

The Judgment Seat of Christ

by

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THE JUDGMENT SEAT OF CHRIST

IT is the joy and wonder of God's Grace that all saving merit in our Lord's life and death becomes ours on simple faith: "for by grace have ye been saved THROUGH FAITH; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God; *not of works*, that no man should glory" (Eph. 2:8-9). A sinner's works, so far from saving him, have actually to be repented of - "REPENTANCE from dead WORKS" (Heb. 6:1) : - for "the FREE GIFT of God unfettered therefore by any obligation on the part of the Giver, and thus completely severed from our merit - "is eternal life *in Christ Jesus our Lord*" (Rom. 6:23). The saving efficacy of simple, vital faith has been beautifully expressed in the moving words of Hooker. "Christ hath merited righteousness for as many as are found in Him; and God findeth us in Him, for by faith we are incorporated into Him. Then, although we be in ourselves altogether sinful and unrighteous, yet even the man who is in himself impious, full of sin, full of iniquity: - him, being found in Christ through faith, and having his sin in hatred through repentance, him God beholdeth with a gracious eye; putteth away his sin by not imputing it; taketh quite away the punishment due thereto, by pardoning it; and accepteth him in Christ Jesus, as perfectly righteous as if he had fulfilled all that is commanded him in the Law; shall I say more perfectly righteous than if himself had fulfilled the whole law? Such are we in the sight of God the Father, as in the very Son of God Himself. Let it be counted folly, or frenzy, or fury, or whatsoever, it is our wisdom, and our comfort: we care for no knowledge in the world but this, - that man hath sinned, and God hath suffered: that God hath made Himself the sin of man, and that men are made the righteousness of God." We thus draw eternal life solely from the Son of God. "God *gave* unto us eternal life, and this life is *in His Son*. He that hath the Son HATH THE LIFE; he that hath not the Son of God hath not the life" (1 John 5:11). Eternal life thus rests forever on simple, saving faith, which produces immediate regeneration, incorporation into Christ, the indwelling of the Holy Ghost, and indefectible life. "He that *believeth* on the Son hath EVERLASTING life" (John 3:36).

REWARD

But even a casual study of the Word of God reveals that a new horizon now opens on the redeemed soul. If life is by faith, *reward* is consequent on *works* done after faith. For Scripture regards each saved soul as a runner racing, an athlete wrestling, a warrior fighting, a farmer sowing, a mason building, a fugitive flying, a besieger storming; and all this strenuous intensity rests on a fundamental of revelation - "that God is, and that He is a *Rewarder*" (Heb. 11:6). "With many disciples the eyes are yet blinded to this mystery of rewards, which is an open mystery of the Word. It must be an imputed righteousness whereby we *enter*; but having thus entered by *faith*, our *works* determine our relative rank, place, reward" (Dr. A. T. Pierson). Calvin, though seeing this truth but dimly, has packed into a sentence the Scripture doctrine of reward: - "There is no inconsistency in saying that God rewards good works, provided we understand that, nevertheless, men obtain eternal life gratuitously."

Nor is there any doubt that this is a truth for the Church of God. "Behold, I come quickly; and my *reward* is with me, to render to each [disciple] *according as his work* is" (Rev. 22:12). To

whom is this said? “I, Jesus, have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things *for the churches*.” Too often, as Dr. A. J. Gordon says, “just as the Legalist resents the doctrine that good works can have no part in effecting our forgiveness, so the Evangelical recoils from the idea that they can constitute any ground for our recompense.” But Paul says: - “He that planteth and he that watereth are *one* “- in standing and redemption – “but each shall receive his own *reward* according to his own *labour*” (1 Cor. 3:8), So also he balances the double-edged recompense. “Servants, obey¹...knowing that from the Lord ye shall receive the *recompense of the inheritance*: ye serve the Lord Christ. For” - on the other hand - “he that doeth wrong *shall receive again for the wrong that he hath done*: and there is no respect of persons” (Col. 3:24). It is thus a truth that concerns *us*. In the words of Dr. Eadie : - “The Christian doctrine of reward is too often lost sight of or kept in abeyance, as if it were not perfectly consistent with the freest bestowment of heavenly glory.”

All honest difficulty concerning Reward vanishes, I think, when we examine *what* God rewards; and, first of all, God’s recompense rests supremely on godlikeness, and god-like conduct. “Love your enemies, and do them good, and lend, never despairing; *and your reward shall be great*, and ye shall be sons of the Most High: *for He* is kind toward the unthankful and evil” (Luke 6:35). Here reward turns upon likeness in character and conduct to our Father in heaven. Secret devotion, also, will be rewarded. “Pray to thy Father which is in secret, and thy Father which seeth in secret shall *recompense thee*” (Matt. 6:6): not only will the prayer be answered, but the praying will be recompensed. Moreover, our attitude of heart will help to sway the Lord’s adjudication on our service: “Condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned: forgive, and ye shall be forgiven” (Luke 6:37). Our life is putting, word by word, the sentence upon ourselves into Christ’s lips: we are manufacturing, as servants, our own adjudication. For goodness and glory are but two halves of one whole: goodness is the suffering side of glory, and glory is the shining side of goodness.

So all labour, also, will be exactly recompensed. “Whoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water *only* “- the minimum of gift - “in the name of .a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall *in no wise* lose his *reward*” (Matt. 10:42). For what is reward? “To him that *worketh*, the reward is not reckoned as of grace, but as *of debt*” (Rom. 4:4): so, as requital for services He graciously owns, God is pleased to bestow tangible and equivalent evidences of His approval. Its measure will be exactly graded. “He that receiveth a prophet in name of a prophet shall receive a *prophet’s* reward; and he that receiveth a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a *righteous man’s* reward” (Matt 10:41): “for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap” (Gal. 6:7).

But, most searching truth of all, God rewards supremely the *why* that underlies the service. “Take heed that ye do not your righteousness” - conduct really good in itself - “before men *to be seen of them*: else ye have NO REWARD with your Father which is in heaven” (Matt. 6:1). Motive is thus revealed as decisively crucial. “The Lord will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and make manifest *the counsel of the hearts*; and *then* shall each have his praise from God” (1 Cor. 4:5). God gives unmerited salvation, but He never gives unmerited praise. So exaltation in

¹ Space forbids the quotation of all Scriptures in full; nor is to be regretted if the reader is (in a sense) compelled to verify and study both text and context for himself. He will find that the abbreviations are not mutilations.

the Age to Come is in inverse ratio to lowliness of service in the present Age. "For whosoever would [wishes to] become *great* among you, shall be your *servant*: and whosoever would be *first* among you, shall be *slave* of all" (Mark 10:43): for greatness, service; for actual primacy, slavery.

Reward is so reserved for all suffering undergone for Christ. "Blessed are ye, when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you from their company, and reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of man's sake. Rejoice in that day and leap for joy: *for behold your reward is great in heaven*" (Luke 6:22-23). Suffering generally ensures purity of motive; and the Lord counterbalances the fear of man, not only by the more tremendous fear of God (Rev. 2:11, 16), but also by the magnitude of His rewards. "Every reward suggested is a prize of a value inconceivable by us at present, and can only be appreciated at the Judgment Seat" (J. H. Lowe). So Moses accounted "the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt: *for he looked unto the recompense of reward*" (Heb. 11:26). He who of all mankind best knew the value of the Prize, and who perhaps, after our Lord, laid down the costliest price for it ever paid, said, "This one thing I do." For reward is merely the tangible expression of the approval of GOD, and we may no more deny Him the pleasure of expressing that approval than we need abjure it for ourselves. *He who despises a throne despises Him Who confers the throne*. It was one of our Lord's rebukes of the Pharisees, - "The glory that cometh from the only God *ye seek not*" (John 5:44).

Thus Reward not only supplies a motive in itself legitimate: it is a motive to which our Lord and His Apostles made frequent and direct appeal: - e.g. Christ (Matt. 6:1), Paul (1 Cor. 9:24), Peter (1 Pet. 1:17), James (Jas. 1:12) and John (2 John 8). "I believe for my part," says Dr. Alexander Maclaren, "that we suffer terribly by the comparative neglect into which this side of Christian truth has fallen. Do you not think that it would make a difference to you if you really believed, and carried away with you in your thoughts, the thrilling consciousness that every act of the present was registered, and would tell, on the far side beyond?" A concordance at once reveals that no one so emphasized reward as the Son of God Himself, who, as Maker of the soul, knows best what stimulants it is wise and right to apply.

Three facts are of importance: - that Sadoc, the founder of the Sadducees, started his career of unbelief by denying the doctrine of reward: also, that this principle took effect even upon our Lord - "who *for the joy that was set before Him* endured" (Heb 12:2): moreover, that no wise disciple can afford to neglect so great a mass of Scripture, or to throw away so mighty an incentive to holiness. *Our discovery of this truth at the Judgment Seat will be too late*. Every seed we drop into the soil - every thought and word and act - is banked in God, and will one day spring up in lovely, or alarming, harvest, - as we sowed, *what* we sowed, as *much* as we sowed, and *why* we sowed. Therefore "LOOK TO YOURSELVES, THAT YE LOSE NOT THE THINGS THAT YE HAVE WROUGHT, BUT THAT YE RECEIVE A FULL REWARD" (2 John 8).

THE BLOOD AND THE LEAVEN

An Old Testament type, of exquisite clearness and beauty, now reveals God's dual truth on the very threshold of all Redemption. A zoologist, it is said, if he be given but a single bone of an animal, can reconstruct the entire anatomy to which the bone belongs: so *one* sure clue is sufficient to explain a type: and, in the Blood and the Leaven, *three* explicit clues are given by the Holy Spirit, so as to put all beyond doubt. "*Our* passover also hath been sacrificed, even Christ" - therefore the lamb's blood typifies Christ's blood: "wherefore let *us* keep the *feast*" - therefore the Church age, the Seven Days between Advent and Advent, is the antitype of the Feast of Unleavened Bread: "not with *old* leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and *wickedness*" - the leaven, therefore, is sin - "but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth" (1 Cor. 5:8). No type could be clearer or surer.

Jehovah's first command was the putting of the Blood upon the House. "They shall take of *the blood*, and put it on the two side posts and on the lintel, *upon the houses* wherein they shall eat" the lamb (Ex. 12:7). The Destroying Angel sought out *every* house, for every house held *sinners*; but he lowered his sword, and passed, wherever he saw the blood. "When I *see* the *blood*, I will *pass over* you." Why? *Because death had already crossed the threshold*: the Lamb had perished in the place of the firstborn. But into every other house the Angel entered. The moment Christ's blood rises up between my soul and Jehovah, it is "the beginning of months" to my soul: it is regeneration, the begetting of a new and divine life: in that moment, when I have consciously appropriated Calvary, I leave the world, in spirit, and start travelling home to God. "Even the *selfsame* day all the hosts of the Lord *went out* from the land of Egypt. it is a night to be much observed unto the Lord for bringing them out of the land of Egypt." *The pilgrim life starts with the putting on of the blood.*

Jehovah's second command was the putting forth of the Leaven from the House. "Seven days shall ye eat unleavened bread; even the first day "- that is, from the moment of conversion - "ye shall *put away* leaven *out of your houses*." Israel started the pilgrim life with sufficient sweet dough to last them the whole Seven Days: the old, sour dough - *all discoverable sin* - was to be left in Egypt: and so urgent is Jehovah that He *nine* times commands the putting forth of the leaven. Paul is no less urgent. "It is actually reported that there is *fornication* among you. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? *Purge out the old leaven*" (1 Cor. 5:1, 7).

Here then is God's dual truth exquisitely revealed. The putting on of the Blood - Justification; the putting out of the Leaven - Sanctification: the putting on of the Blood - Christ's work *for* us; the putting out of the Leaven - the Spirit's work *in* us. Now observe. *There is no command to put out the Leaven before putting on the Blood.* The Lamb, it is true, must be eaten with unleavened bread (ver. 8); the heart must turn from all sin in the act of appropriating Christ: *but we are not to attempt to cleanse the House from Leaven before it is presented to God for the Blood.*

Just as I am, without one plea,
But that Thy blood was shed for me,
And that Thou bidd'st me come to Thee,
O Lamb of God, I come.

“Being now *justified* by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him” (Rom. 5:9).

But the completed work of Justification immediately introduces the complementary work of Sanctification; and only when the Blood is on the door have we power to put forth the Leaven. “Work *out* your own salvation “- the Leaven put forth - “with fear and trembling; for it is God which worketh *in* you” (Phil. 2:12) - *the Holy Spirit is now in the House*. Jehovah does not say that the presence of Leaven in the House proves that there is no Blood on the door: on the contrary, the constant peril of known or discoverable, but unexpelled, leaven is assumed as the peril of every house. *We cannot be too passive under the Blood: we cannot be too active in purging out the Leaven.* “My sins slew my Saviour: now I must slay my sins.”

Both these Divine commands involve grave consequences. The Israelite or Egyptian who refused or neglected to apply the Blood, perished: he perished at the hand of God: he perished *in Egypt*: he perished lost. “We all “- that remain in Egypt - “be *dead men*” (Ex. 12:33). Even if his house were comparatively pure of leaven, the Destroying Angel destroyed. Nor can the disobedient disciple escape unscathed. The Israelite under the Blood who refused or neglected to expel the Leaven, was cut off (ver. 15): not, it is true, *in Egypt*: nor was he cut off *by the Angel*: nor was he cut off from God, but *from Israel* : (that is, he fell an excommunicated pilgrim, *on the right side of the Blood*, and on his way to God. It is not eternal destruction. So, for excommunication, *Paul quotes the actual terms of severance from Israel*: - “put away the wicked man from among yourselves” (1 Cor. 5:13; Deut. 24:7), to be handed over to Satan “for the *destruction* of the flesh,” but for ultimate salvation - “that his spirit may be *saved*.” His salvation is assured. But the disciple who (like the incestuous Corinthian) stretches privilege so as to cloak sin must meet a stern disillusionment at the Judgment Seat of Christ: *no appeal then to the Blood will deliver the Leaven-eater from his judgment.*

Put on the Blood: O my soul, purge out the Leaven! A traveler once watched a carpenter in Nazareth search his house for leaven. Girding himself up, he turned every board, opened every drawer, swept every cupboard; till suddenly, with a cry of horror, he started back. A workman had left some old bread in a small canvas bag. Solemnly and anxiously the carpenter laid hold of it with two pieces of wood - not with his fingers - and, carrying it to the fire, dropped bag and all into the flames. “LET US CLEANSE OURSELVES FROM ALL DEFILEMENT OF FLESH AND SPIRIT, PERFECTING HOLINESS IN THE FEAR OF GOD” (2 Cor. 7:1).

THE DAY OF JUSTICE

We now observe a fact of critical importance. The strictly judicial nature of the Age to Come is the decisive revelation of reward. For “that Day” is revealed, in contradistinction to this Age, as an era, not of grace, but of justice: “the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous JUDGMENT of God; who will render to EVERY MAN *according to his works*” (Rom. 2:5-6). Therefore within the sphere of the coming Age all judgment falls, and by its triple tribunal it exhausts judgment. For (1) at the Bema the Lord’s reckoning with His servants (Matt. 25:19) inaugurates the process of judgment (1 Pet. 4:17) ; (2) the Throne of Messiah’s glory sifts the

nations alive on earth at His return (Matt. 25:31, 32); and (3) the great white Throne (Rev. 20:11) accomplishes the mighty assize of the dead. Thus all judgment falls within the Age to Come; and though eternal judgment (Heb. 6:2) rests upon Hell (Rev. 14:11), no acts of judgment appear to take place in the Eternal State. Nor is this all. The Day of God (2 Pet. 3:12), opening immediately on rapture, the signal for the closing (not of all grace, but) of the *day* of grace, embraces the Day of the Lord, or the Great Tribulation (2 Thess. 2:2, R.V.), during which judgments rain upon an earth in open revolt against God; and also includes the Day of Christ (Phil. 2:16), or the Millennial Reign, which continues throughout as a dispensation, not of mercy, but of justice. For of the saint who reigns with Christ it is written - “He shall rule them with a ROD OF IRON, *as the vessels of the potter are broken to shivers*” (Rev. 2:27); and judgment, given to the co-heirs of Christ on the threshold of the Kingdom (Rev. 20:4), continues throughout to cut off sinners (Is. 45:20), and too afflict whole nations (Zech. 14:18). The epoch is solely judicial. Thus the close of man’s day, the Day of Grace, is the signal for a prolonged Day of Justice; within the scope of which all judgment falls; in which appears the harvest of all previous sowing; and the essential characteristic of which, throughout, is the recoil of conduct upon destiny.

Now it is this return and reign of Justice which inherently and of necessity provokes reward. Mercy postpones the recompense of the righteous because it is prolonging grace to the sinner: it is grace which, for the world’s sake, involves the disciple in suffering, and blocks reward. But the moment the Throne of Grace (Heb. 4:16) is replaced by the Throne of Judgment (Rev. 4:2), Justice *must* visit the wicked, and reward the righteous. So the Apostles said to our Lord : - “Lo, we have left all, and followed Thee; what then shall we have? And Jesus said, IN THE REGENERATION when the Son of Man shall sit on the Throne of His glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones” (Matt. 19:27); for “the time of the dead to be *judged*” is also “the time to give their REWARD to Thy servants” (Rev. 11:18). Judgment over the nations is the signal for the enthronement of God’s saints. “I saw *thrones*, and they sat upon them, and *judgment* was given unto them” (Rev. 20:4). For God’s children to be enthroned now, to be crowned with the wealth and splendor with which God ultimately intends to endow them, is evil: “ye have reigned without us,” is Paul’s gentle reproof to the merchant princes in the Church of Corinth; “yea and I would that ye did reign, that we also might reign with you “- the Kingdom would have come: whereas “we apostles are made as the filth of the world, the off scouring of all things” (1 Cor. 4:8). Since, therefore, Justice reigns from end to end of the coming Age, all appeal to the principles of Grace as dominating that Age falls to the ground: “for the Son of Man shall come in the glory of His father with His angels; and *then shall He render unto every man ACCORDING TO HIS DEEDS*” (Matt. 26:27; 2 Thess. 1:6): “and thou shalt be RECOMPENSED at the resurrection of the just” (Luke 14:14).

