

AN INQUIRY

INTO THE DOCTRINE OF

A GENERAL JUDGMENT,

AND

INTO WHAT IS REVEALED

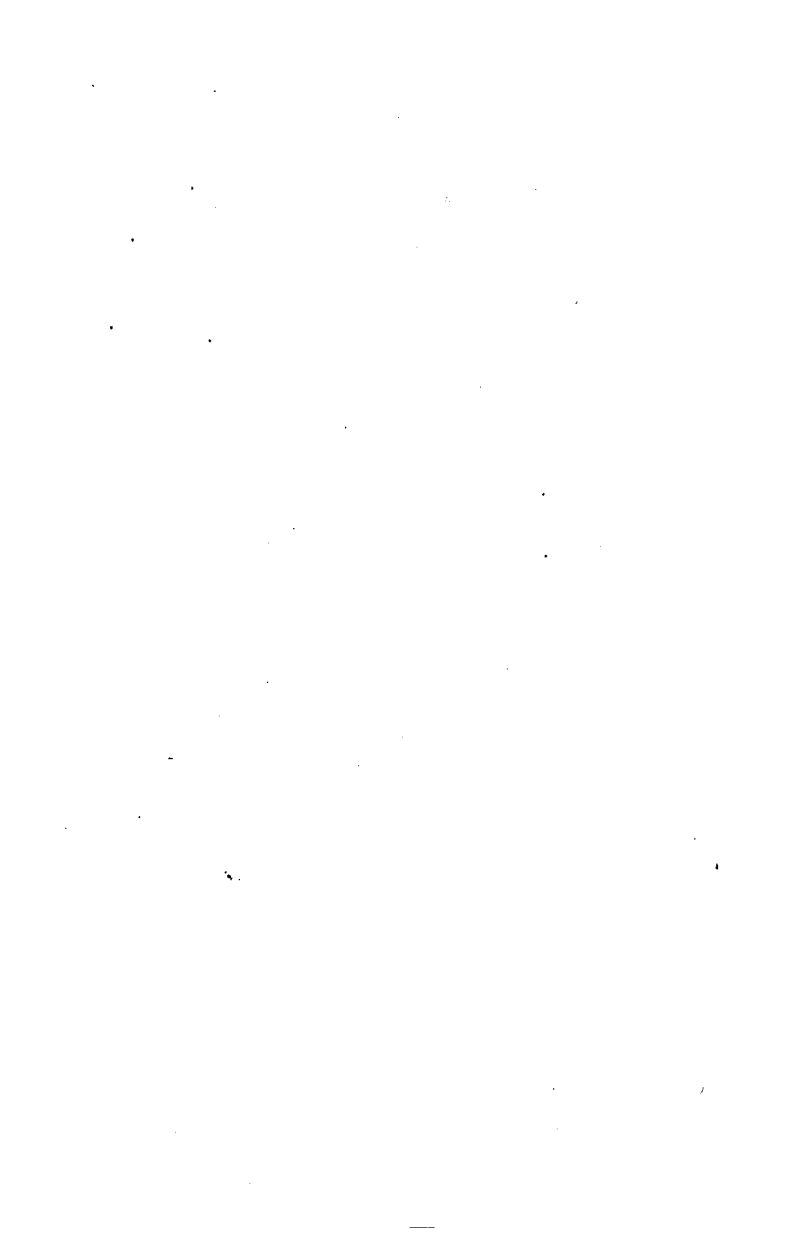
AS TO THE

CHRISTIAN APPEARING BEFORE THE
JUDGMENT-SEAT OF CHRIST.

“God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing,
whether it be good or whether it be evil.”—Eccles. xii. 14.

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INTRODUCTION.

PERHAPS there is hardly any subject with which the Christian is personally concerned that is so obscurely seen, as that of the saints before the judgment-seat of Christ, and the final judgment of mankind generally. It seems universally to be held that all men are to be one day arraigned at the bar of God, there to give an account of themselves; and it is generally believed that all, saints and sinners, will be judged at one and the same time. This being considered as certain, everything else is made to harmonize with it, or, which is oftener the case, they are held with the greatest vagueness. MIDDLETON speaks of one who devoted forty years to the study of the Bible, "who could not discover that the usually-received doctrine of a day appointed for the judgment of *all* mankind by Christ, in the presence of angels, had any foundation in Scripture." But the writer on

the Greek article seems to have considered this so strange a discovery, that, without examination, he merely refers to a few passages of Scripture—which passages we hope to look at in our inquiry.

