



THE JUDGMENT OF THE WICKED.

The hour of God's judgment begins, as we saw last week, before the second coming of Christ, but it does not close then. All who are "accounted worthy" of a part in the first resurrection have passed the test, and the Saviour comes for them, His reward with Him, "to give every man according as his work shall be." Rev. 22:12. The duties of each one have been appointed in the investigative judgment, and Christ brings them the fitness for their future work. Those who have been faithful on earth over a few things are now made rulers over many things, and enter into the joy of their Lord in doing the Father's will.

JUDGING ANGELS.

The cases of those whose names have been blotted out of the Lamb's book of life yet remain to be dealt with, and among these come the fallen angels. "The angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, He hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day." Jude 6. These have sought in every way to overthrow the people of God. Their power and influence have been unsparingly used to make the pathway to heaven a bitter and dangerous one, but through the grace of God their efforts have been defeated, and now the saints who have so often felt their wrath are to sit in judgment upon them, and upon all those who have

joined with them in rebellion. "Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world?" "Know ye not that we shall judge angels?" 1 Cor. 6:2, 3.

"And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them; and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the Word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands, and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. . . . This is the first resurrection." Rev. 20:4, 5. Before that tribunal of glorified martyrs and overcomers are laid the life records of every sinner. Among them come the cases of their own persecutors, the very men who caused them to be beheaded for the witness of Jesus. Will they take full advantage of the change in the situation, and mete out a rich retribution to their tormentors, and everyone connected with their past sufferings?

There will be no vindictive feeling in that judgment. Those who sit there are men who gave their lives for others. When persecuted on earth, the Spirit of Christ enabled them to pray for those who despitefully used them and to love their enemies. Now, when the whole life history of the agents of Satan is unfolded before them, the saints can realise, as they could not before, that the man who wrongs another wrongs himself more deeply, that sin is death, and that the pleasures of sin mean but the torments of despair. They see that those who sell themselves to Satan thereby procure to themselves a harder fate than their worst enemies could wish them. From their own bright heavenly home, rejoicing in the love of the Saviour, and the perfect bliss of the re-united family of God, the saints have no thought for the wicked but one of unutterable pity that the lost children should have forfeited so much, and have been so woefully deceived by the common enemy, Satan.

MERCIFUL JUDGES.

None sit in that judgment but those who have sacrificed everything to save the sinner from his fate. "Saviours shall come up on Mount Zion to judge the mount of Esau." Obad. 21. None will rule except those who have been faithful. The professing followers of Christ, who {598} have not shared His Spirit, and sought like Him to seek and to save that which was lost, will not be saved by their profession. They may have said, "Lord, Lord," they may have eaten and drunk in His presence, and have listened to His Word, and yet be unknown to Him who reads the heart. Luke 13:24-27. While every possible plea for mercy will be urged at that merciful court, what plea can be made for those who knew their Lord's will and did it not? Their punishment will be the heaviest of all. They will be beaten with many stripes. Luke 12:47, 48. It is more tolerable in that day for Sodom and Gomorrah than for them.

NO JUDGING NOW.

The servants of Christ are not to judge now, but to leave all judgment till the time that God has appointed for it. "Judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of

the hearts." 1 Cor. 4:5. "For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil." Eccles. 12:14. The judgment is not conducted according to human powers of forming decisions. It is written of Christ, that the Spirit of God "should be His understanding and knowledge," and He shall not judge after the sight of His eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of His ears. But with righteousness shall He judge the poor." Isa. 11:3, 4. This word shows that judging after the sight of the eyes and the hearing of the ears is not righteousness. If it is unrighteous, and not put away by confession and repentance, such judging will bring him who does it before the tribunal which awards punishment to unrighteousness. It is evident, therefore, that if we would sit with the saints in judgment, we must not judge any now. Christ states, this truth. "Judge not that ye be not judged. For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged." Matt. 7:1, 2. "For he shall have judgment without mercy, that hath showed no mercy." James 2:13.

At the end of the thousand years the wicked are raised from the graves. "The rest of the dead lived not again till the thousand years were finished." Rev. 20:5. They that have done evil come forth "unto the resurrection of damnation." John 5:29. They have no bright future before them, only "a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation." "And I saw a great white throne and Him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and the grave delivered up the dead which were in them; and they were judged every man according to their works." Rev. 20:11-13. "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." 2 Cor. 5:10.

The day is coming when every one will have to stand face to face with Jesus Christ to answer for himself. He will not be able to take comfort in being one among many. He will see no other. There will be no place to hide. Earth and heaven flee before the face of Him that sitteth on the throne. Seeing nothing but Him, the sinner has to stand in the light, naked and alone, to talk with his Redeemer. He may urge his excuses then, and plead his cause if he will, but he will be speechless. He has slighted divine love, and he is without excuse. He hears his sentence, and he feels that God is just.

A PERSONAL INTERVIEW.

Men turn from Christ to-day and seek to forget Him. But every day that passes brings them nearer to that terrible interview with the King they will not serve. Then, if they could do it, how gladly would they recall the past. But their choice has been made, they have judged themselves unworthy of everlasting life, and they see, in that bright light where falsehood cannot come, that the blame is all their own. They confess that

God has done all that an infinite God could do for them, but their stubborn hearts have thwarted His purposes of love.

Then will be seen the fulfilment of the words spoken by Paul of the Saviour: "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." Phil. 2:9-11.

Satan with all his angels, the nations of the lost, and the nations of them that are saved, unite then in acknowledging Christ. If only the wicked would do it now, instead of waiting till it is too late; if they would let the love of God save them instead of resisting Him until the kindest thing He can do is to take from them the life which has become a curse to themselves and to others, how bright and glorious would be that day which, through their own stubbornness, must now end in the lake of fire.

For whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire." "This is the second death."

The judgment is finished. "And there shall be no more curse." "The former things are passed away." "And He that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new."

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