

# The Judgment and the Eternal State

Rev. 20, 21: 1-8.

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Lecture 8 of "The Second Coming and Kingdom of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

I have read this portion of Scripture, not because it is by any means the sole authority for the truths of the judgment and the eternal state, which it is my present business to assert and to prove from the word of God, but because (including Revelation 19: 1, *et seq.*) it presents the course of events from the return of the First-begotten into the world, throughout the whole period of His kingdom, until it be given up and God shall be all in all. This was naturally reserved, in the wisdom of God, for the last book of Scripture, and fell in most consistently with the character of the Apocalypse. There is nothing more distinctly graven upon that book than its judicial character. Hence we have judgment in both its forms: judgment exercised on the quick during the ordinary course of the kingdom of our Lord and of His risen saints; and judgment exercised before the kingdom closes on the dead, the wicked dead, when the whole scene concludes with that which has no end — the eternal state.

It is true that, in the full meaning of that eternal state, but few Scriptures speak of it. There is one in words of deep moment, 1 Corinthians 15: 28, on which I may dwell a little when it comes before us, comparing it with that which we have here. There is another reference in 2 Peter 3: 13. But as to the various applications of judgment, its true character, the persons who will be its objects, and the aim of God in it all, whatever may be its particular phase, Scripture deals with these questions abundantly. But this I may be permitted to state at the outset — that judgment is never properly understood in its real depth, as well as its comprehensiveness, unless salvation be also rightly apprehended. A great effort of the enemy, working on the unbelief of man, is to confound these two things. The object is evident. Man in flesh, *i.e.* in his natural state, never trusts God, who on His part, it is clear, cannot trust man. The gospel calls upon man to confess that his condition is such that God cannot trust him; it claims in the name of the Lord Jesus, because of God's love displayed in giving Him, and by virtue of the efficacious work He has accomplished, that man should trust God — in a word, that he should repent and believe the gospel, that he should believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and be saved. There is immense force in the words, "be saved." There are many even of God's children who have most imperfect thoughts about salvation. Were we, instead of this expression, to insert the words, "be pardoned," or "reconciled to God," I apprehend that the mass of Christians at the present moment would see but little difference; but salvation includes a great deal more than pardon, precious as it is. Salvation takes in the whole scope and result of Christ's work; and whether you look at salvation in its complete sense and heavenly light, as shown us in Ephesians, or add to the work of Christ His priesthood and coming again in glory, either goes far beyond forgiveness of sins, and both are certain and scriptural. The mass of God's children at present on the earth have not only scant but dim perceptions about it, which is proved by the fact that they are under the impression that those saved must be judged like man in general — that all men, saints, or sinners, must equally pass through the judgment, the eternal judgment of God. This prevails even in the minds of premillennialists, who suppose the saints before, and sinners after, the millennium. If they asserted that all men, saints or sinners, must alike be made manifest before the judgment-seat of Christ; if they maintained that every one, without exception, must surely give an account of the things done by the body; if they held and taught that God will magnify Himself, not only in the judgment of those that have despised Christ, but in the distinct appraisal of the character and conduct of every saint, just as much as of every sinner, they would assert nothing more than in my judgment the word of God

most clearly propounds. To me, I confess, it seems an evidence, not of strength, but of weakness of faith, where real Christians shrink from the truth of being manifested before the judgment-seat of Christ, and vote it a strange doctrine and virtually a raising of questions as to personal acceptance again. But not so; Scripture is most explicit as to present and eternal acceptance, and as to our future manifestation before the Lord Jesus. Let none, then, imagine that the doctrine I trust now to prove, surely and plainly, from God's word, weakens the manifestation of every soul, at some time and for one object or another, before our Lord.