Then as to the Christian, there is surely much obscurity. ‘If he is saved now, in what sense is he to be *judged* by and by?’ is a question often asked and seldom satisfactorily answered. Some have maintained that he is not fully justified till after he passes the judgment-seat—the utmost he can have in this life being a hope of eternal life; while others seem to persuade themselves that the Christian has nothing to do with the judgment-seat of Christ, and only avert the difficulty by not looking at it.

Amid all this confusion, our object is simply to discover what God has revealed in His word on this important subject, and to seek, by the teaching of the Holy Spirit, instruction, comfort, and, it may be, warning therefrom.



AN INQUIRY,

&c., &c.

It is commonly understood by the term "General Judgment" that on some future day, at the end of the world, all mankind that have ever lived, or that may yet live—including both Christians and the unconverted—will be, at one and the same time, arraigned at the bar of God, to be there tried and have their destiny fixed and declared. Our inquiry is, Is this Scriptural? and if not, What does the word of God teach on this important and solemn subject?

It is often considered sufficient and conclusive to quote that "It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment." (Heb. ix. 27.) From this passage we certainly learn that God hath, in a general way, appointed "judgment" to follow "death;" but we would first inquire, Are there any exceptions to this general appointment, or is it absolute and of universal application?

The passage from Hebrews, though often quoted as above, is only a part of the sentence. As a whole it stands thus: "As it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment; so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time, without sin unto salvation." Now clearly there is here a comparison: the "as" and "so" show this: *as* the appointment is

what it is, so there are exceptions, and for "them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation" (or, apart from sin for salvation). Have we not here then exceptions to the general appointment? To some, Christ will come in judgment; to others, He will come "apart from sin for salvation," judgment being the very opposite of "without sin" or "apart from sin" unto salvation.

But the question of exceptions to the general appointment needs to be further considered. Let us take death first. It was certainly the appointment that sinful man should die: "The wages of sin is death"—"Death passed upon all men"—"It is appointed unto man once to die." Yet from other passages we are quite sure that there will be exceptions. There was an exception in Elijah for instance, who did not die. (2 Kings ii. 11.) And it is declared "we shall not all sleep." (1 Cor. xv. 51.) And again, "we which are alive and remain shall be caught up to meet the Lord in the air," &c. (1 Thess. iv. 17.) While Christ is declared to be the judge of "the quick [the living who will not have died] and the dead." These passages, it is believed, as clearly establish the exceptions as to death, as the other passages establish the appointment.*

* Is it not strange that, in the face of the passages quoted, ministers are constantly asserting in their sermons that all men, without an exception, must die? No doubt it is done with the good intention of impressing upon their hearers the importance of believing the gospel. But is it not always safer and better to keep to Scripture, however good the motive? "We shall *not* all sleep." And is it not a much more dreadful thought that some will go on living in sin and mirth, be judged, and sent to hell, *without dying*, than the thought of *dying* and lying in their graves for ages? though this, of course, is true of the great mass of the wicked. Christ is coming to judge the *living* as well as the dead.

Then, as to the judgment, in addition to the implied exception in the passage quoted from Hebrews, Christ says, (John v. 24,) "He that heareth my word and believeth on him that sent me hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, (or, judgment,) but is passed from death unto life." The word here translated "condemnation," (*κρισις*) is the same as is translated "judgment" in the appointment in Hebrews ix. 27. May we not, then, conclude, that as clearly as there is in the passage from the Hebrews a general appointment—that after death comes judgment—so surely does the passage from John declare, that the "believer" shall not come into judgment?

This is further confirmed by John v. 29, as to the dead. In resurrection they shall come forth, "they that have done good unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation" (judgment—still the same Greek word). This clearly implies that the righteous dead will not come into judgment.

From this point, then, we have two branches to our subject—one for believers and one for the world. We hold that the believer ought not to dismiss the subject as exhausted as touching himself when he sees that he shall not come into judgment, for there are other passages which demand his serious attention touching the judgment-seat of Christ, which we hope to look at presently; but our next inquiry is, if we except believers, is there then for all others, one, and only one, general judgment?

There are two passages which mention, somewhat in detail, scenes which resemble sessional judgment—that

is, persons are arraigned before the judgment-seat and have their final doom declared—one is in Matthew xxv. and the other in Revelation xx. By placing them side by side we shall see to what extent they differ.

MATTHEW XXV.

The Son of man shall come in his glory and all the holy angels." *Come where? clearly to earth, by what follows.*

Before him shall be gathered all nations." *No mention of the dead.*

"He shall separate them one from another as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats," &c. *Here are two classes, the sheep going away into life eternal.*

"Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire.....for I was an hungered and ye gave me no meat," &c. *Here the condemnation is, because of the treatment towards Christ in His people, without mention of their general sins.*

REVELATION XX.

