

"JUDGMENT TO COME."

It is a common thing to hear people talk of "the judgment day," as though there were but one judgment day, and that was in "the world to come;" or, if we were to state it according to the popular theology, we should say the world to which we go, meaning by the word we, all mankind. We understand this misconception to come from not "rightly dividing the Word of truth."

There is no doubt that there is another world, or state or being, to which Jesus our blessed Redeemer and Lord has gone "to prepare a place" for us, and, when so prepared, "will come again" and receive us unto himself. (John 14:23.) But the word us does not apply to the world in the sense of embracing the whole human race, as is clear from a following chapter (16:20): "Verily I say unto you, that ye shall weep and lament (at his absence), but the world shall rejoice; and ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy." Again, in the 15th chap., 18 and 19 vers., Jesus says: "If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own, but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you."

We think no one can fail to see a clear distinction made here between "the world" and a class for whom Jesus was about to go and "prepare a place." He was to prepare the place, and they were to be prepared for the place through the teaching of the Holy Spirit, "the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him."

They (the disciples) were to become acquainted with the Spirit of truth, not the letter only, but the very nature of truth, the truth itself, should be their guide (John 14:17,26 and 15:26),

enabling them to judge themselves according to the "law of sin and death," and according to "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus." They see that, according to the law of sin and death, they are condemned to death because the account of sin stands against them in "the books," and it is a just account, and they acquiesce in it; but the Spirit of truth reveals to them the glorious fact that, by the law of the Spirit of life in (through or by) Christ Jesus," they are redeemed (liberated) from the law of sin and death; that the race is to live again in a coming age on account of this ransom; but that now (during the gospel age) those who hear and believe this may stand clear of the account, "made free from the law of sin and death," (because if they believe it, they will love the Redeemer, and condemn sin) and be reckoned NOW, what the world shall realize in fact, alive in (by, on account of Christ. (1 Cor. 15:22. – Diaglott.)

But here a seeming difficulty arises; it is asked, how it is that they are made **[R527 : page 4]** free from the law of sin and death and yet have to die? But, it must be remembered, that they are already dead under the law of sin (i.e., legally), but they are to be saved from (out of) death, not from dying. This is to be a fact with the world in the coming age, and, to him who believes it now, it is now reckoned, i.e., he is reckoned as having suffered the penalty of the law of sin, and as having been restored to life by "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus." His faith causes him to walk according to "the Spirit of life." "There is, therefore, NOW no condemnation" to such an one.

Such have ears to hear the gospel invitation to the higher life, the "high calling," which involves the consecration of that redeemed and restored nature, to death, with Christ. This call to the higher life, to be made a "partaker of the divine nature," is not a command, but is a "holy invitation," a glorious privilege, to suffer and die with Christ that we may be also glorified together.

This, then, is a part of the present judgment (trial) of this world, the judgment which is now in progress among "the elect," and this judgment will exempt them from any further judgment ("condemnation"). (John 5:24.)

But there is another order of judgment going on now (to which we referred in the last number) in which the rulership of this world is being judged, and is about to be cast out, and then will follow the judgment to come. (Acts 24:25.)

But, does some one ask, if the human race are judged twice? We answer, most certainly they are. A little thought will convince any one who is familiar with the Scriptures that this is the case, for all men have been judged once already; for "it is appointed unto men once to die;" that is, one judgment; for man would not have been condemned to death unless judged to be transgressors of some law, and "after this (still another) judgment." Not for the same transgression surely. What was the first judgment and sentence of the race for? For the sins of the fathers. The "fathers ate the sour grapes and the children's teeth are set on edge." (Jer. 31:29; Deut. 5:9.) For the whole human race suffer now for the father's sins, or because they sinned? Yes, in a certain sense, (i.e., in Adam) yet not altogether for their individual sins, but the nature of the fathers, being polluted by sin, is transmitted to the children who come under the sentence of death for having the nature (disposition) to do just as the fathers did; as rebels in heart, they are under sentence of death. Then it is not for actual transgression that men die? Not for that only, but it is for the disposition to transgress. (Matt. 5:28.) The inherited taint renders them unfit to live, because with such a nature they cannot keep God's law. (Rom. 8:7.) Then, will the judgment to come consign them to eternal death, or eternal suffering, because they did not keep God's law in this age or life? Surely not; for it was their inability to keep it that caused their death, and called forth the

mercy and love of God the Father and Son, who found a ransom for them, and brought them from death again, and restored to them what they lost in Adam. But will all that was lost in Adam be restored? Certainly; there will be a restitution of all things which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets." (Acts 3:21; Ezek. 16:44-63; Jer. 31:16, &c.) But if all that was lost in Adam is to be restored to all men, does some one ask what is the incentive to a holy life now? The incentive is exceedingly great; it is even an opportunity and the only one – we see no "second chance" – to attain unto the divine nature – IMMORTALITY. During the gospel age is the accepted time for that (Luke 4:19; 2 Cor. 6:2); and if any one receiving an invitation to that "high calling" fails to make his "election sure," it will be an eternal loss, one which can never, NEVER be retrieved, though it should be "sought carefully with tears."

