

THE JUDGMENT SEAT OF CHRIST

By

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## Introduction

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 are ye saved THROUGH FAITH; and that not of yourselves: *it is* the gift of God: *Not of works*, lest any man should boast." (Ephesians 2:8-9). A sinner's works, so far from saving him, have actually to be repented of— "REPENTANCE from dead WORKS" (Hebrews 6:1)—for "the FREE GIFT . . . of God" (Romans 5:15)—unfettered therefore by any obligation on the part of the Giver, and thus completely severed from our merit— "*is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.*" (Romans 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. "And this is the record, that God hath *given* to us eternal life, and this life is *in His Son*. He that hath the Son HATH LIFE; and he that hath not the Son of

God hath not life.” (1 John 5:11-12). 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).

## CHAPTER 1: 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 he [God] is, and *that* he is *a Rewarder*” (Hebrews 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. “And, behold, I come quickly; and my *reward* is with me, to give every man *according as his work shall be*.” (Revelation 22:12). To whom is this said? “I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things *in the churches*.” (Revelation 22:16). 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, “Now he that planteth and he that watereth are *one*”—in standing and redemption— “and every man shall receive his own *reward* according to his own *labour*.” (1 Corinthians 3:8). So also he balances the double-edged recompense. “Servants, obey. . . Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the *reward of the inheritance*: for ye serve the Lord Christ. But”—on the other hand— “*he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done*: and there is no respect of persons.” (Colossians 3:22-25). 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. “But love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; *and your reward shall be great*, and ye shall be the children of the Highest: *for He* is kind unto the unthankful and to the 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 *reward* thee openly.” (Matthew 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. “And whosoever 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*.” (Matthew 10:42). For what is reward? “Now to him that *worketh* is the reward not reckoned of grace, but *of debt*.” (Romans 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 the 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.” (Matthew 10:41). “For *whatsoever* a man soweth, *that* shall he also reap.” (Galatians 6:7).

But, most searching truth of all, God rewards supremely the *why* that underlies the service. “Take heed that ye do not your alms”—conduct really good in itself— “before men, *to be seen of them*: otherwise ye have NO REWARD of your Father which is in heaven.” (Matthew 6:1). Motive is thus revealed as decisively crucial. “The Lord . . . will bring to light the hidden things of darkness,

and will make manifest *the counsels of the hearts*: and *then* shall every man have *praise* of God.” (1Corinthians 4:5). God gives unmerited salvation, but He never gives unmerited praise. So exaltation in the Age to Come is in inverse ratio to lowliness of service in the present Age. “But whosoever will [wishes to] be *great* among you, shall be your *minister* [servant]: And whosoever of you will be the *chiefest*, shall be *servant* of all.” (Mark 10:43-44)—for greatness, service; for actual primacy, slavery.

Reward is also 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 shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of man’s sake. Rejoice ye in that day, and leap for joy: *for, behold your reward is great* in heaven: for in the like manner did their fathers unto the prophets.” (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 (Revelation 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 in Egypt: *for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward.*” (Hebrews 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.” (Philippians 3:13). 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, “How can ye believe, which receive honour one of another, and *seek not* the honour that cometh from God only?” (John 5:44).

Thus Reward not only supplies a motive in itself legitimate: it is a motive to which our Lord and His Apostles make frequent and direct appeal. For example: Christ (Matthew 6:1), Paul (1 Corinthians 9:24), Peter (1 Peter 1:17), James (James 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 full effect even upon our Lord— "*who for the joy that was set before Him endured*" (Hebrews 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 WE LOSE NOT THOSE THINGS WHICH WE HAVE WROUGHT, BUT THAT WE RECEIVE A FULL REWARD" (2 John 8).



## CHAPTER 2: 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. "For *even Christ our* passover is sacrificed for us:" (1 Corinthians 5:7)—therefore the lamb's blood typifies Christ's blood. "Therefore let *us* keep *the feast*" (1 Corinthians 5:8a)—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 Corinthians 5:8). No type could be clearer or surer.

Jehovah's first command was the putting of the Blood upon the House. "And they shall take of *the blood*, and strike it on the two side posts and on the upper door post of *the houses*, wherein they shall eat" the lamb (Exodus 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. "And when I see the *blood*, I will *pass over* you." (Exodus 12:13). 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" (Exodus 12:2) 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 it came to pass, that 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* from the land of Egypt." (Exodus 12:41-42). *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.*” (Exodus 12 15). 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 reported commonly that there is *fornication* among you . . . Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? *Purge out therefore the old leaven.*” (1 Corinthians 5:1, 6, 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 (v. 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 wrath through him.”  
(Romans 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.” (Philippians 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*” (Exodus 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 (Exodus 12:15): 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 from among yourselves that wicked person.” (1 Corinthians 5:13; Deuteronomy 24:7), to be handed over to Satan “for the *destruction* of the flesh” but for ultimate salvation— “that the spirit may be *saved*.” (1 Corinthians 5:5). 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, dropt bag and all into the flames. “LET US CLEANSE OURSELVES FROM ALL FILTHINESS OF THE FLESH AND SPIRIT, PERFECTING HOLINESS IN THE FEAR OF GOD.” (2 Corinthians 7:1).

## CHAPTER 3: 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 deeds*.” (Romans 2:5). 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 (Matthew 25:19) inaugurates the process of judgment (1 Peter 4:17); (2) the Throne of Messiah’s glory sifts the nations alive on earth at His return (Matthew 25:31, 32); and (3) the great white Throne (Revelation 20:11) accomplishes the mighty assize of the dead. Thus all judgment falls within the Age to Come; and though eternal judgment (Hebrews 6:2) rests upon Hell (Revelation 14:11), *no acts* of judgment appear to take place in the Eternal State. Nor is this all. The Day of God (2 Peter 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 Thessalonians 2:2), during which judgments rain upon an earth in open revolt against God; and also includes the Day of Christ (Philippians 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— “And he shall rule them with a ROD OF IRON; *as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers*” (Revelation 2:27); and judgment, given to the co-heirs of Christ on the threshold of the Kingdom (Revelation 20:4), continues throughout to cut off sinners (Isaiah 65:20), and too afflict whole nations (Zechariah 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 (Hebrews 4:16) is replaced by the Throne of Judgment (Revelation 4:2), Justice *must* visit the wicked, and reward the righteous. “Then answered Peter and said unto Him [Jesus], Behold, we have forsaken all, and followed thee; what shall we have therefore? And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, that ye which have followed me, IN THE REGENERATION when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.” (Matthew 19:27-28). For “the time of the dead, that they should be *judged*” is also “that thou shouldest give REWARD unto thy servants” (Revelation 11:18). Judgment over the nations is the signal for the enthronement of God’s saints. “And I saw *thrones*, and they sat upon them, and *judgment* was given unto them” (Revelation 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 as kings without us:” is Paul’s gentle reproof to the merchant princes in the Church of Corinth; “I would to God ye did reign, that we also might reign with you.” (1 Corinthians 4:8). The Kingdom would have come: “For I think that God hath set forth us the apostles last, as it were appointed to death: for we are made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men.” (1 Corinthians 4:9). 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 he shall reward every man ACCORDING TO HIS WORKS.*” (Matthew 16:27) and “*thou shalt be RECOMPENSED* at the resurrection of the just:” (Luke 14:14).