So into the Apocalypse (the Book of Judgment) our Lord has inserted, with exquisite appropriateness, a photograph of Church judgment, which, though in progress now - for Churches are judged in this age, disciples mainly in the age to come - yet displays action peculiarly characteristic of the Bema, for it is consistently judicial. Thus the Seven Epistles - letters of extraordinary value, not only as our Lord’s last words to us, but as samples, given beforehand in the Day of Grace, of our share in judgment - reveal the kind of investigation we must meet at His Judgment Seat. WORKS alone appear on a foundation of faith which is

assumed - “I know thy *works*”; each angel’s conduct, in its component parts, good and bad, is exactly diagnosed; each assembly is divided into overcomers and overcome, with appropriate promises for the overcomers, and solemn warnings for the overcome; and all these issues at the Advent, woven into a mosaic of universal Church truth, are pressed home on all - “*he that hath an ear*, let him hear what the Spirit saith TO THE CHURCHES.” For the rewards and perils on which our Lord casts all the emphasis belong wholly to another Day. He makes it no question of praise or blame, glory or disgrace, in the present Age; it is no matter of unbroken communion or perfected grace or endangered sanctification or spiritual dry rot; it is not loss of usefulness, or eclipse of testimony, or an uneasy conscience, or even present chastisement, however truly all these are involved: - all the issues named by our Lord are made contingent on His return and judgment. Every promise and every warning is set to strike at the crisis of His return. “BEHOLD, I COME QUICKLY”: (Rev. 22:7): “and ALL THE CHURCHES SHALL KNOW THAT I AM HE WHICH SEARCHETH THE REINS AND HEARTS: AND I WILL GIVE UNTO EACH ONE OF YOU ACCORDING TO YOUR WORKS” (Rev. 2:23).

For even in grace, in this life, judgment can cut off a believer. “For this cause many among you are *weak* “- or invalided - “and *sickly* “- or consumptive - “and not a few *sleep*” (1 Cor. 11:30): while saving faith delivers forever from eternal judgment (John 5:24), nevertheless the severest sentence known to human law, even in the day of grace, God is sometimes compelled to inflict upon His own. “But if we judged *ourselves* “- so analyzed our own conduct, so dissected our own actions, as to square all to holiness; for it is possible in some degree to take the pruning knife out of the hand of the Great Husbandman - “we should not be judged”: self-examination, self-condemnation, a self-erected judgment seat within can deliver from all condemnation, here or hereafter. “But when we *are* judged “- a master-revelation is now made concerning all chastisement now or before the Bema - “we are chastened of the Lord, THAT WE MAY NOT BE CONDEMNED WITH THE WORLD.” In the words of Calvin: - “We either avert or mitigate impending punishment if we first call ourselves to account, and, actuated by a spirit of repentance, deprecate the anger of God - punishing ourselves instead of waiting till He puts forth His hand to do it; for believers too would rush on to everlasting destruction, were they not restrained by temporal punishment.” Thus, so far from the judgment of believers being such an undermining of grace, or such a forfeiting of standing and privilege, as to be incredible and impossible, *it is precisely one means* (as here explicitly stated by the Holy Ghost) *whereby that standing is made sure, safe, irrevocable, and eternal.*

THE JUDGMENT SEAT

We now arrive at the burning heart of this entire revelation as it concerns the Church - THE JUDGMENT SEAT OF CHRIST. “Wherefore we make it our aim “- the word means to love and seek for honour (Lange) in what Bengel calls the sole legitimate ambition in the world - “to be well-pleasing unto Him; *for*” - as the fountain of motive in all holy ambition - “we *must*” - as a necessity inherent in Divine justice; for the vindication of God’s holiness, and for the satisfaction of our own highest and holiest instincts - “*all*” - all apostles, all prophets, all martyrs - “be made *manifest*” - to our own consciences, to all the world, and above all to the Judge; a complete

manifestation of all that has transpired within us, or in the external life (Lange) - “before *the Judgment Seat of Christ*; that each one may *receive*” - the technical word for receiving wages (Dean Alford) - “the things done in the body” - therefore thoughts and words as well as deeds, since the brain and the tongue are thus also involved - “*according* to the things that [plural] he hath done” - works exactly regulating reward: not according to the things that *Christ* did in His body; nor according to things done *out* of the body after death - “whether it [the award] be good or bad” (2 Cor. 5:10). In the words of Lange: - Paul's tireless aim to please Christ “can only be fulfilled by his being found approved at that tribunal where he and his fellow believers are shortly to appear; for every action of God's children during their bodily life must there be judged according to the law of strict righteousness, and each believer must be rewarded according to his good or evil conduct.”

For the sweep of the decree as quoted from Isaiah is absolutely universal - “*every* knee shall bow, and *every* tongue shall confess to God. *So then*” - since it is universal and the Church is, therefore, not exempt - “each one of *us* must give account of himself to God” (Rom. 14:11) Nor could it be otherwise. In view of the chaos of conflicting creed and conduct - the bitter controversies, the personal quarrels, the excommunications and anathemas - all denial of a judgment seat is inherently incredible and impossible: there *must* be a judgment seat; and there *is*. Molinos, the Quietist, when condemned as a heretic and led away to his prison cell - “We shall meet again,” said the old man to his judges, “in the judgment day; and then it will appear on which side, on yours or mine, is truth.” Furthermore, it rests upon the oath of God. “By myself have I sworn, the word is gone forth from my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return” - the decree establishing it is as irrevocable as the life of God - “that unto Me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear” (Isa. 45:23). So then, says the Apostle, (Rom. 14:10), let us forbear to judge, for we shall be judged, and, therefore, the bedrock of all our action is to be the approval of our Divine Judge. “We labour” (A.V.) - “we strive” (Alford) - “we are eager” (Stanley) - “we make it our aim” (R.V.) - “we are ambitious (R. V., margin) to be well-pleasing unto Him. *For* we must all be made manifest before the judgment seat of Christ” (2 Cor. 5:10).

The tribunal, before which disciples appear, is peculiar. (1) It is a Bema,² not a Thronos; a judgment seat for the investigation of disciples,³ not a throne for the arraignment of rebels: - for the Judge (2 Tim. 4:8) is “a certain king, which would make *a reckoning with his servants*” (Matt. 18:23). It is the *first* of our Lord's three judgments (Rom. 14:12; Matt. 25:31; Rev. 20:12) on His return; and judgment begins “*at the house of God*” (1 Pet. 4:17). (2) Thus those examined

² The portable tribunal carried about with him by a Roman magistrate.

³ Churches are judged now (Rev. 2:5). The Church is never judged corporately - as the Body or Bride - either here or hereafter; but disciples, apart from their collective standing, in their individual responsibility as servants, must render account. So the Church, as an entity, is never named in the Apocalypse, except once (Rev. 22:17), where the reference is to the present Age; nor do the children of God appear as aught but “servants” throughout that book of judgment, except once (Rev. 21:7), when the Millennial Age has passed into the Eternal. The fact that the judgment of the wicked is by itself, separated by a thousand years (Rev. 20:7), reveals that in 2 Cor. 5:10, “it is genuine Christians of whom Paul is speaking; all whose shortcomings and failures will one day be exposed, and who therefore make it their aim to avoid such defects” (*International Critical Commentary*). Individual judgment is not possible for believers *as such*, for in justification no believer differs from any other; but individual judgment as *servants* yields a variety of adjudication as infinite as the service and the sanctification.

are Christians *only*. “We all” - i.e., “them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with *all* that call upon the name of our Lord in every place” (1 Cor. 1:2): it is a final investigation of the whole Church of God. No Book of Life is produced, for it is no judgment of the lost: “the wicked *shall not stand* [or, rise] in the judgment ... of the righteous” (Ps. 1:5). Nor (3) is it a judgment for life. “He that heareth my word and believeth on Him that sent me, *hath* eternal life, and *cometh not into judgment*, but hath passed out of death *into life*” (John 5:24; Rom. 8:1). The believer was crucified with Christ, and on Calvary exhausted the penalties of Hell: on that ground he can be judged no more. (4) The process is individual: “so then *each one of us* shall give account of *himself* to God” (Rom. 14:12). “We” - it is Christian; “must” - it is inevitable; “all” - it is universal; “made manifest” - it is public; “judgment seat” - it is judicial; “stand” - it is in resurrection; “each” - it is individual; “give account” - it is responsibility; “to God” - it is Divine.

The procedure is revealed as exclusively judicial: “that each one may receive the things done.” Not, that each may receive *something* from God, but “that each may receive *the things*” *he himself has “done”*: it is not a general granting of glory, irrespective of service; but an exercise of the Divine Law, - “*as he hath done*, so shall it be *done to him*” (Lev. 24:19). “Be not deceived” - is a word to disciples - “God is not mocked: for *whatsoever* a man soweth, *that shall* he also reap” (Gal. 6:7). Paul puts it with exquisite clearness, and twofold emphasis. “*Whatsoever good thing*” - for a judge approves - “each one doeth, *the same* shall he receive again from the Lord, whether he be bond or free” (Eph. 6:8): on the other hand - “Ye serve the Lord Christ. For he that doeth *wrong*” - for a judge censures - “shall receive again *for the wrong* that he hath done: and there is no respect of persons” (Col. 3:25).

Our works and conduct are put in as the evidence: “things done by means of the body.” We must all “appear in our true light” (Afford): as the fossil imprint of a bird’s claw, made ages earlier by a momentary alighting when the stone was soft, now records that act in solid rock, so our actions are the unerring imprint of our characters; the things *done* reveal what the body *was*. Like a palimpsest, when the heat of fire (1 Cor. 3:13) passes over it, so our life silently steals forth *in lines every one of which we ourselves wrote*: so that what our eyes looked on, what our ears listened to; what our hearts loved, what our minds believed, what our lips said, what our hands wrought, where our feet walked : - these are the unimpeachable evidences of the Judgment Seat. Secrets (1 Cor. 4:5), motives (Matt. 6:1), soul-attitudes (Luke 6:36-38), and just Church decisions (Matt. 18:18), also sway the adjudication.⁴

The evidence wholly decides the award: “whether it [the award] be good or bad.” The Greek points to the award: “that each may receive according to the *things done*, whether *it*” - i.e., what he receives - “be good or bad.” Reward (as distinct from salvation, which is through faith, against deserts) is strictly defined by works. *So somewhere there exists a draft by the hand of God of what our life might have been, and still can be: some have lived wonderfully near God’s thought for them: let us find and follow that Divine original.*

⁴ Even the lovely modifications of our Lord’s attitude foretold in such passages as Matt. 5:7 - “blessed are the merciful: for they shall *obtain* mercy” - and Luke 6:37 - “condemn not, and ye shall *not* be condemned” - are still fundamentally judicial, - that is, the recoil of a disciple’s conduct upon himself. But no lovelier revelation could be conceived of how we may deal with our *forgotten* sin. “In MANY things we ALL stumble” (Jas. 3:2): but “*if ye forgive men their trespasses, YOUR HEAVENLY FATHER WILL ALSO FORGIVE YOU*” (Matt. 6:14); “for with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again” (Luke 6:38).

So Paul says: “With me” - as an example and model to all Christians – “it is a very small thing” - it is a matter of the least importance - “that I should be judged of you” (1 Cor. 4:3) - the Church of Christ. When “all that are in Asia turned away” from Paul (2 Tim. 1:15), there must have been personal attacks, solemn denunciations, ecclesiastical censures, even excommunication of the Apostle: in wide areas of the Church his name had become a bye-word: *even Paul*. When his priestly executioners brought Savonarola to the stake, they cried : - “We excommunicate you from the Church militant here upon earth!” “*But not from the Church triumphant in heaven!*” answered the lonely hero. Men may not judge me, the Apostle says; *but then neither do I judge myself*: it is not because I am infallible that I rate human judgment so lightly, but because neither they nor I are competent to judge. “Yea, *I judge not mine own self*” - I cannot pass, even on myself, the final judgment - “for I know NOTHING *against myself*”; I am conscious of no sin; “yet am I not hereby [for all that] justified” - found blameless, irreproachable, a perfect steward. So Paul now administers the great heart- tonic: he takes our wrist, like a master surgeon, and with his hypodermic syringe inserts beneath the skin perhaps as powerful a heart-strychnine as I, for one, have ever known. “HE THAT JUDGETH ME IS THE LORD.” A believer’s friends may over praise him, and his critics over blame; the world will totally misunderstand him in any case; his own conscience may flatter: the LORD only can appraise us exactly, and judge to a nicety. “Wherefore judge nothing” - pass no final sentence - “before the time” - our judgment must come; but its time, its season, is not yet: “until the Lord *come*” - to judge. If even my own conscience, knowing my motives and inner life, must be set aside as a judge, of how much less value is the praise or blame of men, whose judgment is purely external; and if an enlightened conscience ruled by Scripture does not condemn, the sharp criticisms of men need not unduly depress. Early in the Great War a young man sat at a table in a London restaurant. Two young ladies, seated at another table, watched him for a few minutes, whispering together; and then, approaching him, offered him a little box. He opened it, and in it lay - a white feather. “How strange,” he remarked, “that I should receive two such gifts in one day: *this morning I received the Victoria Cross at Buckingham Palace.*” If we are clear in the forum of conscience, we may have good hope that we shall be clear at the bar of God. “Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, we have boldness toward God” (1 John 3:21). “Let them say what they will,” said a good man now gone to his rest; “they cannot hurt me; *I live too near the Great White Throne for that.*”

WORKS TESTED BY FIRE

Scripture next unfolds to us the Judgment Seat in actual operation. It is a judgment for those already on the rock. “Other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ,” or, that Jesus is the Christ (1 Cor. 3:11). God laid the foundation in fact: every wise master-builder lays it in doctrine. “Behold, I lay in Zion for *a foundation* a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone *of sure foundation*” (Isa. 28:16). Every regenerate soul is planted upon that Rock as upon adamant. “Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is begotten of God” (1 John 5:1). “Jesus Christ” - the personal Rock; “Jesus is the Christ” - the doctrinal rock; upon this foundation rests all revelation, all regeneration, and all the millions of the saved.

But once again a new sphere opens before the redeemed soul. “But let each [disciple] take heed how he buildeth thereon.” Works emerge into God’s sight only after the foundation of faith is

laid: works before faith are *sins to be repented of* (Heb. 6:1). “But” implies *one* foundation, but *many* superstructures: “take heed” implies that grave consequences attach to how a disciple builds after conversion. Slowly, surely, imperceptibly a house of works - and, for the Christian teacher, a house of doctrine - is rising round each disciple’s life: costly granite and marble, silver columns, and cornices of gold; or else wooden doorways, hay mixed with mud for the walls, and straw thatching for the roof. The supreme fact is this: one set of materials stands fire, the other feeds fire; and, *since the fire is coming*, “let each *take heed how he buildeth thereon*.”

Paul here states reward with the limpid clearness of a crystal. “If any [disciple] building on the foundation [of Christ] *gold*” - ingots of gold - “*silver*” - silver bullion - “*precious stones*” - marbles, jaspers, alabasters - “*wood, hay, stubble*” - boards, chopped hay for mortar, thatch - “each [disciple’s] work shall be made manifest ; for the fire itself shall *prove* the work of each” - not purge, for the inflammable perishes; nor punish, for the gold is equally searched; but prove, test, discriminate the structure for exactly what it is. “If any [disciple’s] work shall *abide*, he shall receive a reward”; that is, all reward is confined to work that survives judgment: “if any [disciple’s] work shall be *burned*, he shall suffer loss” - a loss the degree and duration of which is not here defined: “but he himself shall be *saved*” - *for salvation is through faith wholly independent of works before or after conversion*; “yet so as through fire” (1 Cor. 3:12) - through burning embers and showers of falling sparks, as he flees down a corridor of flame. The sprayed fire, sweeping and searching the entire discipleship, exactly determines what can be rewarded. “Singed and scorched as by an escape out of a burning ruin” (Stanley), he” saves nothing but his bare life “(Lange) in the crash of his life-structure, the collapse of his whole discipleship. The selection of the material lies within the choice of the disciple. “If any buildeth on the foundation gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay, stubble.” *Every disciple has absolute control over the materials with which he builds*: he selects which he chooses. Contending motives sway the choice : popularity, social prestige, wealth, pleasure ; love to Christ, fidelity, a sense of truth, the fear of God. What is the precious stonework? *Material that matches the foundation*. There are a thousand voices in the world today: to the wise man there is but One. “Heaven and earth shall pass away [in fire: 2 Pet. 3:7], but *My words shall not pass away*” (Matt. 24:35): that is, the divine Word will survive the judgment fires. *Every thought, every word, every act is to be built out of the quarries of Scripture*. No higher level is possible to a Christian teacher than to frame a not altogether inadequate setting for the jewels of revelation; no higher level is possible to a Christian disciple than to translate into life the mind of God as revealed in the Word of God: the one transmits the Book into the soul, the other translates the Book into the life.

An exposure of the disciple’s work follows at the Judgment Seat. “Each [disciple’s] work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it is revealed in fire.” The believer’s life is a palimpsest, the invisible lines of which steal forth into sight as it nears God’s fires. The *foundation* is not tested; it is, as Isaiah says, already a *tried* Stone: it is the superstructure which the fire searches. No believer will be put on trial for his standing, but for his walk; not for his faith, but for his works; not for his life, but for his living; not for his foundation, but for his superstructure. “The fire itself shall prove each [disciple’s] work of what sort it is.” The kind of material is infallibly revealed by the fire: it is searched through and through by the eyes of Christ (Rev. 1:14). The fire does not cleanse, it tries: and, if trying the inflammable, it destroys: Christ does not purge our works but searches them judicially. “These things saith the Son of God, who

hath His eyes like a flame” - here is the fire; “I know thy works” - the fire plays into the heart of the material; “and thy love and faith and ministry and patience” - the fire tests the quality, and finds gold; “and that thy last works are more than the first” - the fire tests the quantity, and finds much fine gold (Rev. 2:19). The fire proves.

The Judgment Seat now adjudicates. “If any [disciple’s] work shall abide which he built thereon, he shall receive a reward.” *Salvation* stands upon the foundation, *reward* rests upon the superstructure.⁵ “If the work shall abide - reward”: *reward is utterly conditional on works*. “If any [disciple’s] work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as through fire.” Our Lord also stated the possibility of a bare salvation, and no more; “else ye have NO reward” (Matt. 6:1): *himself* saved - for no soul can ever be swept off the foundation of Christ; his *work* burned - for a discipleship may end in piteous conflagration. As fireballs descend upon a laboriously-constructed dwelling, and the inmate within, overwhelmed by a sudden burst of flame, escapes for his life through a blazing corridor of fire - “he himself shall be saved; yet so as *through fire*.” THEREFORE “LET EACH [DISCIPLE] PROVE HIS OWN WORK” NOW (Gal. 6:4). “O could I always live for eternity, preach for eternity, pray for eternity, and speak for eternity! I want to see only God” (Whitfield). “Blessed is that servant whom his Lord when he cometh shall find SO DOING. Of a truth I say unto you, that He will set him over ALL THAT HE HATH” (Luke 12:43).