In 2 Cor. 5 we have a weighty, full, and unambiguous statement of God's mind upon this matter. Here the apostle, when bringing out the rich blessing of the Christian in the power of the life of Christ communicated to the soul, shows that this life is such in its own character that Christ, the source of it, has only to come, and at once every vestige of mortality in the believer is swallowed up of life. Hence there is the strongest expression possible of assurance; but in this the apostle puts himself on common ground with all other saints, and acknowledges, as a matter of common Christian knowledge, that "if the earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." At the same time he shows that what the believer earnestly desires is not to be "unclothed," that is, to pass through the article of death, as if death were a necessary step in the way of the saint to glory. It is not so at all. "Earnestly desiring to be clothed upon" is the word, the very reverse of being unclothed. When the saint dies, he quits the bodily tenement, he is unclothed, he departs to join Christ. Instead of waiting in the body till Christ comes for him, he goes to be with Him. In this case there is no such thing as mortality being "swallowed up of life." On the contrary he is summoned from the heaven to go to the world. He is "absent," as it is said, "from the body, present with the Lord." But let the Lord come, and instantly there answers to His call and presence the life that He gave to all the Christians upon the earth, and not only to those then found alive, but to such as are dead — to those that slept in Christ. "The dead in Christ rise first;" but, more than that, in the case of the living "mortality is swallowed up of life." These not only do not necessarily die, but death can have no possible dominion over them. Even now and till then mortality is in them; but for such saints as live till Christ comes, there is no death at all. A tendency to death, of course, there is now in the natural body of the believer, like anyone else; but in him, until the actual act of death if he die, it is only mortality. Christ comes, and at once every trace of mortality is swallowed up of life. This then, so far above natural thoughts, was what the apostle speaks of all earnestly desiring then. "For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened; not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life."

Lower down he insists that "we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ." And here I would point out that there is a slight difference in the form but important enough in the sense, which shows that "we all," in the tenth verse of 2 Cor. 5 differs essentially from "we all" in the eighteenth verse of chapter 3. In the third chapter, "We all (ἡμεῖς δὲ πάντες), with open face beholding, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord," means all Christians, and Christians exclusively. But in the fifth chapter there is a specific difference (τοὺς γὰρ πάντας ἡμᾶς) which has not been noticed, as far as I am aware, proving that a larger thought is in the mind of the Holy Ghost, and that while Christians, of course, are included, the expression embraces more than Christians, in fact, all men without exception. It seems to me there need be no hesitation whatever in affirming this; it is, at any rate, my conviction. It is well known that some have restricted 2 Cor. 5: 10 to Christians; but they have overlooked, in my judgment, the comprehensive character of the passage that follows, which they are obliged to pare down and even alter unwarrantably, even then presenting a lame and impotent conclusion and failing to give value to the distinct phrase alluded to, which appears to me expressly calculated, and, indeed, framed to intimate a different truth. For it is not the way of the Spirit of God to vary the language after this

manner, unless He have some different sense to convey by it. In 2 Cor. 5 the Greek article, thus inserted, gives all possible breadth — "*the whole* of us;" whereas in 2 Cor. 3 it is simply "*we* all." What confirms this is, as was said, the effect produced and stated immediately after in verse 11, which shows that the apostle had more in his mind than believers and their portion. "We must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in [by] his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad."

Now, this is clearly applicable either to a believer or an unbeliever. An unbeliever has nothing but what is bad; and when God enters into judgment with him, all will be made manifest, whatever may have been his own thoughts, or those of others, in this world: he is judged and cast into the lake of fire. There had been no love for the will of God, but hatred to it; there had been no faith in God's testimony to his soul, but wilful rejection of it; there had been no clinging to mercy in the person of Christ, but on the contrary all was scorned, or at least done without. Judgment takes its course. There had been nothing but unmingled evil, as will be proved before the judgment-seat of Christ, whose name and precious blood had been despised. In the believer the crop has a mingled character: there is good and there is bad. The Lord will fully own and reward whatever has been the fruit of the Holy Ghost working in the believer's soul and in his ways; but as to the bad, it will be his own deep and thankful satisfaction, while himself owning it all fully, not merely to know it blotted out as a matter of guilt against his soul, but to find himself brought into perfect communion with the Lord about it; he will thoroughly see and judge according to God respecting it all. If there were a single thing offensive to God that self-love or haste or will had blinded him to in this life, he will then know it even as he is known. So far from causing a single waver in his affections, so far from raising any doubt or question of God's perfect grace to his soul, it would be positive loss if the believer were not thus brought into oneness with God's mind and judgment about all that he has here done. Even in this life we know something analogous. Who that has passed any time in the Lord's paths has not experienced what it is to be laid aside for a season — to have the Lord speaking to him and calling up before his soul that which he had too rightly thought of or wholly passed by? Much, it may be, in the very energy of his service had been easily forgotten, when carried along with delight in the work of God, though I am supposing there was also what is sweet and of God in the midst of all. But still, surely there is not a little of nature, not a little of unjudged and unsuspected nature, in the ways and testimony of those that love the Lord. Now, would it be for the Lord's glory if these mistakes, and even wrongs, were noticed by Him at no time? Even in this life He does often send circumstances of sorrow, want, sickness, disappointment, it may be a prison, shutting out from the activity of work, to raise needed questions for the soul's health — not as to God's saving grace nor as to the believer's standing. To doubt either is inexcusable: no trial will ever rightly lead to it. Nothing questions God's grace or faithfulness but flesh, and flesh acted upon by Satan. The truth is, there is not in all the word a single ground, or even excuse, given to a believer for doubting divine grace or his own blessing in Christ. But assuredly one is convicted of feebly holding God's grace, if one regards this perfect manifestation before Christ's judgment-seat as the smallest contradiction or even the least possible difficulty. In the end it is a part of God's necessary ways with His children! its principle is true of them even now: for we are expressly told by St. Peter that the Father judges now. Is this opposed to His love? Surely not! Neither will it be so then. Perfect love will have brought us into that place; for in what condition shall we stand there? Before we are manifested at the judgment-seat of Christ, He will have come for us, and presented us in His Father's house in pure, simple, absolute grace. We shall appear there already glorified: our bodies being like that of Christ, we shall be incapable of that natural shame which might be a pain to us here in this life. We shall then feel entirely with Christ, and consequently be thoroughly above that which will be disclosed there. All will justify His ways, though it be humbling to us; but we shall only rejoice in

