

CHANGE YOUR MINDS.

[CONCLUDED.]

At the dawn of the Gospel dispensation, when the star of Bethlehem had arisen, and was about to be manifested to Israel, John cried: "Reform, (change your minds), because the Royal Majesty of the heavens has approached." (Diaglott). His audience was made up of all classes dwelling in and about Jerusalem at that time, and doubtless all, or nearly all, were more or less under the influence of the teaching of the Jewish church.

But was not the teaching of the Jewish church correct up to that time? asks some one: No, not altogether.

True they had the law given by God to Moses, and it was "holy, just and good," but those Jewish doctors had, by their traditions, added to and taken from to such an extent that the minds of the people were corrupted, being taught "for doctrines the commandments of men."

The nominal Christian church of to-day occupies, in many respects, a position similar to the nominal Jewish church at that time. The idea that "salvation is of the Jews," was a deeply rooted one, but lacking the grand and glorious significance which attached to it in the mind of Jesus, when he gave utterance to the words. (John 4:22.) There is no doubt that the Jewish teachers of that time had taken great pains to instill into the minds of the people at large the idea that if they would enjoy a blissful hereafter they must attach themselves to the Jewish church; in fact, Jesus said they "compassed sea and land to make one proselyte." (Matt. 23:15.) But that their teaching was not of a nature to greatly improve their morals, we infer from the remainder of the passage just quoted.

What was their doctrine and teaching, then, we may aptly inquire?

Briefly, we may say, among other things, the Pharisees believed in the immortality of the soul, and in the eternal suffering of the wicked. The Sadducees, another class, disbelieved in the resurrection; neither did they believe in angel or spirit. How striking the similarity and effect of the teaching of these fundamental doctrines by the nominal church then and now!

Both classes of Jews, by their traditional teaching, did away with the need of a resurrection; and though the Pharisees professed to believe it, yet they practically denied it; and the Sadducees, denying a future life, of course had no use for the doctrine of the resurrection.

The tradition of the Pharisees that man does "not surely (really) die," but **[R433 : page 5]** only changes his mode of existence, could claim great antiquity, having been promulgated in the garden of Eden. (Gen. 3:4.) That our blessed Lord, when warning the disciples against the "doctrine of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees" (Matt. 16:6-12,) had especial reference to the state of the dead, we cannot doubt, for it is primary.

If, to use the language of orthodoxy, "the soul lives after the body dies," then Satan's statement would not have **[R433 : page 6]** been a very killing thing, and the worst we could say of it would be, that he did not tell the whole truth; but Jesus said he was a murderer from the beginning, and that he is the father of lies. (John 8:44.) What was the first lie, if this was not it? We conclude, therefore, that he did a killing thing, that he told a murderous lie when he said "thou shalt not surely die," and this in flat contradiction to God's words: "In the day thou eatest thereof dying thou shalt die." One thing is noticeable; let the statements mean what you will, they do not agree. Which will you believe?

What is the popular teaching upon this subject now?

Just exactly what Satan taught then: man does not surely (really) die; his body dies, his soul still lives.

Upon the capital which this statement furnishes, Satan has done business for thousands of years; but the light shines, day dawns, "the Royal Majesty of the heavens has approached," blessed be his name, and though man dies, he shall live again. Glory be to God!

Knowing that the wages of sin is death, it is the greatest importance for us to find out how we can be saved from death, not from dying; for as all have sinned, all must die.

Our inquiry is answered by Paul in 1 Cor. 15:22. As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive; "but every man in his own order." Ver. 23. This reveals the fact that there are different orders or grades of life. See also 1 Cor. 15:39-42, and "Food" **page 134**. And the term "salvation" is properly applied to either grade, because before they reach either order, they must have been saved from death. This shows that when speaking of salvation we should use some discrimination, as to what order or rank of salvation we refer to, and leads to the conclusion that those who are not in a given order of life are not necessarily eternally damned, nor cut off from every kind of life, but may be found in some other rank or order. After examining much scripture evidence upon this point carefully, we conclude that all men die, and that all men will live again; and therefore we change our mind as to there being but one order of life among the sons of God, redeemed from Adam's fall, and that only a few share in any manner in the merits of Jesus Christ's death.

We once believed that only a few were brought to blissful life, and that all the rest were consigned to a miserable life, and in this misery were immortal, and this we called death. Now, as God's Royal Majesty has approached again, the darkness is being driven away,

and we repent, (change our mind), regarding this doctrine, which has been made the evil instrument of getting money from the poor, who are made to believe that their dead friends are alive, and that a few prayers, paid for with their money; would get them from one rank of miserable life into an order of life more desirable. Into how many multiplied forms of evil this beginning of lies has grown; but we are glad we find space for repentance, and are permitted, "by patient continuance in well doing, to seek for immortality."

We said Satan has for a long time done business upon the capital growing out of this first murderous lie.