"I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth, and the heavens fled away, and there was found no place for them."

"And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God." *No mention of the living.*

"Whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire." *None here are mentioned but the lost.*

"And the books were opened, and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books according to their works." *Here they are judged according to their general sins, and no special mention is made of their treatment of Christ.*

Note here that, in one of these, the judgment is to take place when Christ comes to the earth; in the other, the earth flees away: in one, the living nations only are judged, and no mention made of the dead; in the other, the dead only, and no mention made of the living: in one, there are two classes, the lost and the

saved; in the other, the lost only: in one, the condemnation is because of their treatment of Christ in His brethren; in the other, they are judged according to their general sins.

This comparison seems to show clearly, that the two passages cannot refer to one and the same event. The particular place and character of each we hope to look at presently. But let us here note that we appear to have gathered from Scripture, 1, That the Church will not come into judgment; and, 2, That all the wicked will not be judged at one and the same time. Then there cannot be one general judgment, as that term is usually understood.

Let us now endeavour to see what is revealed in Scripture, and in so doing we shall find it most important to trace along with this subject the great future events predicted in God's word, and thus we may hope to see each fall into its right place and all be the better understood.

First in order is the Church before the judgment-seat of Christ. We are now waiting our Lord's return at any moment: "Surely I come quickly." (Rev. xxii. 20.) "The Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord." (1 Thess. iv. 16, 17.)

Then comes the judgment-seat of Christ for the Church. We have already seen that we are not to

come into the judgment so called, and it is also well to see that for the believer salvation is complete and certain.

“He that heareth my word and believeth on him that sent me hath everlasting life.” (John v. 24.)

“There is, therefore, now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus.” (Rom. viii. 1.)

“Whom he did predestinate, them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified.” (Rom. viii. 30.)

“Heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ.” (Rom. viii. 17.)

“Quickened us together with Christ . . . hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.” (Eph. ii. 5, 6.)

“Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many.” (Heb. ix. 28.)

“As he is, so are we in this world.” (1 John iv. 17.)

“Unto him that loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood.” (Rev. i. 5.)

How can persons, of whom such things are spoken, be brought into judgment to know whether they are to be saved? Or how can their sins, having been borne, suffered for, blotted out, washed away, be still brought against them at a judgment-day? God, as we have seen, says, “He that believeth shall not come into judgment.” “Who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather that is risen again.” (Rom. viii. 33, 34.)

Nevertheless, “We shall all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ.” (Rom. xiv. 10.) The context

clearly shews that the "we" here refers to (or, at least, includes) believers. "Why dost thou judge thy brother, or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ." Now, "stand before" does not seem to imply "stand by" as a friend of the judge might do; but it is the same term as is used in Acts xxvii. 24: "Fear not, Paul, thou must be *brought before* Cæsar." "Judgment-seat" is the same as "throne" in Acts xii. 21, and "judgment-seat" in Acts xviii. 12, 16, 17, and signifies (says Parkhurst) "a judgment-seat, a tribunal, a throne, a raised or elevated seat for a judge or king."

"We must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his body according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." (2 Cor. v. 10.) Here again the "we" must include believers, and the "judgment-seat" is the same as in Romans xiv. 10. The word translated "appear" is generally rendered "manifested"—made apparent—made known. It occurs in the very next verse, and is there so rendered, so that the passage has been translated thus, "For we must all be manifested before the judgment-seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his body according to that he hath done, whether they be good or bad . . . but we are manifested unto God, and I trust also are manifested in your consciences."

From these two passages we certainly learn that the Christian will have to stand before the judgment-seat of Christ and there be manifested, or made known. But this is not all, for it is added "that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he

hath done, whether it be good or bad." Our inquiry is, What does this signify as touching those who are already saved?

We must observe that if the apostle refers here to the manifestation of mankind generally, for *us* it is as a motive why we should be zealous in the Lord's work; he says, "Wherefore we labour (or, are zealous) that whether present or absent we may be accepted of him (or, agreeable or well-pleasing to him). For we must all appear," &c. For us, then, it refers to *service*. We are reminded that we are zealous (or, should be) that we may be well-pleasing to God, for we shall all be manifested before the judgment-seat of Christ. But then the question returns, what is it to "receive for the deeds done whether good or bad?"

Let us see if any other passage will throw light upon this question. Paul (or, rather, God) writing to the Colossians, again speaking of service, says, "Whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward (or, recompense) of the inheritance, for ye serve the Lord Christ. But he that doeth wrong shall receive the wrong which he hath done: and there is no respect of persons." (Col. iii. 23—25.)

Again, in Ephesians vi. 7, 8, we read, "With good will doing service as to the Lord and not to men: knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free." Here "receiving" is again connected with service; indeed, there are a number of passages that speak of rewards in connexion with service to God.