CROWNS

The judicial character of the Judgment Seat has thus become thoroughly obvious: we next pass to the objective consequences of the investigation; and it at once transpires that crowns are conditional on approved service. A crown is a chaplet wreathed about a brow to signalize that brow from others, a symbol of rank, a seal of inherited or achieved distinction, valued quite apart from its own intrinsic worth. Sometimes it is of great value. The crown of the Sultan of Jahore is worth two million sterling; the British crown, originally valued at a quarter of a million, is now enormously richer by the addition of the Cullinan diamond, far the largest diamond in the world. *He Who builds the very foundations of their palace with precious stones is not likely to give His kings worthless insignia*. On the other hand, a crown may be of little or no value in itself, like the Iron Crown of Lombardy, or the oaken crown of Scotland. The Isthmian crown, for which the finest manhood of Greece struggled - a handful of bay-leaves or of olive - was of no value at all; it was not the leaves they ran for, but the glory which the leaves conferred. So a crown of small intrinsic value - *and this is a vital point for elucidating the Scriptures* - may be of all crowns the

⁵ “Out of Christ there are no good works at all: entrance into Christ is not won nor merited by them. In Christ, every work done of faith is good and is pleasing to God. The doing of such works is the working of the life of Christ in us: they are its sign, they are its fruits: they are not of us, but of it and of Him. They are the measure of our Christian life; according to their abundance, so is our access to God, *so is our reward from God*: for they are the steps of our likeness to God. So that no degree of efficacy attributed to the good works of the child of God need surprise us: it is God recognizing, God vindicating, God multiplying, God glorifying, His own word in us.” Dean Alford on 1 John 3:22.

most priceless because of its associations. No prophetic student can forget the thrill with which he gazed on the crown of Charlemagne in the Louvre in Paris; the oldest and most regal crown in the world, yet exceedingly plain and dimmed with age; a crown which, doubtless, will one day rest on the brow of Antichrist. *A crown is of value for what it implies rather than for what it is.* “Know ye not that they which run in a race all run, but one receiveth the prize?” Of what prize is Paul speaking?

“Now they do it to receive a corruptible crown; *but we an incorruptible.*” And to whom is Paul speaking? “Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, even them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ in every place, their Lord and ours” (1 Cor. 1:2). That is, the Church is invoked to race for the crown. The sanctified by blood are exhorted to achieve rank in glory. Second Advent crowns are granted, not on the ground of birth, but on the ground of achievement: the word the Spirit uses for “crown” means a chaplet granted for personal victory. Paul makes it peculiarly clear by fastening it all upon *himself*. Paul was a converted soul. He had worshipped the risen Lord. He possessed the indwelling Spirit consequent on the new birth. He held in his grasp God’s irrevocable gift of everlasting life. Nevertheless the apostle expresses himself as uncertain of the crown. “I buffet my body, and bring it into bondage: *lest by any means*, after that I have preached to others, *I myself* should be rejected [for the crown].” The crown worn by King George at his father’s coronation in 1902 bears a tuft of feathers of the feriwah, the rarest species of the bird of paradise. The bird has to be caught and plucked alive, for the feathers lose their luster immediately after death; as it frequents the haunts of tigers its capture involves great danger; and the Prince of Wales’s crown took twenty years to collect, is worth £10,000, *and cost the lives of a dozen hunters*. What a wonderful parable of the martyrs’ crowns! “Be thou faithful *unto death*, and I will give thee THE CROWN of life” (Rev. 2:10).

Paul therefore reveals the conditions of the coronation to which he summons the whole Church. (1) Self-mastery is an essential for crown-winning. “Every man that striveth in the games is *temperate in all things*... I therefore ... *buffet my body*, and bring it into bondage.” The foe the believer fights is *inside*. As God saves only the wounded soul, so He crowns only the bruised body. “*Mortify* therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness” (Col. 3:5). The athlete, in training, not only cuts off poisons; he abstains from things doubtful. “Let us lay aside every *weight*, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race” (Heb. 12:1).

(2) The glory of the crown is to be the conscious incentive of the soul. The ten months’ agonizing of Corinthian athletes won a chaplet of parsley, or a crown of wild olive: the glory was as fading as the crown. “Now they do it to receive a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible.” Ours is the crown “that fadeth not away” (1 Pet. 5:4), which all eternity cannot dim, nor any hand pluck from our brows. It is ensured to him who contends lawfully. “I therefore run, as *not uncertainly*: so fight I, as *not beating the air*.” If this stated Paul’s certainty of the crown, it would only mean that he already knew by revelation (as he did later, 2 Tim. 4:8) that he was a prize-winner, as distinct from the “many” (ver. 24) who fail: but this is not the meaning; for immediately after (ver. 27) he asserts his own insecurity: what he indicates is that for all who fulfill the conditions no accident or umpire’s partiality or any conceivable miscarriage can rob

them of the prize. An athlete, no matter how perfect his training, might be outstripped in the Isthmian games; but crowns sufficient exist for all who pass the standard of God.

(3) Disobedience forfeits the crown. “Hold fast that which thou hast, that no one take *thy* crown” (Rev. 3:11). This incentive held Paul’s soul as in a grip of iron: “lest by any means, after I have acted the herald [for the lists], *I myself* should be *disapproved* [for the prize].”

Thus it is certain that all crowns are conditional on works done after faith, and all are attainable by achievement. *Our Lord Himself comes back crowned with many crowns*: therefore that cannot be a senseless adornment, or an improper distinction, which clothes the Son of God, and which God regards as the final seal set upon His suffering, His character, and His royalty. Exactly as we approach our Lord in grace, so shall we approach Him, and so should we aim to approach Him, in glory. For “upon His head are MANY DIADEMS,” or crowns (Rev. 19:12); a tiara, of which the Papal tiara is a counterfeit; a composite crown, tier above tier, consolidated of many crowns. Four crowns are used at the British Coronation of a king and queen - the crowns of St. Edward and St. Edgitha, and the two crowns of State; the two latter, as the personal property of the sovereign, may be re-made for each coronation. (1) The crown of incorruption : - “In a race all run, *but one* receiveth the prize. Now they do it to receive a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible” (1 Cor. 9:24,25). Can that racer be crowned *who failed in the running*? “Even so run, *that ye may attain.*” (2) The crown of rejoicing : - “What is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye, before our Lord Jesus at His coming?” (1 Thes. 2:19). Can he be crowned for turning many to righteousness (Dan. 12:3) *who never turned one*? (3) The crown of glory : - “The elders therefore among you I exhort ... *Tend the flock of God*, and when the chief Shepherd shall be manifested, ye shall receive the crown of glory” (1 Pet. 5:1-4). Can a disciple be rewarded for shepherding the flock of God *who never did it*? (4) The crown of righteousness: - “I have kept the faith: *henceforth* there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, ... and not only to me, *but also to all them that have loved His appearing*” (2 Tim. 4:7,8). Can the crown for watchfulness be given to him *who never watched*? (5) The crown of life : - “Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for *when he hath been approved*, he shall receive the crown of life” (Jas. 1:12). Can he be crowned for resisting temptation *who succumbed to it*?

That a crown may be lost to a believer is as certain as any truth in Holy Scripture. “Hold fast that which thou hast, *that no one take thy crown*” (Rev. 3:11). For crowns are rewards, not given unless the conditions are fulfilled. “If also a man contend in the games, he is NOT CROWNED, *except* he have contended lawfully” (2 Tim. 2:5). As God has made holiness the passport to the crown, so the crown is only the manifestation of the holiness. A crown is given, not at the beginning of a race, but at the end; it is a circlet of glory granted only to the successful runner; and a successful runner is an athlete who has carefully observed the regulations of the race. “If I can be thus crowned, can I be otherwise than a fool if I am not prepared to sacrifice all to win it?” (Preb. Webb-Peploe). When Romania became a kingdom in 1881, King Charles, as there was no crown, said, - “Send to the arsenal, and melt an iron crown out of the captured cannon, *in token that it was won upon the field of battle, and bought and paid for with our lives.*”

OUR CROWN IN JEOPARDY

Paul now immediately reinforces, with a momentous and supreme type, God's dual truth thus foreshadowed again and again from the very dawn of Redemption. Israel in the Wilderness, says Paul, are a type, real and actual, of us. "In these things they became FIGURES OF US: these things happened unto them *by way of figure*" (1 Cor. 10:6,11). Their experiences God has selected, not as exceptional, but as permanent, revelations of His character: all human experiences, ours as theirs, must flow out of the one unalterable character of God. Moreover God so wrought, and so wrote, purposely for the Church. "In these things they became figures of us, *to the intent that we should not lust, as they also lusted*": "these things were *written* for *our* admonition." *The inspired record exists to prove the parallel*: God so wrought, that we might know His character; He so wrote, that we might know it forever. Moreover the parallel points specifically to the acts of judgment. "They were *overthrown* in the wilderness. Now *these things*" - the repeated overthrows - "were our examples." The judgments are embedded in the Word as in rock forever that the Wilderness should become the kindergarten of the Church. To deny the parallel is to overthrow inspiration: to ignore the parallel is to silence the Scripture: to admit the parallel is to disclose a momentous peril to the believer in Christ.

The apostle lays down, in figure, the ample bedrock of our own spiritual standing. "Our fathers were *all under* the cloud" - redeemed by the blood of the Lamb - "and *all passed through* the sea" - separated from a godless world - "and were *all baptized* unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea" - a people buried to sin - "and did *all eat* the same spiritual meat" - at the Lord's Table - "and did *all drink* the same spiritual drink" - the Spirit from the smitten Lord - "for they drank of a spiritual rock that followed them: and the rock was Christ." Standing in grace could hardly be stated, in so few words, more exhaustively: if privilege could render immune, Israel was beyond fall. Now observe the startling and studied contrast. "*Howbeit* with most of them God was not well pleased: for they were *overthrown* in the wilderness." *All under - all through - all immersed - all eating - all drinking: MOST OVERTHROWN.* For "they which run in a race *all run* but *one* receiveth the prize." *All - all Israel: most - all Israel minus two: "wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall."*⁶

God's sharp dilemma impales us on its one horn or on the other. Overthrown Israel is a type, either of the believer's eternal destruction, or of his forfeited reward: if it is not lost *glory*, it is lost *life*. *But the passage itself decides.* "Know ye not that they which run in a race *all run*, but *one* receiveth THE PRIZE? Even so run, that ye may attain ... *For*⁷ I would not, brethren, have you ignorant, how that our fathers," so privileged, "were overthrown." It is a prize, not the gift of eternal life, which is in peril. *God never put us under the Blood to withdraw us from its blessed efficacy* (Rom. 8:1; John 10:27-29; Rom. 11:29; Heb. 9:12): *neither has He ever presented the Prize as an irrevocable gift.* As fivefold was the privilege and fivefold the overthrow, so even the best saints need cautioning against the worst sins. "He is not crowned, except he have contended lawfully" (2 Tim. 2:5). *The blessed reality of the election of God can prove no shelter for the sins*

⁶ The fourfold (Luke 13:24) inheritance of the Kingdom is remarkably embodied in *two* living - Caleb and Joshua, and *two* Jacob (Gen. 49:29) and Joseph (Josh. 24:32), whose bones were carried into the Land.

⁷ See R. V. and Critical Editions.

of the elect: remember Moses.⁸ “Now THESE THINGS HAPPENED UNTO THEM BY WAY OF EXAMPLE; AND THEY WERE WRITTEN FOR OUR ADMONITION, UPON WHOM THE ENDS OF THE AGES ARE COME.” Dean Farrar tells us that Queen Victoria was once speaking with her chaplain - probably himself - on the Second Coming. “How I wish,” she said, “the LORD would come in my life-time!” “Why, your Majesty?” he asked. “Because,” she replied with quivering lips, “I should so love to lay my crown at His feet.” *According solely to our achievements in sanctified service will be the glory that we shall cast at His feet in that day.*

CHRISTIAN RESPONSIBILITY

It is in the nature of a trust that a day must come for a report of the trust to be put in; and so, after a prolonged period during which His servants trade with the talents he had entrusted to them, Jesus says that “the lord of those servants cometh, and *maketh a reckoning* with them” (Matt. 25:19). The parable covers the entire period from the Nobleman’s departure to his return - that is, from our Lord’s Ascension to the Second Advent; and so embraces all who have conducted His business on earth for nearly two thousand years: it covers the period, and the only period, in which the Church of Christ exists, and so is a comprehensive history of the work and judgment of the Church. The goods entrusted are small, but the returns possible on the outlay are enormous. To the very highest servant, who turns one pound into ten, our Lord says, “Thou wast found faithful in *a very little*” (Luke 19:17); obscure, nameless, often landless, sometimes homeless, even friendless, without rank or power, nevertheless we hold in our hands a trust which, rightly used, can change into incalculable wealth and power in the day of Messiah’s Kingdom.

Now our Lord casts the main emphasis on the third servant - *seven* verses are devoted to the servant who was a failure, and only *three* each to the successful servants: therefore, on this servant’s identity depends Christ’s main teaching in the parable; and unless we understand that he may be ourselves, ours will be a concealed peril, like a man-trap hidden under forest-leaves. For every truth, appropriated, falls on the soul like an electric shock; whereas it is obvious that the believer who denies the application of the passage to himself, while he may be committing every offence of which the third servant can be guilty, so encases himself in a coat of steel that God’s sword falls on him blunted and harmless. It is of vital import to know the spiritual standing of the third servant.

Now this servant is proved a child of God by the following facts. (1) Equally with the other servants he is entrusted with our Lord’s goods on His ascension; but Christ has never entrusted, and never does entrust, His work on earth to the unsaved: therefore this is a saved soul equally with the rest. Jesus calls them all “His *own* servants”; literally, “slaves,” bought with their Master’s money, and owned by Him. “About to take a journey, the Nobleman is obliged to hand

⁸ In another aspect of his typical life Moses, in his unique burial and appearance on the Mount of Transfiguration fourteen hundred years later – for, with all the prophets (Luke 13:28), he is as *personally* sure of the Kingdom as earlier he was *typically* among the excluded – stood forth on the Mount the solitary representative of dead saints; for he was “*faithful* in all His [God’s, Nub. 12:7] house AS A SERVANT” (Heb. 3:5).

over this property of his, which he is unable to manage personally as before, to other faithful hands during the time of his absence. He therefore calls, not strange laborers, but his own servants, belonging to him as his servants; and as their master, since he may expect that they will regard his interest as their own, entrusts to them and their hands the property he leaves behind” (Goebel). The servants differ greatly in capacity - in the extremes, as five to one; but they differ not at all in the possession of a common trust. (2) The three servants are judged together, at one spot and at one time; but the wicked dead are not judged until the Great White Throne (Rev. 20:5,12), a thousand years after the judgment of the redeemed. So also the slothful servant is judged *last* of the three, as last risen and last rapt; for he is “the servant which knew his Lord’s will, and made not ready, nor did according to his will” (Luke 12:47). As judged together, all three servants are the redeemed, judged in the one and only judgment in which the Church, and the Church alone, appears (2 Cor. 5:10); and as this judgment is in the Parousia, the only access to which is by rapture, all the unsaved are of necessity physically excluded. *None can reach the Judgment Seat except the saved.*⁹ (3) All three are judged, like the Seven Churches, solely on the ground of their *works*: their faith in, and love for, the absent King are implied and assumed: their *standing* is never challenged. If the third servant were an unsaved soul, his works could in no way, and on no ground, be accepted: between the two Advents, it is the redeemed alone who are judged according to their works; for only those who have received *from* Christ can work *for* Him. Every servant of God has a personal service for Christ in the world, a sacred trust to fulfill; it is that mission, that trust, which *constitutes* him a ‘servant’ - the title by which the Apostles most loved to describe themselves (Rom. 1:1; 2 Pet. 1:1; Jas. 1:1; Jude 1): the salvation a believer receives is the sole ground on which he can trade at all, and it is the Church alone which is the market where God’s trade is forever going on. “It is evident that the design is not to describe a man entirely fallen from faith, an apostate; but one who, although he has not dissolved his connection as a servant, or squandered his talent, yet has not used it to his Lord’s advantage, one who has not done his duty” (Olshausen). (4) Overwhelming is the final proof. In the twin parable of the Pounds, the unsaved are placed in careful contrast with the saved, as Citizens and as Servants, the only two classes in the world, sharply sundering mankind: the Servants our Lord entrusts with His all on earth, the Citizens send the message after the ascended Christ, - “We will not have this Man to reign over us”; a message which, as Archbishop Trench says, will have its full and final fulfillment in the great apostasy of the last days. All three Servants have accepted Jesus as Lord, and have entered vitally into the service of God; “His *own* Servants, i.e., who have become His in faith, in contradistinction to the Citizens who *would not*” (Steir), and who are slain without mercy before His face (Luke 19:27). “Whilst the one Servant represents an inactive member of the body of Christ, the Church, who failed to perform his duty, these Citizens are open rebels, and hence their Lord orders them to be killed: it is evident that this penal proceeding is essentially distinguished from the reproof administered to the one Servant” (Olshausen).

⁹ At a meeting in Toronto a Christian lady came up to the speaker and said, - “You alarm me! I thought I was not coming into any kind of judgment. How then am I to know that I am saved?” “Madam,” he said, “the answer is very simple. The moment you stand before the Judgment Seat you will *know* that you are saved, *for none but the saved will ever stand there*. The lost from among the dead are not judged until the great White Throne appears, a thousand years later.

Now therefore we see the danger to us all which our Lord flashes out like a red light upon the line - a danger which, remarkably enough, is greatest to the lowliest disciple. What is the peril? *Undervaluing what God has given us*. Christ gives to each servant what He sees he can wisely use; as much as he can handle and profit by; no servant can say, Lord, Thou givest me nothing; no servant is expected by Christ to produce results greater than his abilities or his opportunities; the poorest, the most unlettered, the most obscure have the 'very little' which yet can coin enormous future wealth. "A talent is entrusted also to the idle servant 'according to his own ability': he is therefore just as able, and for this reason just as bound, to work spontaneously with his gifts, as all other servants with theirs" (Goebel). But he so undervalues his opportunity as to bury it in the earth - in earthliness; his carnality is his shame *because* he is a child of God, and as such betrays his trust: "the circumstance rendering him guilty is, that he to whom the money belonged was no stranger to him, but his master, to whom he was bound as a servant" (Goebel). For it is not the *possession* of the talents that determines our reward, but solely our *use* of them: it is the second five and the second two, not the first five and the first two, on which reward alone is given.

