

THE CURSE LIFTED.

A curse signifies an opposition, a 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 the reader to the many scriptures which declare it, and the many which declare that it will be removed.

But if the Scriptures were silent on the subject, our experience proves that a curse rests on 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 wearying labor, no pain, nor dying; but joy, peace, life and communion with God. All our distresses are included in the term *death*, because they all surely lead to it, and are caused by it. And this curse – DEATH – passed upon all men in that all had sinned in the person of their representative Adam. – 1 Cor. 15:22; Rom. 5:12.

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 came upon us. Every law, to be made of force, must contain a penalty or curse for its violation. This curse is elsewhere termed by the Apostle an "ENMITY," which word has much the same meaning as curse. (Eph. 2:14,15.) Enmity signifies *an opposition to – a resentment*.

Not only has God, represented by his law, a just and righteous opposition or enmity toward sinners, but the sinners have since come to have an opposition or enmity toward God, without a cause. Cast off,

from communion and fellowship with his Maker, man went headlong into evil; and the more he lost God's image and the more degraded 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 entirely remove this *enmity*. Then "There shall be no more *curse*." – Rev. 22:3.

Some would make it appear that the only enmity, is that which man feels in opposition to God and righteousness; but such see only 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 deigned 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 they were obliged to offer, before they could have communion with God.

In these sacrifices there was remembrance or acknowledgement of sins; and since they were repeated, it proved that they never *really* took away sin (Heb. 10:3,4), or 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. – Heb. 10:5-10.

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; and that he would not commune with God. Then God is represented as remonstrating and pleading 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 concludes to make a great *sacrifice to men* to appease THEIR *wrath* and to win their love. This theory would represent God as saying, I have been too severe; if I had it to do again I would not be so strict; I would pardon sin quickly before you had time to get angry with me for my justice, and cast me off from your favor and love. I would bless instead of cursing you; my love for you has conquered my justice and love of right, entirely. 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. 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 its government are upheld by justice. – "Righteousness and justice are the prop of thy throne." (Ps. 89:15. – *Lesser.*) While stern Justice was reading to Adam the penalty of the broken law – THE CURSE – Love was telling him that there would be a deliverance. Men 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 his law would be forced aside by his love; but if they did thus imagine, the long years of death's reign should have shattered such hopes. And when God declared that he changes not, and will never clear the guilty (Mal. 3:6, and Exod. 34:7), any false expectations might well be extinguished.

Then we may well inquire, If God's justice can never yield, how can his love help us? 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 curse, as it is written: "He was made a curse [*i.e.*, he was cursed, he 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 treated as man's representative or substitute, cast off to die, as an enemy, and a sinner. Remember 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 [Jew and Gentile] **unto God**, in one body, **by the cross**, – having slain the enmity [opposition, condemnation, against both Jew and Gentile] **thereby.**" "For **through him** we both have **access**, by one spirit unto the Father." – Eph. 2:14-19.

Both Jew and Gentile needed to have a work done **for** them. Not to make God right, in their eyes, but to render them acceptable with God. Not to atone for any injustice on God's part, but for unrighteousness (violation of God's law) on their part. Jew and Gentile are here kept distinct in speaking of Christ's work of reconciliation, because, while all were of one family originally, and all condemned in Adam, the Jew had been separated from the others and given another trial (typically) under Moses' Law – in which also they had **failed**, forfeited life (typically) a second time. So that had their covenant been real, – and not merely a typical one, the death penalty under it would have been final and hopeless, the Second Death, – from which there is no hope of recovery or resurrection.

Our Lord Jesus, by his death, not only bore all the penalty against Adam, and hence against all condemned through Adam; but as a Jew he met, on behalf of all Jews, all that special condemnation which was upon them because of failure to keep their Law covenant. There was

no "*access unto the Father*" as long as the enmity (opposition) of his just law barred us off as sinners; but when Jesus became our substitute and suffered the condemnation, he thus *destroyed* all claim and enmity of the original law against us on account of Adam's disobedience as well as the condemnation of the Mosaic Law against the Jews. "Now *therefore* ye are no more strangers and foreigners," and outcasts from the Lord and his communion, [R1068 : page 6] but are "*made nigh by the blood of Christ.*" – Eph. 2:13,19.

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 of God 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 of the curse, or penalty, which resulted from the original violation 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." Having purchased all mankind, he is therefore "Lord of *all.*" – John 5:22; Acts 10:36.

Having delivered mankind from the dominion and curse of the perfect law, abolished the legal opposition – the curse of death which was against them – the work of Messiah is toward men, and not toward God; and for *this* work he takes to himself his 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 hearts.

Thus, our Lord not only releases us from the penalty of Adam's violation of God's law, but more, he releases us from all accountability to the Father's law; for having "bought us" we are under whatever laws

or arrangements he may make for us. True, he will make no arrangement but such as is part of the Father's plan; but (as shown in August TOWER – Ransom or Pardon Which?), it is the Father's plan to deal only with perfect beings, and to have but one perfect law, viz., the obedient may live, the disobedient must die. If placed under this law (though it is just and holy and good), we fallen, depraved creatures could gain nothing by a release from the penalty of Adam's disobedience; because, we would violate this law unintentionally at once. Hence, that good law would not be good for us, now. It was made for *perfect* beings who *could* obey if they would, while fallen humanity cannot. Even released from Adamic condemnation, we realize that it would profit us nothing, if thus put under Jehovah's perfect law. As Paul suggests, it would be a fearful thing for imperfect beings to fall into the hands of the living God. – Heb. 10:31.