— only exalt Him. And I see no ground at all to doubt that not merely what we have been as believers, but the whole life, from first to last, will be brought out. And what will be the effect of it? An infinitely deep appreciation of the grace of God; profound delight in all His ways and ends, and above all in Himself; and an equally deep sense of what the creature, and we ourselves, have been, in every form or degree in which self wrought here below. God forbid that any one should count such a manifestation a loss, grief, or danger to be dreaded. Even here the measure of it we know is gain: what will it be then and there?

Further, it appears to me that this is the reason why the Spirit of God uses the remarkable language found here; for there is nothing expressed about being judged in the passage. It would not be true, as may be proved by other Scriptures, to say, "we must all be judged before the judgment-seat of Christ." None but the unjust, the unbeliever, will ever come into judgment; but every soul, good or bad, believer or unbeliever, must be equally and perfectly manifested before His judgment-seat. And what makes this still more evident is not only the choice of the language, "we must all appear," or "be manifested;" and then again that which follows — "knowing therefore the *terror* of the Lord" (which there is no ground whatever to weaken) "knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men." This is the strongest possible proof of the large scope of the preceding verse 10, because we are here shown the effect of that future final manifestation upon the spirit as regards not ourselves but others. Thus, properly understood, this portion of Scripture supposes the fullest rest in the grace of God, even when we contemplate solemnly the judgment-seat of Christ. There is no question of perturbation about our own souls; but it fills us with anxiety about "men" as such. Why about men rather than about saints? Evidently and only because the judgment-seat of Christ will not in the smallest degree jeopard the safety of a single saint. The language is therefore changed, and instead of adopting the word "we," or continuing the former phrase "us all," or anything that would either present the believer alone, or the believer with the unbeliever to a certain extent, we have the word changed - "Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men." That is, we go forth animated with the deep feeling of what that judgment-seat must be to the unbeliever. We know that it is a solemn, though a most blessed, thought to a believer. We know nothing but the mighty grace of God in Christ could have made it to be a happy prospect for us. But the deeper and more solid the conviction, that only His grace gives us stable peace in presence of the judgment-seat, the more in proportion do we feel what that judgment-seat will be to those who have not Christ. Hence then the apostle proceeds to speak of it as the common feeling of himself and other Christians) from the awful import of the judgment-seat to the unbeliever, to "persuade men," as he calls it; *i.e.* to seek to bring them to the knowledge of Christ. "But we are made manifest to God," he carefully adds here. In other words, even now the spirit of the judgment-seat is true of the believer; not that he will not appear there by and by, but that now also we are made manifest unto God. This is most true, and important too. "We are made manifest unto God, and, I trust, also are made manifest in your consciences." He could speak in an absolute manner of being made manifest to God; he could speak but in a hopeful way of being manifested to the consciences of believers, because there might be disturbing influences in their case. After all, this could only be a comparative thing, while to God, I repeat, they were already made manifest absolutely. Thus the passage contains the most weighty truth, fully asserting the present manifestation of the believer to God, while it also insists on what is future and perfect before the judgment-seat of Christ for the believer by and by, and intimates the effect of grace on his heart to seek unbelievers, knowing, as we know, the terror of the Lord for them by and by; for we shall all be made manifest there; not only the unbeliever, but the believer. He presumes in the strongest manner the peace of the believer, even in contemplating the judgment-seat. On him the effect of this disclosure is to awaken not a single alarm as to himself or his brethren. What a witness of a full, and present, and eternal salvation! All his soul's energies are thrown out in behalf of

men who are living for the present and for the earth, little thinking that they must stand before Christ's judgment-seat, ignorant of its real character, and heedless of its issues.

