



THE HOUR OF JUDGMENT.

In the final proclamation of the everlasting Gospel to all the earth, there is one new feature. It is not a new truth, which is then revealed for the first time, but it is the re-statement of an old truth, with the added emphasis that the time has come when it is to be fulfilled. *"Fear God, and give glory to Him: for the hour of His judgment is come."* Rev. 14:6. The whole earth is concerned in this solemn event, and it is to be made known to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people. This is to be a leading thought in the last message. A work of judgment begins in heaven at the same time that a special preaching of the Gospel begins on earth, and the work on earth derives a special significance from the work of judgment that is carried on in heaven.

NO SECRET FROM MEN.

"Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but He revealeth His secret unto His servants the prophets." Amos 3:7. God does not hide His work from men. He dwells in the light, and it is not His fault if men are found in darkness, so that God's dealings take them by surprise. When the time is at hand for the hour of His judgment, God takes care that everyone shall know about it. He sends a special message to everybody concerned, and in the message He gives full and clear information as to the judgment, the standard, the witnesses, the Judge, and every other point in which the subjects of the judgment

are interested. He states clearly what is expected of men, and how they may be prepared for the test.

The standard of holiness is the law of God. If a man fails to meet this standard in his life, he is a sinner, but "the doers of the law shall be justified." Every transgression is condemned by the law of God. "I had not known sin but by the law." Rom. 7:7. "Whomever committeth sin transgresseth also the law." 1 John 3:4. This law is the test in the judgment. If a man's life record reveals obedience to God's law, and a love of its principles, he will not be condemned. "For as many as have sinned without law, shall also perish without law: and as many as have sinned in the law, shall be judged by the law; in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ." Rom. 2:12, 16.

THE JUDGE A MAN.

Jesus Christ is the Judge. It is a Man who judges men. God does not sit in judgment on men, but leaves it to One who has Himself met the temptations that beset men, and knows what it is to be human. "The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son." "And hath given Him authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of man." John 5:22, 27. It is the law as revealed in the life of the Man Christ Jesus that is the standard of the judgment.

THE DIVINE STANDARD.

It is for this reason that God is now calling attention to the fact that, although His law is unchangeable, a human ordinance has been substituted for the fourth commandment, teaching men to honor a day which God has not set apart, and leading them to dishonor the rest day divinely appointed. Sabbath, keeping was a prominent feature in the life of Christ, and now that men are to be judged by that life, the true standard is to be lifted up that none may be deceived by human alterations. Some are receiving God's correction; others are fighting against it. They hate the human instruments through whom God has brought before them the reform for which He is calling. If they could only realise that the hour of God's judgment is come, and that their lives are being tested by the law of God, they would value the light that comes, and turn from every commandment of men to be fashioned after the Divine Pattern.

THE JUDGMENT IS GLAD TIDINGS.

Notice that the declaration of the judgment is a part of the everlasting glad tidings. Men tremble at the thought of judgment to come, but it is a necessary part of the Gospel. Paul says that "God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my Gospel." Rom. 2:16. Peter, when preaching the Gospel to Cornelius, said: "He commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is He which was ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead." Acts 10:42, "Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad; let the sea roar, and the fulness thereof. Let the field be joyful, and all that is therein: then shall all the trees of the wood rejoice before the

Lord: for He cometh, for He cometh to judge the earth: He shall judge the world with righteousness, and the people with His truth." Ps. 96:11-13.

That the judgment is a necessary part of the Gospel is seen when we consider that, without the judgment, there would be no second coming of the Lord, or resurrection from the dead. The judgment is the separating of the wheat from the tares, the sheep from the goats, it is the making up of God's treasure, and the conclusion of Christ's work in behalf of His people. It is the time when the kingdoms of this world become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ. The time when the dead are judged is the time "that Thou shouldest give reward unto Thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear Thy name, small and great, and shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth." Rev. 11:15-18. If it were not for the judgment, the present state of things would go on for ever. Wrong would always trample down the right, the rich would oppress the poor, Satan would continue to be the god of this world, and God's people would never enter into their inheritance. For it is only those that are "accounted worthy" who obtain the world to come, and the resurrection from the dead. Luke 20:35. It is in the judgment that men are "accounted worthy." When the hour of God's judgment has come, the solemn moment has arrived when the books are opened (Dan. 7:9-14), and the dead are judged accord- {582} ing to the things that are written in the books.