So Jesus describes the third servant as the exact opposite of the first two: instead of "good" and "faithful," He says he is "wicked" and "slothful": not "good" in the general sense, but a good servant; and so not bad (or wicked) in a general sense, but a bad servant: the goodness of the one consisted in his faithfulness, the badness of the other in his sloth. "This distinctive name comprehends all his guilt, Thou *slothful* servant" (Steir); *unprofitable* (Matt. 25:30), but not unregenerate, or apostate; he did not misemploy, nor embezzle, nor squander, but simply hid his money. So what exactly does our Lord charge him with? Unbelief, unregeneration, rebellion, apostasy, adultery, theft, murder? Nay: *it is simply a servant of God who has made nothing of his life*; all he has done wrong is merely to withhold his powers from serving God; he hoarded, when he ought to have expended; he had no sacred sense of responsibility. "The parable is not for gross sinners: the warning is for those who, being equipped of God for a sphere of activity in His kingdom, hide their talent" (Trench). He says, As I cannot be so holy as God requires, I give up the attempt to satisfy such strictness: I object profoundly to the doctrine of reward according to works, and deny all responsibility in a servant of Christ beyond his responsibility to maintain the gift of grace with which he was entrusted at his conversion. But his answer (as his Lord says) implies that he knew the truth. The Judge answers - *Your very consciousness of the severity of the principle ought to have made you more careful, not less, to meet its requirements*. "Thereby must the evil servant bear testimony with his own mouth to the innermost truth, and the most perfect right, according to which the Lord requires fruit from what He sows or gives - that God demands fruits and works" (Steir). *For the believer to have at his judgment only what he had at his conversion will be his condemnation*. As his life had been negative, so is his punishment: he is cast into the darkness outside the brilliantly lit festal hall¹⁰: "nothing is said here of any further punishment of the servant; enough that he has no part in the kingdom of the Lord" (Goebel).

¹⁰ Since the Parousia is a place of thick darkness (Ps. 18:9), indwelt by the Shekinah Glory (Matt. 26:27), to be cast forth from the inner ring of light on the threshold of the Kingdom is to be expelled into the external dark of the Pavilion of Cloud (Ps. 18:11).

Over lost opportunities, wasted graces, slighted privileges, a sold birthright, there is weeping and gnashing of teeth.”¹¹

Both the faithful servants are remarkable examples of “boldness in the day of judgment” (1 John 4:17): both come joyfully forward, for they have facts in their hands - the talents doubled; and both are invited at once into the joy of their Lord - our Lord’s joy in His Kingdom, for which He endured the cross, despising the shame, “the authority God will confer on Him on His second coming from heaven in kingly power and glory to establish the Messianic Kingdom” (Goebel).¹²

So also would the third servant had he been found faithful. “He has no share in the kingdom of his lord, and therefore he who is like him will have no share in the Kingdom of Christ” (Goebel). Both faithful servants had exercised all their faculties and powers in the interests of their Master; the long delay in His return had not made them slothful or negligent, but, on the contrary, had afforded them longer time for greater gains; and what they had gained in the Church, they reap in the Kingdom. The “well done” is conferred for no reason but one - because they have *done well*. “The period is not given them for idle waiting. It is of the most critical importance for themselves, because it is appointed them as a test-time, on the use of which their own participation in the Kingdom of Christ and their position in it will depend” (Goebel). For the way to advance our own interests is to advance our Lord’s: each gained cent, per cent, for their Lord, and for each pound (Luke 19:17) the reward is a city: the more devoted the life, the more blazing the glory. No servant had more than one pound: no servant was *without* one pound: every servant had an equal opportunity of making ten pounds: yet ONLY ONE (so far as we know) did so. “It is an experiment of the future King, in the course of which His servants first prove their fidelity in a little sum of money, and then for their reward take part in managing His Kingdom” (Goebel). For while the ten cities and the five cities are figurative, because every phrase in a parable is ipso facto figurative, nevertheless our Lord reveals that the “many things” over which He puts the faithful servant will be no less than royalty. “He that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give AUTHORITY OVER THE NATIONS, and he shall rule them with a rod of iron” (Rev. 2:26, 27). Then follows the judgment on the wicked among Israel and the Gentiles. “When the King has thus distributed praise and blame, rewards and penalties, to those who stand in the more immediate relations of servants to Him, to those of His own household, He proceeds to execute vengeance on His enemies, on all who had openly cast off allegiance to Him, and denied that they belonged to His House at all” (Trench).

So “the Coming One remains the Lord of all these servants, of the unfaithful as well as the faithful; and in the case of the latter will show Himself as Lord in the reckoning” (Steir). For as profound the punishment of sloth, so magnificent is the reward of fidelity; it cuts both ways: in exact proportion as we accept the promised enormous premium on fidelity, so we are compelled to acknowledge the gravity of the consequences of unfaithfulness. “In the times between the departure of their Lord and His second coming His disciples are to work with what He committed to them on His departure for Him and His cause with faithful diligence, *because the most glorious reward awaits such fidelity at the hour of Christ’s return, while the heaviest*

¹¹ “It the servant is not a believer, but a mere professor, then we have in the parable nothing to represent the Christian who fails in faithfulness” (C. G. Trumbull).

¹² It must be the Millennial Kingdom, for our Lord’s everlasting Kingdom as the Son of God – as distinct from the kingdom the Nobleman goes away to obtain (Luke 19:12) – is inherently His, without beginning or end, never conferred: “of the Son He saith, Thy Throne, O God, is FOREVER AND EVER” (Heb. 1:8).

punishment threatens the selfish indolence that would decline active employment of what it has received” (Goebel).

Thus we confront our crisis. Officers are required for the administration of a kingdom: so God has deliberately interposed a prolonged period between the two advents, that our Lord might be enabled to so test His servants, in His absence, as to discover which are fitted for positions of responsibility and trust at His return. The Nobleman, before He departed, laid plans for the selection of officers to aid Him in the administration of the Kingdom; He devised a plan for bringing to light who those officers are on His return; this plan is in operation at the present moment, purposely so contrived as to reveal individual capacity for office, and personal fitness for trust; and - most impressive of all - the Long Journey is now nearly over, and at any moment the investigation may begin. “Make haste about cultivating a Christ-like character. The harvest is great; the toil is heavy; the sun is drawing to the west; the reckoning is at hand. There is no time to lose; set about it as you have never done before, and say, ‘This one thing I do’” (A. Maclaren).

THE MILLENNIAL KINGDOM

So the scope of our inquiry now enlarges. It has become obvious that reward and glory - the coronation of the disciple - is conditional on character and service: to what extent - as the parable we have just examined seems to imply - does this principle affect a disciple’s entrance into, or exclusion from, the Millennial Age itself? That Age has long dropped out of the vision of the Church. But the return of our Lord in person to establish a Kingdom over the whole earth was the universal faith of the Church in its purest dawn. “The assurance [of that return and reign] was carefully inculcated by men who had conversed with the immediate disciples of the apostles, and appears to have been the reigning sentiment of orthodox believers” (Gibbon). “This prevailing opinion met with no opposition previous to the time of Origen” (Mosheim): *until Origen no Christian writer can be found who denied it.*

“No one can hesitate to consider this doctrine as universal in the Church of the first two centuries” (Giesler). “The doctrine was believed and taught by the most eminent fathers in the age next after the apostles, and by none of that age opposed or condemned: it was the catholic doctrine of those times” (Archbishop Chillingworth). “The idea that the perfected Kingdom of Christ is to be transferred to heaven is properly a modern notion. According to Paul and John the Kingdom of God is to be placed upon the earth, and in so far this itself has part in the universal transformation” (Dr. Tholuck). “FOR THE LORD HIMSELF SHALL DESCEND FROM HEAVEN, WITH A SHOUT, WITH THE VOICE OF THE ARCHANGEL, AND WITH THE TRUMP OF GOD” (1 Thess. 4:16): “AND HE THAT OVERCOMETH, AND HE THAT KEEPETH MY WORKS UNTO THE END, TO HIM WILL I GIVE AUTHORITY OVER THE NATIONS; AND HE SHALL RULE THEM WITH A ROD OF IRON” (Rev. 2:26).¹³

¹³ The “Kingdom of God,” or “of the heavens,” a phrase drawn directly from Daniel, is a Kingdom which “fills the whole EARTH” (Dan. 2:35, 44), replaces all worldly empires, and is obviously the Messianic Kingdom: when “the Kingdom of the world is become the Kingdom of our Lord, and His Christ” (Rev. 11:15). It is foreshadowed now by the Kingdom in Mystery (Matt. 13), or the Church, and for both regeneration is essential (Luke 17:21, John 3:3); but

Moreover, the world-wide revival of the Gospel of the Kingdom before the End is certain (Matt. 24:14): already considerable attention is being concentrated, even in skeptical quarters, on our Lord's apocalyptic utterances. "In our Lord's teaching the conception of the Kingdom is supreme. Yet it is safe to say that there is no subject upon which there, exists a greater amount of division among expositors. For some the Kingdom is definitely the historical Church; for others it is altogether in the future, a great Divine supramundane order of things which is suddenly to overwhelm the temporal order; for others again it is simply the ideal social order to be realized on earth; for a fourth class the Kingdom is the rule of God in the heart of the individual. *Among recent critics the tendency is more and more to lay stress on the eschatological interpretation*, and to hold that, in our Lord's teaching, the Kingdom is essentially the great future and heavenly order of things which will be revealed at His coming. The Kingdom in its fullness is yet to come. It is always to be prayed for. It is the great end which is ever before us" (Archbishop D'Arcy, University Sermon at Oxford, 1910). FOR "FLESH AND BLOOD CANNOT INHERIT THE KINGDOM OF GOD, NEITHER DO THOSE WHICH CORRUPTION INHERIT INCORRUPTION. BEHOLD, I TELL YOU A MYSTERY: WE SHALL NOT ALL SLEEP, BUT WE SHALL ALL BE CHANGED" (1 Cor. 15:50).

Thus it is natural that the question should now be pressed - is the Millennial Age itself in the nature of a reward? Is the possession of some one of the crowns a title to entrance into the Kingdom?¹⁴ Can a disciple be excluded, and yet his name be found at last written in the Lamb's Book of Life? (Rev. 20:15). It is obvious that the Scriptures alone can supply an answer; nor is there anything alarming in the suggestion. All are agreed that rank *in* the Kingdom is regulated by service and suffering: if entry itself, or exclusion, also turns on service and suffering, it is plainly only an extension of a momentous principle already accepted and taught. But before turning to the Word of God it may be well to observe that many godly servants of Christ have understood the Scriptures to teach the possibility of a believer's exclusion. Polycarp, an actual

its manifestation at the Second Advent, to which all Scripture prophecies refer it, proves it to be Millennial. It is the "Kingdom" with which our Lord returns (Luke 19:12, 15). In one aspect, however the kingdom is now present: *for in parables the kingdom is the Church*: in literal passages, it is the literal kingdom; in figurative, it is the mystical. The reason seems clear. Our Lord, when personally present, spoke of the kingdom as present also, for it was present *in the person of the King*: "if I by the Spirit of God cast out demons, then is the kingdom of God *come upon you*" (Matt. 12:28). When the King withdrew from the world, so did the kingdom. But the Lord is *mystically* present with His Church: there is, therefore, a mystical kingdom: "who *translated* us into *the kingdom* of the Son of His love" (Col. 1:13). Concerning the Everlasting Kingdom, prophecy reveals but little, and that little perhaps solely in the last two chapters of the Apocalypse. IN THE ONLY PASSAGE IN WHICH THE HOLY GHOST USES THE PHRASE "THE KINGDOM" (1 Cor. 15:24), HE MEANS THE MILLENNIAL.

¹⁴ "Receive the crown of glory, honour, and joy," says the Archbishop at the British Coronation: but the crown is not the glory or the kingdom, but its proof and symbol. When Tsar Nicholas II, returning to the Winter Palace as a captive, was received by the guard with the republican salute, "We greet you, Colonel Romanoff," the loss of the actual gem-studded circlet probably never even crossed the Tsar's mind, but only the tragedy of a lost empire: so when our Lord says, "He that overcometh, and he that keepeth My works unto the end, to him will I give *authority over the nations*, and he shall rule them with a rod of iron" (Rev. 2:26), it is not the *symbol* (the scepter is merely of iron) that is priceless, but the enormous rank and power for which the symbol stands, and which the Lord confers on the tested and approved servant of God. Now no resurrected saint can be a *subject* in the Millennial Kingdom, for "they lived *and reigned* with Christ" (Rev. 20:4): all are actually enthroned (Rev. 20:4); and neither Scripture nor the world knows anything of a *crownless* king. (The Sheep of Matt. 25:34 – saved Gentiles – are the subjects in both the Millennial and Eternal Kingdoms.) The crown is an invariable accompaniment – the proof and symbol – of a kingdom: so our Lord treats the conditional offer of a crown (Rev. 3:11) as a synonymous incentive with the conditional offer of a throne (Rev. 3:21); and Paul illustrates the loss of the incorruptible crown (1 Cor. 9:27) by Israel's loss of an earthly kingdom (1 Cor. 10:5). The two are indivisible.

disciple of the Apostle John, says: - “*If we please Him* in this present Age, we shall also receive the Age to Come; and *if we walk worthy of Him*, we shall also reign together with Him.” The opinion that the Millennial Reign was even confined to the martyrs “prevailed, as is known, to a great extent in the early Church, and not only proved a support under martyrdom, but rendered many ambitious of that distinction. For the First Resurrection is limited to a portion of the redeemed Church; and while eternal life and the inheritance are of faith and free grace, and common to all believers merely as such, the millennial crown and the first resurrection are a Reward - the reward of suffering for and with Christ; a special glory and a special hope, designed to comfort and support believers under persecution: a need and use which I have little doubt the Church will before long be called on to experience collectively, as even now, and at all times, it has been experienced by some of its members” (Burgh). “Has any child of God any warrant of Scripture to expect that he will reign with the Lord during the period of Rev. 20? But, on the contrary, has not every child of God a promise of reigning with Christ in the perfect and final state?” (Robert Chapman). “Into that glorious company of the First Resurrection it is probable that only those who have been partakers of Christ’s humiliation and suffering (either personally or throughout the present aeon) shall be received - a select portion of the redeemed, including the martyrs” (Dr. E. R. Craven, editor of Lange’s *Apocalypse*). “To those who believe on Him, but go no further, the Lord does, indeed, give eternal life; but the fruition of it will not begin until the Last Day, until the thousand years of the Millennial reign are ended. Such persons will not, therefore, be permitted to enter the Kingdom of the Heavens” (G. H. Pember). “The greatest of all the revelations about the future condition of the saints is, that they are to be identified with Jesus Christ in His reign - that is, those who ‘overcome.’ Not all saints are to be elevated to this position; this is for victorious saints” (Dr. A. T. Pierson). “The gift of Eternal Life contains potentially the Prize; but that potentiality may never be developed in the present period of the believer’s probation; and if such be the case he will miss the Kingdom and its glory in the coming Age” (S. S. Craig). “According to the views of some, the most disobedient child of God will have the privilege of reigning with Christ, having lost the incorruptible crown, and with ‘a terrible, irretrievable loss at the Bema.’ Can such a believer be morally fitted for reigning with Christ? ‘Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection’” (J. Sladen). “It is a matter of sad observation that every species and degree of crime is committed, and has been committed, by believers after their conversion: so that there may be positive and entire forfeiture of the Kingdom, and only the lowest position in Eternal Life after it. The native magnitude of this truth must speedily redeem it from all obscurity. Those who have the single eye will perceive its amplitude of evidence, and embrace it, in spite of the solemn awe of God which it produces, and the depth of our own responsibility which it discloses” (R. Govett). For “in this exclusion from the Kingdom, which is the dominion of the good made visible at the return of our Lord, we are not to see the loss of eternal salvation: an entrance into the Kingdom is rendered impossible [in certain cases], but not by any means does it follow that salvation can be thereby prevented” (Olshausen). “Oh, for a noble ambition to obtain one of the first seats in glory! Oh, for a constant, evangelical striving to have the most ‘abundant’ entrance ministered unto you into the Kingdom of God! It is not Christ’s to give those exalted thrones out of mere distinguishing grace. No, they may be forfeited, for they shall be given to those for whom they are prepared; and they are prepared for those who, evangelically speaking, are ‘worthy’” (Fletcher, of Madeley). So remarkable a consensus of opinion provides at least a *prima facie* case for investigation.

EXCLUSION FROM THE HOLY LAND

The designed type - as deliberate and elaborate as any in the Bible - solves the problem of exclusion with extraordinary clearness. For Paul labours to make clear that the ninety-fifth Psalm names a Rest which, since it has never yet occurred, is therefore open to us: for David, though himself enthroned and at rest (2 Sam. 7:2), wrote of *God's Rest* as still future; a fact which at once dissociates it both from the Divine rest after creation three thousand years earlier, and from Israel's rest in Canaan five hundred years before David wrote. "There remaineth therefore a SABBATH-REST" - a word used nowhere else in the Bible, nor ever in classical literature, but coined by the Holy Ghost to express a toil completed - "for the people of God" (Heb. 4:9). So the Rest is the Millennial Reign. For it is the sabbath rest, or seventh millennium, following on six thousand years of redemption toil: it is God's rest in the old earth's closing dispensation, foreshadowed by every sabbath under the Law: it is not the Eternal Rest, for it is merely a concluding section, a closing seventh: it is, as Paul has just said, "THE AGE [not the Ages] TO COME, whereof we speak [of which we are speaking]" (Heb. 2:5). Thus Canaan is the type of the Millennial Kingdom of Christ.¹⁵

Now we arrive at once at a question enormously emphasized by the Holy Ghost: against whom went forth the oath of exclusion? "For *who*, when they heard [the actual voice of God] did provoke?" - not Egyptians, nor the Seven Tribes of Canaan, nor Moab nor Amalek, none of whom were ever shut up to Jehovah, severed from all the world in a desert as the sole people of God: "nay, did not all they *that came out of Egypt*" - Israel, under passover blood and through Red Sea baptism. "And with whom was He displeased forty years? was it not with them that sinned" - as only believers can sin; that is, against privilege and light - "whose carcasses fell in the wilderness?" The carcasses were the proof of the oath: they so pampered the body, that mere bodies they became, reaping corruption. "And *to whom* sware He that they should not enter into His rest" - against whom went forth God's oath of exclusion - "but to them that were disobedient?" - a justified but an unsanctified people. In the words of Bishop Westcott: - "The warning is necessary; Christians have need of anxious care: for who were they who so provoked God? - *even those whom He had already brought from bondage.*"¹⁶

But what exactly was the sin which provoked the oath? "We see that they were not able to enter in because of *unbelief*" (Heb. 3:19). But unbelief in what? Israel's whole wilderness standing was on faith: "BY FAITH [Moses] kept the passover, and the sprinkling of the blood; BY FAITH they passed through the Red Sea as by dry land" (Heb. 11:28). The unbelief was not in fundamentals: we are never told that Israel doubted their salvation from Egypt, and their ransom by blood: on the contrary, the exact moment and cause are revealed when God's oath left His lips. *The rejected report of the godly spies completed Israel's unsanctification*: "because all these men have tempted me THESE TEN TIMES, they shall not see the land" (Num. 14:22); "they despised the pleasant land, therefore He lifted up His hand [to swear]" (Ps. 106:24). Israel

¹⁵ The Rabbis so understood the Sabbath. "As the seventh brings in a time of rest, so the millennial rest will close a period of seven thousand years": quoted by Delitzsch.

