

QUESTIONS ON THE RESURRECTION HOPE.

WHAT IS GUARANTEED BY THE RANSOM?

Question. – Would it be correct for us to say that our Lord Jesus by his death canceled the sins of the entire human family, so that there is now no condemnation to any?

Answer. – No; this would not be a correct statement. The Scriptural declaration is, "There is now no condemnation *to them that are in Christ Jesus.*" There is still condemnation upon all who have not yet come into Jesus through faith in the precious blood and through a reformation of life in harmony with that faith. This is directly implied by the Apostle's words. Again, he says, "We were children of wrath, even as others [are], but we who believe [who have accepted Jesus] have escaped the condemnation that is on the world." These Scriptures imply that the condemnation was still on the world at the time of [R2855 : page 251] these letters, after our Lord's death and resurrection.

Consequently the death of Jesus did not cancel the condemnation, it did not remove the sins, and all the world of mankind not only have continued under the condemnation, but also under its sentence of death, and have died, the same since Jesus died as before – except in the case of the Church, whose death is reckoned as being no longer Adamic death, as a penalty for sin, but as "being dead with him," as joint-sacrifices, participators in the sin-offerings.

That our Lord's death did not cancel sin is again attested by the Apostle Peter's declaration to some at Pentecost (after our Lord's death and resurrection, ascension, etc.): "Repent and be converted, that your sins *may be* blotted out when times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord, and he shall

send Jesus Christ [at the Second Advent]." This Scripture shows that the blotting out is a future work, just as the Apostle elsewhere shows that the sins of those who are in Christ Jesus are now covered from God's sight, to permit us to have present blessings and privileges, prior to the time when the sins shall be blotted out. The sins of the Church will be blotted out, and no more record will appear of them forever, as soon as the first resurrection shall have taken place, for all who have part in it will have perfect bodies, without a trace of sin, blemish or imperfection in them. And as for the world of mankind in general, the blotting out of the world's sins will be during the "times of restitution" – a gradual work, as implied in the word "blotting." Every one who accepts Christ and the Kingdom, and endeavors to live in harmony with the Lord under the terms of the New Covenant, will, during the thousand years of Christ's reign, find his sins, his blemishes, mental, moral and physical, gradually giving way, yielding to perfection, and they will thus be in process of blotting out until, at the close of the Millennial age, there shall no sin remain unblotted out for any one who has desired to have them blotted out, and who shall have availed himself of the abundant privileges of that time.

Thus we see, by two lines of demonstration, either of which would be sufficient, that Christ has not canceled the sins of the whole world, nor the sins of any, and that he has merely covered the sins of the Church, preparatory to the cleansing time, while the world's sins are not even covered. To make these two proofs the more conspicuous we will state them thus: **(1)** The fact that God's Word speaks of the world as being still under condemnation, and children of wrath, is a conclusive proof that their sins are not blotted out. **(2)** The fact that sin, and its wages of death, including pain, sickness, etc., are still inflicted upon humanity, is a second and indisputable proof that the sins are not blotted out, for if they had been blotted out it would be wrong on God's part to punish for sins no longer recognized.

Question. – If Christ's death did not effect the cancellation of man's sins, wherein lies the fault? Does it imply that the sacrifice was not sufficient to cancel the sins, or does it imply that God has not been just toward the sinners, but has accepted a payment from Jesus and is also requiring a payment directly from the individual sinner, as tho he had not accepted Christ's ransom sacrifice?

Answer. – Neither of these is implied by the fact that the world's sins are not yet blotted out. The Scriptural statement of the matter is that our Lord bought the whole world with his own precious blood. (1 Pet. 1:19.) There is no statement anywhere in the Scriptures to the effect that the sins of the whole world were canceled by Christ's death, nor that God ever purposed to cancel the sins of the world as an offset to the sacrifice of our dear Redeemer. On the contrary, the Scriptures everywhere hold out the thought that neither the blotting out of sins nor even their covering, is possible, except as the sinner shall first of all accept of Jesus through faith. Thus we read that God arranged the plan as he did arrange it, in order that "he might be just, and yet be the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus." There is no proposition in this text, or in any other, to justify any others than believers – no proposition to justify the world in sin, but merely to justify those who desire to escape from sin and its penalty, accepting of Christ as the Savior.

The statement of 2 Cor. 5:19 is in full accord with this. It represents a work begun by God *in* Christ, but not yet concluded. The ***ministry of reconciliation***, committed to the Church, will not be finished until the close of the Millennium; and whoever of mankind shall by that time have failed to accept the reconciliation, proffered by God in Christ, will "be destroyed from among the people." – Acts 3:23.

The statement that our Lord Jesus was a propitiation (satisfaction) for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world, implies that his death was sufficient in merit to meet the penalty against every individual and to satisfy the claims of divine justice against each individual. However, the canceling of the sentence which Justice had decreed against Adam and his progeny would include and imply nothing of restitution whatever. It was merely a sentence that Adam could not live, having forfeited his right to life. The fact that after this sentence came upon Adam, and while under it, he and his race decayed mentally and physically, and became morally leprous, has nothing whatever to do with the [R2856 : page 252] original sentence – the degeneracy of the race is a side issue. It resulted from the sentence of death, but was not a part of it, and the removal of the *sentence* of death need not mean a recovery from the fall.