So in 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*” (Revelation 2:2); 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 UNTO THE CHURCHES;*” (Revelation 2:7). For the rewards and perils on which our Lord casts all the emphasis belongs 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:” (Revelation 22:7): “AND ALL THE CHURCHES SHALL KNOW THAT I AM HE WHICH SEARCHETH THE REINS AND HEARTS: AND I WILL GIVE UNTO EVERY ONE OF YOU ACCORDING TO YOUR WORKS.” (Revelation 2:23).

For even in grace, in this life, judgment can cut off a believer. “For this cause many are *weak*”—or invalided— “and *sickly*”—or consumptive— “among you, and many *sleep*” (1 Corinthians 11:30). While saving faith delivers for ever 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. “For if we would judge *ourselves*”—so analyzed our own conduct, so dissected our own actions, as to square all 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.” (1 Corinthians 11:31). 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 SHOULD NOT BE CONDEMNED WITH THE WORLD.” (1 Corinthians 11:32). 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.*

## CHAPTER 4: 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 labour,”—the word means to love and seek for honour (Lange) in what Bengel calls the sole legitimate ambition in the world— “that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of 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—“appear”—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 every one may *receive*”—the technical word for receiving wages (Dean Alford)—“the things done in his body”—therefore thoughts and words as well as deeds, since the brain and the tongue are thus also involved—“according to 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 Corinthians 5:9-10). 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 to me, and *every* tongue shall confess to God. *So then,*”—since it is universal and the Church is, therefore, not exempt— “every one *of us* shall give account of himself to God.” (Romans 14:11-12). 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. “The LORD of hosts hath sworn, saying, Surely as I have thought, so shall it come to pass; and as I have purposed, so shall it stand.” (Isaiah 14:24). The decree establishing it as irrevocable as the life of God— “That unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear.” (Isaiah 45:23). So then, says the Apostle, “But why dost thou judge thy brother? Or why dost thou set at naught thy brother? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ.” (Romans 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 appear before the judgment seat of Christ” (2 Corinthians 5:10).

The tribunal [The portable tribunal carried about with him by a Roman magistrate.], before which disciples appear, is peculiar. (1) It is a Bema, not a Thronos; a judgment seat for the investigation of disciples, not a throne for the arraignment of rebels: for the Judge (2 Timothy 4:8) is “Therefore is the kingdom of heaven likened unto a certain king, which would take account of his servants.” (Matthew 18:23). It is the first of our Lord’s three judgments (Romans 14:12; Matthew 25:31; Revelation 20:12) on His return; “For the time is come that judgment must beat the house of God” (1 Peter 4:17).

Churches are judged now (Revelation 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 (Revelation 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 (Revelation 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 (Revelation 20:17), reveals that in 2 Corinthians 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.

(2) Thus those examined are Christians only. “Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours.” (1 Corinthians 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: “Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous.” (Psalm 1:5).

(3) Nor is it a judgment for life. “Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.” (John 5:24). “There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.” (Romans 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 every one of us shall give account of himself to God.” (Romans 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 every one may receive the things done in his body” (2 Corinthians 5:10). Not, that each may receive something from God, but “that every one 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.” (Leviticus 24:19). “Be not deceived”—is a word to disciples— “God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.” (Galatians 6:7). Paul puts it with exquisite clearness, and twofold emphasis. “Whatsoever *good* thing”—for a judge approves— “any man doeth, *the same* shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free.” (Ephesians 6:8). On the other hand— “Ye serve the Lord

Christ. But he that doeth wrong”—for a judge censures— “shall receive *for the wrong* which he hath done: and there is no respect of persons.” (Colossians 3:24b-25).

Our works and conduct are put in as the evidence: “the things done in his body” (2 Corinthians 5:10). We must all “appear in our true light” (Alford): 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 Corinthians 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 Corinthians 4:5), motives (Matthew 6:1), soul-attitudes (Luke 6:36-38), and just Church decisions (Matthew 18:18), also sway the adjudication.

Even the lovely modifications of our Lord’s attitude foretold in such passages as Matthew 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. “For in MANY things we offend ALL.” (James 3:2): but “*if* ye forgive men their trespasses, YOUR HEAVENLY FATHER WILL ALSO FORGIVE YOU.” (Matthew 6:14). “For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again.” (Luke 6:38).

The evidence wholly decides the award: “whether it [the award] be good or bad.” (2 Corinthians 5:10). The Greek points to the award: “that every one may receive the *things* done in his body, according to that he hath *done*, whether it”— *i.e.*, what he receives— “be good or bad.” (2 Corinthians 5:10). 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.*

So Paul says: “But 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*”—the Church of Christ. (1 Corinthians 4:3). When “all they which are in Asia be turned away” from Paul (2 Timothy 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*” (1 Corinthians 4:3)—I cannot pass even on myself, the final judgment— “For I know NOTHING by myself;”—I am conscious of no sin— “yet am I not hereby [for all that] justified”—found blameless, irreproachable, a perfect steward. (1 Corinthians 4:4). 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.” (1 Corinthians 4:4). A believer’s friends may overpraise 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. “*Therefore 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. (1 Corinthians 4:5). 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, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things.” (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.*”

## CHAPTER 5: 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. “For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ,” or, that Jesus is the Christ (1 Corinthians 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, a sure foundation” (Isaiah 28:17). Every regenerate soul is planted upon that Rock as upon adamant. “Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born 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 every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon.” (1 Corinthians 3:10). Works emerge into God’s sight only after the foundation of faith is laid: works before faith are *sins to be repented of* (Hebrews 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 every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon.” (1 Corinthians 3:10).