¹⁶ Never having left Egypt, nor ever crossed the Red Sea, the generation that entered Canaan (apart from Caleb and Joshua) from no part of the type, and so are ignored.

strongly revolted against God's picture of the future, and the corresponding demands made upon them: it was the *partial* unbelief of the *regenerate*: "in THIS thing ye DID NOT BELIEVE the Lord your God" (Deut. 1:32). So Paul says : - "The word of hearing" - the report drawn up by Caleb and Joshua concerning the Kingdom beyond Jordan - "did not profit them, because *it*" - not the good news that pointed back to the blood, but the good news that pointed forward to the crown; not the gospel of the Grace, but the gospel of the Kingdom - "was not mixed with faith in them that heard" - namely, the people of God. God gives us not only facts backward to believe, but facts forward: never to believe the facts backward is to be lost; not to believe the facts forward is for a child of God to drift at once into sin, and to incur the peril of the oath of exclusion.

So the Apostle closes on the clearest warning to the Church of God. "We which have believed do enter" - are entering; all believers are runners with the goal ahead, without having yet breasted the tape. "Let *us* therefore" - Paul even includes himself - "fear" - for great and frequent have been the falls of eminent saints - "lest haply a promise" - but conditional: for the oath of inclusion (Ex. 13:5), on a failure in sanctity, was met by the counter-oath of exclusion¹⁷ - "being left of entering into His rest, any one OF YOU" - three times the Spirit empties this torpedo into the breast of the Church, the holy brethren who are partakers of the *heavenly* calling (Heb. 3:1) - "should seem to have come short of it" - the mere suspicion of failure, even though it may not be fully justified, for man's judgment is necessarily fallible, is a thing to be earnestly dreaded (Westcott). "Let us therefore give diligence" - earnestly strive (Delitzsch); literally, make haste, be in hot pursuit; because the prize is noble and the peril great (Westcott) - "to enter into that rest, that no man [none of you] fall after the same example of DISOBEDIENCE" - an unholy walk springing from a secret unbelief. The Wilderness is a corridor to the palace, but we may so slip in the corridor as to miss the palace: "we are to fear the wrath of God, which within the sphere of even the *chosen* people has still displayed its judicial terrors upon all unbelievers" (Lange).

EXCOMMUNICATION AND EXCLUSION

One New Testament passage decisively proves - though a multitude confirm - the possibility of exclusion: let us examine it. As, in the regenerate, the current of being sets towards good, and evil is a backwater; so, in the unregenerate, the current of being sets towards evil, and effort after good is a backwater: and this is always the criterion of regeneration. "He that *doeth righteousness* is righteous: he that *doeth sin* is of the devil" (I John 3:7, 8). "Faith alone saves; but faith which is alone is not faith" (Luther). Yet it is also certain that the regenerate can sin deeply, and die in such sin. For - as an example - three facts decisively establish the regenerate nature of the incestuous brother whom the Holy Ghost has made a perpetual and conclusive proof.

¹⁷ The oath under the Law is paralleled by the double negative (Matt. 5:20, etc.) under Grace.

(1) Excommunication was to deliver his flesh, *but not his spirit*, to Satan: Satan might touch his body, like Job's, but not his soul: "that the *spirit* may be SAVED in the day of the Lord Jesus" (1 Cor. 5:5). Now the destruction, like Ananias's, might be immediate (for aught we read to the contrary) and yet his salvation was assured: *therefore he was regenerate before excommunication*. "When we are judged" - even unto death (1 Cor. 11:30) - "we are chastened of the Lord, *that we may not be condemned with the world*" (1 Cor. 11:32). (2) Paul sharply limits the jurisdiction of the Church to believers: "do not ye judge them that are *within*, whereas them that are *without* God judgeth? Put away the wicked man" - pass sentence, *for he is within* - "from among yourselves."¹⁸ The right to judge unbelievers, Paul says, belongs solely to God: therefore the incestuous brother, judged by the Church at Paul's command, was a believer. (3) This brother, if excommunicated at all, was promptly restored: for in his second Epistle Paul says - "*forgive him and comfort him; confirm your love toward him*" (2 Cor. 2:7).¹⁹ This is absolutely decisive. The sharp discipline had severed him from his sin: acting under an inspired command the Church restored him to full fellowship, as a living member of Christ. Therefore a believer *can* so sin, and *has*: and - since there may be destruction of the flesh - can also *die* in it. Just as no natural deaths (not even of Moses and Aaron) are recorded in the Wilderness, and all who were slain for fornication, etc., were already thereby excluded from Canaan, so it is with the excommunicate committed to Satan for the destruction of the body.

But a fact of overwhelming decisiveness still remains. *Paul states that the identical sin might permeate the whole assembly*. "Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the **WHOLE LUMP**?" Was the "whole lump" all good dough, or half bad? Was the assembly regenerate throughout or not? "Purge out the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump" - fresh, pure dough throughout - "even as ye **ARE** unleavened." Those whom Paul is alone addressing (1 Cor. 1:2) had all left the hands of God as pure, sweet dough on conversion: *all were regenerate*: "ye **ARE** unleavened": now *keep* so, Paul says, and if any leaven returns, purge it out, to keep the lump new. For fornication - as also the other immoralities named - might spread through the entire Church: "know ye not that a little leaven *leaveneth the whole lump*?" So far from Paul regarding the incestuous brother as no believer, because of his fornication, he asserts exactly the reverse - that, unless drastic measures purge the Body, *immoralities may contaminate the whole*. No disciple is immune from peril; and Paul therefore devotes the rest of the chapter to proving how great a sin fornication is *in one indwelt by the Holy Ghost*. "Shall *I* then," - for the sin is possible even to an apostle - "take away **THE MEMBERS OF CHRIST** and make them *members of a harlot*?" (1 Cor. 6:15). If Paul has unbelievers in mind, then he warns them of a sin which they *cannot* commit; for to take the members of *Christ*, and make them members of a harlot, is an act possible only to one *in Christ*: that is, Paul, throughout the passage, speaks solely of the members of the Body of Christ.

¹⁸ Thus the term "wicked" - applied here to an immoral believer by the Holy Ghost, as by our Lord to a slothful servant (Luke 19:22) - does not disprove conversion. Wickedness is inherent in the unsaved: it is incidental in the redeemed.

¹⁹ It is blessedly certain that a disciple's confessed and abandoned sin is immediately purged. "If we confess our sins" - our specific transgressions, after conversion, confessed as they occur - "He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9). Therefore Peter's denial has not forfeited his throne. "Many shall be **FIRST** that are **LAST**" (Matt. 19:30).

Thus it is certain that believers *can* commit such sins: it is certain that some in Corinth *did*: it is certain that all such are to be excommunicated: Paul now unfolds the tremendous revelation that disciples so unclean as to be shut out of the Church, must also be shut out of the Kingdom; that the excommunicated will be the excluded. For what is the catalogue of excommunication? Fornicators, idolaters, covetous, drunkards, revilers, extortioners (1 Cor. 5:11). And what is the catalogue of exclusion? “Ye yourselves do wrong”: at what peril? “Know ye not that *wrong-doers* [the same word, with no article] shall not inherit the kingdom of God?”²⁰ Be not deceived” - could a well-instructed Church like Corinth be in peril of imagining that *unregenerate adulterers* would enter the Kingdom? - “neither fornicators, nor idolaters, [four new sins are now added, three an expansion of fornication, one an expansion of covetousness: exclusion is a wider thing than excommunication], nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners” - *each excommunicating sin is also an excluding sin* - “shall inherit the kingdom of God.” It is the same list: the justly excommunicated will be the infallibly excluded.²¹ For “whose soever sins ye forgive [e.g., the incestuous brother’s], they are forgiven unto them; whosoever sins ye retain” - always assuming that it is an excommunication which God has commanded - “*they are retained*” (John 20:23); “for what things so ever ye shall bind *on earth* shall be *bound in heaven*” (Matt. 18:18).

Paul closes with words finally conclusive. “Such were some of you; but ye were washed” - through blood, and water - “but ye were sanctified” - set apart for God as hallowed - “but ye were justified” - through the accepted righteousness of Christ: *these are the souls Paul is threatening with exclusion*: defiled, ye were cleansed; profane, ye were hallowed; unrighteous, ye were justified. Dare any of you become foul again? Paul asks. If unbelievers only are excluded, Paul’s warning is not only pointless, but unjust. *Believers* are sinning; *unbelievers* are to be excluded: “ye do wrong”; therefore *the world* will be punished: does God reveal the sins of one set of men, to threaten punishment to another? “I fear lest I should find *you* not such as I would,” because of “uncleanness and fornication and lasciviousness which they COMMITTED” (2 Cor. 12:20). *It is the washed, the sanctified, the justified that are in peril*. Are hypocrites - empty professors, false brethren, who have slipped past the Church examiners - washed, sanctified, justified? Hear what the Spirit is saying to the churches : - “HE THAT DOETH WRONG SHALL RECEIVE FOR THE WRONG THAT HE HATH DONE; AND THERE IS NO RESPECT OF PERSONS” (Col. 3:25). “Thou hast a few names in Sardis which did not defile their garments: and THEY shall walk with me in white; FOR THEY ARE WORTHY” (Rev. 3:4). “NOT EVERY ONE THAT SAITH UNTO ME, LORD, LORD” - an utterance

²⁰ “The Kingdom of God is here taken in the eschatological sense” - Godet: “the Kingdom of God refers here to its external appearance at a future period” - Olshausen. That “the Kingdom” is the Millennial and not the Eternal, *this very epistle declares*: - “He shall deliver up THE KINGDOM to God, even the Father” (1 Cor. 15:24).

²¹ Other passages, equally decisive, are also addressed to believers with equal clearness. “For this ye know of a surety, that no fornicator, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, hath any inheritance in the Kingdom of Christ and God. Let no man deceive YOU with *empty words*” (Eph. 5:5): man may grant us free passes into the Kingdom, but these certificates will not be franked at the gates. To Galatia Paul gives the most exhaustive list. “Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousies, wraths, factions, divisions, parties” - distinctively Church sins - “envyings, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I forewarn YOU, even as I did forewarn you, that they which practice such things *shall not inherit the Kingdom of God*” (Gal. 5:19-21).

peculiarly characteristic of disciples (John 13:13) - "SHALL ENTER INTO THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN;²² but he that DOETH THE WILL of my Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 7:21.)

For it is exceedingly remarkable that in the very heart of the great Grace chapter of the Bible, the truth that a Christian's reward is exclusively determined by his own fidelity lies deeply embedded. "*Working*," as Calvin has said, "is not at all opposed to *grace*." "For if, by the trespass of the one [Adam], death reigned through the one; *much more*" - as much more as God loves to reward His servants more than He loves to reward His enemies - "shall they that *receive*" - take constantly, take continuously; not grace, but - "the *abundance* of grace" - its superabundance, so that the superfluity overflows (Godet) - "*reign in life*" (Rom. 5:17) - "life," a limited phrase used in the Gospels (Mark 9:43, 45, 47) as a synonym for the Millennial Kingdom. So far from reward undermining grace, it is the ABUNDANCE of GRACE, which alone entitles to reward: grace confers justification as a free gift; but only the abundance of grace, deliberately and continuously received, qualifies for glory with Christ in the Life that is life indeed. Grace *underlies* all: in the beautiful words of Augustine, - "To whom could the righteous Judge give the crown if the merciful Father had not given grace? And how could these be paid as things due, were not things not due previously given?" For Grace, while it grants salvation solely on the merits of our Lord, cannot ignore our conduct after regeneration; and every instinct of our hearts calls for justice, after the painful controversies that have rent the Church for two thousand years, *before* eternal bliss shall pass an obliterating sponge over the past, "in that all-reconciling world where Luther and Zwingli are well agreed." And so Paul asserts. "But thou, why does thou judge thy brother? or thou again, why dost thou set at nought thy brother? *for we shall all stand before the Judgment Seat of God*: let us not therefore judge one another any more" (Rom. 14:10, 13); but, while rigidly adhering to all the truth we know, hand over all judgment to an august and awful Tribunal not our own.

THE FIRST RESURRECTION

Once again the Scriptures - which summon the believer to the Crown, as insistently as the unbeliever to the Cross - present this dual truth with crystal clearness. Paul opens one little masterpiece of revelation (Phil. 3:4-15) with a supreme hopelessness. What is it? *The one man who came nearest to reaching God through his own goodness proved to be the chief of sinners*. Ponder Paul's incomparable assets: no soul, before or since, ever held up to the face of God a hand filled with such exquisite pearls. Circumcised - stamped as God's from infancy; of the

²² Death-bed conversions leave no room for "the *works* of faith": it is certain that our Lord ignores the dying thief's petition (Luke 23:42), but comforts him with the assurance of simple salvation. Our Lord closes the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 7:21-27) as He began it (Matt. 5:20) by presenting the Sermon as the great standard of righteousness for entrance into the Kingdom; for in the Sermon, together with our Lord's other utterances and the Spirit's body of commands throughout the Epistles, our active righteousness is to be found: "for except your righteousness [your active obedience] exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees [the standard of the Mosaic Law], ye shall IN NO WISE enter the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 5:20).

stock of Israel - with a blood-right to salvation; of the tribe of Benjamin - a tribe which never broke away; a Hebrew of Hebrews - a full-blooded Jew to the furthest generation back; a Pharisee - intensely orthodox; persecuting the church - on fire for God's Law; in the Law blameless - obedient in jot and tittle. *No man ever came so near to winning life through what he was and what he did.* "If any other man" - of any age, or race, or clime - "thinketh to have confidence in the flesh, *I yet more*": Paul towers over all legalists forever. But a sudden and awful discovery blasted his prospects. "I was alive [in my own eyes] apart from law once: but when the commandment ["thou shalt not lust"] came [home to my conscience], sin revived [sprang again into life], and I died [saw myself a dead man]; and the commandment, which was [in God's design] unto life, this I found to be [in fact] unto death" (Rom. 7:9,10). "If any man thinketh to have confidence in the flesh, *I yet more*": but what had his inward vision revealed? - *a corpse before God.* With Paul's failure, the whole world lapses into hopeless despair.

There next appears a supreme righteousness. Whose? Not Paul's; for he had discovered, with Isaiah, that "we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousness are as filthy rags" (Isa. 64:6). He now discovers that what he could not do, Christ did; that what he could not be, Christ was; and that Christ had done it, and been it, in order to take his place (2 Cor. 5:21). He instantly drops his own righteousness, and seizes Christ's: he exchanges his own pearls for one priceless, flawless gem. "I do count them but dung, that I may gain Christ, and be found in him, *not having a righteousness of mine own, ... but that [righteousness] which is through faith in Christ.*" Paul never afterwards doubts his salvation (Rom. 8:38): for Christ has kept the Law, not with head, hands, and feet only, but with heart also (Ps. 40:8): *and this righteousness* is now Paul's (Rom. 5:19). The supreme hopelessness is replaced by a supreme salvation.

There yet remains a supreme uncertainty. Here are startling words. "Brethren, I count not myself yet to have apprehended: ... but I press on." Not apprehended *what*? "If by any means I may attain unto the [select] resurrection from [among] the dead." "It is most evident that Paul had some special resurrection in view, even the first: and to share in that he was straining every nerve" (J. MacNeil). Press on to what? "Towards the goal unto the prize of the high calling." "If" - conditional; "by any means" - hazardous - "I may attain unto" - hypothetical - "the out-resurrection" - selective - "that which is from among the dead" - exclusive; it would be difficult to cram a text with more uncertainty than Paul does here. In the words of Bishop Ellicott: - "As the context suggests, the *first* resurrection; any reference here to a merely ethical resurrection is wholly out of the question." That Paul is speaking of bodily resurrection is clear from the closing verse of this very chapter: - "we wait for a Saviour who shall fashion anew *the body of our humiliation*, that it may be conformed to the body of his glory." Every passage that refers to resurrection FROM the dead (Mark 9:10, Luke 20:35, Rom. 1:4, Rev. 20:4) refers to physical resurrection. "Of his resurrection at the end of the world, when all without exception will surely be raised, he could have no possible doubt. What sense then can this passage have, if it represents him as labouring and suffering merely in order to attain to *a* resurrection, and as holding this up to view as unattainable unless he should arrive at a high degree of Christian perfection? On the other hand, let us suppose a *first* resurrection to be appointed as a special reward of high attainments in Christian virtue,²³ and all seems to be plain and easy.

²³ On the First Resurrection Dean Alford says: - "Those who lived next to the Apostles, and the whole church for 300 years, understood the 'first resurrection' in the plain literal sense: and it is a strange sight in these days to see

Of a resurrection in a *figurative sense, i.e. of regeneration*, Paul cannot be speaking; for he had already attained to that on the plain of Damascus” (Moses Stuart). *Salvation can never be insecure: the Prize can never be assumed until it is won*. Why? (1) *Because* it is a prize. If the prize be given on faith without works, it is no more a prize. “Know ye not that they which run in a race all *run*, but one receiveth the prize? Even so run, that ye may attain” (1 Cor. 9:24). (2) No splendor of past service can guarantee immunity from backsliding. None so renounced, so suffered, so served as Paul: yet he assumes no prize. (3) False doctrines which rob God of His glory will rob us of ours: therefore “let no man *rob you of your prize*” (Col. 2:18). (4) Fleshly sins also disqualify. Therefore “I buffet my body, and bring it into bondage: lest by any means, after that I have preached to others, I myself should be rejected [for the crown]” (1 Cor. 9:24-27). *The insecurity of the chief of apostles binds insecurity of reward forever on the Church of God*. “Not that I have already obtained, or am already *made perfect*; but I press on, if so be that I may apprehend”:²⁴ that is, the apprehension is indissoluble linked with the perfection.