Judgment begins at the house of God. 1 Peter 4:17. The closed up records of lives that have long been forgotten among men are brought forth. They have not been forgotten in heaven. "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints," and He does not forget any that have committed the keeping of their souls to Him. Loving memories stir afresh in angel hearts as familiar names are called from the book of life. The record of their lives is read: it is seen that on earth they endured the cross, despising the shame, and they are accounted worthy of a part in the glory. Name after name is called, and for every one that Christ acknowledges, called and chosen and faithful, there is joy among the angels over a soul snatched from Satan's power, and saved for the Redeemer's kingdom.

DENIED BY CHRIST.

But what of those who heard the call, and girded on the armour, who fought the good fight a while, and then made peace with the enemy, and returned to his yoke? "Whosoever shall deny Me before men, him will I also deny before My Father which is in heaven." Matt. 10:33. "He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before My Father, and before His angel." Rev. 3:5.

The list of names of the overcomers is a long one, glory to God, "a great multitude that no man could number," but there comes a time when the last of the sleeping saints is passed, and none are left but those who are alive on the earth. These will not know it, but as they go about their daily work, an hour will come when their name is called above, their record is read, and their destiny sealed for ever. This is the moment of which we read in Rev. 22:11. "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is

filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still." The following verse (v. 12), shows that these words, so fraught with life or death to every soul, are spoken before the coming of the Lord. Death arrests the development of character, and fixes man's destiny. As the tree falls so it lies. The same stop comes then to living men, but they do not know that the fateful word has been spoken, the division has been made, the choice has gone for ever. "Take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares. For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth." Luke 21:34, 85.

THE POWER OF THE GOSPEL.

Great as will be the need of those who serve God in such a time, the grace will be even greater. As Christ calls men to such an experience as Enoch and Elijah had, His Gospel furnishes the power and salvation that will fulfil the same work in every believer. The everlasting Gospel is no empty form. It is the living power of God. It consumes sin as fire consumes stubble. It fills the believer with spiritual power, "according to the measure of the gift of Christ." Its first fruit is an all-absorbing love that forgets self in service for others, and knows no fear in the hour of judgment. 1 John 4:17, 18. As the message of the everlasting Gospel is received, it does its work. Once more the days of the apostles will be seen, the church of Christ, revived by the latter rain, will take up its long neglected work, and carry a pure Gospel to earth's remotest bound, while the sentence that comes from heaven, where the judgment sits, is, "Here is the patience of the saints; here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus." Rev. 14:12.

CHRIST JUDGED BY MEN.

As God's people take up this work, they reveal what spirit they are of. It is seen that the effect of the Gospel is to put into men the spirit that was in Christ, "who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with Him." Christ will be admired in all them that believe. Men can find nothing then to say against Him, for His life is only good. The Lord has been judged by His people. Their unfaithfulness has brought dishonor upon Him. Now He is vindicated. The hour of His judgment is come, and His faithful witnesses bear true testimony to His wonderful love and great salvation. Henceforth none but His enemies, who hate Him simply because He is good, can speak a word against Him. As the church of Christ comes into harmony with His own life, He is free to work with power. In the past, he has been bound because His people have been unlike Him, and He could not work mightily through them without seeming to countenance their evil ways. Now there is nothing to hinder His full cooperation with His church, and the full tide of divine life flows with mighty power through His people. They go forth upon their work conquering and to conquer.

VINDICATING THE SAVIOUR.

It is in this clearing of Christ from the misjudgment of men, and setting Him before the world in His true light, that Christians will meet the issues of the hour of judgment. They cannot be present in the courts above, except as they commit themselves to Christ, the Advocate. He cannot be present on the earth, where He is being judged, except as He can find ambassadors here who will represent Him. If we will confess His name here, and bring honor to His name among men, He undertakes to speak for us in heaven, and procure glory for us there. Matt. 10:32. So that it is here, and not in heaven, that we have to meet the test of the judgment. The decision is in our own hands. We are not to be in fear and trembling, waiting for the moment when the judgment may pass from the dead to the living. If we do not know yet that our interests are secure in heaven, we can make them so at once, and put the matter beyond question, by becoming whole-hearted, blood-bought witnesses for Jesus Christ, who follow Him fully. Whatever others may say or do, we can take our stand boldly in the place where the angelic verdict of the judgment approvingly descends: "Here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus."

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