Paul here states reward with the limpid clearness of a crystal. “Now if any man [disciple] build upon this foundation [of Christ] gold”—ingots of gold—“silver”—silver bullion—“precious stones”—marbles, jaspers, alabasters —“wood, hay, stubble”—boards, chopped hay for mortar, thatch—“Every man’s [disciple’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” (1 Corinthians 3:12-13)—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 man’s [disciple’s] work *abide* which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward.” (1 Corinthians 3:14); that is, all reward is confined to work that survives judgment: “If any man’s [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 by fire.” (1 Corinthians 3:15)—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. “Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble.” (1 Corinthians 3:12). *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 Peter 3:7], but *My words shall not pass away*.” (Matthew 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. “Every man’s [disciple’s] work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire.” (1 Corinthians 3:13). 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 shall try

every man's [disciple's] work of what sort it is." (1 Corinthians 3:13). The kind of material is infallibly revealed by the fire: it is searched through and through by the eyes of Christ (Revelation 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 unto a flame of fire" (Revelation 2:18)—here is the fire; "I know thy works"—the fire plays into the heart of the material; "and charity, and service, and faith, and thy patience, and thy works"—the fire tests the quality, and finds gold; "and the last to be more than the first."—the fire tests the quantity, and finds much fine gold (Revelation 2:19). The fire proves.

The Judgment Seat now adjudicates. "If any man's [disciple's] work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward" (1 Corinthians 3:14). *Salvation* stands upon the foundation, *reward* rests upon the superstructure.

"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)

*If the work shall abide—reward: reward is utterly conditional on works.* "If any man's [disciple's] work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire." (1 Corinthians 3:15). Our Lord also stated the possibility of a bare salvation, and no more; "otherwise ye have NO *reward*" (Matthew 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 fire-balls 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 *by fire*." THEREFORE "LET

EVERY [DISCIPLE] PROVE HIS OWN WORK" NOW (Galatians 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 make him ruler over ALL THAT HE HATH." (Luke 12:43-44).



## CHAPTER 6: 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 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 run all, but one receiveth *the prize*?” (1 Corinthians 9:24). Of what prize is Paul speaking? “Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; *but we an incorruptible.*” (1 Corinthians 9:25). And to whom is Paul speaking? “Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, *to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus*, called to be saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours” (1 Corinthians 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. "But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: *lest that by any means*, when I have preached to others, *I myself* should be a castaway [for the crown]." (1 Corinthians 9:27). 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 lustra 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 A CROWN OF LIFE" (Revelation 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. "And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. . . I therefore . . . keep under my body, and bring it into subjection." (1 Corinthians 9:25-27). 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, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry" (Colossians 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" (Hebrews 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 obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible" (1 Corinthians 9:25). Ours is the crown "that *fadeth not away*" (1 Peter 5:4), which all eternity cannot dim, nor any hand pluck from our brows. It is ensured to him who contends lawfully. "I therefore so run, *not as uncertainly*; so fight I, *not as one that beateth the air*" (1 Corinthians 9:26). If this stated Paul's certainty of the crown, it would only mean that he already knew by revelation (as he did later, 2 Timothy 4:8) that he was a prize-winner, as distinct from the "many" (verse 24) who fail: but this is not the meaning; for immediately after (verse 27) he asserts

his own insecurity: what he indicates is that for all who fulfil 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 outstript in the Isthmian games; but crowns sufficient exist for all who pass the standard of God. (3) Disobedience forfeits the crown. "Hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take *thy* crown" (Revelation 3:11). This incentive held Paul's soul as in a grip of iron: "lest that by any means, when I have preached to others [for the lists], *I myself* should be a *castaway* [for the prize]" (1 Corinthians 9:27).

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 "on his head were MANY CROWNS" (Revelation 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— "they which run in a race run all, *but one* receiveth the prize. . . Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible" (1 Corinthians 9:24-25). Can that racer be crowned *who failed in the running*? "So run, *that ye may obtain*" (verse 24). (2) The crown of rejoicing— "For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming?" (1 Thessalonians 2:19). Can he be crowned for turning many to righteousness (Daniel 12:3) *who never turned one*? (3) The crown of glory— "The elders which are among you I exhort. . . *Feed the flock of God* . . . and when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory" (1 Peter 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 a crown of righteousness . . . and not to me only, but unto all them also *that love his appearing*" (2 Timothy 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 is tried*, he shall receive the crown of life” (James 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 that fast which thou hast, *that no man take thy crown*” (Revelation 3:11). For crowns are rewards, not given unless the conditions are fulfilled. “And if a man also strive for masteries, yet is he NOT CROWNED, *except* he strive lawfully” (2 Timothy 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.*”

## CHAPTER 7: 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, is a type, real and actual, of us. "Now these things were OUR EXAMPLES," "Now all these things happened unto them for *ensamples*" (1 Corinthians 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. "Now these things were our examples, *to the intent* we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted;" and "they are *written* for our admonition" (1 Corinthians 10:6, 11). *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" (1 Corinthians 10:5-6). 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. "All our fathers were *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 that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ" (1 Corinthians 10:1-4). 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. "But with many of them God was not well pleased: for they were *overthrown* in the wilderness." (Verse 5). *All under—all through—all immersed—all eating—all drinking: MANY OVERTHROWN.* For

“they which run in a race *run all*, but *one* receiveth the prize” (1 Corinthians 9:24). *All*—all Israel: *many*—all Israel minus two: “*Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall*” (1 Corinthians 10:12).

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

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 run all, but one receiveth THE PRIZE? So run, that ye may obtain . . . *Moreover*, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers,” so privileged, “were overthrown.” (1 Corinthians 9:24; 10:1, 5). 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* (Romans 8:1; John 10:27-29; Romans 11:29; Hebrews 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 strive lawfully” (2 Timothy 2:5). *The blessed reality of the election of God can prove no shelter for the sins of the elect*: remember Moses.

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, Numbers 12:7) house, AS A SERVANT” (Hebrews 3:5).

“NOW ALL THESE THINGS HAPPENED UNTO THEM FOR ENSAMPLES; AND THEY ARE WRITTEN FOR OUR ADMONITION, UPON WHOM THE ENDS OF THE WORLD ARE COME” (1 Corinthians 10:11). 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*.

## CHAPTER 8: 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 *reckoneth* with them” (Matthew 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, “Well, thou good servant because thou hast been 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’ (Luke 19:13); literally, “slaves,”

bought with their Master's money, and owned by Him. "About to take a journey, the Nobleman is obliged to hand 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 labourers, 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 (Revelation 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 "that servant, which knew his lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither 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 Corinthians 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.*

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* 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.