"Whosoever shall give you a cup of water to drink

in my name because ye belong to Christ, verily I say unto you, he shall not lose his reward." (Mark ix. 41.)

"Do good and your reward shall be great." (Luke vi. 35.)

"God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love." (Heb. vi. 10.)

All this has clearly nothing to do with our salvation; but being saved, we are *all* the servants of God, and He will not forget our poor, poor service, but will reward us, and various are the terms used to describe the rewards:—they are "great," "full," "the reward of the inheritance," "the joy of the Lord," "a crown," &c. And we are to be manifested before the judgment-seat of Christ and receive our rewards. Things done in private are to be rewarded openly. Our brethren may have misunderstood us, blamed us—all will then be set right; we are manifested unto God now, then we shall be manifested to one another. Everything like selfishness and envy will be banished then, and we shall be able heartily to joy in each other's blessing. May reader and writer have a full reward in that day!

But what of the counterpart? Here not so much is said in Scripture; still we are exhorted to "Take heed that ye do not your alms (or, righteousness) before men to be seen of them, otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven." (Matt. vi. 1.)

Again, "Every man's work shall be made manifest, for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide which he hath built thereon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss; but he

himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire." (1 Cor. iii. 13—15.)

Again, "Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility, and worshipping of angels," &c.

Again, "Hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown." (Rev. iii. 11.)

These passages clearly refer to a saint losing his reward, and remark that while in the passage in 2 Cor. v. 10 we read of each receiving the things done in the body, whether good or bad, we never read of the one receiving a reward and the other a *punishment* when the Church is spoken of; but the one shall receive a reward and the other shall suffer loss, or lose his reward. So then, if we do our righteousness with a wrong motive—or build upon the foundation (of Christ) wood, hay, and stubble*—or turn from the simplicity of Christ unto the beggarly elements of human religion—we shall lose the reward we ought to have.

A solemn subject this for the saints of God; and it clearly is not confined to evangelists and gifted persons, but to all. The words are very explicit: "we must all"

* Does not this more especially refer to the work of the ministry? If persons are truly converted, *they* will be the evangelist's crown of rejoicing in that day, as Paul says; (2 Cor. i. 14;) but if not converted, the work will be burnt up and the converts will not be there as the evangelist's crown. Does it not also apply to all who are building Christians together? If it is to the name of Christ simply, it is well, for that name will be the only rallying-point then; but if it is to any other name, it will not even be named there. Take Wesleyanism, for instance. Here it may grow into a vast system to which saints are gathered; but *there* it can in no wise appear. Of course the saints engaged in the work and the saints gathered will be there, but *Wesleyanism* will not be there. It will all be burned up as wood, hay, and stubble, though built upon the foundation of Christ. Solemn consideration surely for those thus employed!

←“every one”—“every man”—“every man’s work,” &c., all are to be manifested before the judgment-seat of Christ. There we shall know what had hindered us, and wherein we missed the mark. Oh that we had wisdom now to judge of all things by their true worth and in the light, that we lose not our reward!

But some may think that this “suffering loss” amounts to a rebuke, and may feel a difficulty in supposing that any who have been saved by grace, sanctified, glorified, can receive hereafter anything like a rebuke. But the passage does not speak of a rebuke. We know what a look of love did for Peter when he had denied his Lord, and surely one glance of that blessed One will at once melt every heart and set every thing right in those who have been unfaithful to their Lord. And who has not?

“How shall I meet those eyes?
 Mine on Himself I cast,
 And own myself the Saviour’s prize,
 MERCY from first to last.”

But the word does say they shall suffer loss, and it does speak of some being saved so as by fire, as if they would be so surrounded by the wood, hay, and stubble, that in testing the work by fire, they also would be consumed were they not pulled through the fire!

Others have supposed that the death of Christ, making full atonement for sin, will also clear us from every consequence of our failure as servants; that the Christian is so completely hid in Christ that not a failure in service can any more appear against us than any sin we ever committed, and therefore we need have

no anxiety, as we shall never be called to account even as servants; or, if called to account, the blood of Christ will answer all and secure us from loss.

But does Scripture put it in this manner? It is quite true, as we have already seen, that he that is saved *is* saved—saved eternally—and *he* shall never come into judgment; neither shall his *sins* ever come into judgment—they were all borne by Christ. But Scripture does say that he shall be manifested before the judgment-seat of Christ—that his *work* shall be made manifest—that his work shall be *tried in fire*—that if his work abide he shall receive a reward; but if it be consumed he shall *suffer loss*, and he himself shall be saved as through the fire. (1 Cor. iii. 13—15.) Also, “ We must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.” (2 Cor. v. 10.) This is the way in which Scripture puts it; and while the Holy Ghost has fully assured us that our eternal salvation is secure, He as positively tells us that we shall lose our reward if our christian labour will not bear the test. May the Lord lay it on all our hearts!