Let us notice a few points:

First; if men are dead they are not in torment, (this truth would ruin that slander upon God's mercy and justice), neither are they in heaven – hence; second; they would need a resurrection; and third; to have a resurrection there must be some one to raise them (a Saviour), all of which might be dispensed with if man did not die. Thus the adversary has made many believe that they do not need a Saviour, and that they receive communications from their dead friends. But says one: "Our Saviour saves his people from their sins, and when saved from sin, they are saved from death. Ah, no, my orthodox (?) brother, your being saved from sin does not save you from death. Read more carefully, think closely. You are now living, your fathers have been living in an age where men do not die for their own sins. Adam, who lived in "the world that was," died from his own sin, and we have "sprung from the man whose guilty fall corrupts his race and tints us all." "The fathers have eaten a sour grape, and the children's teeth are set on edge." (Jer. 31:29.) If you were to live a sinless life from the moment your sins were forgiven, you would die, but in the resurrection you would come up in a different order from what you would, if they had not been forgiven

in this age. Do you say: "Well, if I am not saved from my sins in this world, I never shall be?" Then we should say, that will depend upon how incorrigible you are under the "many stripes" which you will certainly get, if you do not forsake sin in the coming age, for in that age every man who dies, dies for his own sin. (Jer. 31:30.) Now, as we said, you die on account of Adam's sin, and perhaps a little sooner on account of your own, but you must die anyhow; but in the age to come, if you will be obedient to the heavenly messengers (for then they shall all be taught of God), you may live forever. Perhaps you say: "Well, I don't believe we shall have any second chance for salvation if we are not saved here." My dear brother, "of which salvation" are you speaking? Do you say you do not know but one salvation?

In the sense of there being salvation only through Christ, it is true there is but one salvation, but in the sense of there being degrees or orders of life, it is plain there are more than one. The prize held out to view now, is, that under certain conditions we may be partakers of the divine nature, that prize can only be reached in this world (or age), for the very good reason that a part of the conditions can only be met in this age. Those who wish to be made like Christ, and receive the "great salvation" (become immortal), must suffer with him, must "fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ." (Col. 1:24.) Those who are of this class, are chosen "through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth." (2 Thes. 2:13.) May we be "kept by the power of God through faith unto (this) salvation?" Yes, this is the salvation now about to be revealed, of which the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto us, a salvation embracing things which the angels desire to look into. 1 Peter 1:3-12.

Those who would be Christ's, can only become members of his body in this age: members of that anointed company of which Jesus is the chief or head. "Do you not know that the saints shall judge the world?" (1 Cor. 6:2.) Surely they are not judging the world now? Does some one say, "Well, then, what is meant in John 12:31, "Now is the judgment of this world?" Read on a little further, "Now shall the prince of this world be cast out." Who is the prince of the world? He is the one who now rules in the children of disobedience." (Eph. 2:2.) Is he cast out? No. Well, the same "now" that applies to judgment," applies to being "cast out." Then the words of Jesus must have meant this: "now," i.e., by this arrangement of Christ's incarnation and death Satan is to be cast out. By this means will finally be accomplished the judgment of this world. The saints (partakers of the divine nature), are judged now, and will not come into judgment again. "He that heareth my word (they do not all hear who are spoken to), and believeth him that sent me, hath eternal life, and cometh not into judgment, but hath passed out of death into life." (John 5:24. R.V.) Does our orthodox (?) brother say "There, now stop right there; does that not prove that if we are saved from sin we are saved from death?"

Well, let us see. How is he passed out of death into life? By judgment.

O yes! he is judged out, and cannot have another judgment passed on him. It is a legal proceeding, then, by the highest tribunal, and is a conclusive argument to prove that a judgment day is now in progress, and that this judgment will be executed (realized) when he stands up in the "first resurrection" with Christ's likeness, the conflict being over. He will then be immortal, and "cannot die any more," and will be in a fit condition to judge the world and angels. (1 Cor. 6:2-3.)

"And it shall come to pass in that (judgment) day, that the Lord shall set his hand again the second time to recover the remnant of his people." (Isa. 11:11.) Then Satan will be cast out, obstacles will be removed, "all shall be taught of the Lord" (the judicial body, the complete Christ), and doubtless nearly all will, under such circumstances, obey and accept of life. This will be everlasting human life in harmony, peace and filial obedience to God – the blessed estate which Adam lost – a gloriously satisfying portion to the natural man who cannot now, and never will comprehend spiritual things, because he never is to have them.

A word more.

Let us earnestly entreat those who by consecration have become "new creatures," (spiritual) and as such, are hoping for the prize, to remember Paul's words (and they may be emphasized now), in this time of worldly pressure and conflict. "This one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the HIGH CALLING of God in Christ Jesus." Now is the special time of instruction for earth's future rulers.

"Be wise now, therefore, O ye kings, be instructed ye judges of the earth."

Satan's first lie believed, would blind us to the whole line of God's truth and plan. We did believe it, but we now repent.

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