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 fulfil; it is that mission, that trust, which *constitutes* him a 'servant'—the title by which the Apostles most loved to describe themselves (Romans 1:1; 2 Peter 1:1; James 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 connexion 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 fulfilment 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).

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 gavest 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* (Matthew 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 hall:

Since the Parousia is a place of thick darkness (Psalm 18:9), indwelt by the Shekinah Glory (Matthew 16:27), 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 (Psalm 18:11).

“Nothing is said here of any further punishment of the servant; enough that he has no part in the kingdom of the Lord” (Goebel). Over lost opportunities, wasted graces, slighted privileges, a sold birthright, there is weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

“If 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).

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).

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: “But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is FOR EVER AND EVER” (Hebrews 1:8).

*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. "And he that *overcometh*, and keepeth my works *unto the end*, to him will I give POWER OVER THE NATIONS: And he shall *rule* them with a rod of iron" (Revelation 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 [The Judgment Seat] most glorious reward awaits such fidelity at the hour of Christ's return, while the heaviest 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 Christlike 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).

## CHAPTER 9: 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 dropt 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 Thessalonians 4:16). “AND HE THAT OVERCOMETH, AND KEEPETH MY WORKS UNTO THE END, TO HIM WILL I GIVE POWER OVER THE NATIONS: AND HE SHALL RULE THEM WITH A ROD OF IRON” (Revelation 2:26-27).

The “Kingdom of God,” or “of heaven,” a phrase drawn from Daniel, is a Kingdom which “filled the whole EARTH” (Daniel 2:35,44), replaces all worldly empires, and is obviously the Messianic Kingdom: when “The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ” (Revelation 11:15). It is foreshadowed now by the Kingdom in Mystery (Matthew 13), or the Church, and for both regeneration is essential (Luke 17:21, John 3:3); but its manifestation at the Second Advent, to which all Scripture prophecies refer it, proves it to be the 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*: “But if I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is *come unto you*” (Matthew 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: “and hath *translated* us into *the kingdom* of his dear Son” (Colossians 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 Corinthians 15:24), HE MEANS THE MILLENNIAL.

Moreover, the world-wide revival of the Gospel of the Kingdom before the End is certain (Matthew 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 DOETH CORRUPTION INHERIT INCORRUPTION. BEHOLD, I SHEW YOU A BYSTERY; WE SHALL NOT ALL SLEEP, BUT WE SHALL ALL BE CHANGED” (1 Corinthians 15:50-51).

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?

“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 only 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 keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give *power over the nations*: And he shall rule them with a rod of iron” (Revelation 2 26-27), 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” (Revelation 20:4): all are actually enthroned (Revelation 20:4); and neither Scripture nor the world knows anything of a *crownless* king. (The Sheep of Matthew 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 (Revelation 3:11) as a synonymous incentive with the conditional offer of a throne (Revelation 3:21); and Paul illustrates the loss of the incorruptible crown (1 Corinthians 9:27) by Israel’s loss of an earthly kingdom (1 Corinthians 10:5). The two are indivisible.

Can a disciple be excluded, and yet his name be found at last written in the Lamb’s Book of Life? (Revelation 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 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 Revelation 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. Peirson). “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.

## CHAPTER 10: 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 Samuel 7:1), 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— "to the people of God" (Hebrews 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 WORLD [not the Worlds] TO COME, whereof we speak [*of which we are speaking*]" (Hebrews 2:5). Thus Canaan is the type of the Millennial Kingdom of Christ.

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

Now we arrive at once at a question enormously emphasized by the Holy Ghost: against whom went forth the oath of exclusion? "For *some*, when they had 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: "howbeit not all *that came out of Egypt*"—Israel, under Passover blood and through Red Sea baptism. "But *with whom* was he grieved forty years? Was it not with them that had 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 believed not?” (Hebrews 3:16-18) 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.*”

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

But what exactly was the sin which provoked the oath? “We see that they could not enter in because of *unbelief*.” (Hebrews 3:19). But unbelief in *what*? Israel’s whole wilderness standing was on faith: “THROUGH FAITH he [Moses] kept the passover, and the sprinkling of blood . . . BY FAITH they passed through the Red sea as by dry land” (Hebrews 11:28-29). 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 those men which have seen my glory, and my miracles, which I did in Egypt and in the wilderness, and have tempted me now THESE TEN TIMES, and have not hearkened to my voice; Surely *they shall not see the land* which I swear unto their fathers, neither shall any of them that provoked me see it” (Numbers 14:22-23). “Yea, they despised the pleasant land . . . *Therefore*, He lifted up His hand against them” (Psalm 106:24, 26). Israel strongly revolted against God’s picture of the future, and the corresponding demands made upon them: it was the *partial* unbelief of the *regenerate*: “Yet in THIS thing ye DID NOT BELIEVE the LORD your God” (Deuteronomy 1:32). So Paul says— “The word preached”—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 being mixed with faith in them that heard it”—namely, the people of God (Hebrews 4:2). 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. “For 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, a promise”—but conditional: for the oath of inclusion (Exodus 13:5), on a failure in sanctity, was met by the counter-oath of exclusion

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

— “being left us of entering into His rest, any 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 (Hebrews 3:1)— “should seem to come short of it” (Hebrews 4:1). 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, lest any man [any of you] fall after the same example of UNBELIEF” (Hebrews 4:11)—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).

## CHAPTER 11: 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 *committeth sin* is of the devil” (1 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.

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 Corinthians 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— “we are chastened of the Lord, *that we should not be condemned with the world*” (1 Corinthians 11:32).
2. Paul sharply limits the jurisdiction of the Church to believers: “do not ye judge them that are *within*? But them that are *without* God judgeth. Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person” (1 Corinthians 5:12-13)—pass sentence, *for he is within*— “from among yourselves”.

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.

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 Corinthians 2:7-8).

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 just 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 that are FIRST shall be LAST" (Matthew 19:30).

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?" (1 Corinthians 5:6). Was the "whole lump" all good dough, or half bad? Was the assembly regenerate throughout or not? "Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump"—fresh, pure dough throughout— "*as ye ARE unleavened*" (1 Corinthians 5:7). Those whom Paul is alone addressing (1 Corinthians 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*?" (1 Corinthians 5:6). 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 THE MEMBERS OF CHRIST, and make them the *members of an harlot*?” (1 Corinthians 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.