Others may feel an objection that ‘anything like this cannot take place in heaven, and saints go to heaven when they die.’

The spirits of the redeemed go to paradise at their death, but their bodies are laid in the graves. At the coming of the Lord their bodies will be raised “in glory,” and inhabited by their spirits; they will be caught up to meet the Lord in the air, and the being manifested before the judgment-seat of Christ may take

place in the air.* Though not positively revealed where, Christ says, (Rev. xxii. 12,) "I come quickly, and my reward is with me;" and in Luke xiv. 14, we read "Ye shall be recompensed at the resurrection of the just;" and Paul says, "There is laid up for me a crown of righteousness which the Lord the righteous judge shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing." (2 Tim. iv. 8.)

Thus then we have looked a little at the saint before the judgment-seat of Christ, and this is to be ushered in by the coming of our Lord,† whom we are looking for at any moment. After the Church is gone, Anti-christ will be fully revealed, and this will usher in the greatest tribulation that will ever take place on the earth; and this is followed by our Lord coming to the earth, when the first final judgment of the wicked will take place, which must next engage our attention.

We read that the Lord Jesus is Judge of the quick and of the dead, and from the passages quoted side by side on page 8, it appears that both the living and the

* The passage in 1 Thess. iv. 16, 17, says we shall assemble "in the clouds," and then meet the Lord in air, not *the* air, as in Ephesians ii. 2; Revelation ix. 2; xvi. 17. It will not be on earth, nor in heaven, but in air—perhaps above the clouds in distant space. The Greek word for "air" is said to be derived from an Hebrew word signifying "to be clear, light."

† It is deemed right to state that in this tract certain things are taken for granted, but which must be duly noted—such as, that the righteous dead will be raised before the wicked dead—that the coming of Christ *for* His saints is quite distinct from his coming to the earth *with* His saints—that the "church" does not include all the saints that have ever existed or that may yet be. These subjects are not gone into; but the inquiring reader is referred to tracts on these subjects mentioned on the wrapper.

dead will not be judged at one and the same time. In Matthew xxiv., xxv. we have three classes mentioned: "the elect"—"servants," &c.—"the nations;" and before the sessional judgment of the nations is spoken of, we read that the unfaithful servant shall have "his portion with the hypocrites: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth;" (xxiv. 51;) and again, "into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth," (xxv. 30,) which seems to speak of their final doom; while others go in to the marriage, and the door is shut; and the faithful servants are made rulers over many things, and enter into "the joy of their Lord."

Now note that all these things are ushered in by these words, "Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory." (Chap. xxiv. 29, 30.) Note this, I say, because this shows that these events take place at the return of the Lord to the earth after the Church has been caught away. Consequently we must not expect to find the Church in this scene: as we observe in the Revelation, when the great tribulation is passing on the earth, the Church is represented in heaven.

But if the Church is not there, who is? 1. The elect (xxiv. 31) who shall be gathered "from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other." By those who insist on one general judgment, it is interpreted that "the elect" here signify all chosen to eternal life, and that they shall, before the judgment, be gathered from all parts of earth and heaven, and are afterwards called the sheep. But notice, first, that the Jews are often

called in Scripture "the elect," and it may signify them here. Secondly, the passage does not say heaven *and* earth, but "from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other." If the "four winds" refer to earth, will not "one end of heaven to the other" also signify earth? There is no conjunction as joining two distinct things. But, thirdly, a reference to a passage that clearly speaks of the gathering of the Jews will seem to determine the question.

"Then the Lord thy God will turn thy captivity and gather thee from all the nations whither the Lord thy God hath scattered thee. If any of thine be driven out unto the *outmost parts of heaven*, from thence will the Lord thy God gather thee." (Deut. xxx. 8, 4.)

"And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from *one end of heaven to the other*." (Matt. xxiv. 31.)

The passage in Deuteronomy clearly refers to earth only and to the Jews, may we not conclude then the passage in Matthew refers to them also?

2. We have faithful and unfaithful servants. "Who then is a faithful and wise servant whom his lord hath made ruler over his household to give them meat in due season?" Again, "If that evil servant shall say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming, and shall begin to smite his fellowservants," &c. This language seems to imply that these will be in a place of service—no doubt in the kingdom, for the kingdom will continue after the Church is caught away.