All therefore culminates in a supreme effort. “This one thing I do.” Is this for Paul only? “Let US *therefore*” - for he is our inspired example – “as many as be perfect, be *thus minded*.” “SEEK ye FIRST the kingdom of God” (Matt. 6:33) is our Lord’s word to disciples already in the kingdom in mystery. How? (1) “*Forgetting* the things which are behind.” The immeasurable value of the prize may be computed by the immense sacrifices necessary to obtain it. “The Kingdom of Heaven has no entrance fee, but its subscription is - all that a man hath.” *Its cost is a crucified world*. “Blessed is the man to whom the world, with all her rags of honour, is crucified, and who holds her to be worth no more than a thief on the gallows.” Nothing makes the other world more real, or more blessed, than the renunciation of this. (2) “*Stretching forward* to the things that are before.” It is a racer, as Professor Eadie says, in his agony of struggle and hope: every muscle is strained, every vein starting; the chest heaves, and the big drops gather on the brow; the body is bent forward, as if the racer all but touched the goal. “Let us therefore *labor* to enter into that

expositors who are among the first in reverence of antiquity complacently casting aside the most cogent instance which primitive antiquity presents.” From such cases as Lazarus, who died again, it is certain the *act* of resurrection is distinct from its *state*: so our Lord identifies the First Resurrection with the Age to Come, - “they that are accounted worthy to attain *that age*, and *the resurrection from among the dead*” (Luke 20:35). The act of resurrection to appear before the Bema is thus distinct from participation in the First Resurrection or the Millennial Age. It was for a share in a resurrection not temporary – a state, not an act – that ancient martyrs refused life. “Women received their dead by a resurrection” – a temporary resurrection: “and others were tortured, *not* accepting their deliverance; that they might receive a *better* resurrection” (Heb. 11:35, Matt. 10:39). It is not that Paul assumes his own death, for it was not until his final hours that God revealed to him his martyrdom (2 Tim. 4:6); but it is his aspiration, whether living or dead, to attain to the *state* of the risen in that Kingdom which can only be entered by incorruption (1 Cor. 15:50). So baptism, commanded for the Kingdom (John 3:5), pictures the seed-bed out of which Christ’s fellow-plants will spring (Rom. 6:5) in *His* resurrection, the First: none *unbaptized* into Moses (1 Cor. 10:1) ever entered Canaan, though most so baptized failed *after* baptism. Tertullian (as Dr. Seiss reminds us, *The Last Times*, p. 242) testifies that in his day, the era immediately following on the Apostles, it was the custom for Christians to pray that they might have part in the First Resurrection.

²⁴ Unflinching obedience, however, and a close walk with God, can produce “assurance of hope,” even as Paul in his last hours knew by revelation that he had won the Prize (2 Tim. 4:8). “Having therefore boldness to enter into the holy place *by the blood of Jesus*, let us draw near in *full assurance of FAITH*” (Heb. 10:19). Our eternal life, based on the covering blood of the Atonement, is as sure as God. But a vast vista opens up beyond. “Show the same *diligence* unto the *full assurance of HOPE even to the end*: that ye be not sluggish, but imitators of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises” (Heb. 6:11). I am not to *hope* that I am saved, but to *believe* it: on the contrary, I am not to *believe* that I have won the prize, but to *hope* that I shall win it. For only “the end” can reveal how I have run. But the more battles won, and the more mileage covered, the more we can mature to the full *assurance* of hope. “WE ARE WELL ABLE TO OVERCOME” (Num. 13:30).

Rest, that none [no disciple] fall after the same example of *disobedience*" (Heb. 4:11). (3) "This *one* thing I do." All his missionary ardor, all his thirst for souls, all his toil for the churches, are bent before this overmastering passion of his soul; *because the running-tracks for the prize God has laid through these channels of holy service*; and today's toil is the measure of tomorrow's glory. "The First Resurrection is a reward for obedience rendered after the acceptance of salvation, *and Paul knew not the standard which God had fixed in His own purpose*" (G. H. Pember). "The Kingdom of Heaven suffereth violence, and MEN OF VIOLENCE take it by *force*" (Matt. 11:12). (4) It is a calling "upward," *therefore it is God who is calling*. "Walk worthily of God, who *is calling* you into His own kingdom and glory" (1Thess. 2:12).²⁵ God is calling us from all earthly glories up to the Throne: "that ye may be COUNTED WORTHY of the Kingdom of God, for which also ye suffer" (2 Thess. 1:5). The Cross is ours forever: *when we have been approved*, we receive the Crown (Jas. 1:12). We honor God in proportion as we covet His immeasurable rewards. The apostle not only renounces, he forgets; he not only advances, he presses; he not only gazes, he stretches; he not only does it, but he *does it only*. "LET US, THEREFORE, AS MANY AS BE PERFECT, BE THUS MINDED." "Oh, that the thought, the hope of millennial blessedness may animate me to perfect holiness in the fear of God, that I may be accounted worthy to escape the terrible judgments which will make way for that happy state of things, *and that I may have part in the first resurrection!*" (Fletcher of Madeley). For "blessed AND HOLY is he that hath part in the first resurrection: THEY LIVED, AND REIGNED WITH CHRIST A THOUSAND YEARS" (Rev. 20:4, 6).²⁶

THE TWO JUSTIFICATIONS

Once more the Holy Spirit puts the dual truth afresh. For one man God has chosen to be the supreme model of all justification; and one apostle the Holy Spirit has specially selected to express justification *by faith*. For to Abraham, a repentant heathen idolater with his face set towards the Holy Land, God said, - "He that shall come forth out of thine own bowels shall be thine heir" (Gen. 15:4); then, leading him out under the countless stars, God said again, - "*So shall thy seed be.*" Then we read, "Abraham *believed* in the Lord" - that is, as Paul puts it, he *believed* God (Rom. 4:3); "and God counted it [his faith] to him for righteousness." Abraham *believed* God - that was all: as God dimly, but really, presented Christ to him, far down the ages - the single Seed as well as the plural seed (Gal. 3:16) - he accepted God's Word without question

²⁵ Paul's distinction between the Will and the Codicil corroborates his contrast between the Gift and the Prize. "*Heirs of God indeed*" (μὲν) - no condition, save regeneration: "*but (δὲ) joint-heirs with Christ, if so be that we suffer*" - "in case we suffer as He did" (Olshausen); "provided that" we suffer (Alford) - "with Him, that we may be also glorified with Him" (Rom. 8:17). (Si autem filii, et heredes: heredes *quidem* Dei, coheredes *autem* Christi: *si tamen* compatimur, ut et conglorificemur: Vulgate). Both heirships involve eternal life: but the Codicil, which bequeaths joint-heirship with Messiah in His Millennial Reign, and bequeaths it on the same condition on which our Lord receives it (Phil. 2:9; Heb. 1:9; Isa. 53:12), antedates the Will by a thousand years: it is "the reward of the inheritance" (Col. 3:24), a legacy which entitles to an "abundant entrance" into the Eternal Kingdom (2 Pet. 1:11). Both heirships are in the Will; both heirships are offered to all; both Will and Codicil depend for their validity on the death of the Testator; but without the fulfillment of its condition the Codicil is inoperative. "The suffering *with Him* must imply a pain *due to our union*" (Moule): "*if we suffer, we shall also reign with Him*" (2 Tim. 2:12); the Will is the unconditional bequest of free grace, the Codicil is a glory conditioned on identity of experience with Christ.

²⁶ See also the thirteenth Present Day Paper, *The First Resurrection* (2d., Thynne).

or doubt; *and God thereby instantly accepted him as a righteous man*. No voice ratified it from Heaven; no wave of emotion (so far as we know) swept over believing Abraham: silently, mysteriously, suddenly God regenerated, and Abraham, on bare faith, was justified.

Now the apostle asks the critical question, “We say, To Abraham his faith was reckoned for righteousness. *How* then was it reckoned? when he was in circumcision, or in uncircumcision?” (Rom. 4:9). Had Abraham earned his justification? or obtained it by “sacraments”? or won it by long obedience and a holy life supplementing the mercy of God? or was it by *faith alone*? So vital is the reply that it is couched both negatively and positively, - “*not* in circumcision, but in *uncircumcision*: that he might be the father” - the progenitor, the pattern - “of all them that *believe*.” The reply of the Holy Ghost is thus perfectly explicit. Abraham was justified *before* he brought forth any works at all, or submitted to any ritual; therefore he must have been justified by *faith*; before ever he *worked* for God he *believed* God; and until he believed, Abraham was a Chaldean idolater, a lost soul. Behold, therefore, the perfect model and the unchanging example of *how* God saves: “the father of ALL them that believe.”

But there is a reverse side to the shield of Faith. Abraham had reached the end of a radiantly holy life; God had asked of him his last great renunciation, and he had yielded it: now upon the aged patriarch, tested again and again, a second great justification falls. The moment Isaac had been (in intent) offered, the Angel of the Lord said, - “*Because* thou hast *done* this thing” - that is, *works* - “and hast not withheld thy son, in blessing I will bless thee” (Gen. 22:16). Here was no regeneration silent, mysterious, internal: it was coronation, an open and solemn approval of God unto reward. Paul is the New Testament parallel. “I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith” - all *works* : - “*henceforth* there is laid up for me *the crown*” - a special revelation made to Paul, as to Abraham, at the close of life - “of righteousness” - the crown consequent on righteousness - “which the righteous *Judge*” - awarding a second justification - “shall give to me at that day” (2 Tim. 4:7). From that moment Paul knew that of which he had been ignorant (1 Cor. 9:27; Phil. 3:11-14) before.

So the Holy Spirit has selected a second apostle through whom to reveal the second justification with startling emphasis. “Was not Abraham our father JUSTIFIED *by works*, in that he *offered up Isaac* upon the altar? ... *by works* was faith made perfect: ... *by works* a man is *justified*, and not only by faith” (Jas. 2:21-24). That Abraham’s second justification was a justification before God, not men, is clear, because God alone - apart from Isaac - was present when he was so justified (Gen. 22:16). James is not speaking of works *before* faith, that is, works of law: for “*faith wrought with his works*, and by works was faith *made perfect*”: faith was already there. The justification of James, therefore, is not justification unto eternal life. *Scripture strenuously denies that works before faith can ever justify*: “by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified” (Rom. 3:20). But works done *after* faith, works done *in* faith, the ‘work of faith’ (2 Thess. 1:11) does justify *for reward*. “If any [disciple’s] *work* shall abide, he shall receive a *reward*. If any [disciple’s] work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: *but he himself shall be saved*” (1 Cor. 3:14-15) - as already possessed of the justification unto life. “I know nothing against myself; yet am I *not* hereby *justified*” - with the second justification: even a conscience void of offence in a regenerate apostle cannot ensure that: nothing can (apart from a special revelation) but the Judge upon the Bema - “but he that judgeth me is the Lord. Wherefore judge

nothing before the time” (1 Cor. 4:4-5). Therefore the Spirit bids us, - “So speak ye, and so do, as men *that are to be judged* by a law of liberty” (Jas. 2:12) - the law, not of Moses, but of Christ.

God called Abraham, and he believed; God proved Abraham, and he endured: *the two justifications were then complete*. For his justification by faith Paul points to the moment of his regeneration; for his justification by works James points to his final act of accomplished obedience. Both justifications are demanded from every human soul. First, justification by blood, then justification by obedience; first, justification by faith, then justification by works; first, justification for life, then justification for reward; first, the escape of Israel out of Egypt, then the escape of Caleb and Joshua out of the wilderness: the one is an adjudication on a transferred righteousness through the obedience of Another; the other is an adjudication on an active righteousness through obedience of our own. For blessed is “the man unto whom God reckoneth righteousness *apart from works*” (Rom. 4:6): blessed also is “the man that endureth temptation [testing]; for *when he hath been approved*, he shall receive THE CROWN OF LIFE” (Jas. 1:12).

So there are also two overcomings. “Be of good cheer; I have overcome the world” (John 16:33). The “world” is all the mass of temptation, allurements to sin, ungodly habits, unholy life, which make up our present environment: by steadily, unceasingly, and completely resisting its pressure, the Lord Jesus overcame. The term is most expressive, an “overcomer”; it implies pressure, resistance, battle, victory, over that which calls for beating down and subduing; it is constant effort carried through to a victorious issue. *Never to sin*, in spite of fierce and unceasing temptation, is to be an absolute overcomer; and One only ever so overcame - Jesus the Christ. Now this conquest of our Lord is the victory of all His saints “God *giveth* us the victory *through our Lord Jesus Christ*” (1 Cor. 15:57); for “this is the victory that *hath* overcome the world, *even our faith*” (1 John 5:4). Not ‘will’ overcome, but ‘hath’ overcome (R.V.); yet not ‘Christ,’ but ‘we’: *for faith transfers Christ’s conquest to me: I have overcome in Christ*; for He and I are one. “The conflict and suffering which we now have is not the real battle, but only the celebration of the victory” (Luther). From the first moment of faith the victory of every disciple is an assured fact: “*whatsoever* is begotten of God” - the whole mass of the regenerate – “*overcometh* the world: and this is the victory that *hath* overcome the world, *even our faith*.” But there is a second overcoming. *Seven times our Lord invokes every member of His Churches to become an overcomer*. “The reason why so many Christians fail,” says Mr. Moody, “is just this - they underestimate the strength of the enemy.” We thus arrive at God’s duplex truth. Compared with the world, all believers are overcomers; compared with one another some are overcomers, and some are not: for the first overcoming is by simple faith, whereas the second is by unswerving obedience. The second overcoming, no more than the first, is a sudden act, or the victory of a moment, or a rush of holy emotion; it is a confirmed *habit* of goodness, - the long wind, the hard biceps, the iron muscle of the unwavering, faltering runner; it is not a victorious battle, but a victorious campaign. “He that *overcometh*, I will give to him to sit down with Me in my throne, *as I also overcame*” - for the two overcomings are identical in kind though not in degree - ”and sat down with my Father in His throne” (Rev. 3:21). Caleb’s cry should now ring through the Churches of Christ: - “WE ARE WELL ABLE TO OVERCOME” (Num. 13:30).

THE PRIZE OF OUR CALLING

We are now in a position to summarize our conclusions concerning entry into the Millennial Kingdom. Is the Kingdom - as well as rank in it - the Prize for which the Christian is to run, and which may be forfeited, unless a standard of holiness be attained known only to God? It is so--

1. Because our Lord states it in the Gospels, - the Holy Spirit repeats it in nearly every Epistle, - it is the basis of the promises and threats to the Seven Churches, - and it is foretold as an actual experience in the prophecies of the Apocalypse.

(1)Matt. 7:21; Luke 20:35, etc.

(2)Eph. 5:5, 6; Gal. 5:19 - 21.

(3)Rev. 2. and 3.

(4)Rev. 11:18, 20:6.

2. Because the Types of the Old Testament, largely an unquarried mine, strikingly corroborate it, thus confirming our understanding of the literal passages of the New Testament, and weaving all into an exquisite mosaic of revelation.

1 Cor. 9:24 - 10:12; Ex. 12:15; Luke 17:32; Heb. 4:11.

3. Because the Age to Come - as distinct from the Eternal State, which is based on grace alone (Rev. 20:15) - is revealed as "one last day of a thousand years, a full and perfect judicial aeon," in which all seed sown in this Age reaps its exactly corresponding harvest, and to which all adverse consequences of works done after faith are confined.

Rom. 2:5-11; 1 Pet. 4:17; 1 John 4:17; Gal. 6:7 - 9.

4. Because it safeguards the infinite merits of our Lord's imputed righteousness and divine sacrifice by establishing the spotless and eternal *standing* of every believer in Him while it also safeguards human responsibility and divine justice by making every believer accountable for his *walk*, under pain of a possible forfeiture of coming glory.²⁷

(1) Heb. 10:14; Rom. 8:33.

(2) Phil. 2:12; Rev. 3:11.

²⁷ The unique plateau of grace and ultimate glory to which our Lord has forever exalted His Church, so far from making her immune from responsibility, deepens it. "And that servant, which knew His lord's will, and made not ready, nor did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes; but he that knew not, and did things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. *And to whomsoever much is given, of him shall much be required, and to whom they commit much, of him will they ask the more*" (Luke 12:47). "Those who believe that from the evangelical position one cannot possibly speak of any punishment in the judicial sense, but only affectionate chastisements for the moral amendment of the misled, can hardly measure aright the fearful earnestness of declarations such as these" (Lange).

5. Because - since God's dealings with His people must always rest on the character of God, and God's character is not mercy only, but justice also - it is inconceivable that a disciple's life, if unholy,²⁸ should have no profounder effect on his destiny than mere gradation in glory.

Heb. 10:30-31; Rev. 22:12; I Cor. 3:15; Luke 20:35.

6. Because, if we acknowledge any judgment of a believer's works at all, and that before a tribunal which is a judgment seat and not a mercy seat, we are thereby compelled to acknowledge, further, that the investigation must be strictly judicial, and that it will therefore be as exactly graded in censure as it is in praise.²⁹

2 Cor. 5:10; Rom. 14:10-12; Col. 3:24-25; 2 Tim. 2:5.

7. Because it vindicates the holiness and justice of God from the charge of compounding with His people's sins, and makes the highest glory given by God to rest only on the active righteousness of the disciple co-operating, consistently and ceaselessly, with the imputed righteousness of his Lord, - obedience being the only proof of love.

I Cor. 3:17; 1 Thess. 4:6; Matt. 5:20; Rev. 20:6.

8. Because it is the supreme reconciliation between Paul and James, - that is, between justification through faith unto Eternal Life and justification through works unto Millennial Reward; for into an *Everlasting* Kingdom, which is granted as a gift, an *abundant* entrance can only be a prior one, and it is built upon a sevenfold foundation of works (2 Pet. 1:5-11).

(1) Before works - Rom. 4:10; Gen. 15:6.

(2) After works - Jas. 2:21; Gen. 22:16.

²⁸ It is not only gross sin, or deeply defective service, that excludes: it is of the utmost importance to learn that what I *am*, equally with what I *do*, must decide the issue. Harsh tempers (Matt. 5:3), haughty spirits (Matt. 5:5), unforgiving dispositions (Matt. 6:14), purse-proud hearts (Mark 10:24), unmellowed characters (Matt. 20:22) are not only unfit for co-royalty with the Lord, but would quickly reduce the Kingdom to the chaos to which they have reduced the Church. "Except ye" - apostles - "turn, AND BECOME AS LITTLE CHILDREN" - trustful, pure, lowly, loving - "ye shall *in no wise* enter into the Kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 18:3): "for of SUCH is the Kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 19:14). Moreover, truth rejected becomes very stern. "Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall in no wise enter therein" (Mark 10:15).

