

THE CURSE LIFTED.

A curse signifies an opposition, an evil, a bitter punishment. Ever since the representative of our race was tried in Eden, and transgressed God's commandment, the curse of that broken law has rested upon him and upon all whom he in trial represented – all the Adamic race. That this is so, we need not stop to prove at length; we merely refer you to the many scriptures which declare it, and the many others which declare that it will be removed.

But if the Scriptures were silent on the subject, our experience proves that a curse rests upon mankind. The anguish, sorrow, distress, and death which attend us from the cradle to the tomb, all tell us that a curse rests upon us. Surely we would be justified in reasoning, that if man were in full harmony with his Creator, something much better than he has, would be his portion. And looking into God's Word this thought is corroborated. We find that when man was sinless and in harmony with God, there was no curse, no sorrow, no weary laboring, no pain, nor dying, but joy, peace, life and communion with God. All this distress is included in the term death, because they all surely lead to it. And this curse – DEATH – passed upon all men in that all had sinned in the person of their representative Adam.

It was God's law that cursed us. And since the law is the expression of God's mind, or decision, it was God's curse that was on us. Every law, to be of any force, must contain a penalty or curse for its violation. It is the penalty or curse of God's law that is causing so much misery and distress in the world, because all are subject to its curse through its violation by Adam. This curse is elsewhere termed by the Apostle an "ENMITY," which word has much the

same meaning as curse. Enmity signifies an opposition to – a resentment.

Let us look at the subject fairly and fully, for not only has God and his law a just and righteous opposition and enmity against sinners, but the sinners have since come to have an opposition or enmity toward God. Cast off from communion and fellowship with his Maker, man went headlong into evil, and the more evil he became, the more opposition and enmity he had toward that which is good and holy and right. "The darkness hateth the light," and the darker the hearts of men became, the more enmity they felt toward God.

Now, if God and man ever again come into harmony, and are made at-one, he who makes the at-one-ment must remove entirely this enmity. The enmity of man toward God and his law can be removed by making known to men the real character of God and of his law. They will then see and admire the righteousness and justice of both. This work toward the world will be accomplished during the next – the Millennial age. The knowledge of the Lord shall fill the whole earth, and all shall know him. And it is of that time that we read: "There shall be no more curse." (Rev. 22:3.)

But what will bring about this abolishment of the curse of the law? What will compensate for man's violation of the Law which brought the curse? Some would have us believe that the only curse is that opposition which man has against God and his law, the only enmity, that which man feels in opposition to God and righteousness; but such surely see but one side of the subject. What about God's opposition to the sinner, which drove him from Eden into sorrow and death? Any theory which fails to recognize this, fails entirely; for there have been some of the race in all ages who felt no enmity toward God, but desired the blessings of his favor – Eden life and joy in his fellowship: yet such never were brought back to

the original condition, and any with whom God designed at all to commune, were made to feel that His enmity, his opposition, his curse as a barrier still separated between them as sinners, and himself as holy. This was shown in various ways, but in none more emphatically than in the sacrifice for sin which each must offer before he could have any communion with God.

In these sacrifices there was remembrance or acknowledgment of sins, and since they were repeated it proved that they never really took away sin (Heb. 10:3,4), never really removed the curse; but these were typical of a better sacrifice, which God himself provided in due time, which did once for all and forever, remove the sin, the curse, and the enmity on God's part (vs. 5-10.)

The idea that the enmity is all on man's part, carried to its legitimate end, leads to the very absurd conclusion, that man got angry with God and went out of Eden full of enmity; that he would not commune with God, etc., etc.; God remonstrates and pleads with him to return and have his communion and fellowship; man refuses, and turns his back on his Maker. God sends prophets and teachers, but man spurns them. Finally God concluded to make a great sacrifice to men to appease THEIR wrath and to win their love. This theory would have God say: I have been too severe, if I had it to do again I would not be so strict; I would forgive instead of condemning you; I would bless instead of cursing; my love for you has conquered my justice. Come, now, see what an evidence of my repentance I am willing to give. My son shall die merely to show and assure you that your sins are pardoned, and that I am anxious to have your good will and esteem. What a God that would be! Both men and angels would have in contempt such laws and such a lawgiver.

How different from this is the truth on this subject! Jehovah declares his JUSTICE as unalterable as his LOVE, and that infinite wisdom and power make possible the harmonious operation of both.

He assures us that justice is the very foundation of his throne; that the empire of the universe, and the laws for the government of the same are upheld by justice. Righteousness and justice are the prop of thy throne. (Psa. 89:15. Leeser.) While Justice was reading to Adam the penalty of the broken law – THE CURSE – love was telling him that there would be a deliverance. Man might have supposed that God would relent, and not long enforce the penalty; they might have supposed that God's enmity or opposition to sinners expressed by the curse of the law would be forced aside by his love; but if they did thus imagine, the long years of death's reign must have shattered such hopes, and when finally God declared that he changes not, and will never clear the guilty (Mal. 3:6, and Exod. 34:7), such false expectations might well be extinguished. If God's justice could never yield, how could his love help them? they might well have asked.

Infinite WISDOM was equal to the emergency, and God removed the enmity of his own just law by providing a ransom, a representative or substitute to take man's place before the law, to suffer the just for the unjust; and thus while he did not destroy that law which was just and holy and good, Jesus destroyed its enmity or opposition to the Adamic race, by himself enduring its enmity and curse, as it is written: "He was made a curse [i.e., he was cursed or bore the penalty of the curse – death – destruction] for us." (Gal. 3:10-13.)