3. Virgins, who go forth to meet the bridegroom. These are evidently professors—some with oil, and some with none—some saved, and some not. But these are clearly connected with the kingdom of hea-

ven, for they are introduced by the words, "*Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins.*"

4. Those who take part in the sessional judgment, (xxv. 31—46,) and being the subject under consideration, demands our close attention. On page 8 we have already glanced at its principal features. We there saw that it could not represent a general judgment of all mankind, because the living nations only are introduced, and no mention is made of the dead; and also because no mention is made of the general sins of those judged, but only their treatment of the Lord in His brethren. And in order to see the force and appropriateness of such a sentence, we must endeavour to ascertain from Scripture what will be the state of the world which ushers in this judgment of the nations.

As we have seen, after the Church is caught away, the kingdom of heaven will remain, profession will go on, and God will have some faithful servants among the prevailing declension and apostacy. But besides all this, in Revelation xi. we read of God giving power to His two witnesses and they shall prophecy in sackcloth. There will evidently be a decided testimony for God, and these witnesses, with any associated with them, may be "the brethren" of our passage—the people's treatment of whom decides their doom. Notice, too, that in Matthew xxiv. 14 we read, "This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come."

But besides this testimony for God, we must remember that Antichrist is to be revealed, and that he will exalt himself above all that is called God, and seek to be wor-

shipped, and then the question as to who is on the Lord's side will be very much more marked than it is now.

“That day shall not come except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition, who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God, sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time. For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way. And then shall that wicked be revealed whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming.” (2 Thess. ii. 3—8.)

Further, it will be a time of great pretension and great deceit—the enemy working miracles, &c. “Whose coming is after the working of Satan, with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish.” (2 Thess. ii. 9, 10.) “And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed. And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire to come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men. And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles. (Rev. xiii. 12—14.)

And further, we read that Satan will be cast out of heaven, and then “Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath because he knoweth that he hath but a short time and the dragon was wroth with

the woman and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ." (Rev. xii.)

From these passages we learn that the godly remnant of those days will be surrounded with the grossest deception, accompanied with the most frightful persecution. Among other things we read that no one will be allowed to buy or sell, but he that has the mark or the name of the beast. This must surely test the people of the nations. All will be obliged to take part either with Satan and his agents, or with the persecuted brethren of Christ.

Similarly perhaps to what it would be in this country, if, in the absence of our Queen, a usurper was to lay claim to the British Crown and gather around him the great mass of the people. Those who were the representatives of the Queen would be hunted after and persecuted on every hand; and each would make manifest whose he was by the treatment of those representatives. At the Queen's return, she would not want to inquire who had lived good moral lives so much as who had treated her representatives well and given them protection and help. And those who had not helped them when they might, would surely be found guilty of disloyalty.

So when the Son of man returns to the earth will He separate the sheep from the goats—those who have succoured His persecuted ones from those who have not. *Then* most weighty and pointed will be the sentence, "Inasmuch as ye did it not unto these my brethren ye did it not unto me." And notice the terms used in the sentence, which clearly imply that these brethren were

persecuted ones, "I was hungry....I was thirsty I was a strangernaked sick in prison."

Thus we see how this description of the judgment of the living nations exactly suits the state of things that will exist at the time of our Lord's return to the earth, as revealed in other parts of God's word : while we can but notice how such a sentence as the above would appear quite inapplicable to millions of the dead who have never heard of Christ. Much has been written to make this sentence agree with the idea of one general judgment; such as reasoning thus—for those who have heard the gospel—that if those judged did not treat Christ's brethren well, they did not love Christ; and if they did not love Christ they did not believe in Him; and if they did not believe in Him they could not be saved! While they leave out how it could apply to the heathen altogether.

But before passing on, let it be noted that this judgment of the living nations, though it sounds a very long way off, may not be far distant. The very nations now in existence (1864) may be *the* nations. The Church may be caught up to meet the Lord in the air ere this ink is dry, and the great final events begin immediately. A solemn consideration for any engaged in the study of prophetic truths whose souls are not saved. "Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men."

After this judgment, follows the Millennium—Satan is bound.

Then a short space of rebellion—Satan being loosed.
(See Rev. xx.)

Then follows the sessions of the wicked dead. (Rev. xx.) As we have seen, there is in this judgment no mention of any but the dead, and they are judged for their sins generally by the things written in the books. The book of life is there, but we do not read of any being found therein.

Here we also see how applicable this judgment out of the books will be to all the unrighteous dead. Some may have heard the gospel and rejected it, and that rejection may be recorded against them as their greatest sin, but they are judged for all their sins; others emphatically had the law and are judged by the law; others had no law and are condemned without law. "As many as have sinned without law shall perish without law; and as many as have sinned in the law (or, under law) shall be judged by the law." (Rom. ii. 12.) "And whosoever was not found written in the book of life [and none are here mentioned as being there] was cast into the lake of fire."