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 Corinthians 5:11). And what is the catalogue of exclusion? “Ye *do wrong*”: at what peril? “Know ye not that the *unrighteous* [the same word, with no article] shall not inherit the kingdom of God?” (1 Corinthians 6:8-9).

“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 have delivered up THE KINGDOM to God, even the Father” (1 Corinthians 15:24).

“Be not deceived” (1 Corinthians 6:9)—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 adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners”—*each excommunicating sin is also an excluding sin*—“shall inherit the kingdom of God.” (1 Corinthians 6:9-10). It is the same list: the justly excommunicated will be the infallibly excluded.



Other passages, equally decisive, are also addressed to believers with equal clearness. “For this we know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. Let no man deceive you with *vain (empty) words*” (Ephesians 5:5-6): men 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; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies”—distinctively Church sins— “Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell YOU before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things *shall not inherit the kingdom of God*” (Galatians 5:19-21).

For “whose soever sins ye remit [forgive; i.e. the incestuous brother’s], they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain”—always assuming that it is an excommunication which God has commanded— “*they are retained*” (John 20:23); for “whatsoever ye shall bind *on earth* shall be *bound in heaven*” (Matthew 18:18).

Paul closes with words finally conclusive. “And such were some of you; but ye are washed”—through blood, and water— “but ye are sanctified”—set apart for God as hallowed— “but ye are justified”—through the accepted righteousness of Christ (1 Corinthians 6:11): *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? “For I fear, lest, when I come, I shall not find *you* such as I would” because of “uncleanness and fornication and lasciviousness which they have COMMITTED” (2 Corinthians 12:20, 21). *It is the washed, the sanctified, the justified that are in peril*. Are hypocrites—empty professors, false brethren, who have slipt 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 WHICH HE HATH DONE; AND THERE IS NO RESPECT OF PERSONS” (Colossians 3:25). “Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and THEY shall walk with me in white; FOR THEY ARE WORTHY” (Revelation 3:4). “NOT EVERY ONE THAT SAITH UNTO ME, LORD,

LORD”—an utterance peculiarly characteristic of disciples [John 13:13]— “SHALL ENTER INTO THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN; but he that DOETH THE WILL of my Father which is in heaven” (Matthew 7:21).

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 (Matthew 7:21-27) as He began it (Matthew 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: “Except your righteousness [your active obedience] shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees [the standard of the Mosaic Law], ye shall IN NO CASE enter into the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 5:20).

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 one man’s offence [Adam] death reigned by one; *much more*”—as much more as God loves to reward His servants more than He loves to reward His enemies—“ they which *receive*”—take constantly, take continuously; not grace, but the “*abundance* of grace and of the gift of righteousness”—its superabundance, so that the superfluity overflows (Godet)—“shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ” (Romans 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 why dost thou judge thy

brother? Or why dost thou set at naught thy brother? *For we shall all stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ*" (Romans 14:10); but, while rigidly adhering to all the truth we know, hand over all judgment to an august and awful Tribunal not our own.

## CHAPTER 12: 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 (Philippians 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 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 that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, *I more*”: Paul towers over all legalists for ever. But a sudden and awful discovery blasted his prospects. “For I was alive [in my own eyes] without the law once: but when the commandment [“thou shalt not covet” Romans 7:7] came [home to my conscience], sin revived [sprang into life again], and I died [saw myself a dead man]. And the commandment, which was [in God's design] ordained to life, I found to be [in fact] unto death.” (Romans 7:9-10). “If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, *I 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* righteousnesses are as *filthy rags*” (Isaiah 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 Corinthians 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 win Christ, and be found in him, *not having mine own righteousness*, which is of the law, but that which is *through the faith of Christ*, the righteousness which is of God by

faith” (Philippians 3:8-9). Paul never afterwards doubts his salvation (Romans 8:38): for Christ has kept the Law, not with head, hands, and feet only, but with heart also (Psalm 40:8): *and this righteousness is now Paul’s* (Romans 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 to have apprehended: . . . but . . . I press [on]” (Philippians 3: 13-14). Not apprehended *what*? “If by any means I might attain unto the [select] resurrection of the dead” (Philippians 3:11). “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*? “I press toward the mark for *the prize* of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.” (Philippians 3:14). “If”—conditional; “by any means”—hazardous; “I might attain unto”—hypothetical; “the resurrection”—selective; “of 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 two closing verses of this very chapter: “we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall change *our vile body*, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body” (Philippians 3:20-21). *Every passage that refers to resurrection FROM the dead* (Mark 9:10; Luke 20:35; Romans 1:4; Revelation 22:4) *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 laboring 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 and all seems to be plain and easy.

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 expositors who are among the first in reverence of antique complacently casting aside the most cogent instance which primitive antiquity presents.” From such cases as that of Lazarus, who died again, it is certain that the *act* of resurrection is distinct from its *state*: so our Lord identifies the First Resurrection with the Age to Come— “But they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain *that world [that age]*, and *the resurrection from 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 raised to life again”—a temporary resurrection: “and others were tortured, *not* accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a *better* resurrection” (Hebrews 11:35; Matthew 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 Timothy 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 Corinthians 15:50). So baptism, commanded for the Kingdom (John 3:5), pictures the seed-bed out of which Christ’s fellow-plants will spring (Romans 6:5) in *His* resurrection, the First: none *unbaptized* into Moses (1 Corinthians 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.

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 *run* all, but *one receiveth the prize*? So run, that ye may obtain.” (1 Corinthians 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 *beguile you of your reward*” (Colossians 2:18). (4) Fleshly sins also disqualify. “But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway [for the crown]” (1 Corinthians 9:27). *The insecurity of the chief of apostles binds insecurity of reward for ever on the Church of God.* “Not as though I had already attained, either were already *perfect*: but I follow after, if that I *may apprehend*” (Philippians 3:12) that is, the apprehension is indissolubly linked with the perfection.