²⁹ Present chastisement - even bodily, as Miriam struck with leprosy by God's own hand (Num. 12:10), or Church members afflicted and cut off for sin (1 Cor. 11:30) - all acknowledge; but most assume that all chastisement is sharply confined to this life. *The Judgment Seat is thereby shorn of all judicial function, and made totally unreal.* Scripture, on the contrary, asserts that judgment which falls now (1 Tim. 5:24) is exceptional; and, apart from the present chastisement of all sons (Heb. 12:8), it is the Age to Come which is supremely judicial. Death works no magic upon character. How grave is the ultimate logic of a denial of the Judgment Seat it is needless to emphasize. "The reasons *why* chastisement must end with this life will be very hard to find, very hard to establish. Those then who will be quit of this doctrine at all hazards will scarcely feel any position a safe one, but that which asserts (1) that there is no precept given to the elect of God; and by consequence, (2) that they never sin, nor ever receive chastisement. This awful position of unbelief I shall not here assail" (Govett). If the backslider, even the worst, is instantly and miraculously cleansed and perfected at death, and by the act of death, there would neither be need for the prolonged process of sanctification through a lifetime of suffering, nor justice to those countless sufferers who have achieved holiness through agony.

9. Because it is perhaps as near an approximation as has yet been reached to a solution of the perennial controversy between the Calvinist and the Arminian: for it establishes all the passages of glorious certainty, while it leaves ample scope for the most solemn warnings: it takes both sets of Scripture as it finds them.³⁰

John 10:27, 28; Rom. 6:23; Rom. 11:29; John 15:6; Heb. 10:26; Matt. 5:22.

10. Because it gives the natural and unforced interpretation to the facts of Church life, as it does also to the simple statements of Holy Writ, and reveals how exactly the one squares with the other, both in present character and in just recompense; and whether as selective rapture, or exclusive resurrection, or forfeiture of crowns, or failure of the prize, or conflagration of works, or limited coheirship, or even penal consequences, - the argument is cumulative, and overwhelming in its accumulation.

2 Cor. 12:20, 21; Jas. 2:5; Matt. 18:18; Rom. 8:12, 13.

11. Because large sections of the Church of God are purged, and can only be purged, by seeing the drastic consequences of a carnal life; and because, for want of a frank and fearless statement of these consequences, multitudes of disciples are now wrapped in a profound slumber.³¹

1 Cor. 5:5, 11; 6:9; Matt. 24:48-51; Luke 12:47, 48; Rev. 3:16, 21.

12. Because it purges every motive with the awful vision of the Judgment Seat of Christ, and supplies an incentive second only to love in its motive power for alienating the disciple from the

³⁰ The Arminian groups – the High Church, the Wesleyan, and the Salvation Army – affirm that a believer may suffer eternal destruction; the Calvinistic groups – the Low Church, the puritan Nonconformist and the Brethren – deny all adverse judgment on a believer beyond negative loss: the understanding of Scripture here maintained affirms that a believer may suffer anything short of eternal destruction, but only within the Millennial epoch. It is at least a balanced mean between two sharp extremes. Too long the leaders of the Churches have burked the menacing words God directs against the wicked and slothful servant, and theirs therefore must be the ultimate responsibility for the slow and painful reluctance with which souls loyal to the whole Word of God are now being compelled to readjust their perspective. But all teaching which deepens holiness and lowliness, and transforms us into a closer image of the Lord, can hardly be from the Pit; again and again I have seen it transfigure lives; and a large measure of any grace or blessing that has entered my own life these thirty years I owe to these stern truths which are so fiercely contested.

³¹ It is astounding that disciples should deny penal effects at the Judgment Seat (Matt. 25:30) *which the Holy Ghost is working before our eyes*. Missionaries wrote of the Chinese Revival (1910): - “Confessions were made by Christians of all ranks – pastors, elders, deacons, evangelists, Biblewomen, church members – of sins which included all forms mentioned in the Pauline Epistles, - idolatry, adultery, gambling, theft, fraud, hatred, divisions; sins covering every one of the Ten Commandments, one of the most frequent being the breach of the Seventh. One reason they gave for confession was lest, if they did not confess now upon earth, they might be forced to confess hereafter in heaven. I have seen them beat their heads with their hands. I have seen them beat their heads on the ground. I have seen them beat their heads on the forms before them IN A GREAT PHYSICAL AGONY. *It seemed at times that we were witnessing a part of the great judgment scene.*” The Holy Ghost can so act even in the Day of Grace. “I shudder at the thought of positive affliction: nevertheless what saith the Scripture?” (R. Govett). “SO SHALL ALSO MY HEAVENLY FATHER DO UNTO YOU, IF YE FORGIVE NOT EVERY ONE HIS BROTHER FROM YOUR HEARTS” (Matt. 18:35).

world and filling him with a passion for the Kingdom of God; and because it is the golden possibility for every child for God to share Messiah's Throne.

1 Pet. 1:17; Rev. 2:21-23; Phil. 3:11-14; Rev. 2:26, 27.

THE GREAT ESCAPE

One last application of the principle, and the most immediate and urgent, still remains: - it is the peril of unwatchfulness on the near approach of the last judgments. "*All these things* that shall come to pass" (Luke 21:36) what things? Crowding and disastrous miracles: - terrors from heaven (ver. 11); signs in sun and moon and stars (ver. 25); the powers of the heaven shaken (ver. 26) for these will be the days of vengeance (ver. 22), of persecution (ver. 17), of distress of nations, men fainting for fear (ver. 25). "Then shall be great tribulation, such as hath not been from the beginning of the world until now, no, nor ever shall be" (Matt. 24:21). *No peril so awful has ever demanded an escape so great.*

Escape is possible: "to *escape* all these things." Now since the distress is universal it can only be an escape into the heavens; "for it shall come upon *all* them that dwell on the face of all the earth." *No foothold of safety will exist in the whole inhabited world.* It is an escape to "the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory": for "He bowed the heavens also, and came down; ... He sent from on high, He took me" (Ps. 18:9, 16). Therefore this cannot be the deliverance of the elect Jewish remnant: for (1) the escape of the Jew is into the wilderness, never into the heavens (Rev. 12:6). The earthly escape was typed by Noah passing *through* the Flood, the heavenly by Enoch who escaped it altogether; and this is an escape which sets "*before the Son of Man.*" (2) The Jewish escape is active: this escape is passive. The faithful Jew is to "*flee* to the mountains" (Matt. 24:16): the faithful disciple here is to pray to *be* removed - "to be *set* ('by angels,' Alford) before the Son of Man." (3) The Jewish escape is on purely physical grounds, - if he instantly sets his face to the mountains, *whatever his exact moral condition*, he escapes: this deliverance turns critically on moral acceptability - "accounted *worthy* to escape."

Other Scriptures are conclusive that this escape is Christian. (1) To the chief officer of a Christian church is our Lord's promise: - "Because thou didst keep the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of trial, that hour which is to come upon the whole world" (Rev. 3:10). (2) To the chief officer of a Christian church is also our Lord's warning: - "If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will arrive over [see Greek] thee" (Rev. 3:3). Thus if, on the ground of 1 Thess. 5:4, it should be said that the Parousia cannot overtake a believer as a thief, this word of our Lord at once negatives the inference, for the threat of a thief-like descent, accompanied by total ignorance of the arrival, is addressed to a Christian pastor.³²

³² This fact decisively proves that Thessalonian disciples (1 Thess. 4:15) stand, not for the whole Church, but for the watchful only; even as the promise is addressed to the Philadelphia Angel, and only indirectly to all in Philadelphia

(3) The Type exquisitely confirms it. The Field is the world; the Wheat is the church; the Reapers are angels (Matt. 13:39) : - *the Reapers first of all gather the First-fruits, then garner the Harvest, and finally glean the Corners of the Field which had been deliberately left unreaped* (Lev. 23:10-22). So first-fruits are found in the Heavens *before* the harvest (Rev. 14:4); and *after* the harvest (Rev. 16:15) the warning to watchfulness still goes forth (Rev. 14:15). “Only those who are devoutly looking and waiting for the Saviour’s return shall be taken at first” (Seiss).

The moral crisis of the escape lies in the condition: “watch ye at every season, making supplication, that ye may prevail to escape” (Luke 21:36). These Divine words, if they have any meaning at all, must mean that without the worthiness the escape is impossible: and without the prayerful vigil the worthiness is impossible: “watch and pray always.” “No command is more frequent, none more solemnly impressed” (Dean Alford): *for the escape is no privilege attached to faith, but a reward attached to a standard of holiness known only to God*. “Then shall two men be in the field; one is taken, and one is left: two women shall be grinding at the mill; one is taken, and one is left. *Watch therefore*: for ye know not on what day your Lord cometh” (Matt. 24:40). “Our Lord assumes that some of His beloved Church will continue to be cared for as His sheep upon earth, until He destroy ‘that wicked’ with the breath of His mouth” (Tregelles).

“Watch” is one of the great comprehensive words of the Bible. *Watch* oneself: *watch* the advances of the world-crisis: *watch* for the King: *watch* for the highest interests of Christ: *watch* for flying opportunities: *watch* for dying souls: *watch* Satan: *watch* God. Watchfulness is acute alertness exercising every faculty for God. But it must be accompanied by specific prayer: - “*pray that ye may be accounted worthy*” ; “that ye may prevail to escape.” Watchfulness invokes all our powers for God, - prayer invokes all God’s powers for us: but more than that, - watchfulness devotes our *works* to God, - prayer devotes *ourselves*. Of carnal believers Hudson Taylor, than whom none did a vaster work for Christ in the nineteenth century, and few (I imagine) walked closer to God, says: “They have forgotten the warning of our Lord in Luke 21:34-36, and hence are not accounted worthy to escape: they have not ‘counted all things but loss,’ and hence do *not* attain unto *that* resurrection, which Paul felt he might miss. We wish to place on record our solemn conviction that not all who are Christians will attain to that resurrection, or thus meet the Lord in the air.” How much safer to strive than to assume!

Thus the cry of urgency should now ring through the whole Church of God. Why? Because (1) “if my faith is wrong, I am bound to change it: if my faith is right, I am bound to propagate it” (Dr. Whately). *To withhold the warning is to rob the Church of the very truth which is to deliver from the peril*. Because (2) no more powerful lever can be imagined for overturning our natural sluggishness. Facts are more moving than a whole library of exhortation. For the coming judgment of believers is a revelation leveled specifically at the flesh *in* the believer, and therefore can never be popular: the very bitterness with which it is assailed is an extraordinarily subtle and convincing proof of its truth. Caleb and Joshua witnessed to the approaching Kingdom, and to the necessity for obedience as well as faith to enter it, at the peril of their lives (Num. 14:10); and

who also had “kept the word of My patience.” To *Thessalonian* disciples there will be no thief-like suddenness: therefore the Thessalonians stand for the souls never surprised (1 Thess. 5:4) because never unready.

the Lord foretells that the servant who disqualifies for reward is also the servant whose intolerance starts persecution (Matt. 24:49). It is little wonder if those who belittle responsibility, themselves fail to achieve it. Because (3) the peril, however imminent, has not yet fallen. “*Lukewarm Laodiceans can be roused before it is too late: Christ is standing at the door*” (G. H. Pember). Fulfillment of its conditions involves a golden certainty of attaining the Kingdom. “Perilous times are upon us: may it be mine to watch and pray always that I may be counted worthy to escape all these things that are coming to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man!” (John Wilkinson). “WHAT I SAY UNTO YOU I SAY UNTO ALL, WATCH” (Mark 13:37).³³

ETERNAL JUDGMENT

The Day of Justice closes with the final judgment. The Kingdom is over (1Cor. 15:24): the old heavens and earth have fled away: in all God’s universe no object remains save one great, glittering white Throne, before which the dead, both small and great, stand. “And books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged” (Rev. 20:12). Books of *works* - one book of *names*: books of works, that all condemnation may be exactly adjusted to guilt; a book of names, *for the saved have nothing in the Book of Life but a name*. Works, whether before or after faith, disappear, it is the *Lamb’s Book*, and the names, enrolled from before the foundation of the world, as blood-washed at Calvary, are set there by sovereign, electing Grace; and thus the merits on which we stand for eternity are solely the merits of Christ. Therefore all believers of the Patriarchal, Legal, and Christian dispensations reign in the Eternal Kingdom.³⁴ “And if any was not found written in the book of life, he was cast into the lake of fire.” Calvary is the measure of God’s love to the world; Hell is the measure of His love to Christ: for God so loved the world as to give up His Son to Calvary; and He so loves His Son that whosoever rejects Him must be given up to Hell. All reformatory chastisement now ceases: punishment purges no more, and becomes punitive forever. But the saved are saved with an astounding salvation. “There shall be no curse any more” (Rev. 22:3) - eternal sinlessness: “and the Throne shall be therein” - eternal communion: “and His servants shall serve Him” - eternal service: “and they shall see His face” - eternal joy: “and His name shall be on their foreheads” - eternal security: “and there shall be night no more” - eternal energy: “and the Lord God shall give them light” - eternal knowledge: “AND THEY” - all the risen, of all dispensations – “SHALL REIGN FOR EVER AND EVER” - eternal glory.

NOTE ON PURGATORY

It is obvious that the truth of a believer’s judgment, so abundantly stated in the Scriptures, is of vast practical moment, and, once it lays its grip upon a soul, simply incalculable in its motive

³³ For fuller treatment see the tenth Present Day Pamphlet, *Rapture* (6d., Thynne).

³⁴ Nevertheless “those rewards, or crowns, conferred upon the overcoming ones by the Lord Jesus at His appearing shall never wax old, or fade away; for the Kingdom only comes to an end in the sense of there remaining no more enemies to subdue, and of nothing further of disorder requiring intervention and cure” (W. Lincoln).

power. For, contrary to what is sometimes supposed, it greatly reinforces our assurance of eternal life; because, by disentangling countless conditioned promises of reward from the simple assurance of eternal life granted on bare faith, it isolates the unconditioned gift into a radiant light, while withdrawing into the sphere of reward numerous menacing passages, expressive of extreme difficulty and doubt, which have ever been the strongholds of Rome. By reassuring of eternal safety, while yet warning of Millennial peril, it frees the soul for an arrow-flight straight to God's highest and best. Moreover, of all Scripture truths none is more needed by the Church of Christ.

Augustine, as remarkable a servant as God ever had, says that no more constant or powerful motive actuated his discipleship than the knowledge that he must give account; and no Christian would dare plunge into the worldliness and sin now rampant amongst multitudes of true believers had the truth our Lord expresses to Thyatira been once burnt home to the soul: - "*All the churches shall know that I am He which searcheth the reins and hearts, and I will give unto each one of you according to your works*" (Rev. 2:23). And finally, it brings to bear upon the redeemed heart, with thrilling power, the full impact of facts. If a literal bodily removal from coming horrors, if literal bursting from the tombs with the throbbings of immortal life, if literal thrones, and a literal authority over the nations, walking with Christ in white - if all these are contingent on holiness and suffering, all other ambitions become as dust, and martyrdom itself no excessive price.

But not the least of its advantages is the light it casts on Roman error, and how that error arose; and, above all, on the Roman doctrine of purgatory. For (we first observe) it is a supreme peculiarity of our Lord's love to His own that it can never stop short of the perfection of the person loved. "As many as *I* love, I reprove and *chasten*" (Rev. 3:19) : "He chastens us for our profit, *that we may become partakers of His holiness*" (Heb. 12:10). His holiness is perfection; so that our discipline, however drastic or prolonged, is never a proof of His enmity, but of His love; and is never a sign - either now, or at the Judgment Seat - of a disciple's ultimate destruction, but of his ultimate perfection. Where others show their love by indulgence, Christ shows His by chastisement. "*Every branch in Me that beareth fruit, He PURGETH it*" (John 15:2). Thus if the judgment of believers, and the Scripture so calls it (I Cor. 11:32), is in full operation (as all admit) in the day of grace itself, it is obvious that such judgment, even to the infliction of death here (1 Cor. 11:30) or hereafter (Luke 12:46), can be no contravention of the principles of grace: our chastisement is our highway to perfection.

Now our Lord, in insisting on forgiveness among the servants of God, has pictured what may happen after this life with a force so appalling, in terms so irresistibly clear and convincing, and yet in words so little accepted or taught, that it may well be - as Sir Robertson Nicoll has said - that "the Christian Church has never fairly faced these words." For the regenerate nature of the Merciless Servant (Matt. 18:24) is decisively revealed: *the unforgiving servant is himself a forgiven man*. The King says, - "*I forgave thee all that debt, because thou besoughtest me.*" Has any unbeliever sought and obtained forgiveness, and yet is an unbeliever and unregenerate still? No sin has ever been forgiven, or ever will be, save through the blood of the Cross: is such forgiveness ever unaccompanied by salvation? This Servant, says Mr. Kelly, "represents the Jew"; "it is the hatred of the Jew towards the Gentile": or, as Dr. Bullinger puts it, the ten-thousand- talent debt is the Crucifixion. But the Jew has never repented, never confessed, never sought pardon, never obtained it, and for eighteen centuries unmingled justice has rested on

Israel. This man confessed his sin - “all that debt”: he asked forgiveness – “thou besoughtest me”: he obtained pardon – “I forgave thee”: he was raised to responsibility and trust – “thy fellow-servants.” Moreover the King bases his censure wholly on the fact that the offender is a forgiven man: “shouldest thou not also have had mercy on thy fellow-servant, *even as I had mercy on thee?*”

Even if he were a regenerate Jew, of a remnant belonging partly to our Lord’s day and partly to the Great Tribulation, the truth is affected, not in principle, but only in application: FOR HE IS A SAVED (BECAUSE A FORGIVEN) MAN: *therefore our Lord can so act towards the saved.* So sore a judgment on a regenerate man would thus be a coming *fact*: all objections, therefore, to the *principle* behind the fact must fall to the ground. But the context carries no statement that he is a Jew, saved or unsaved. It is the resurrection of an old and (one had thought) obsolete assumption that all curses are for the Jew, and all blessings are for the Church. Such a thought assumes that *more* privilege means *less* responsibility; *it assumes that Jewish disciples with far less light will, if they sin, incur far severer punishment*: whereas the exact reverse is ever Paul’s warning cry - *How much more, how much more!* (Heb. 12:25; Rom. 11:24). Moreover, our Lord identifies the Servant with the Kingdom of *heaven* (ver. 23), which has been taken *from* the Jew (Matt. 21:43) and given to the Holy Nation, the Church (1 Pet. 2:9, R.V.).

But a further fact is equally decisive. Our Lord is answering a question – “How oft shall *my brother* sin against me, and I forgive him? Jesus saith unto him, Until seventy times seven. *Therefore* is the kingdom of heaven likened unto a certain king, *which would make a reckoning with his servants.*” The parable is an amplification of the answer: it is a revelation of what will happen *to Peter* if he does not forgive: it is a scene of the Judgment Seat of Christ. Our Lord has just dealt with *church* quarrels: “if thy *brother* sin against thee” - it is offences between brethren, or even apostles – “and he refuse to hear *the church* also, let him be unto thee as the Gentile and the publican.” If the servant is an unbeliever, the parable is wholly remote from Peter’s question. Peter asks Jesus to define the limits of forgiveness in the church disputes just named: it could be no answer to Peter for our Lord to reveal the consequences of an unforgiving spirit *in an unbeliever*. Who is a ‘brother’? “Whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother” (Mark 3:35).

