

DESTROYING THE ENMITY.

For He is our peace who made both one and the middle wall of the enclosure broke down; the enmity, in his flesh [even] the law of the commandments in decrees bringing to nought; that the two he might create in him into one man of new mould, making peace; and might fully reconcile them both in one body unto God, through the cross – slaying the enmity thereby. – EPH. 2:14-16. (Rotherham's translation.)

The Apostle is addressing Christians – converts from heathen nations – Gentiles, and is showing that the difference, in God's estimation, between Jew and Gentile, has now ceased. The Jew once had special favor, brought about by the typical sin offerings, though it was only typical of the real favor with God, which the gospel church enjoys – brought about by the better sacrifice (which needeth not to be repeated year by year) and the better covenant than the law. This contrast of their former condition as Gentiles, from the former condition of Jews, is referred to in vs. 11-13. But now, in Christ Jesus, ye who at one time were afar off [from God's favor] are made nigh by the blood of Christ.

This shows how the Gentiles were brought into favor and communion with God – "by the blood of Christ." Now, the Apostle proceeds to show how the Jew got a blessing through the same "blood" of Christ – they who had been favored by the Law ordained to life. [The favor under the Law covenant was, that if any Jew could keep the Law he should have a right to life, and should never die. Rom. 10:5. Gal. 3:12.] But that Law which seemed a promise or covenant by which they could have life – hence regarded a blessing – was found to be of no advantage, but rather a curse, because it did not give life to a single one of them. This was not because of

faultiness of the Law, for the Law was holy and just and good. (Rom. 7:12.) The fault was in the Jew who, because of sinful propensities and imperfect organism, inherited through the fall of Adam, could not keep the Law, and hence could not claim the life promised under that Law covenant. Thus, it will be seen, that the Law which was to bless them was found to curse or condemn the Jew, and was for this reason reckoned his enemy – called "the enmity," or OPPOSITION, or CONDEMNATION.

What advantage had the Jew, then, do you ask? He had the first opportunity of the Gospel high calling, and will have the first call under the restitution. Then, too, some out of that people were developed into fitness for the spiritual kingdom, and some for the earthly kingdom.

The Apostle having shown, as already explained, that those who had been Gentiles, without the Law, received their adoption and favor through the blood of Christ, now shows that the Jew had received an equally great blessing from the same one sacrifice, saying, "He is OUR peace." He settled the curse or condemnation of the Law which was upon us Jews. Not only did he settle fully the original claims of the Law violated by Adam, which condemned both Jew and Gentile, but he did even more for us Jews; he removed from us the galling yoke of the Law covenant under which we could never have attained life, and has offered us life as a gift or favor. Thus both the original curse or enmity between God and us Jews, as well as the secondary enmity or curse of our Law, which, as a partition, formerly separated us from you Gentiles; this was all taken away, so that both you and we may now have access to God through him who, by his blood – by his cross – destroyed all curse or enmity.

The design is, that ultimately there shall be not Jew and heathen, but that all men shall be made new – re-created of a new mould. The old Adamic mould was spoiled by sin in the very

outstart, but through Christ mankind is to be perfectly restored – remoulded.

Let it be noticed that the enmity or opposition was of God and toward men; men did not condemn God; but God did condemn men on account of sin. It was not Adam who became angry and offended with Jehovah and left the Garden of Eden. It was God who said, Cursed is the ground for thy sake, and who condemned (cursed) both man and woman to labor, sorrow, pain and ultimate death. Hence the enmity or curse which Jesus destroyed by tasting death for every man, was the enmity or curse which was the penalty of the broken law. When, therefore, we are justified to freedom from that condemnation or curse of death, by our ransom, it follows that we are justified to life, happiness, etc., such as was possessed before the curse came. And as surely as Jesus bought all, so surely will he in due time provide a deliverance for all by a resurrection.

In this connection, it is well that all should remember that the Bible presents God to us in various characters. He is the FATHER that pitieth his children, and also the JUDGE of all the earth who will do right, and by no means clear the guilty. It is in the aspect of a Judge that God is represented in the matter of sin and its penalty.