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 Timothy 4:8). “Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest *by the blood of Jesus . . .* let us draw near with a true heart in *full assurance of FAITH.*” (Hebrews 10:19, 22). Our eternal life, based on the covering blood of the Atonement, is as sure as God. But a vast vista opens up beyond. “And we desire that every one of you do shew the same *diligence to the full assurance of HOPE unto the end*: that ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises”

(Hebrews 6:11-12). I am not to *hope* that I am saved, but to *believe* it: on the contrary, I am not to *believe* 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” (Numbers 13:30)

All therefore culminates in a supreme effort. “This one thing I do.” (Philippians 3:13) Is this for Paul only? “Let US *therefore*”—for he is our inspired example— “as many as be perfect, be *thus minded*” (Philippians 3:15). “SEEK ye FIRST the kingdom of God” (Matthew 6:33) is our Lord’s word to disciples already in the kingdom in mystery. How? (1) “*Forgetting* those things which are behind” (Philippians 3:13). 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) “*Reaching forth* unto those things which are before” (Philippians 3:13). 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 *labour* therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of *unbelief*” (Hebrews 4:11). (3) “This *one* thing I do” (Philippians 3:13). All his missionary ardour, 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 THE VIOLENT take it by *force*” (Matthew 11:12). (4) It is a calling “upward,” *therefore it is God who is calling*. “That ye would walk worthy of God, who hath *called* you unto his kingdom and glory” (1 Thessalonians 2:12).

Paul’s distinction between the Will and the Codicil corroborates his contrast between the Gift and the Prize. “*Heirs of God*”—no condition, save regeneration: “and *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 together" (Romans 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 (Philippians 2:9; Hebrews 1:9; Isaiah 53:12), antedates the Will by a thousand years: it is "the *reward* of the inheritance" (Colossians 3:24), a legacy which entitles to an abundant entrance into the Eternal Kingdom (2 Peter 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 fulfilment 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 Timothy 2:12); the Will is the unconditional bequest of free grace, the Codicil is a glory conditioned on identity of experience with Christ.

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 ye also suffer" (2 Thessalonians 1:5). The Cross is ours for ever: *when we have been approved*, we receive the Crown (James 1:12). We honour 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." (Philippians 3:15). "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" (Revelation 20:4,6) [see also the thirteenth Present Day Paper, The First Resurrection (2d., Thynne).]



## CHAPTER 13: 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 idolator with his face set towards the Holy Land, God said, “He that shall come forth out of thine own bowels shall be thine heir” (Genesis 15:4); then; leading him out under the countless stars, God said again, “So shall thy seed be” (Genesis 15:5). Then we read, “And he [Abraham] *believed* in the LORD”—that is, as Paul puts it, “Abraham *believed* God and it [his faith] was counted unto him for righteousness” (Romans 4:3). 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 (Galatians 3:16)—he accepted God’s Word without question 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, “For we say that faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness. *How* was it then reckoned? When he was in circumcision, or in uncircumcision?” (Romans 4:9-10). 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*” (Romans 4:10, 11). 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 idolator, a lost soul. Behold, therefore, the perfect model and the unchanging example of *how* God saves: “the father of ALL them that believe” (Romans 4:11).

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, thine only son: that in blessing I will bless thee" (Genesis 22:16, 17). 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 a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith"—all *works*— "*Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown*"—a special revelation made to Paul, as to Abraham, at the close of life— "of righteousness"—the crown consequent on righteousness— "which the Lord, the righteous *Judge*"—awarding a second justification— "shall give me at that day" (2 Timothy 4:7, 8). From that moment Paul knew that of which he had been ignorant (1 Corinthians 9:27; Philippians 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*, when he had *offered Isaac* his son upon the altar? . . . by *works* was faith made perfect . . . by *works* a man is *justified* and not by faith only" (James 2:21, 22, 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 (Genesis 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?*" (James 2:22). 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 deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified" (Romans 3:20). But works done *after* faith, works done *in* faith, the 'work of faith' (2 Thessalonians 1:11) does justify *for reward*. "If any man's [disciple's] *work* abide . . . he shall receive a *reward*. If any man's [disciple's] *work* shall be burned, he shall suffer loss, *but he himself shall be saved*" (1 Corinthians 3:14, 15)—as already possessed of the justification unto life. "For I know nothing

by 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. Therefore judge nothing before the time” (1 Corinthians 4:4, 5). Therefore the Spirit bids us— “So speak ye, and so do, as they *that shall be judged* by the law of liberty” (James 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 imputeth righteousness *without works*” (Romans 4:6). Blessed also is “the man that endureth temptation [testing]; for *when he is tried*, he shall receive THE CROWN OF LIFE” (James 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. “But thanks be to God, which *giveth* us the victory *through our Lord Jesus Christ*” (1 Corinthians 15:57); for “this is the victory *that overcometh* the world, *even our faith*” (1 John 5:4). Not ‘will’ overcome, but ‘overcometh’; 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 born of God” — the whole mass of the regenerate — “*overcometh* the world: and this is the victory *that overcometh* the world, *even our faith*” (1 John 5:4). But there is a second overcoming. *Seven times our Lord invokes every member of His Churches to become an overcomer* (Revelation chapters 2 and 3). “The reason why so many Christians fail,” says Mr. Moody, “is just this—they under-estimate 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. “To him that *overcometh* will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even *as I also overcame*”—for the two overcomings are identical in kind though not in degree— “and am set down with my Father in his throne” (Revelation 3:21). Caleb’s cry should now ring through the Churches of Christ— “WE ARE WELL ABLE TO OVERCOME” (Numbers 13:30).

## CHAPTER 14: 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.
  - a. Matthew 7:21; Luke 20:35, etc.
  - b. Ephesians 5:5, 6; Galatians 5:19-21
  - c. Revelation 2 and 3
  - d. Revelation 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.
  - a. 1 Corinthians 9:24-10:12
  - b. Exodus 12:15
  - c. Luke 17:32
  - d. Hebrews 4:11
3. Because the Age to Come—as distinct from the Eternal State, which is based on grace alone (Revelation 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.
  - a. Romans 2:5-11
  - b. 1 Peter 4:17

- c. 1 John 4:17
- d. Galatians 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.
  - a. Hebrews 10:14
  - b. Romans 8:33
  - c. Philippians 2:12
  - d. Revelation 3:11

The unique plateau of grace and ultimate glory to which our Lord has for ever exalted His Church, so far from making her immune from responsibility, deepens it. "And that servant, which knew his lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more." (Luke 12:47-48) "Those who believe that from the evangelical position one cannot properly 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, should have no profounder effect on his destiny than mere gradation in glory.
  - a. Hebrews 10:30-31
  - b. Revelation 22:12
  - c. 1 Corinthians 3:15

d. Luke 20:35

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 (Matthew 5:3), haughty spirits (Matthew 5:5), unforgiving dispositions (Matthew 6:14), purse-proud hearts (Mark 10:24), unmellowed characters (Matthew 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— “be converted [turn], AND BECOME AS LITTLE CHILDREN”—trustful, pure, lowly, loving— “Ye shall *not* enter into the Kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 18:3). “For of SUCH is the Kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 19:14). Moreover, truth rejected becomes very stern. “Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein.” (Mark 10:15)

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.
  - a. 2 Corinthians 5:10
  - b. Romans 14:10-12
  - c. Colossians 3:24-25
  - d. 2 Timothy 2:5

Present chastisement—even bodily, as Miriam struck with leprosy by God’s own hand (Numbers 12:10), or Church members afflicted and cut off for sin (1 Corinthians 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 Timothy 5:24) is exceptional; and apart from the present chastisement of all sons (Hebrews 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.