This will be sufficient, I trust, to convince any Christian open to conviction, that, far from denying, I think we cannot too strongly insist on, the extent, as well as the certainty of the manifestation of every man, believer or not, before the judgment-seat of Christ. But then, observe well, it is their *manifestation*. The moment we come to speak of *judgment*, the Lord has decided for the Christian already. In John v. will be found clear unmistakeable evidence, which proves the separation, even in this world, between believer and unbeliever, through the Lord Jesus. This real present separation is simply by faith, but it is not the less according to the eternal truth of God. I do not speak of course of external circumstances. The Lord introduces it thus in verse 21: "For as the Father raiseth up the dead and quickeneth them, even so the Son quickeneth whom He will: for the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son; that all men should honour the Son even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father that sent him." Hence it is evident that, as two glories meet in Christ, so two actions are attributed to Him. One of them is in communion with the Father; the other is confined to Himself alone. In communion with the Father, He quickens or gives life. The reason is manifest. The communication of life flows from His deity. None but a divine person can quicken the dead. The Father raises the dead: so the Son quickens not only those whom the Father will, but whom *he will*. He is sovereign therefore, as being the Son, equal with God. Whatever may be the language of His lowliness as man, He never abrogated, though He might hold for a season in abeyance, His full rights as a divine person, one with the Father. But then the Father does not judge. How is this? The Son judges, and He alone. No doubt it is the judgment of God, but it is His judgment administered by the Son.

The Father has committed all judgment unto the Son. Wherefore this difference as set forth in so marked a change of language? Why, in the one case, the *quickeneth whom He will*, and in the other, the *judging* by that authority that is given Him of the Father? Because the Lord Jesus here lets us know that His judgment is in the closest connection with His assumption of human nature.

The moral ground is evident. Why do men despise the Son, who ostensibly pay homage to God the Father? They take advantage of the humiliation of the Son, because He was pleased to empty Himself, to take the form of a servant, to be made of a woman, to become man. Wretched man, led of Satan, dared to spit in the face of the Lord of glory, and to crucify Him between robbers. His matchless and all-lowly love gave the opportunity to man, who was too madly base to lose it. The unbelieving way of every soul demonstrates the same sad truth. It is the history of the race from the beginning, and will be so to the end. God notices and will avenge it, when He makes inquisition for blood. But, besides, He commits all judgment to the Son. In that very nature in which He was set at nought He will judge. He will judge not merely as God, though He is God, but as man, once thoroughly despised and rejected, because, though the Son, He deigned to partake of flesh and blood, and thus become Son of man. Man will be judged before the Man he hated unto death. Man will stand and tremble before the exalted Man, the Lord Jesus Christ. And so it is treated here: "The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son; that all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father that sent him. 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."

The believer of course does not require judgment to compel him to honour the Son. There is nothing, first of all, that so honours the Son as faith; therefore, in hearing Christ's word, and believing Him who sent Christ, the believer does honour the Son in that sort which is so sweet to Himself, and

most acceptable to the Father, who refuses all homage at His expense. He bows to Him as Saviour; he owns his sins, seriously and truthfully; he receives life and propitiation in Him and through Him. He confesses Him as Lord; acknowledges Him to be his Lord and his God. He does not need therefore the judicial pressure of Christ to make him unite the Son with the Father in coequal divine honour. Well he knows that none but a divine person, one with the Father, could give him that life which he has received in the Son of God. "He that heareth my word," as He says, "and believeth him that sent me, hath everlasting life." Even now to the believer the Son of God gives life, and the highest form of it — eternal life. How can he then but bow down and bless the Lord Jesus? The consequence is that he needs nothing to enforce it, as the unbeliever does, who rejects Him, does without His cross, denies therefore the word and His work, and therefore has to be forced to honour Him in some other way, if he with all men must honour the Son, even as they honour the Father.