Now, a righteous judge must decide a case according to the law; and, where law is violated, he must condemn the violator according to the penalty mentioned in the law, no matter who the culprit may be, whether a near relative or the judge himself. [In Pennsylvania this really happened last month. A judge unwittingly violated a State law, condemned and fined himself according to the prescribed penalty.] Thus with Jehovah, when his loved child and creature Adam violated law, he must condemn him. Since the law was, "In the day that thou eatest thereof dying, thou shalt DIE," the Judge must execute the penalty, and sent the cherubim, drove the condemned ones from the garden of life-sustaining trees into the

barren land outside, (where they would be unable to sustain life and must die), the sterile and unprepared earth; left in that cursed or barren condition because God foreknew its necessity as the prison or work-house in which man should exhaust his condemned life and realize the bitterness and evil of violating God's law.

The prisoner who is guilty, and who hears his sentence uttered by the judge, may often think of the judge as his pitiless ENEMY and may seldom know of the sympathy and love of the man existing behind the stern look of the magistrate who represents THE LAW. So, too, some who appreciate not the love element in the character of the Judge of all the earth, and see not the wise provision of the Law which cuts off from life the disobedient, and will not permit them to live forever in sin, such think of God only as the unbending and severe Judge. It is only those who have caught a glimpse of God's plan for the liberating of the guilty prisoner whom He himself had justly condemned – only these can realize the great love wherewith the Judge loved us while we were yet sinners, while he was condemning us, and while he was permitting our deliverance into the great prison-house of death.

The Judge did not show much of His love for quite a while, but merely thundered forth the disapproval of Law against sin and its penalty, against sinners, sternly declaring that the Law cursed all such – was at enmity or opposition to them. Thus did the Judge convince all of the exceeding sinfulness of sin, and then in due time He showed His love for the prisoners by himself providing the ransom. In this was manifested the love of God toward us, **[R504 : page 3]** because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him (1 John 4:9). Now, all may see that this causes the character of the Judge to shine out the brighter. His great love and pity is seen the more clearly as we mount it upon the

background of unbending justice, which could in "no wise clear the guilty," even though pitied and loved.

This furnishes the key to an appreciation of the statement: "If when we were enemies [convicts before the Judge] we were reconciled to God [our penalty paid] by the death of His Son; much more being reconciled [guiltless – acquitted by the Judge who once condemned us] we shall be saved by His life" (Rom. 5:10). He who paid our ransom for us will bring us out of the prison-house of death, and the Judge will not object, but approve of our liberty.

Again, speaking of his confidence, that his condemnation had given place to approval and justification, Paul introduces this same judgment scene, and shows that there need be, can be, no mistake about it. He asks: "What shall we then say to these things?" [He has been arguing justification as a basis or step to glory and heirship] "If God be for us, who can be against us?" [If the Judge who once condemned us says our ransom price has fully met the demands of the Law against us, why should we be in doubt about it? There could be no better evidence.] "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is GOD that justifieth." [There could be no higher court to which to appeal, and the Judge pronounces us justified – freed from the condemnation of all inherited weakness and sin.] "Who is he that condemneth?" [Dare anyone claim that I am still guilty? If so, he must be ignorant of the ransom paid, ignorant that our substitute tasted death for every man. It should be a sufficient answer to such a one to tell him that] "It is Christ that died; yea, rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us" (Rom. 8:31-34).

This same subject – the sinfulness of all, God their condemning Judge, Himself also their deliverer by providing a

ransom, and the CONSEQUENT righteousness of God in cancelling the sin – is forcibly set forth in Rom. 3:22-26: "For there is no difference [between Jew and Gentile], for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. Being justified [cleared of guilt] freely by His grace [favor] through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Whom God [the Judge] hath set forth to be a propitiation [satisfaction – for Adamic sin] through faith in his blood. To declare His [the Judge's] righteousness for [in] the remission of sins that are passed through the forbearance of God." [i.e., the Judge sent his Son and paid the claim against the condemned race, in order that he might set them at liberty without violating his own laws]. "To declare, I say, at this time His righteousness: that he might be JUST and [also] the justifier of [sinners] him which believeth in Jesus" (Rom. 3:22-26). So then, that which was "enmity," which once hindered approach to God, which once condemned, was removed by virtue of the blood of the cross, and now all may come unto God realizing that our ransom settled the claims of justice once and forever. Indeed, since Jesus became the propitiation for our sins, instead of refusing to receive or commune with the condemned, the Judge and Father is sending out messengers during this gospel age, and will continue the same during the next – to inform them of his reconciliation, as we read: "Now, then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us; we pray you, in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God" (2 Cor. 5:20).
