just painful feet. One day, resting beside a large banyan tree, he heard a Christian preach that the blood of the sinner's substitute, Jesus Christ, cleanses from all sin. He got up, threw off the torturing sandals, and cried aloud, "That is what I want .. that's what I need!" There is substance in that' From that day forward he became a dedicated follower of the Lord Christ.

Every sinner needs a substitute. But there is only one substitute and He is none other than God manifest in the flesh. He went to Calvary's cross as a substitute for His people. The Indian gentleman in our story discovered that self-torture could not take away sins. It is sad to say that there are many today who, like those Hindu priests, are deceitfully offering false hope. For example, Spiritualism says; "Man becomes his own savior. He is made better in this life by intercourse with spirits."

Theosophy says: "An ordinary being must pass through hundreds of incarnations before he can complete his purification from sin."

Mormonism says, "To get rid of our sins, we must work out our own salvation through the teachings and forms of the Mormon church."

Roman Catholicism says, "The instrumental cause of justification is the sacrament of baptism and the grace purchased by Christ's death can flow only through the hands of the Catholic priests."

Nonsense! Baloney! Balderdash! Twaddle!

In the Gospel, we have the One true Substitute, Jesus Christ. "He bore our sins in his own body on the tree." (1 Peter 2:24). Since He is our substitute, we are secure. If Jesus has been

condemned in our place, how then can we be condemned? To claim that the believer can be eventually lost is to say that Jesus was an unacceptable substitute. Away with such drivel.

O Christ, what burdens bowed Thy head!
Our load was laid on Thee;
Thou stoodest in the sinner's stead,
Didst bear all ill for me.
A Victim led, Thy blood was shed;
Now there's no load for me.

Death and the curse were in our cup:
O Christ, 'twas full for Thee;
But Thou hast drained the last dark drop,
'Tis empty now for me.
That bitter cup, love drank it up;
Now blessing's draught for me.

Jehovah lifted up His rod;
O Christ, it fell on Thee!
Thou wast sore stricken of Thy God;
There's not one stroke for me.
Thy tears, Thy blood, beneath it flowed;
Thy bruising healeth me.

The tempest's awful voice was heard,
O Christ, it broke on Thee!
Thy open bosom was my ward,
It braved the storm for me.
Thy form was scarred, Thy visage marred;
Now cloudless peace for me.

And that's the Gospel Truth!