It is said here further for his comfort, not only that he "*hath* eternal life," but that "he shall not come into condemnation." It is well known, and must be insisted on, that this word κρίσις means judgment, and not "condemnation." Remarkably enough, it stands correctly represented in the common Popish version, though we all know the Roman Catholic version is too often inaccurate, and otherwise faulty, because it follows the common text of the Vulgate, even in its blunders not a few; yet for all that, the Vulgate being right as to this particular passage, the Romish version is therefore much nearer the truth of God in this chapter than the Protestant Bible. The Roman Catholic version, faithful to the Latin, which is here faithful to the Greek, allows and maintains throughout the whole context that there are two dealings in opposition one to the other, life-giving and judging. This contrast is kept up in every case. The Son has life because He is God; the Son judges because He is man. Being the only person in the Godhead who became man, but still in no way forfeiting His rights as God, He is ordained of God the judge of quick and dead. His resurrection proved what God thought of Him and means to do by Him, and what is the character, position, and doom of the world which put Him to death. The Son - the Son of man — will judge man. On the other hand, the believer owns Him, not only as the Son of man, but as God, on and according to His word; he consequently receives eternal life through honouring the divine glory of the Lord Jesus Christ. The unbeliever, stumbling more particularly over His deity, refuses Himself, rejects, as we know, His work in atonement, or manifests a guilty indifference about it, even if he do not openly deny it — has no real sense of his sins, and consequently no fear of God, nor appreciation of His eternal judgment. In one or other form men, unbelievers, slight, if not oppose, and in all cases do without, the Son of God, and, as far as they can in this world, dishonour the Father in thus dishonouring Him. And how then are they to honour the Son? They must be judged by Him. They have disclaimed eternal life, because they received not the Son of God. Now they may avoid stooping to the humbled Son of man; but they must stand before Him as the glorious Judge to be condemned for ever. But as for those who in this world received Him, followed Him, adored Him, through faith in His name, — they have everlasting life now, and therefore they need not to come into judgment. In truth, He was judged in their stead on the cross.

Let me repeat that it is not merely life and condemnation which are contrasted, but life and judgment. Men may adhere to the opinions of translators, but if the original word of God is to decide, I defy any man in the world fairly to controvert what is here affirmed. The truth was too strong for those trained up in the schools of theology; the grace which underlies it was too rich to mingle with their formularies and preachings. But as to the simple and necessary meaning of our Saviour's words there ought to be no hesitation; and I am persuaded that, just in proportion to familiarity with the language used here, and the truth everywhere, a candid Christian cannot escape from its force. There is no Greek scholar who does not know that there is another word (κατάκριμα) whose function it is to express condemnation. The word used here throughout means simply "judgment." Unquestionably the effect of

judgment is condemnation. Would that our own and other translators had only understood this thoroughly because this very result, which is otherwise scripturally certain, necessarily excludes the believer! Herein lies the importance of the truth before us. It crushes the vain hope of unbelief; it demonstrates the absolute need of grace. No guilty soul can enter into the judgment of God without being laid bare in his sins. Impossible that God should not deal with them according to His own holiness.

No matter who it is the man may be, if he be judged he is judged for what he has done and is; he is put on his trial for his sins; and if it be so, what is more certain than that he must be lost? In vain then to talk about God's mercy! His mercy is now manifested and proclaimed in Christ, who is the Saviour Son of God, but will shortly prove that He is also the Judge of men. You cannot mingle the two things. The unbeliever has avowedly no part in Christ's salvation; he believes not, he ridicules or loathes the testimony of eternal life in the Son of God. On the other hand, and equally, the believer has no part in the judgment which the glorified Son of man will then execute. The two things are kept perfectly distinct. There is no mingling them in the smallest degree.

Therefore, we may note, the statement of the Lord Jesus is the strongest the language He employed could afford; and where is the tongue more admirably accurate than the Greek? and by whom is it wielded with such precision as by the writers of the New Testament? The Lord's words here recorded show that it is decided for ever between the believer and the unbeliever. The truth is, that for man all turns upon Christ. Do I make light of Him? Then I give the lie to the testimony of God. I insult the grace and truth which came by Jesus Christ, and prove myself to be at war with God. This I cannot do, save to my eternal judgment: "He that believeth not is judged (κέκριται) already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God; . . . shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him." (John 3: 18, 36.) If I receive Him by faith, I have eternal life in Him on the warrant of the living word of God: "He that heareth my word and believeth him that sent me hath everlasting life, and cometh not into judgment" (κρίσιν). It is a verbal noun formed from, and alluding to, the same word that was rightly translated "judge" in verse 22. It is essential to the context that the same sense should be preserved intact throughout. Weigh what comes afterwards: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming and now is when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live." Manifestly we have life again as the effect of hearing His voice — and this too going on now. The dead, the spiritually dead, are being awakened to hear the voice of the Lord Jesus Christ, then heard when the great salvation began to be spoken by Him, but still continued "by them that have preached the gospel unto you by the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven." And they that hear shall live — as He said. Such is the declared effect; he that believes "hath everlasting life:" "For as the Father hath life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself," The reason why the Father is said to give this to the Son is, I apprehend, because Christ the Son so completely takes the place here of a sent One in humanity upon the earth, though even He does not so speak till He had betrayed, as it were, His own intrinsic glory, as One personally entitled to quicken whom He would. Here however, true to the place He had been pleased to accept, as man in subjection to God the Father, whose glory He upheld above all things, He only speaks of the Father as having given to the Son to have life in Himself. It is part of His perfection as man, that He did not claim as a present thing all or any of the rights attached to His essential dignity, but that He entered fully into the humiliation by which alone God could be retrieved in His moral glory here below, by which alone the counsels of grace to the lost could be made holily efficacious.