The purchase plan was adopted, therefore; so as to transfer man from accountability to the uncompromising law, under which he was created, into the complete control of his Redeemer, Christ Jesus; who for a time puts all under a compromising law, which takes cognizance of men's weaknesses and inflicts *lesser* penalties (as well as the death penalty – which is the *only* one in the Father's perfect law for perfect beings) according to the *willfulness* of the disobedience.

But, this change of jurisdiction, from God's judgment-seat to the judgment-seat of Christ, is not a permanent change. It is only a temporary measure, made expedient because of man's fall and because he had been redeemed, and was to have a fresh trial for everlasting life; and because he could not stand trial in the higher court. During the Millennial reign, Christ will not only be the Judge, but also the Priest and Physician and Lifegiver; to restore men to perfection, step by step, as under *his judgment* they are found worthy; until all shall be tested, and the disobedient cut off from life. (Acts 3:23; Rev. 20:9.) Then, all the worthy having been made perfect, the perfect law will be very good for them; and we read that then, the Son shall deliver up the kingdom

to God, even the Father, – his special law and special judgment being over. – 1 Cor. 15:24,25.

The work of reconciliation toward God for man's sins was quickly accomplished, for Jehovah *waited* to be gracious. And when after laying down his life on our behalf, our Redeemer ascended up on high and there appeared in the presence of God for us, and presented the *price* (his sacrifice) as the redemption price of all, it was at once accepted by the Father, and the holy spirit (with gifts) was *at once* given (at Pentecost), as the evidence of God's reconciliation – the seal of acceptance to the consecrated waiting disciples. While there has been much error held with reference to God's character, representing him as without love, and the embodiment of stern justice only, there was in it much truth also. Like many subjects, this one has two sides; God is both *loving* and *just*. Our Father's love could not override his justice and could not acquit the guilty. The penalty must first be fully met before his love could embrace and own the sinner as his child. This was witnessed to and sealed at Pentecost and the words are now true:

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"My God is reconciled,
His pardoning voice I hear.
He owns me for his child,
I can no longer fear.
With confidence I now draw nigh,
And Father, Abba Father, cry."

But the reconciling of men is not so quickly done. While some were anxious for reconciliation and restoration to divine favor before Pentecost, and could only receive it in part, and that after typical sacrifices for sins had been offered, yet the great majority have wandered so far from God, and have had the divine likeness or resemblance so effaced, and their ideas of right and wrong, justice and injustice, so warped and twisted, and their eyes so blinded by evil and error, that they love their degradation. They will require a thorough

course of training before they can appreciate the privilege now offered them through and by Christ. Only the few, are ready for this during the Gospel age; and these are offered a share with Christ in the future work, on conditions. The vast majority, however, must be released from prejudice, superstition and blindness, before they can see; and this great work of making known to men God's love and favor and their need of it, we are informed by the Scriptures, will require an age – The Millennium.

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, his judgment of right and wrong, his conscience, was exact; so 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 fully *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, this law became more and more 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 and willing 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 they 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. 1:21,28.

About two thousand years after the fall, and when the original law was well nigh erased, God selected the small nation of Israel, and made covenants with them based on their keeping his law, which being so erased from their hearts, was expressed to them in commandments on tables of stone. But, as God foreknew, the law in stone only re-

condemned them; 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 perfectly. But that law served to give them an idea of their need of divine *favor*, rather than justice; – their need of having their penalty paid, and also of having the law re-written *in their hearts*. – Jer. 31:33,34; Heb. 8:10; 10:16.

Though Satan and sin have done a terribly degrading work in man, putting darkness and error for light and truth, we may still find traces of the original law, in the most degraded of men, the world over. Even savages have some ideas of right and wrong, justice and injustice, however crude. 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 is 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 for reward, nor 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; that they are the only prevention of sin, the source of misery. When God and his creatures are thus made entirely at one, the *at-one-ment* will be complete, and then 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 (opposition) of God's law having been cancelled, and man's enmity to the law removed by a restitution to original perfection, the image of God.

*We here deal with the great mass of the world and purposely omit mention of two comparatively small classes – the church selected in the Gospel age, and the finally impenitent of the Millennial age. (Acts 15:14; Matt. 25:46.) Because previously mentioned, it is unnecessary to interrupt the statement of the general plan as it relates to the great mass of mankind.

In harmony with this is another Scriptural statement: "***If while we were enemies*** we were ***reconciled*** to God [the opposition and curse of his violated law being lifted] by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we ***shall be*** SAVED by his ***life;***" *i.e.*, brought back into that condition of perfection and harmony with God and His law, where we will be no longer condemned but approved. (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] will have passed away (Rev. 22:3; 21:4), being put away legally by the sacrifice of 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."

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