Thus we see how perfectly applicable are the descriptions of the two final sessional judgments to the varied conditions of the quick and of the dead. Reverse them and they will not apply at all. Make them one and all is unintelligible disorder.

The following diagram, it is hoped, will make the order of events and the places of the judgments more easily grasped.

THE COURSE OF EVENTS, WITH THE PLACE OF THE
JUDGMENTS POINTED OUT.

- | | | |
|--|--|---|
| 1. The saints caught up }
to meet the Lord in }
the air - - - - } | 1 Thess. iv. 16, 17
1 Cor. xv. 51, 52
xv. 23 | |
| 2.*The Jews in their own }
land - - - - } | Zech. viii. 7, 8
Isaiah xi. 10—16 | |
| 3. Development of corrupt }
Christianity and An- }
tichrist revealed - - } | 2 Thess. ii. 2—8 | |
| 4. The Great Tribulation | Matt. xxiv. 14—24 | |
| 5. Christ comes to the }
earth - - - - } | Zech. xiv. 4, 5
Matt. xxvi. 64 | |
| 6. Christ executes judg- }
ment on the nations, }
sparing some - - } | Rev. xix. 11—16.
Jude 14, 15 | |
| 7. He purges out of His }
kingdom all things }
that offend - - - } | Matt. xiii. 41 | |
| 8. Satan is bound, and }
the Millennium - - } | Isaiah xxv. 6—8
Jeremiah xxiii. 5—8
Revelation xx. 1—4 | —Judgment of the
living nations.
Matt. xxv. |
| 9. Satan loosed for a little }
season and deceiveth }
the nations - - - } | Revelation xx. 7, 8 | |
| 10. Christ subdues all }
that opposes - - - } | Revelation xx. 9, 10 | |
| 11. Resurrection of the }
wicked, dead - - - } | Rev. xx. 5 | —Judgment of the
wicked dead.
Rev. xx. |
| 12. Christ delivers up the }
kingdom to God - - } | 1 Cor. xv. 24—28 | |
| 13. God is all in all - - | 1 Cor. xv. 28 | |

* The Jews may begin to return to their land before the Church is caught up.

It still remains for us to examine a few passages of Scripture that may appear not to harmonize with the foregoing conclusions.

1. In several passages we read of "the day of judgment" as if one day and only one day had been appointed for the judgment of all mankind.

In one of the passages where this phrase occurs (2 Peter iii.) we are exhorted not to be ignorant that "one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day;" which some have thought is intended to show that not a literal day is intended, but that the judgment of Matthew xxiv. will take place at the beginning of the day, and the judgment of Revelation xx. at the end of the day, with nearly a thousand years intervening. It may be so; but does not the expression, "a thousand years as one day," &c., seem more connected with the 9th verse, where the Lord is said not to be slack concerning His promises? However, we must look a little more closely at the term, "the day of judgment." It occurs eight times in the New Testament, and in seven of the places it has no article and may be rendered "a day of judgment" as characteristic of a time of calling to account, without implying that there will be but one day as *the* day. In those seven places, then, the absence of the article answers the objection. 1 John iv. 17 is the exception—there it has the article: "Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment, because as he is, so are we in this world. There is no fear in love," &c. But here clearly the subject that is under consideration is not the judgment, but love; and the day of judgment is brought in as an illustration of

what perfect love does for us. There may be a doubt as to what "day" is here referred to. For we do not read that the Church will be present at the judgment of the quick, or at the judgment of the dead; and on the other hand, as we have seen, *they* will not themselves come into judgment at all. But we read that the saints will accompany the Lord when he comes to execute judgment.* "Behold the Lord cometh with ten thousand of his saints to execute judgment upon all." (Jude 14.) And may not the "boldness" refer to such a scene as this? Will not the passage also have an application to those saints who will be on earth during the great tribulation, which is also called "judgment?" "Thou shalt not be afraid a thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand: but it shall not come nigh thee." (Psalm xci.) Perfect love will cast out all fear. However, we may safely conclude that there is nothing in the passage that asserts or implies that the wicked and the just will be in one general judgment.

2. "He hath appointed a day in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained." (Acts xvii. 31.) Here, certainly, the appointment of a day is mentioned, but what for? not to judge the whole universe, but the habitable earth. The word is *οικουμένην*, and occurs fifteen times in the New Testament, but in no instance does it signify the universe or include the dead. Parkhurst says the word signifies the habitable earth, or "the in-

* It is worthy of remark that the passage in 2 Peter iii. has two articles, "the day of the judgment."

habitants of the earth." Then this passage merely declares that God hath appointed a day in which he will judge the nations, (agreeing with Matt. xxv.) without a word as to the dead, though, doubtless, *another* day has been appointed for the judgment of the dead also.