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.
  - a. 1 Corinthians 3:17
  - b. 1 Thessalonians 4:6
  - c. Matthew 5:20
  - d. Revelation 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 Peter 1:5-11).
  - a. Before works—Romans 4:10; Genesis 15:6
  - b. After works—James 2:21; Genesis 22:16
  
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.
  - a. John 10:27-28



- b. Romans 6:23; 11:29
- c. John 15:6
- d. Hebrews 10:26
- e. Matthew 5:22

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.

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.
  - a. 2 Corinthians 12:20-21
  - b. James 2:5
  - c. Matthew 18:18
  - d. Romans 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 wrapt in a profound slumber.
- a. 1 Corinthians 5:5, 11; 6:9
  - b. Matthew 24:48-51
  - c. Luke 12:47-48
  - d. Revelation 3:16, 21

It is astounding that disciples should deny penal effects at the Judgment Seat (Matthew 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 infliction: nevertheless, what saith the Scripture?” (R. Govett). “SO LIKEWISE SHALL MY HEAVENLY FATHER DO ALSO UNTO YOU, IF YE FROM YOUR HEARTS FORGIVE NOT EVERY ONE HIS BROTHER THEIR TRESPASSES.” (Matthew 18:35)

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 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.

- a. 1 Peter 1:17
- b. Revelation 2:21-23
- c. Philippians 3:11-14
- d. Revelation 2:26-27

## CHAPTER 15: 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? Earthquakes, famines, pestilences and fearful sights—great signs from heaven (Luke 21:11); signs in sun and moon and stars (Luke 21:25); the powers of the heaven shaken (Luke 21:26); for these will be the days of vengeance (Luke 21:22); of persecution (Luke 21:17); of distress of nations, men fainting for fear (Luke 21:25). “For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be” (Matthew 24:21). *No peril so awful has ever demanded an escape so great.*

Escape is possible “to *escape* all these things” (Luke 21:36). Now since the distress is universal it can only be an escape into the heavens; “For as a snare shall it come on *all* them that dwell on the face of the *whole* earth” (Luke 21:35). *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” (Luke 21:27) for “He bowed the heavens also, and came down . . . *He sent from above, he took me*” (Psalm 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* (Revelation 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*” (Luke 21:36).
2. The Jewish escape is active: this escape is passive. The faithful Jew is to “*flee* into the mountains” (Matthew 24:16). The faithful disciple here is to pray to *be* removed—“and to *stand* [‘by angels,’ Alford] before the Son of Man” (Luke 21:36).

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” (Luke 21:36).

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 hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world” (Revelation 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 on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee” (Revelation 3:3). Thus if, on the ground of 1 Thessalonians 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.

This fact decisively proves that Thessalonian disciples (1 Thessalonians 4:15) stand, not for the whole Church, but for the watchful only; even as the promise of escape is addressed to the Philadelphian Angel and only indirectly to all in Philadelphia who also had “kept the word of My patience” (Revelation 3:10). To Thessalonian disciples there will be no thief-like suddenness: therefore the Thessalonians stand for souls never surprised (1 Thessalonians 5:4) because never unready.

3. The Type exquisitely confirms it. The Field is the world; the Wheat is the church; the Reapers are angels (Matthew 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* (Leviticus 23:10-22). So first-fruits are

found in the Heavens *before* the harvest (Revelation 14:4): and *after* the harvest (Revelation 16:15) the warning to watchfulness still goes forth (Revelation 16:15). “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 therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy 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 be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left. Two women shall be grinding at the mill; the one shall be taken, and the other left. *Watch therefore*: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come” (Matthew 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—“Watch ye therefore, and PRAY always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape” (Luke 21:36). 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.*
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 levelled 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 (Numbers 14:10); and the Lord foretells that the servant who disqualifies for reward is also the servant whose intolerance starts persecution (Matthew 24:49). It is little wonder if those who belittle responsibility, themselves fail to achieve it.
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). Fulfilment 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). “AND WHAT I SAY UNTO YOU I SAY UNTO ALL, WATCH” (Mark 13:37).

## CHAPTER 16: ETERNAL JUDGMENT

The Day of Justice closes with the final judgment. The Kingdom is over (1 Corinthians 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 the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged" (Revelation 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. "And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire" (Revelation 20:15). 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 for ever. But the saved are saved with an astounding salvation. "And there shall be no more curse"—eternal sinlessness: "but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it"—eternal communion: "and his servants shall serve Him"—eternal service: "And they shall see His face"—eternal joy: "and His name shall be in their foreheads"—eternal security: "and there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun"—eternal energy: "for the Lord God giveth them light"—eternal knowledge: "AND THEY"—all the risen, of all dispensations—"SHALL REIGN FOR EVER AND EVER"—eternal glory (Revelation 22:3-5).

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)

## I. 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 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—*"And all the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give unto every one of you according to your works"* (Revelation 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 throbings 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 rebuke and chasten"* (Revelation 3:19). *"But He [chastened us] for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness"* (Hebrews 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 that beareth fruit, he PURGETH it” (John 15:2). Thus if the judgment of believers, and the Scripture so calls it (1 Corinthians 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 Corinthians 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, is 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 (Matthew 18:24) is decisively revealed: *the unforgiving servant is himself a forgiven man*. The King says, “I *forgave* thee all that debt, because thou *desiredst* me” (Matthew 18:32). 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 desiredst”: he obtained pardon—“I forgave thee”: he was raised to responsibility and trust—“thy fellowservant.” Moreover, the King bases his censure wholly on the fact that the offender is a forgiven man: “Shouldest not thou also have had compassion on thy fellowservant, *even as I had pity on thee?*” (Matthew 18:33).

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 regenerated 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!* (Hebrews 12:25; Romans 11:24). Moreover, our Lord identifies the Servant with the Kingdom *of heaven* (verse 23), which has been taken *from* the Jew (Matthew 21:43) and given to the Holy Nation, the Church (1 Peter 2:9).

