

THE DAY OF JUDGMENT.

MAY 22. – MATT. 25:31-46.

"He shall reward every man according to his works." – Matt. 16:27.

MOST of our Lord's parables or illustrations represent some phase of the Kingdom of Heaven – the Church – either in its present embryotic and preparatory condition, or in its future majesty. For instance, the parable of the wheat and the tares shows the sowing of the good seed, the gospel of the Kingdom, by our Lord, and the development of that seed in the Church; the sowing amongst it of the false doctrines by the adversary, and the development from it of the false professors in the Church; the harvest time at the end of the age, followed by the burning of the tares – the destruction of the counterfeits as such, and the gathering of the wheat into the garner, – which, our Lord explained, was an illustration of the glorification of the Church in Kingdom majesty: "Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the Kingdom of their father." But in the parable before us we have no such illustration of the Kingdom – the Kingdom of Heaven is not likened to, nor illustrated by, the matters presented in this parable. Quite to the contrary of this, it is a lesson or description of the matters which will transpire after the Kingdom of Heaven has been developed in this age, and after it has been glorified at the end of this age.

This is shown by verse 31, which distinctly states the time of its applicability: "**When** the Son of Man shall come in his glory." We are to remember, in this connection, that the first event of the second advent is not the manifestation of glory, but the thief-like gathering (unknown to the world) of the elect "little flock," the "chaste virgin," to the Bridegroom, and her exaltation to the position of "the Bride, the Lamb's wife, filled with the glory of God." The revelation of our Lord's glory is not another coming, but another step or development during the same coming or *presence* (parousia). "When he shall appear

in glory, we also shall appear with him," explains the Apostle (Col. 3:4), and this view agrees with the Apostle's other statement that, as the wife is the glory of the husband, so the Church is the glory of Christ. Consequently, our Lord could not appear in his glory, according to his own arrangement as expressed through his own mouthpieces, until first he had associated the Bride with himself.

Hence, the scene of this parable is not a judgment scene respecting the Church, because before this scene begins, those who shall be accounted worthy of a share in the Kingdom shall be with the Lord in the throne of his glory, according to the promise, "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne;" "To him that overcometh will I give power over the nations." The judgment scene here presented is the world's judgment, in which the Church shall share only as judges, as the Apostle explains, "Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world?" – 1 Cor. 6:2.

In full harmony with this is the statement of verse 32, **[R2304 : page 141]** that it is the nations of earth then gathered to judgment before the throne of glory – the great white throne of justice and impartiality – that are here pictured to us. But the day of the world's judgment is not such a day as it has been generally represented. It will not be a twenty-four hour day, but a larger day, a thousand years, for "a day with the Lord is as a thousand years" (2 Pet. 3:8): it is the long-promised Millennial day, in which the overcomers of this age shall live and reign with Christ a thousand years, and as kings and priests unto God shall bless the world by a righteous judgment. – Rev. 5:9,10; 20:4.

This brings us to the thought that this great judgment day, so far from being merely a day of general damnation, is really the great blessing, the great boon, secured for the world by the death of Christ. Originally, through Adam's transgression, the entire race was under sentence of death, justly; and there was no need for anything further of future judgment or sentence, for the original sentence, "Dying thou

shalt die," in its execution had utterly destroyed mankind, without hope. But when divine mercy provided the great "ransom for all," another judgment was thus provided; that is to say, another trial for life. The first judgment or trial for life in Eden had resulted disastrously to Adam and all his race, but the penalties of that judgment being borne by our Redeemer in [R2304 : page 142] his own body on the tree, Adam and his posterity are to be granted another trial, another opportunity to see whether or not, with their added experience, they would choose righteousness, and thereby choose the accompanying gift of God – eternal life; or whether they would choose sin and the accompanying penalty of sin – death; which, in this case, would be the Second Death; the penalty of failure under the second opportunity or trial.

God not only appointed the great redemption for sin, of which our Redeemer was the willing central figure, but he also appointed that the Redeemer should be the one through whom the blessings of the ransom – the second trial – should come to all: as it is written, "God hath appointed a day [the Millennial age, the seventh day, the seventh thousand-year period of earth's history] in which he [God] will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained [Jesus Christ]." And not only so, but having predestinated the adoption of a little flock to joint-heirship with Jesus in the Millennial Kingdom and its glory, its service and its judgment of the world, God has, during this Gospel age, preceding the day of judgment, granted a special, earlier trial to the Church.

The trial of the Church during this Gospel age is along lines considerably different from those which will be applied to the trial of the world in the next age. For instance, mankind in general shall be tried or judged according to their *works*, during the Millennial age, as shown in this lesson, and in the Golden Text, and in Rev. 20:12; but the Church of this age is not judged according to its works, which could not be perfect because of the infirmities of the flesh, "for we have this treasure [the new nature] in earthen vessels." We are judged

according to our *faith*: "This is the victory that overcometh the world [during this age, while the world is under the Prince of this world, Satan, and in antagonism to righteousness and the righteous], even your faith."

True, faith without works would be dead, and we are to show our faith by our works; but we are not to be judged by the imperfect works which are the utmost of our ability, but to be judged by our faith, which is reckoned unto us for righteousness – as full perfection: for, "The righteousness of the law [of God's demands] is [reckonedly] fulfilled in us who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit." – Rom. 8:4.