3. "The Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom." (2 Tim. iv. 1.) Note here that *two* classes are mentioned as well as *two* periods. The living, as we have seen, will be judged at the appearing—then the kingdom will be set up—and the dead judged quite at the close of the kingdom: all this perfectly agreeing with the passage. But it may be questioned if the above is the true text. It has been judged to be, "*and by his appearing and his kingdom.*" And if this is right, the passage has no bearing on our present question.

4. "In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel." (Romans ii. 16.)

The whole sentence reads, "As many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law ; and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men," &c. This is a general statement referring both to Jews and Gentiles, and it is the secrets of men, as men, without mentioning the righteous at all, who are not treated as men merely. And even here, it is

literally "a day," and not "the day" as insisting or implying that all "men" shall be judged in one day.

5. "The nations were angry and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead that they should be judged, and that thou shouldest give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints." (Rev. xi. 18.)

The Church is not in this passage at all—it is seen in heaven before this scene. There will be prophets and saints after the Church is caught up, and at the close of the kingdom these will be rewarded, and the dead judged, as we have already seen. The passage in no way favours the idea of a general judgment, for it pointedly says, "the time of *the dead* that *they* should be judged," without one word as to the living. It also clearly implies that "thy servants the prophets and the saints" will not be judged at all—they will be rewarded.

6. "And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day." (Jude 6.)

This passage refers to fallen angels, and says nothing of a general judgment of mankind. It is, however, worthy of remark, that the sentence may be rendered, "judgment of a great day," without the definite articles.

7. "The Lord shall judge his people." (Heb. x. 30.) This may seem to be at variance with the conclusion that the Church will not come into judgment. But note that this is a quotation from Deuteronomy xxxii.,

where it refers to the Israelites, and here in the quotation it is addressed to Hebrew professors, and not strictly to the Church as "His people." This is confirmed by taking the whole of the verse: "For we know him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge his people." Now it cannot be maintained that God is going to deal with his Church in vengeance; but if the former part of the verse does not apply to the Church, why the latter? The passage seems to refer to a Jewish professor finally falling away and coming under the judgment of God. If a Gentile professor fell away, he would also come under the judgment of God in the same way, though there are perhaps a few words used in the passage (such as 'his people') which would not have been used by the Spirit of God if *all* professors had been directly written to, though the same principle applies to all.

8. "The time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God." (1 Peter iv. 17.)

From the passage and its context it is seen that this does not refer to a final judgment, but to a judgment at the present time. "The time is come." Verse 12 speaks of a "fiery trial," and tells the saints not to think it strange, but exhorts them to rejoice, inasmuch as they are made partakers of Christ's sufferings. Then it says, They are happy if they are reproached for the name of Christ. They are not to suffer as evildoers; but if they suffer as Christians, they are to rejoice. "*For* the time is come when judgment must begin at

the house of God, and if it first begin at us, what shall the end of them be that obey not the gospel of God? And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear? Wherefore, let *them that suffer,*" &c. Here judgment has clearly to do with sufferings in time, and the saints being brought safely through it. The time had arrived when God saw it needful to let trial and suffering come to his house, but it has no reference to a future sessional judgment of the saints.

9. "God shall judge the righteous and the wicked." (Eccles. iii. 17.) This, from the context, does not apply at all to a future judgment, but to God's dealing with saints and sinners in time. Truly God does now judge His saints. He calls on us to judge our ways and our spirit as before Him, but if we do not do it, He does it. "If we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. But when we are judged we are chastened of the Lord that we should not be condemned with the world." (1 Cor. xi. 31, 32.) This clearly has nothing to do with a future judgment,—we are judged *now* that we may not be condemned with the world. "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous, therefore, and repent." (Rev. iii. 19.)

God also deals with assemblies now. If any allow evil and will not judge it and put it away, God judges them. He speaks thus to Ephesus: "Repent and do the first works, or else I will come unto thee quickly and remove the candlestick out of his place, except thou repent." (Rev. ii. 5.)

Thus far then our inquiry. There may be other passages that touch upon the subject, but the principal have been here considered. There may be difficulties as to detail, but difficulties cannot overthrow the plain statements of Scripture. We may not know all, but let us hold fast what we do know as taught of God.



A SAINT'S RESOLVE.

FOR HIMSELF

“We labour that whether present or absent we may be accepted of him. For we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.”

FOR OTHERS.

“Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord we persuade men.” (2 Cor. v. 9—11.)