Hence the Lord says that the Father hath "given to the Son to have life in Himself, and hath given Him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man." Life is in Him; He also is the

appointed Judge. Then we have the final result: "Marvel not at this; for the hour is coming in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth." Here it is an hour, not "that now is," but wholly future; and it is no question of faith called for, or unbelief proved, but "all that are in the graves shall hear his voice." Before, the only part expressly treated was the believer with his blessing; dead indeed as to his state by nature, but quickened by hearing the voice of the Son of God. It was an individual personal thing for the soul; but when we come to this future hearing His voice, there is no question of faith any longer. It is the mighty power of the Son of God that is put forth absolutely and universally. Therefore, "all that are in the graves," it is said, "shall hear his voice, and shall come forth" Does this mean all at the same moment, so that they all form a common class? Not only is there no such doctrine anywhere else in the Bible, but this passage rightly understood excludes it. Popular as it may be, the idea of a general resurrection is wholly without foundation - nay, contrary to all Scripture. No doubt two or three passages in the word of God have been construed to speak of an indiscriminate rising from the dead, and none more commonly or more constantly than the verses before us.\* Yet it is not merely a mistake as to the force of the text, but a fundamental error, which will be found to obscure and weaken salvation by grace; for it confounds the ways of God, and blots out that present difference which it is God's manifest desire to render especially distinct now to faith, as it will be by and by in fact, when confusion is no longer possible.

\* The other Scripture chiefly rested on is Daniel 12: 2; but it needs little exegetic skill to see that the rising in question is bound to the deliverance of the Jews at the end of this age, and therefore must be figurative (like Isa. 26 and Ezek. 37.). It would, if literal, involve *both* just and unjust rising *before* the millennium, which contradicts the plainest Scripture. Besides it is here "many," not *the* many, still less *all*, contrary to the hypothesis.

They were not, then, to wonder that even now dead souls receive life in hearing Christ; for a more manifest wonder was coming when the voice of the Son of God sounds forth in a day that is future. Then "all that are in the graves" (that is, not the dead morally, but all literally dead) "shall hear his voice, and shall come forth." These are thereon not viewed as a common category, which as lying in the graves they were, but are by resurrection divided into two distinct classes — "They that have done good unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil' unto the resurrection of [not 'damnation,' but] *judgment*" — the very same word throughout. It cannot be denied. It is in vain for learned or unlearned to attempt glosses, clever or clumsy, over the expression. The word of God is too strong for man to bend it. No doubt the truth is too bright for those that uphold the vulgar error in this particular case. This or other reasons may have influenced the English translators from Tyndale: the *motive* I do not pretend to judge; but the *fact* is plain. And I affirm that "condemnation" or "damnation" is a wrong rendering of κρίσις, for which there is no tenable ground. The verb means, and is rightly translated "judge," (verses 22- 30); the substantive means "judgment," or "the act of judging," and should have been so translated, and nothing else, throughout (verses 21, 24, 27, 29, 30).

But this makes the distinction of the two classes that are raised from their graves manifest and complete. As to the first, they are those that have practised good (for they are no longer characterised as believers only); it is a life resurrection. As bowing to Christ in this world, they had life in Him, the Son; their resurrection is simply the consummation of the life. For the body will be quickened as well as the soul. It is Christ, as the Son of God, who gave them life through faith, even now and in this world; it is Christ who will shortly call them out of their graves; and the power of the life they possessed in Him will be then manifest for ever.

As to unbelievers, they contemned the Son of God. They saw not His glory; they felt not His grace. They consequently lived, or rather they lay, in unremoved death, moral or spiritual death before

God. They had no life even while they lived, because they had not the Son of God; and the consequence is that they, summoned from their graves, know not a resurrection of life, according to the mould of Christ's own, but simply rise to be judged. They come forth in due time (solemn thought!) that they may be compelled in judgment to honour that Son whom here they spurned to their own everlasting shame and ruin - to honour Him who, when they were alive, met them with gracious words of life, had they but hearkened to His voice of quickening grace. But, alas! He (and, as it will soon be shown, all in Him) was definitively rejected. They had done nothing but evil or worthless things here; they are called up by Christ's power. It is a judgment resurrection.