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? Till seven times? Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven. *Therefore* is the kingdom of heaven likened unto a certain king, *which would take account of his servants*” (Matthew 18:21-23). 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* shall trespass against thee” (Matthew 18:15)—it is offences between brethren, or even apostles—“If he neglect to hear *the church*, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican” (Matthew 18:17). 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’? “For *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 unto him. SO LIKEWISE SHALL MY HEAVENLY FATHER DO ALSO UNTO YOU, IF YE FROM YOUR HEARTS FORGIVE NOT EVERY ONE HIS BROTHER THEIR TRESPASSES” (Matthew 18:34-35). “For he shall have judgment *without mercy*, that hath shewed no mercy” (James 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 men gather them and cast them into the fire, *and they are burned*” (John 15:6).
2. “But whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be *in danger* of HELL FIRE” (Matthew 5:22).
3. “For if *we* sin willfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and *fiery indignation*, which shall devour the adversaries” (Hebrews 10:25-26).

No branch, withering after vital verdure, and embedded in the Vine, can represent empty profession: the ‘brother’ who angrily charges another ‘brother’ as fool [rebel from God] risks hell fire *because his charge is false*; that is, both are children of God, and therefore God’s ancient principle (Deuteronomy 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” (Hebrews 10:30-31)—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 favour 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. "And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the JUDGMENT" (Hebrews 9:27). 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 (Hebrews 12:8); it may, in extreme cases, be fearful bodily disease (Exodus 15:26), or even be mortal (1 Corinthians 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—*but 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, lest any man should boast*” (Ephesians 2:9).

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 one faulty believer “that he may find *mercy of the Lord IN THAT DAY*” (2 Timothy 1:18), and of others— “that it may not be laid to their charge” (2 Timothy 4:16). For there are sins that will be forgiven— obviously not sins of unbelievers—*in the Age to Come* (Matthew 12:32). In the words of Messrs. Hogg and Vine— “The attempt to alleviate the text [‘he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done,’ Colossians 3:25] of some of its weight by suggesting that the law operates 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 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*. “And almost all things are by the law *purged with blood*” (Hebrews 9:22). “How much more shall the *blood of Christ*, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, *purge* your conscience from dead works”—the deadly efforts of self-righteousness— “to serve the living God?” (Hebrews 9:14). For Christ has effected the essential and fundamental purging once for all. “When he had by himself *purged* our *sins*, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high” (Hebrews 1:3). 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*. “But if ye be *without* chastisement, whereof all [believers] are partakers, *then are ye bastards*, and not sons” (Hebrews 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*. “But he that doeth wrong”—the context is addressed solely to believers— “SHALL RECEIVE FOR THE WRONG WHICH HE HATH DONE; and there is no respect of persons” (Colossians 3:25). But it is Divine Love that will not rest until all we who believe are become “partakers of His



holiness” (Hebrews 12:10): 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 hast paid *the uttermost farthing*” (Matthew 5:26).

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 and if *that* servant”—the good steward, whom the Lord Himself set over His household— “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.

This emphatic pronoun (Luke 12:45) must have some antecedent, and none is to be found save the ‘faithful and wise steward’ (Luke 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).

“And that servant, which knew his lord’s will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, SHALL BE BEATEN WITH MANY STRIPES” (Luke 12:47). 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 by fire’ (1 Corinthians 3:15) at a subsequent period.”

It is certain that all believers must, sooner or later, appear at the Bema (2 Corinthians 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” (Hebrews 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 *raised to life again*” (Hebrews 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. “But they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage: NEITHER CAN THEY DIE ANY MORE, for they are equal unto the angels; and are the children of God, *being the children of the resurrection*. (Luke 20:35-36). Of believers *not* accounted worthy of that World, 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 (1 Corinthians 15:50), that Paul says that they “shall be raised INCORRUPTIBLE” (1 Corinthians 15:52).

Thus the warning of God comes home to us in full force. “Therefore, *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 SHALL*”—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” (Romans 8:12-13). 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 to his flesh shall of the flesh reap CORRUPTION” (Galatians 6:7-8)—a “corruption” as literal as the “flesh.” “The Apostle does not speak [in Romans 8:11-13] of the lot reserved for the

bodies of unbelievers, or of unsanctified believers. The same is the case in 1 Corinthians 15:20-28. The word of verse 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 the gospel’s, but he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time . . . and IN THE WORLD TO COME *eternal life*” (Mark 10:29-30).

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 sceptic’s inquiries on the origin of evil, or the sovereign elections of God—queries impossible of human reply (Romans 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* (Revelation 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 (Philippians 1:23; Luke 23:43).

3. Some are in the mysterious region known as the 'outer darkness' (Matthew 25:30).
4. Some, guilty of the very gravest offences, are temporarily in Gehenna (Matthew 5:22; John 15:6; Hebrews 10:26-27; Revelation 2:11). "And I say unto you *my friends* . . . I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: Fear him, which after he hath killed hath power to cast into HELL [GEHENNA]; yea, I say unto YOU, *Fear him*" (Luke 12:4-5).

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; "Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness: *otherwise thou also shalt be cut off*" (Romans 11:22). And the melancholy fact revealed all down the ages in 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. "But to *this* man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and *trembleth* at my word" (Isaiah 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 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.”

## II. 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: Matthew (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 Corinthians 5:10). “But he that doeth WRONG shall RECEIVE FOR THE WRONG WHICH HE HATH DONE, AND THERE IS NO RESPECT OF PERSONS” (Colossians 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.”



## CONCLUSION

Many Christians who have happily sung, “. . . when by His grace I shall look on His face, that will be glory, be glory for me,” are due for a terrific shock when they stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ and find that it is not glory for them.

When we see Jesus it will be at His Judgment Seat, not at the Mercy Seat, and then “Every man’s work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by FIRE” (1 Corinthians 3:13). And every Christian will be rewarded according to his works.

Carnal Christians have often been heard to say, “I am not bothering about rewards; I will be happy anyway.” The boy who has been disobedient is REWARDED according to his works. Perhaps he would not want to bother about rewards either but is rewarded nevertheless.

This present work of D. M. Panton’s is being reprinted because it so vividly shows what the Scriptures clearly teach regarding the future unhappy state of the disobedient Christian; and because the neglect of this teaching has contributed largely to the present lethargy of the church.

## CONCLUSION OF REVISED COPY

The revised copy contains only Bible references in the King James Version. Very little has been changed from the original book written by D. M. Panton. A few words have been altered to correspond to the actual words in the King James Version of the Bible. Also, references have been added for all Bible quotes.