Most remarkable is it that, just as our Lord is the most insistent preacher of Hell, so no warnings to the believer are as grave as His; and His application of His own parable is fearfully decisive. “And his lord was wroth, and delivered him *to the tormentors* - till he should pay all that was due. So SHALL ALSO MY HEAVENLY FATHER DO UNTO YOU, IF YE FORGIVE NOT EVERY ONE HIS BROTHER FROM YOUR HEARTS”: “for judgment is *without mercy* to him that hath showed no mercy” (Jas. 2:13). Nor does this passage stand alone. There are others of equally fearful force.

(1) “If a man *abide* not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered and they gather them, and cast them into the fire, *and they are burned*” (John 15:6).

(2) “Whosoever shall say [to his brother], Raca, shall be *in danger* of THE GEHENNA OF FIRE” (Matt. 5:22).

(3) “For if *we* sin willfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more a sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and a *fierceness of fire* which shall devour the adversaries” (Heb. 10:26).

No branch, withering after vital verdure, and embedded in the Vine can represent empty profession: the ‘brother’ who angrily charges another ‘brother’ as Moreh - ‘rebel from God’ - risks Gehenna *because his charge is false*; that is, both are children of God, and therefore God’s ancient principle (Deut. 19:16-19) recoils on him - that the false witness incurs the penalty he sought to inflict: nor could the Apostle be more explicit that ‘we’ - including himself - must meet fearful consequences for willful sin. These passages may be (I believe they are) susceptible of a reconciliation with the ultimate salvation of all believers; but no thinking soul, reverent of Scripture, and conscious of the dreadful holiness and majesty of God - “the Lord shall judge *His people*,” is immediately followed by, “It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God” (Heb. 10:30) - will wish to treat them lightly, or blunt the edge of these sharpest warnings of the Most High. It is an ill turn to the grace of God to make it silence the righteous claims of His justice and holiness: exactly so the Restorationist and the Universalist seek to elude the doctrine of Hell.

Now we turn to the Roman doctrine of Purgatory. Rome’s perversion of the truth, which would have been impossible had the Church always held and taught the full Scripture revelation of a believer’s purging, has only twice been officially defined. “If such as be truly penitent die in God’s favor before they have satisfied for their sins of commission and omission by worthy fruits of penance” - i.e., have assisted their own atonement - “their souls are purged after death with purgatorial punishments” (Council of Ferrara); “and the souls delivered there are assisted by the suffrages [prayers and devotions] of the Faithful, and especially by the most acceptable sacrifice of the Mass” (Council of Trent). The manifest errors here - apart from such fearful accretions as the sale of indulgences, or the efficacy of the Mass - are mainly three. (1) The doctrine of Purgatory locates the purging in Hades: Scripture locates it in this life, and at the Judgment Seat after resurrection, *but never in Hades*. Paradise, for all believers, is the ‘very far better’ of an especial presence of Christ. (2) No power of pope or priest, and no prayers of fellow-believers, can in the slightest degree modify the judgments due to any man, believer or unbeliever, after he has once passed into the other world. “It is appointed unto men once to die, and after this cometh JUDGMENT” (Heb. 9:27. R.V.). Prayer for the dead is unknown in the Scriptures: even in this life prayer does not avail for a believer under sentence of death (1 John 5:16). This cuts away the root of all the abominations (as indulgences, etc.) that have grown around the Roman doctrine. (3) But the vital error lies in confusing discipline with salvation. Chastisement is necessary and salutary; it is inflicted by God in this life upon all believers without exception (Heb. 12:8); it may, in extreme cases, be fearful bodily disease (Ex. 15:26), or even be mortal (1 Cor. 11:30); and since death produces no magical change, such as converting the sinning into the sinless, and since much less can it cancel unrepented offences during discipleship, chastisement may be equally necessary and salutary at the Judgment Seat:³⁵ - *but*

³⁵ The belief that judgment for the believer is exhausted in this life is obviously untenable, because we have all known backsliders who died in the utmost worldly prosperity: so that Paul prays for the faulty believer, “that he may receive mercy of the Lord IN THAT DAY (2 Tim. 1:18), and of others - “may it not be laid to their account (2 Tim. 4:16). For there are sins that will be forgiven - obviously not sins of unbelievers - in the Age to Come (Matt. 12:32). In the words of Messrs. Hogg and Vine: - “the attempt to alleviate the text [‘he that doeth wrong shall receive again for the wrong that he hath done,’ Col. 3:25] of some of its weight by suggesting that the law operates

disciplinary suffering has no connection whatever with eternal life. There are no atoning sufferings but the sufferings of Calvary: human works with a view to salvation are sinful and deadly; “*not of works, that no man should glory*” (Eph. 2:9).

So we turn once again to the Scripture truth. God has provided two purgings - one by blood, and one by discipline; *and the purging by blood must precede the purging by discipline.* “According to the law, I may almost say, all things are *purged by blood*” (Heb. 9:22): “how much more shall the *blood* of Christ *purge* your conscience from dead works” - the deadly efforts of self-righteousness - “to serve the living God” (Heb. 9:14). For Christ has effected the essential and fundamental purging once for all: “who when He had *purged* our *sins*, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high” (Heb. 1:3); and this purging is the sole basis, and predisposing cause, of all subsequent purging. For only a saved soul *can* be purged by chastisement. No amount or degree of suffering can improve into life a soul dead in trespasses and sins, any more than dead wood can be made to grow fruit by pruning; chastisement cannot *purge him*; he *can* be purged, but not by chastisement; *and God is not habitually chastening the wicked at all.* For “if ye are *without* chastening whereby all [believers] have been made partakers, *then are ye bastards*, and not sons” (Heb. 12:8). Corrective sufferings are only granted and effective to those already judicially purged by the sacrificial sufferings of Calvary. In the words of Dr. Griffith Thomas : - “While a genuine Christian who becomes a backslider will not be judicially condemned for ever, there will be a very serious measure of personal, practical condemnation when such an one stands before the judgment seat of Christ, to be dealt with according to works since conversion.”

The second purging is by discipline. “Every branch that beareth fruit” - i.e., living wood, set in the living Vine - “He *purgeth* it” (John 15:2). A soul which is born again, yet still having ‘the flesh’ in him, can have his still fallible character cleansed and corrected by chastisement. Nor need this purging end with life. “Some of the old Roman divines taught that all the remains of sin in God’s children are quite abolished by final grace at the very instant of their dissolution; so that the stain of the least sin is not left behind to be carried into the other world” (Archbishop Usher’s *Answer to a Jesuit*, p. 165). This ancient Roman doctrine is as unscriptural as the later Roman doctrine of Purgatory. For the unbeliever who falls asleep unwatchful, wakes unwatchful - the servant who dies slothful, appears before the Judgment Seat slothful; their last look on this world is, morally, their first look on the next; they *will* be purged, but they are *not* purged; there is no magic in death, and no opportunity in Hades to correct a faulty discipleship; *and the coming millennial day of Justice, dominated by the Judgment Seat, has for its essential characteristic the recoil of works in judicial retribution.* “For he that doeth wrong” - the context is addressed solely to believers - “SHALL RECEIVE AGAIN FOR THE WRONG THAT HE HATH DONE; and there is no respect of persons” (Col. 3:25). But it is Divine Love that will not rest until all we who believe are “become partakers of His holiness”: no discipline ever involves our destruction; it effects, sooner or later, our perfection. Perhaps the most solemn passage our Lord ever addressed to the believer concludes exactly thus : - “Verily I say unto thee, thou shalt by no means come out thence, TILL [for all chastisements of believers are purgative and temporary] thou have paid *the last farthing*” (Matt. 5:26).

only in this life, fails, for there is nothing in the text or context to lead the reader to think other than that while the sowing is here, the reaping is hereafter.”

So our Lord in the Parable of the Steward, puts the conversion of the ‘evil servant’ beyond all doubt by identifying the two characters as possible in one and the same man. “But if that servant” - the good steward, whom the Lord Himself set over His household - “shall say in his heart” (Luke 12:45): it is not a change of servants that our Lord contemplates, but a change of *mind* in the same servant: it is one and the same servant, who may turn out either a good steward, or a bad.³⁶ “And that servant; which knew his Lord’s will, and made not ready, nor did according to his will, SHALL BE BEATEN WITH MANY STRIPES.” The appearance of the slothful servant at the Bema with his fellow-servants is decisive proof of his conversion; *for the Scripture knows nothing of a rapture of unbelievers*. In the words of Dr. Seiss: - “The words do not at all imply that the one is saved, and the other lost, but simply that the one reaches blessedness at once when the Lord comes, while the other, not being prepared by proper watchfulness, is punished with temporal judgments, and only saved ‘so as through fire’ at a subsequent period.”

It is certain that all believers must, sooner or later, appear at the Bema (2 Cor. 5:10), and it is equally certain that none can so appear as a naked spirit; but what is constantly overlooked is that, apart from our Lord, who rose in “the power of an *endless* life” (Heb. 7:16), so far from death after resurrection being impossible, *we have not a single example to the contrary in the recorded history of mankind*. “Women received their dead by a resurrection” (Heb. 11:35) - a genuine, actual rising of the corpse, like Lazarus; even a skeleton was re clothed (2 Kings 13:21) yet, without exception, it has always been no more than a temporary resuscitation to fulfil a specific purpose of God. Until the final entrance of all the risen into the City in the Eternal Ages, it is of one group of the risen, and of one group only; that a resurrection is stated which is incapable of death. “They that are accounted worthy to attain to that Age, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry nor are given in marriage: FOR NEITHER CAN THEY DIE ANY MORE; for they are equal unto the angels; and are sons of God, *being sons of the resurrection*” (Luke 20:35-36). Of believers *not* accounted worthy of that Age, and the resurrection *from* the dead, the First, no such assertion of incorruptibility is made; so also it is only of partakers of the Kingdom (I Cor. 15:50), that Paul says that they “shall be raised INCORRUPTIBLE” (1 Cor. 15:52).

Thus the warning of God comes home to us in full force. “So, then, *brethren*” - the Church of Christ - “we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh; *for if ye live after the flesh, YE MUST*” - ye are *about* to: the expression in the Greek is almost, one might say, consecrated to denoting the Millennial Kingdom; eight times it is used in Hebrews of the *Coming* Age (Govett) - “DIE” (Rom. 8:12). It is not eternal death, for the believer is guaranteed eternal life: it is not present death, for it is contrary both to Scripture and to fact that all sanctified believers live to a great age, and all backsliders die young: it is Millennial death, the cutting asunder at the Bema. “Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth unto his own flesh shall of the flesh reap CORRUPTION” (Gal. 6:7) - a “corruption” as literal as the “flesh.” “The Apostle does not speak [in Rom. 8:11-13] of the lot reserved for the bodies of unbelievers, or of unsanctified believers. The same is the case in 1 Cor.

³⁶ The emphatic pronoun (Luke 12:45) must have some antecedent, and none is to be found save ‘the faithful and wise steward’ (12:42). Truth is not to be reached by settling for ourselves in advance what the Lord may or may not do to His own servants, and then sweeping aside the words which do not agree with that prior decision” (G. H. Lang).

15:20-28. The word of ver. 13 - 'If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die' - should suffice: that is not, especially after all that precedes, a word of salvation" (Godet). For while all believers possess eternal life, that life will be manifested for such believers as have renounced heavily for Christ a thousand years earlier. "There is no man that hath left house or brethren ... for my sake, and for the gospel's sake, but he shall receive a hundredfold now in this time, ... and IN THE AGE TO COME *eternal life*" (Mark 10:29).³⁷

So now we are in a position for a final summary on exclusion. Where, it will be asked, are the excluded during the Kingdom? We are not obliged to solve all possible problems connected with a revealed truth before we accept it; or else a skeptic's inquiries on the origin of evil, or the sovereign elections of God - queries impossible of human reply (Rom. 9:20) - could invalidate the Gospel. Nor is it wise to probe too deeply into that over which God has cast a holy reserve; lest, losing ourselves, we become "wise above that which is written." Let us grant (if we choose) that God has shrouded the temporary fate of the excluded in impenetrable mystery, the *fact* of exclusion remains, resting securely on its own abundant Scriptures. Nevertheless Scripture is not wholly silent on the location of the excluded. (1) Some, perhaps from the lower regions of Enoch and Elijah, may behold - as Moses from Pisgah - without entering (John 3:3,5). (2) Some return temporarily to corruption, as did all who rose before our Lord, until Hades, together with Death (or Abaddon) are emptied at the final judgment - *saved inmates issuing from Hades* (Rev. 20:13). Both these classes, presumably the great proportion of the excluded, continue to enjoy the conditions of Paradise - the 'very far better' of the Lord's especial presence (Phil. 1:23; Luke 23:43). (3) Some are in the mysterious region known as the 'outer darkness' (Matt. 25:30). (4) Some, guilty of the very gravest offences, are temporarily in Gehenna (Matt. 5:22; John 15:6; Heb. 10:26-27; Rev. 2:11). "I say unto you, *my friends*, ... I will warn you whom ye shall fear: Fear Him, which after He hath killed hath power to cast into GEHENNA: yea, I say unto you, Fear Him" (Luke 12:4).

The denial of these solemn truths paralyses and destroys some of the most powerful stimulants God has supplied to His Church in its deadening struggle with the world, the flesh, and the devil; it empties of all horror the dread warnings to the backslider, and leaves him, if it does not put him, in a drugged sleep; and it drives privilege over the precipice of responsibility - a disaster of which the Church has had direct warning : - "continue thou in His goodness, *otherwise thou also shalt be cut off*" (Rom. 11:22). And the melancholy fact revealed all down the ages is this - that where the sharpness of God's warnings has been blunted by the misuse of grace, *sin follows*, and too often privilege becomes the cloak of lasciviousness. No man kicks against God's goads save at his own peril.

To *this* man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and that *trembleth* at my word" (Isa. 66:2). Concerning the utterances, unutterably solemn, with which our Saviour warns believers of the final fires with reiterated emphasis, Isaac Taylor has said : - "We of this age may

³⁷ The disciple saved, but barely escaping with his life, is said to be 'fined' (1 Cor. 3:15); and our Lord, depicting the disciple who seeks his own good things in this life, in contrast to him who even lays down life itself in martyrdom, reveals that the 'fine' is the 'soul,' or life (Matt. 16:26). "He that findeth his life [soul, or animal life] shall lose it" - at the Bema; "and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it" (Matt. 10:39) in the First Resurrection, in a life indissoluble (Heb. 7:16, R. V. margin).

expound as we think fit these appalling words; or may extenuate these phrases; or, if we please, let us cast away the whole doctrine as intolerable and incredible. Let us do so: but it is a matter of history, out of question, that the apostolic church, and the church of later times, took it, word for word, in the whole of its apparent value. It is true that several attempts were made to substantiate a mitigated sense: but it is certain that the language of Christ, in regard to the future life, was constantly on the lips of martyrs throughout the suffering centuries. Often and often was it heard from out of the midst of the fire, and was lisped by the quivering lips of women and children while writhing on the rack.”

NOTE ON THE JUDGMENT OF BELIEVERS

The words of Govett are exceedingly acute and arresting : -

“All the results of this great doctrine it is impossible to foresee. But some important ones may be traced. If its opponents maintain their hold on the doctrine of the Millennium, it will drive them to strange extremities.”

The present attitude of most assailants is this : -

1. ‘We admit, that there will be rewards.’
2. ‘We confess, that the believer sins, and as a consequence receives chastisement. But it is only in this life!’
3. Some go further, and allow that offending believers will suffer loss at Christ's coming. But it will not amount to exclusion from the Kingdom.

But the outcry against the doctrine is so sharp, that those who admit so much will find themselves in a very awkward position.

Impartial Christians aroused at the stir, and learning the state of the case, will say to such: ‘What! are you crying out that this man is subverting the truth, and unfit for communion, while you are holding the very principle he affirms, and differ only in the extent to which it shall be pushed? Christ, you admit, will call believers before His judgment-seat. You think that negation of reward alone will ensue. *He*, that in extreme cases, positive punishment will be awarded. Is *that* all the difference about which this loud hue and cry is raised? You agree in the principle, you differ about its extent. If he, then, be a burglar, you are guilty of petty larceny.’

Such assailants, too, will be looked on with suspicion by the stouter-hearted opponents of the doctrine, as almost traitors to the truth.

Most then will take up the ground - ‘Chastisement, *but only in this life*.’

Your proofs, friend?

‘The blood of Jesus Christ His Son *cleanseth us from all sin*: 1 John 1:7. Ours is no half-Saviour.’

But you admit, that, in spite of Jesus’ atonement the chastisements of God descend on the offending believer in this life. It is no bar then to their falling on him in the next age. What Scriptures are there which assert, that chastisements shall not befall an offending disciple when our Lord appears?

No such passages are forthcoming.

Proofs to the contrary are many and plain. Take those from a single Gospel: Matt. 5:22-30; 7:21-27; 10:32,33,39; 16:25; 18:7-9, 21-35; 24:45-51; 25:1-30.

This will be felt then to be not very tenable ground. The reasons why chastisement must end with this life, will be very hard to find, very hard to establish. Many believers have died out of the communion of Churches from which they have been justly excluded for sin. Will they be accounted worthy of a place in the *Kingdom*, who were put out as unworthy of a place in the *Church*?

Lastly, you admit, friend, that there will be reward for the saints’ good deeds, at Jesus’ appearing. There must then be punishment for their evil deeds, if the coming day be ‘the day of *justice*’ (‘judgment’). Shall we give account only of our right expenditure as stewards? or of thriftless and extravagant expenditure also? We may wish it otherwise: but is it not written - that each will “receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be GOOD or BAD” (2 Cor. 5:10). ‘He that doeth WRONG shall RECEIVE FOR THE WRONG WHICH HE HATH DONE, AND THERE IS NO RESPECT OF PERSONS’ (Col. 3:25).

Those then who will be quit of this doctrine at all hazards will scarcely feel any position a safe one, but that which asserts: (1) That there is no precept given to the elect of God; (2) And, by consequence, that they never sin, nor ever receive chastisement.

This awful position of unbelief I shall not here assail. My only object is to show the main bearings of the controversy, and to urge believers to look into the matter prayerfully, submitting themselves to the Word of God. To Father, Son, and Spirit, be all glory! Amen.”