All men will be restored to what was lost in Adam, unconditionally, "for since through a man, there is death, through a man also there is a resurrection of the dead; for as by Adam all die, so by the anointed also, will all be restored to life" (1 Cor. 15:21,22. – Diaglott.) But to this "high calling" there are "hard" conditions; it is a reaping where he "had not sown." The conditions are so hard that but few will accept them, for the conditions are even sufferings and death; not of the old nature, already under sentence of death, but of the perfect human, like what Jesus had, and with which the believer is credited. But those who accept these hard conditions do so "for the glory set before" them, and are passed from death (legally, out of) into life (Mark 8:35), and shall not come into condemnation" (process of judgment) again. (John 5:24.) But all the rest of mankind will come "after this" into judgment.

That they will have a future trial, i.e., probation and judgment, is clear from several scriptures to which we have referred, and from the fact that man suffers the penalty of sin (death) before the "judgment to come;" hence the judgment to come must be after

probation to come; for how can judgment (krima, an accusation charge) be brought concerning a transgression for which penalty has been suffered, and from which the subject has been redeemed? They were cast into prison (death, the penalty) till they should pay the "uttermost farthing." A redeemer paid it, and they are free. Who shall now condemn again for that? But now, with a knowledge gained from bitter experience, may come another probation which shall be a success. The first probation was in a representative, Adam, by whom all die; another, Christ, represented them, and by him all live again, (in a resurrection) and from that onward the probation is every man for himself. Herein we discern the thought of Paul when he said (1 Tim. 5:24): "Some men's sins are open beforehand, going before to judgment, and some they follow after."

The works of the little flock composing the mystical body of Christ are manifest, and are judged beforehand (the first and second man, the man Adam and the perfect man in Christ Jesus, are both judged beforehand, i.e., before the "restitution" race are). "There is, therefore, now no condemnation of (judgment against) them which are in Christ Jesus," (the little flock) nor will there ever be, for the rule by which men will be judged in the coming judgment will be the same as that by which they are judged now, viz.: the law of God as embodied in the holy Scriptures, which will then be "opened" to the understanding of all and no longer sealed (Rev. 20:12); so that he who is unjust or unholy according to that law, will forever stand so judged by it, until he becomes changed or restored in his nature. And let no one vainly think that in the judgment to come there will be any other standard, for he who is unjust now, by the same standard, will "be unjust still." (Rev. 22:11.)

But there is one notable element that will necessarily be left out of the "judgment to come;" that is, the element of redemptive or propitiatory sacrifice, or representative suffering. Christ having offered one sacrifice (of this kind) for sins, forever sat down on the

right hand of God, from henceforth expecting till his ENEMIES be made his footstool," (Heb. 10:12,13), i.e., as we understand, instruments of service, not members of his body. So, we understand, there will be no more offerings of this kind, hence no more forgiveness of sins; every one who shall be subject to that judgment (trial) shall expiate his own sins. Stern justice will preside then. Christ having died to save that which was lost, namely, the ability to keep the law, that, being restored, man will be required to keep it or be beaten with many or few stripes according to the extent of his transgressions. These stripes will not be vindictive but reformatory. Verily "it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God;" yea, "Fear him, which, after he hath killed, (and brought again from death) hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, fear him." (Luke 12:5.) This is the "fiery indignation which shall devour the adversaries" ("eat up" opposition). (Heb. 10:4.) Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire?

The Christ of God "will not fail nor be discouraged till he have set judgment (right) in the earth (Isa. 42:4); and yet he will not break the bruised reed nor quench the smoking flax, but will bring forth judgment unto truth (right according to truth). None will suffer for the sins of their fathers then as is now the case. (See Ex. 34:7; Deut. 5:9, and human experience all around.) It will then no more be said, "The fathers have eaten sour grapes and the children's teeth are set on edge," but "the soul that sinneth it shall die." "The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son." (Ezek. 18:20.) No one will die again on account of another; no one live again on account of another.

But the inquiring mind naturally asks, Why was not this course pursued with man in the first place? We answer that God is just, and it would not have been according to his law of justice to imperil and hold man to such a strict account, without a possibility of redemption, UNTIL he had had experience with sin, and become acquainted with

its awful results; but now, after having learned the exceeding sinfulness of sin, (which is the great lesson now being taught to the world,) and having (when brought again from the dead) ability given to keep the law, it is but justice to require it, and to attach a penalty, as at first, to the violation of it.

In the beginning the judgment was, "In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die," and then and there a Saviour, Redeemer was provided, a city of refuge for him who had unwittingly forfeited his life. But we are not told of any such Saviour, city of refuge, in the age to come. True, "Saviours shall come up on mount Zion to judge the mount of Esau" (Obad. 21), but these saviours we understand to be [R528 : page 4] typified by those who judged Israel, and will be leaders and guides, kings and priests, but not Redeemers.

So, a similar judgment is to be given in the coming age, that was given in the beginning, for violation of God's law, viz.: death. This is the "second death," from which we are told of no resurrection; at least, if so, we are not aware of it. But he who in this present age having died with, or in Adam, is awakened of the Spirit and consecrates himself to death with Christ (this would be his second legal death), is not hurt of it, for he shall "find it" again in the first resurrection. (Mark 8:35; Rev. 2:11; 20:16.)

O, blessed thought, that "Righteousness and judgment are the habitation (base) of his throne."

"O, that men would praise the Lord for his goodness and for his wonderful works to the children of men."

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