The great work of the Millennial age is briefly comprehended in the statement of verse 33, "He shall set his sheep on his right hand [position of favor] and the goats on his left." The wayward, wilful goat is chosen as a symbol to represent depraved humanity, while the docile sheep fitly represents those who are fully subjected to the Lord's will in every particular. Other scriptures show us that this division of mankind into two classes, the willing and obedient separated from the unwilling and disobedient, will be very gradually accomplished, with much patience, and with every opportunity for the sheep character to be developed by the whole world. For instance, speaking of that new dispensation and the patient and generous trial of mankind there to be granted by the Redeemer-Judge, the Prophet Isaiah shows that while all will be obliged to refrain from doing injury to others, for "nothing shall hurt or destroy in all my holy Kingdom," yet liberty to make progress, or not to make progress, under those favorable conditions will be left to each individual: and that those who refuse to make progress will die a hundred years old (the Second Death) because of having failed to benefit by the opportunities granted to them; altho then they will be but children – for they might live, by even outward conformity and progress, to the end of the day of judgment, till the close of the Millennium. – Isa. 65:17-20.

The culminating scenes, marking the close of the Millennial age, are set forth in verses 34-46, tho in the reverse order to that given by the same Teacher in Rev. 20:7-10, and 11-15. The account in Revelation seems to indicate that the goat class will be dealt with first: a certain test, a deception by Satan, will manifest those who have the goatlike disposition of wilfulness still remaining in their hearts after they have enjoyed all the blessings of the "times of restitution." Those whose hearts are not completely won by the instruction and favorable opportunity for coming to a knowledge of God's goodness and wisdom and grace, will be destroyed with Satan, in the Second Death. Then will be ushered in the grand perfections of the eternal state, in which there shall be no more dying, no more crying, no more pain, because the former things – sin, and those who have unconsecrated dispositions disposed to sin, will be no more.

The reward to the righteous will then be in order, and they will be introduced to the Father by the Son, blameless and irreprovable in love. These will have been perfected through the processes of the restitution. They will be perfect men, in the image of God as was Adam, but with their knowledge of God infinitely enlarged by the experiences through which they will have passed. This is the delivering up of the Kingdom to God, even the Father – the cessation of the Millennial Kingdom, mentioned by the Apostle Paul. (1 Cor. 15:24-28.) Mankind will no longer need a mediator, but will then be able to stand in their own righteousness, as Adam could stand in his own righteousness before he transgressed. **[R2304 : page 143]**

The mediatorial Millennial Kingdom of Christ and the Church, having accomplished its purpose, and being withdrawn, the dominion of the renewed earth will be handed over to the rule of its redeemed and restored rulers – humanity. Thenceforth man shall again be king of the earth, subject to the Great King, Jehovah, in whose "everlasting Kingdom" Christ and the Church will thereafter be associated. We may reasonably suppose that even perfect men will require some form of government, and that it will be a representative government, since

every member of that human family will be perfect, and therefore equally a king with each other member. Such a government would be nothing more nor less than a republic, in which each individual is a sovereign, and one of their number is chosen as their servant or President.

This transfer of the earth's control to the renewed race is briefly represented in our Lord's words, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." It should be distinctly noted that this is a totally different kingdom from the one promised to the saints of this Gospel age, which is a joint-heirship with Christ in his Kingdom during the Millennial age, terminating, so far as the earth is concerned, at the close of the Millennium. The spiritual class and Kingdom was foreordained "from [BEFORE] the foundation of the world:" the earthly kingdom is here described as "prepared for you [restored and worthy humanity] *from* the foundation of the world." The earthly kingdom relates to the earth; and the foundation or preparation of the earth, which is its basis.

The character of the judgment is intimated, rather than described, in the words addressed to the approved and to the condemned. The reward is for good *works*, indicative of sympathy, love, compassion; the punishment is for the neglect of good works, thus intimating the absence of good motives, tender, loving sentiments. Thus it appears, that those who will ultimately be accounted worthy of the Second Death will not be murderers, thieves, and liars, in the present-day acceptance of those terms, but those who lack evidences of the possession of the holy spirit whose fruits are meekness, patience, long-suffering, brotherly-kindness – Love.

Our Lord's words summed up mean approval to those only who have at heart the disposition of love; and that such only will be adjudged worthy of eternal life. All who shall not attain to that graciousness of character, God-like-ness, will be rejected as unworthy

of eternal life, and will die the Second Death. All who have not the spirit of love are "accursed," under that law of the New Covenant. Satan and all who (after the full opportunities of the Millennial age) still have to any degree his disposition or spirit of selfishness, lovelessness, will be accounted worthy of the Second Death, called, in verse 46, "everlasting punishment," in verse 41, "everlasting fire," and in Rev. 20:10,14,15, "the lake of fire;" – and there explained to be "the Second Death;" – "everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power." The wages or punishment of sin being death, the hopelessness [R2305 : page 143] of any rescue or further redemption from death, makes that death an everlasting punishment.

For a further explanation of verse 46 and of other similar texts, see *What Say the Scriptures about Hell?* – ten cents, 50 cents per dozen, – this office.

*

*

*

THE LORD'S SUPPER. – MAY 29. – MATT. 26:17-30.

For this lesson, please see article in our issue of March 1, "The Memorial Supper."
