

ENOCH, ELIJAH AND THE SENTENCE.

THE answer to the following query may interest others than the inquirer: –

"Since 'death passed upon all men,' because of Adam's sin; and since all had to be *redeemed* before they could escape from that death sentence, how came it that Enoch and Elijah escaped from it before the redemption-price was paid?

We answer, that they did not escape, but were still under the sentence of death until the ransom was paid. The *execution* of the sentence was deferred in their cases, and their lives prolonged; but they would eventually have died had they not been redeemed. After Father Adam was sentenced he lived nearly a thousand years, but under his particular sentence he could not have lived more than a thousand years; because the sentence read, "In *the day* that thou eatest thereof, dying thou shalt die." And since "a day with the Lord is as a thousand years" (2 Pet. 3:8), his death was fixed to take place within that "day." But God left the way open to make types of Enoch and [R3378 : page 166] Elijah, and hence, so far as they and the remainder of the human family were concerned, no limit of time for the execution of the sentence was fixed. If, therefore, it pleased God to have it so, they might have continued to live for thousands of years, under the death sentence, without dying. In Elijah's case, although he was translated, it is not said that he did not die afterward. His translation made a type, as we have seen (MILLENNIAL DAWN, Vol. II, Chapter viii.), and he may have died and been buried afterward, unknown to men, as was Moses. – Deut. 34:6.

But with Enoch the case was different, as we are expressly told that he did not die. In his case, therefore, it is evident that the execution of the sentence was deferred, but there is no evidence that it was annulled. He, therefore, remained under that sentence of death

until he was *ransomed* by our Lord's death. As a member of the fallen race, he was an imperfect man, and although redeemed, and although a restitution to human perfection is provided for him in the divine plan, we are not certain that he is *yet* a perfect [R3378 : page 167] man. For the Apostle seems to teach that none of those whose faithfulness was attested before the Gospel call was made will be *made perfect* until after Christ and his bride are made perfect. He says (Heb. 11:39,40), after enumerating many of the ancient worthies, Enoch included, verse 5, "These all, having obtained witness through faith, received not the promise [everlasting life, etc.], God having provided some better thing [priority of time as well as of honor and position] for us [the Gospel Church], that they [the ancient worthies] without us [apart from us] should not be MADE PERFECT." And since the Church, the body of Christ, has not yet been perfected in glory, it is but a reasonable inference that wherever Enoch is and however happy and comfortable he may be, he is not yet made a perfect man, and will not be until all the members of the body of Christ have first been made perfect in the divine nature.

As to *where* God took Enoch, we may not know, since God has not revealed that. Should we speculate as to whether God took him to some other world, and for what purpose, it would be but an idle speculation. We may not be wise above what is written. We may be certain, however, that Enoch did not go to heaven – the *spiritual* state or condition – for such is the record: "*No man* hath ascended up to heaven but he that came down from heaven – even the Son of man." (John 3:13.) Elijah is said to have ascended to heaven; but, from our Lord's statement above quoted, that must be understood to refer to the *air* – as, when it is said that "the fowl fly in the midst of heaven" it certainly cannot refer to the *heavenly condition*, which flesh and blood cannot enter nor even see without a change of nature, which change has been promised only to the Gospel Church.

Understanding, as above shown, that Enoch was preserved from actual dissolution in death – although, already under that sentence,

legally dead (Rom. 5:12; Matt. 8:22) until the ransom-price for all was paid by our Lord's death – we can see that there will now be no necessity for his dissolution, but that when the due time shall have come he may be fully and completely *restored* from even the measure of human imperfection he had inherited to full, perfect manhood.

So, too, it will be with those of the world who will be living when the "times of restitution" are fully ushered in: it will not be necessary for them to go into the tomb. For although they are already legally dead, in that condemnation (or sentence) to "death passed upon all men," yet their penalty has also been legally met by another, Christ. He now holds the *judgment* against all, but graciously offers to cancel it entirely for each one who will accept restitution to life and perfection on the conditions of the New Covenant.

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