

"MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN"

– NOVEMBER 12. – DANIEL 5. –

"For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good or whether it be evil." – Eccle. 12:14.

ALAW OF RETRIBUTION operates. Good thoughts, good words, good deeds, are sure to bring good results – sooner or later. Evil thoughts, evil words, evil deeds, are sure to bring evil results – sooner or later. This Divine Law operating in the world, rewarding good and evil deeds, save in exceptional cases, now operates only amongst the Jews and amongst Christians. This is because only Jews and true Christians have come into covenant-relationship with God. The Apostle's declaration is true – "The world lieth in the Wicked One"; "The god of this world hath blinded the minds of them that believe not." The time promised in the prophecies has not yet come when "all the blind eyes shall be opened and all the deaf ears shall be unstopped." (Isa. 35:5.) Nevertheless, in a general way God exercises a supervision of the world's affairs, restraining evil from going to such lengths as would be irreparable; restraining it also from working real injury to those who are in covenant-relationship with Him – Jews and Christians.

Sodom and Gomorrah, Nineveh, Nebuchadnezzar and our lesson of today tell of exceptions to God's rule of dealing merely with His covenanted peoples. In our lesson the fall of Belshazzar's kingdom was not merely a judgment upon it, but a part of the great type of the fall of antitypical Babylon at the hands of an antitypical Cyrus.

The king of Babylon, feeling secure in the great walls of his capital, three hundred and fifty feet high, revelled with his generals and nobility. To renew the memory of their great victories of the past, he brought forth for the occasion the golden vessels taken in the pillage

of Solomon's temple – a triumph over the Jews and, as was generally supposed, over Jehovah, the God of the Jews.

In the midst of the banquet a horror came over the [R4902 : page 392] assembled dignitaries as a human hand was beheld writing on a wall of the banquet room in letters of fire, "Mene, Tekel, Upharsin." The wise men and astrologers were unable to read the writing or give its significance. Daniel was remembered and sent for. He not only showed the reading but its meaning. The secret evidently lay in the manner in which the letters were arranged, the characters themselves being Chaldaic. The Prophet Daniel declined the rewards and honors offered for the interpretation. He told the king plainly that the writing signified that he was "tried in the balances and found wanting." The Babylonian kingdom, so far from advancing human interests, had really retrograded from the original type. Another nation – Medo-Persia – would be given a trial. Later, the Grecians were given universal empire; still later, the Romans; and finally God permitted what was styled the "Holy Roman Empire," or the reign of Christ. Each of these has proven its insufficiency – its inability to bring to the world the blessing which God declares shall ultimately abound when Messiah's true reign shall be inaugurated, and the blessing and uplifting of mankind will become the "desire of all nations."

EVERY MAN'S WORK TO BE TRIED

We have said that Jews and Christians, because of covenant-relationship with God, are now on trial – being judged. This has been God's repeated declaration to the Jews. Their shortcomings are punished in a manner that the shortcomings of others, not in covenant-relationship with God, are not punished, but their punishments and stripes are intended to work out blessing for them eventually. Had it not been for the persecutions which have come to the Jews they would not today be a separate and distinct people as God designed, and hence they would not be ready as a people to receive and be the first to participate in the glorious blessings of the Messianic Kingdom. In

proportion as they maintain loyalty to their Law and confidence in the promises of God they will be prepared for the fulfilment of these great promises which are still theirs – earthly promises of restitution, etc. – Acts 3:19-23; Isa. 35.

While God's promises to the Jews pertain to the earthly phase of the Kingdom and its blessings, His promises to covenanted Christians are spiritual, heavenly. These respond to God's invitation, "Gather together My saints unto Me," saith the Lord, "those who have made a covenant with Me by sacrifice." (Psa. 50:5.) That covenant to sacrifice earthly things will be rewarded with heavenly things. In proportion as they are faithful to their covenant of sacrifice they will be spiritually refreshed, strengthened in the will and in the power of His might and rich toward God in faith and in works. Those riches of grace and spirit, the full attainment of which will come in the First Resurrection, are often associated now with poverty and sorrows of an earthly kind. The heavenly things are to be attained only by those who sacrifice earthly things. Harken to the Master's words, "Whoever will live godly shall suffer persecution"; "Be thou faithful unto death and I will give thee a crown of life." – 2 Tim. 3:12; Rev. 2:10.

ALL REAP AS THEY SOW

During Messiah's thousand-year reign of righteousness the world will be dealt with and brought to its judgment, its testing, its crisis. But it will be a righteous testing or crisis, giving to all mankind a fair test as to loyalty to God. The result of this opportunity, or trial for everlasting life or everlasting death, will come as a result of the great redemption work accomplished at Calvary. It is the will of God "that all men should be saved [recovered] and come to a knowledge of the Truth." (I Tim. 2:4.) In that glorious Epoch Satan will be bound and the fetters of sin and death now upon our race will be broken, and all will be granted the full opportunity of returning to the blessed conditions and favors enjoyed by **[R4902 : page 393]** Father Adam in

his perfection – but refusing this favor they will be destroyed, and that without remedy, in the Second Death.

But while that future time will be the actual testing period of the world for life or death everlasting, we are not to forget that every good deed and every evil deed committed now will have a bearing then. Every good deed, every good thought, every good word, has its uplifting and beneficial influence upon character; and every evil word, thought and deed has its injurious effect upon character. Every kindness done to one of the Lord's saintly, elect members, will be rewarded. Every evil deed done to one of the least of these will be surely punished.

Thus the world of mankind is now laying up in store helps or hindrances as respects their own everlasting interests. The honorable, the upright, even though they do not become Christians or saints, will have proportionately a better standing in the future time of trial. The dishonorable will have proportionate degradation in the future, and will come forth proportionately more degraded, and will need proportionately more stripes in order to rise up out of sin, degradation and death, by the assistance of the Savior and the glorified Church. – I Cor. 6:2.

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