The sentence of the divine law against Adam and his race, prohibiting them from the privileges of life, having been paid by the Lord Jesus' sacrifice, and the payment having been accepted by the Father, there can be no objection now raised on the part of Justice to hinder the sinner and his race from having eternal life if they can now demonstrate their worthiness of it. Had such an offer been made to father Adam the day after his transgression and expulsion from Eden, he would doubtless have gladly reentered Paradise and stood a fresh trial, and with better hopes of success, having learned something, at least, by his experience. But after six thousand years of falling and degradation under the dominion of sin, Adam and his race are in no condition to profit by the removal of the sentence of Justice which was against them, being unable, in their fallen condition, to comply with the divine requirements, if granted a new trial by the Father. Hence this proposition is set aside at once as infeasible, and instead God turns over the entire race to his only begotten Son, their Redeemer, that the Son may institute amongst those whom he

redeemed processes of restitution, which will be helpful to them in bringing them up again to the grand perfection originally enjoyed by father Adam. And when this work of restitution shall have been accomplished, the world, furnished with a large experience both in the fall and their restitution from it, will be ready for final testings or judgments preparatory to acceptance of those who stand the tests to eternal life which were set before father Adam, but which he failed to attain through disobedience.

In order to make this restitution process of the largest advantage possible to mankind, the divine plan is that step after step of the journey upward from degradation to perfection shall be attained only through the cooperation of the restored ones with their Redeemer and Restorer. To this end it is called a period of judgments or discipline, under which every effort for righteousness will bring its meed of blessing, and every dereliction bring its stripes or punishments. Thus day by day and year by year during these "times of restitution" the lesson on the desirability of righteousness and heinousness of sin will be given to the world of mankind, with every encouragement to those who will to do right; but with the rod, and eventually "everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord," to all those who, under those favorable conditions, love iniquity and serve it rather than righteousness.

Thus seen, Christ's death became the offset and cancellation of the legal sentence against man, but it did not and was not intended to remove his degradation. Man's sentence, recorded in the race, mentally, morally and physically, is still in evidence all about us, and will continue in evidence even after the Millennial reign has begun, and until the gradual processes of "blotting out" these sins shall, by the close of the Millennium, have completely obliterated them. The record of sin is in every human being, and the blotting out of those sins will mean the full restoration of that being to the image and likeness of God. This blotting out of sins,

therefore, was not accomplished by the satisfying of the claims of justice and the removal of the sentence of death, but must be accomplished, if at all, in the divinely arranged manner, by processes of restitution to the image and likeness of God – to which none will attain except as they cooperate with the great Restorer – the life-giver, Christ.

Suppose an illustration of this matter of the canceling of the sentence in respect to an earthly criminal sentence by an earthly court. Suppose a criminal had been sentenced for life, and that fifteen years after sentence he was pardoned and set at liberty. In those years he might have changed quite considerably, might have contracted disease and have become bald-headed and crippled with rheumatism. But no one would suppose for an instant that in pardoning him the court would undertake additionally to give him back his hair, his strength, his health, and the fifteen years of life which he had lost in prison. Neither does the remission of the original sentence by the heavenly court in any sense of the word promise or imply restitution of the things which man lost while under the sentence of death. The promises of restitution through Christ, while all based upon the ransom, are separate and distinct from it – the operation of love and mercy, and not in any sense of the word the operation of Justice, on man's behalf.

In regard to Rom. 5:18,19. The world could not be on trial before a court which had already condemned it, unless the condemnation were lifted; but in the case of man there is a transference of the case to a new court, of which not the Father, but the Son, is the Judge; as it is written, God "hath committed all judgment unto the Son." In one sense man starts in his new trial, under the new Judge, free from condemnation, that is, free from the judicial feature of his condemnation; but not free from the actual degradation which, in another sense of the word, is the curse or condemnation which rests upon our race. Justice will have nothing against the culprit, and makes no objection to his being awakened and assisted back to perfection by the new Judge; but

neither [R2856 : page 253] Justice nor the new Judge will release the culprit from the difficulties under which he labors, called the curse, the fall, etc., except as he exercises both trust and obedience in the new Judge under the terms of the New Covenant; and the new Judge will only release him from this curse or condemnation little by little, as he shall, by obedience, give evidence of transformation of his character from that of a servant of sin to that of a servant of righteousness.

In a word, the sentence or degree of death which came upon Adam, and through him upon us, was merely the judicial sentence, not the degradation which followed it as a consequence; and the removal of the judicial sentence by the payment of a price and the transfer of a sinner to the jurisdiction of Christ, for a fresh judgment or trial, secures merely the release of the original judicial sentence, but secures no release from the fall and degradation which followed the original sentence. The ruined sinner, whom justice would not permit to live, and who has degraded himself since, may now know that through Christ the demands of justice have been met for him, and that if he were back again to the condition in which father Adam was when he fell he would now be able to keep the divine Law perfectly. However, having fallen into degradation, and sin, he is now on so low a plane mentally, morally and physically, that altho the sentence be lifted, he is quite powerless to accomplish anything of consequence for himself. He first needed a Redeemer to ransom him, to pay the redemption price for him; he now needs a Savior, a Life-giver, to deliver him from the death-conditions, mental, moral and physical, into which he fell while under the divine sentence, and this will be the gracious work of the Kingdom, of which Christ will be the Head and King, and the elect Church his joint-heirs in the Kingdom, and under-representatives in the work of judging and uplifting the race.
