Revelation 22:3 (JBP) 68577

Bible Treasury: Volume 15, There Shall Be No More Curse (22:3)

(Revelation 22:3)

A curse is a malediction, and we know that no word from God can fail of its effect; tinder any circumstances a curse from Him cannot be otherwise than a very terrible thing. It may be a stroke only of God's temporal government (Deut. 30:1-8), or it may be absolute, the fall and final judgment of sin, the full and adequate penalty of our sins. Christ was made a curse for us on the cross (Gal. 3:13); He thus bore the judgment of sin, and of our sins. This was primarily for the glory of God—the vindication of the divine glory with regard to sin. It was also for the good of the world as such, the ground of all respite and of every mercy towards it, temporal or spiritual; and it is the ground of the eternal salvation of believers. But, in God's moral government, temporal punishments also attend sin. God works in this world His displeasure of it, as He shows also His love by His mercies. This is always true, however the Israelites may, in a more definite and specific way, be the people of His manifested government.

Thus punishments and blessings may be temporal only, or may go on so as to be eternal. Temporal judgments, however, are not to be called curses, unless distinctly stated to be so in Scripture—in fact are never so to the children of God, even when disciplinary or in chastisement. For “whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every sin whom he receiveth,” and “all things work together for good to them that love God.” So that what may be of the character of a curse to the unbeliever is turned into a blessing to the believer, i.e. the very same dispensation of God's providence, or stroke of His moral government (however painful), may be, and often is, a curse to one person and a blessing to another, such for instance as suffering and death. Moreover, judgments may apply to an individual only, or may extend to a family, to a nation, or even be universal in scope. But they are connected with the moral government of God in this world, and are therefore with a view of vindicating Himself as the Supreme moral Governor, restraining evil, and instructing and benefiting the wise, i.e., the children of God (Isa. 26:9; Dan. 12:10).

But bear in mind that all instruction, which through the grace of God turns to the profit of the individual or community, is in this world; in the next the results will be seen, and these are then eternal and unalterable. Some of God's severest judgments are remarkable not only for divine wisdom in government, but even as containing mercy towards the world. When our first parents fell, we read of no “curse” pronounced on them personally, though we do read, “cursed is the ground for thy sake;” and the very penalties pronounced upon them were morally necessary, and had mercy in them. For example Adam was condemned to toil, and what would men be, what would the world be, without such a necessity? And even as to death, whilst to the Christian it has neither sting nor terror, for “all things are yours',” says the apostle, “whether the world, or life, or death,” &c., yet, even as regards this world, what would the world become, if wicked men lived on in it without dying? So even the penalty of pain in child-bearing is not wholly punitive. There are in fact always wise reasons for the course which God's moral government takes, nor does He willingly afflict. We should remember that that government is in view of the whole power of evil, that it has objects and results therefore infinitely beyond our comprehension, and that, even though often and deeply in sorrow, we may well trust the love of Him who has saved us, (but at the cost of the sacrifice of His only-begotten Son,) for the maintenance of His own righteousness.

The importance of clear views on this subject is great; for strenuous efforts are being made in connection with other very pernicious doctrines, to represent Christ as a curse-bearer, in common with men, during His life upon earth; as also to put Christians, in common with the world, under curse from God. This would of course destroy their peace; and it is therefore desirable that the truth should be brought prominently forward.

The time is coming when “there shall be no more curse” (Rev. 22:3), i.e. as connected with a probationary and temporal state of things, in short upon the face of the earth. This text has nothing whatever to do with the eternity of punishment. That question is settled in Rev. 20:11-15—the language there used being as clear and indisputable as it is awful. J. B. P.