

"LET HIM BE UNJUST STILL."

"He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he that is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy let him be holy still." (Rev. 22:11.)

To some minds the text here quoted is considered strong evidence against the position taken by the WATCH TOWER favoring a future probation for the world.

Indeed, it seemed to us so, for a long time after we saw from other Scripture (1 Tim. 2:4; Ezek. 16:48 to the end of the chap; Matt. 11:24,25; 12:32; Eph. 2:7; John 11:9; 1 John 3:8, and many others) that a future probation was a doctrine of the Bible.

Although so many Scripture texts seemed plainly and unmistakably to establish the doctrine of a future probation, still this one seemed to be an unyielding argument against the position; and yet we did not feel satisfied, for the stronger reason that as an argument against future probation (or judgment, trial, for the world, John 1:24 – R.V.) it would be out of harmony with the teachings in the Scripture texts referred to. The thought that God would give permission to be unjust under any circumstances, is out of harmony with his past dealings with men, and out of harmony with his own character as well as his word. Ever since we saw clearly that God is "of purer eyes than to behold evil" (with allowance) we have been convinced that he will not forever permit the vile thing to pollute his universe.

He will not "let" nor consent to endless transgression of his law. But what is meant, then, in the text we have called attention to? That we may understand it better, let us go back to the first verse, and find, if we can, what events are to transpire at the same time, which may help to an understanding of this.

In connection with the scenes spoken of in the first and second verses, it is said (in the third verse) "there shall be no more curse" (the Adamic death having been destroyed); this, then, is at a time when, if a man dies, it will be for his own sin; now all die on account of Adam's sin. "By one man sin entered into the world and death by sin" (Rom. 5:12). "By one man's disobedience the many were made sinners" (19th verse), though a man may shorten his life by violating the laws of the physical nature. At the time spoken of here, too, the truth of God (1st verse), "clear as crystal," is flowing to the nations without obstruction directly from "the throne." It is, moreover, at a time when "the leaves of the tree (wood, or trees, plural – Young's trans.) are for the healing of the nations." As the nations are not yet healed, and will not have been healed when Christ takes the kingdom (Rev. 11:15,18,) it must be at the time spoken of here, which is after Christ comes to judge (give trial, probation to) the world. And notice that "the time ("for the healing of the nations," "and [when] there shall be no more curse") is at hand:" and just at this time "he that is unjust, let him be unjust still," etc.

We ask would the popular construction put upon it, namely, that it signifies that the condition of the wicked when Christ comes, is to eternally remain the same, i.e., that as they were found in that condition at his coming, they are forever to remain in it with his decree of "let"; we say would that be in harmony with the preceding part of the chapter, saying nothing about the Scriptures referred to above? How very inconsistent it would seem in connection with the statement, "There shall be no more curse;" but with the generally received opinion regarding it, there would be an unspeakable, indescribably awful curse still resting upon the world of mankind.

But perhaps some one is ready to say "that is a description of the city of the New Jerusalem, and it is in the city that there is to be no more curse." Well, let us read on a little; leaving the 11th verse

we will begin with the 14th: "Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city"; the city (kingdom of our Lord) will finally absorb all except the "death and hell" element of the 15th verse, including whosoever loveth and maketh a lie, which dregs shall finally be disposed of in the "second death" (chap. 20:14). 16th verse: "I, Jesus, have sent mine angel to testify unto you (John) these things in the churches."

Now, we submit this understanding of the 11th verse. During this Gospel age, the standard of judgment concerning our acts is God's revealed word; by it the saints (God's children, the elect) judge themselves, and when the righteous rule of the next age is inaugurated, and the curse removed, even with so great a change in some important respects, "still" the same law will continue in force, and will be the standard of judgment.

He that is unjust by the standard of judgment in this age, will ("let him") be unjust still. Justice being one of the attributes of God, there can be no other standard, and he who is unjust must, by his holy law, i.e., according to it, forever be declared unjust. Not that he must remain unjust; but that while he is unjust he will always be declared, or judged so, by this standard. And he that is judged holy by that law now will then (in the age or "ages to come") be holy still. Mark well now, that when the statement in 11th verse is in force, the 17th verse is also. "And the Spirit and the Bride say come (this must be after the marriage of the Lamb): And let him that heareth, say come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."

– J. C. Sunderlin.