Thus, beyond all controversy, there remains the patent fact that we have two resurrections distinguished here by their character — resurrections, not merely separated by time (which is stated expressly elsewhere, but after all it is quite a subordinate question), but in their own nature and issues as different as can possibly be. A difference of character is a far more important feature than a difference in point of time. For my own part, so far from thinking so much of the long space between them, I believe that were it but a minute which separated the resurrection of life and the resurrection of judgment, the eternal and essential features would remain; that the one is a resurrection of life which is given by the grace of God in His Son, and always distinguishes those who have received Him here; the other is a resurrection of judgment for those who would not have Him in this world, but are finally compelled by divine power, when His voice is heard in glory, to honour the Son even as the Father.

To this answers the well-known passage in the book of Revelation; but not it alone; for, in truth, scattered all over the New Testament, we have intimations of the great distinctions that the resurrection-state exhibits. It is true and very natural that the mass of the New Testament testimony should bear upon the resurrection of the righteous. Surely to dwell upon what is so bright and blessed, as being the fruit of the grace of God, is far sweeter to the Holy Ghost than to descant (save where it was needed as solemn warning) upon that which is the last awful resort of eternal judgment. Nevertheless we have the twofold fact plainly asserted in the New Testament, as well as constantly implied.

For instance, in Luke 14, we hear of the resurrection of the just, of those who had such communion with the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ as produced practical righteousness, — as indeed grace is the sole thing that does. They will have their recompence; not in this world (that would not be a ground or character of faith) but "in the resurrection of the just." This assuredly falls in with, and implies, a separate or special resurrection. Then again, in Luke 20, we read of the question being raised about the condition, of the risen dead. A puzzle was put to the Lord by the rationalistic Sadducees of that day, as to the resurrection. It was no matter of conscience, but of mere curiosity, if it were not rather an endeavour to embarrass our Lord, and so overthrow the truth. But the Lord answered with His own perfect wisdom, and showed that the mistake lay in their own minds, and that its source was their ignorance of the Scriptures and of the power of God. Had they known the Scriptures, they could not overlook the resurrection so strongly asserted there; had they known the power of God, how could mere difficulty to their minds stand in the way? It was then a question of human ignorance. God always will be found (and is there any wonder in this?) wiser and mightier than man. But the Lord, in His solution of the matter, takes occasion to impart rich instruction as to the resurrection, and more particularly as to the resurrection in its only sweet and happy sense — the "resurrection of life" and "of the just;" for though it be not called by either of these names in these places, it is evidently the same in substance. The language is perfectly clear. "They that shall be accounted worthy," the Lord says, "of that world (or age), and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry nor are given in marriage; but they are equal to the angels, and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection." In this

remarkable exposition, where is found the least appearance of a general resurrection? The Lord speaks solely of a blessed resurrection: the other does not even come into view. He describes a resurrection of those that should be accounted worthy; He alludes to a special age — "that age" in contrast with "this;" He characterises the resurrection as from the dead, and not of the dead only; He limits this resurrection to the sons of God. So far, therefore, we find that these passages of Scripture in nowise jumble together all classes of men in a common rising from their graves; but very distinctly indeed single out that resurrection which concerns the saints, though not, of course, denying the other. To the very same Luke, in the Acts of the Apostles (Acts 24: 15), we are indebted for the record "that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of just and unjust." Here again no sign appears of a promiscuous resurrection. The resurrection of two classes is quite definitely presented to us. It is not otherwise in John 6, where our Lord gives the negative to all question of an earthly deliverance by a Messiah such as the Jews expected. He had come down from heaven, Himself the living bread, and there was everlasting life given to them that believed in Him now in this world. This severs men even now; but He adds, "I will raise him up at the last day." Evident it is that here we have no confounding of the believer with the unbeliever; but, on the contrary, the portion that distinctly and exclusively pertains to the believer. Once more then the evidence, as far as it goes, is against the scheme which groups men together indiscriminately, whether righteous or unrighteous.