Because Jesus was our representative or substitute, [See Webster's definition] therefore the curse belonging to us fell on him, and the enmity or opposition against us, was reckoned against him. He was cast off to die out of communion, as an enemy, as a sinner, and we recall his dying words, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me"? Yes – "He is our peace who hath made both (Jew and Gentile) one and hath broken down the middle wall of partition,

having abolished IN HIS FLESH the enmity." – "That he might reconcile BOTH unto God [Jew and Gentile needed to have a work done for them which would make them right before God; not to make God right in their eyes; not to atone for an injustice on God's part, but for unrighteousness on man's part] in one body by the cross – having slain the enmity [opposition of the law against both Jew and Gentile] thereby." "For through him we both have access, by one spirit [R587 : page 3] unto the Father." (Eph. 2:14-19.)

There was no "access unto the Father" as long as the enmity (opposition) of his just law barred us out as sinners; but when Jesus became our substitute and suffered the condemnation or enmity for the unjust – absorbed it all – received its full measure on the cross, he thus abolished – destroyed – all claim and enmity of the law against us on account of Adam's disobedience. "Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, and outcasts from the Lord and his communion, but are "made nigh BY the blood of Christ." (vs. 13,19.)

Jesus offered himself as a sacrifice, not for God, unto men, to appease their enmity or opposition, but unto God, for men, to remove the righteous enmity and curse of God's law which was against men because of their sin.

But note, the LAW has not been changed; right is still right and wrong is still wrong, and will ever so remain; but mankind has been purchased out from under the dominion and curse of the law. Mankind is reckoned as now belonging to him who bought them with his own precious blood. The claims of the law being all settled by him, the entire control of men is delivered to the Lord who bought them. Whatever now shall be done with them he shall do it. He may do what he will with his own – thenceforth "the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son" – "He is Lord of all." (John 5:22; Acts 10:36.)

Having delivered mankind from the dominion and curse of the perfect law, and abolished the legal opposition – the curse of death which was against them – the next work of Messiah is to men, and not toward God; and for this work he takes to himself great power and will reign. The object of his reign will be to destroy man's enmity to God and his law, and to re-engrave that law upon their consciences. The work of reconciliation toward God for man's sins, was quickly accomplished, for the Lord waited to be gracious, but towards men it will require an age – the Millennium – to accomplish it.

The reason of this is apparent: It will require all of the Millennial age to rewrite the law of God upon the hearts of men. When perfect, before the fall, the law of God was so thoroughly imprinted in man's nature that no written law upon tables of stone was needed. Man, a moral image of God, had a conscience so delicately adjusted that it would decide instantly what was right and what wrong. His difficulty, as we have already seen, was that he did not appreciate the evil or curse or enmity which was the penalty of wrong-doing.

But cast off from the fellowship and communion of God by reason of sin, the law became more or less obliterated, and instead there sprung up an enmity or opposition to the law which they acknowledged as good, but found themselves less and less able to observe. Paul refers to this blotting out of the image and knowledge of God and his law, saying: "When they knew God they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened." "And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind." (Rom. 2:21,28.)

About two thousand years after the fall, and when the original law was well nigh erased, God selected a small nation – Israel – and

made covenants with them based on their keeping his law, which became so erased from their hearts, was expressed to them in commandments on tables of stone. But, as God foreknew, the law in stone only condemned, for none could render full obedience except with it written in their hearts, as a part of their very being. They must be constitutionally right and just and loving, "else they would be constantly warring against themselves and unable to obey." (Rom. 7:20-25.) But that law served to give them an idea of their need of divine help – the need of having the penalty paid for them, and then having the law rewritten in their hearts. (Gal. 3:23-25 and Gal. 4:5-7.)

Though Satan and sin have done a terribly degrading work in man, putting darkness and error for light and truth, yet we may still find traces of the original law in the most degraded of men, the world over. Even barbarian savages have some ideas concerning right and wrong, justice and injustice, however crude they may be. Paul testifies to this also, saying of the heathen: "These having not the [written] law are a law unto themselves, which show the work [some evidence] of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness." (Rom. 2:14,15.)

It is because this law has been so nearly blotted out of the once perfect human nature, that it will require so long to restore it to perfection. This law must gradually be again interwoven into human nature before it will again be an image of God, and at one with him. When so restored to God's image, all doubts as to what is right and what wrong, and all preference for the wrong, will be at an end. With his whole nature right, the law of God written all over him, as the law of his being, man will be prepared to do right, not from fear, nor from reward, not because some one would see or some one would not see, but because right is right – the very same motive of righteousness and justice which governs all of our Maker's actions.

Then God and men will be entirely at one, in perfect harmony. Then it will be seen that God's laws are only blessings, and the only prevention of evil which is a source of misery. When thus harmonized, Christ the mediator who died to redeem, and reigned to restore men to God, will "deliver up the kingdom to God, even the Father." (1 Cor. 15:24.) All enmity and curse will have been destroyed. The enmity of God's law having been met and settled, and man's enmity to the law removed by a restitution to original perfection, the image of God.*

*We have here dealt with the great mass of the world and purposely omitted mention of two comparatively small classes – the church selected in the gospel age, and the finally impenitent of the Millennial age. Because previously mentioned, it is unnecessary to interrupt the statement of the general plan as relates to the great mass of mankind.

In harmony with this is another Scriptural statement: "While we were enemies, we were reconciled to God [and the opposition and curse of his violated law was lifted] by the death of his Son, much more being reconciled we shall be SAVED [brought back into that condition of perfection and harmony with God and His law where we will be no longer condemned but approved] by his life." (Rom. 5:10.) This is another brief statement of the same glorious truth by the Apostle. When the work of Christ is fully accomplished, "Then there shall be no more curse;" "for the former things [the evil incurred through Adam's transgression] are passed away." (Rev. 22:3; 21:4.) put away legally by the "sacrifice of himself (Christ);" and put away in fact by his glorious reign. "Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world." For "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us."