So again, when we come to the epistles, the same thing appears. The epistle to the Romans, which gives us the foundation of all individual truth (only touching upon corporate things slightly in one part of it), could not overlook the resurrection: as of Christ, so of those that are His. But the apostle does not go beyond the saints rising from the dead, because the principle of their resurrection lies in their having the Spirit of life, of which privilege Romans 8, speaks so largely. "If the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, the Spirit of him that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by," or because of, "his Spirit that dwelleth in you." There we have a principle of the weightiest kind; but what can more plainly mark distinction? Could it be said of any save of the believer? The unbeliever has not the Spirit of Christ, and is none of His. The saint alone has the Spirit of Him that raised up Christ from the dead dwelling in him; consequently we have in his case a resurrection, not as the salient proof of the Son of man's power and authority to judge men and compel their homage, but by reason of the Holy Ghost's indwelling. Hence from this moment, the believer has that true of him which distinguishes him for ever from the unbeliever. Indeed, knowing that so it is, I cannot but insist upon this truth as one of the most practical nature besides being also of the highest possible interest and importance otherwise. You will find, I am persuaded, that wherever there is an enfeebling of the distinction between the resurrection of the just and of the unjust; in a word, whenever men imagine a common class of those that are raised, there is at the same time always, more or less, a cloud over the gospel of God's grace, and a tendency at least to put the Christian on common ground with the unbeliever. I do not mean that there is conscious deliberate plan; but the effect is in result this very thing, as has been noticed already. And no wonder; for when all present shadows are clear away, they really believe that all, without exception, go through a common judgment, the believer being tried no less than the unbeliever, though saved one knows not how. But the Lord denies the fact, and asserts in the clearest and most positive terms, as we have seen, that the believer does not come into judgment, but is passed from death unto life.

Be not moved by Pharisaic any more than Sadducean outcries. Let no soul that loves the Lord and trembles at His word let go this momentous truth, or suffer it to be weakened by tradition or philosophy. Hold it fast as the word of Christ. People may reproach you as a heretic, as a proud rejecter of a dogma which the Christian world worships. But let me remind you that you belong to Christ, not to them. They are not lords over you, however much they might desire it: let them not therefore have

dominion over your faith. To the Lord you stand; to His word alone I commend you. Unmistakeable runs His assurance, "that he who heareth his word, and believeth him that sent him, hath everlasting life, and cometh not into judgment; but is passed from death unto life." "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." Life and judgment are irreconcilably distinct: you cannot have both, though Christ the Son gives the one and will execute the other. His friends and foes are the objects respectively.

Thus far we have seen the distinctive resurrection of the saint, evidently showing that the resurrection of the rest of the dead has quite a different character. But it is not confined to any one epistle. In 1 Corinthians we have a whole chapter (1 Cor. 15) devoted to the resurrection of the saints, as a scene entirely to itself. It is impossible to find in that chapter the resurrection of the unbeliever, except by implication. So little are they treated as a common company, that, on the contrary, the whole chapter, long as it is, and abounding in the most important details, deals with the resurrection of the righteous as an entirely separate matter. Beginning at ver. 22, we read these words: "As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming." Nothing can be more distinct. The resurrection of Christ was a resurrection not merely *of*, but *from*, the dead. No man can deny it. The resurrection of those that are Christ's is, no doubt, a resurrection of dead persons ( $\nu\epsilon\kappa\rho\tilde{\omega}\nu$ ); but it is also a resurrection *from* the dead ( $\acute{\epsilon}\kappa \nu\epsilon\kappa\rho\tilde{\omega}\nu$ ). Accordingly we have here this resurrection fixed to the time (not of "the end," but) of His coming — "they that are Christ's at his coming." He comes in His kingdom. The next stage is "the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father, when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power; for he must reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death." There we have in the clearest manner possible a statement of the separate resurrection of those that are Christ's, and not a word said about the rest. The point afterwards noticed is not the resurrection of the wicked, but "the end." The truth is, that "the end" will only be after the wicked are raised and judged, because the revealed account at "the end" is, not that He then raises up the wicked, but that He delivers up the kingdom. In 2 Tim. 4 we saw the judgment of the quick and the dead bound up with His appearing and His kingdom; for the kingdom includes the whole action of His power, from His appearing in the world until the new heavens and the new earth in their full, final sense. Before "the end," before He shall have delivered the kingdom up to God, even the Father, the dead, therefore, must be raised and judged; but so far from confusing together the unrighteous with the righteous in a general resurrection, we can only gather from other Scriptures where we must insert the resurrection of the unrighteous into this picture. The chapter, as such, is devoted to, and dwells only upon, the resurrection of the righteous. The most we can learn of the resurrection of the unjust, as far as 1 Cor. 15 is concerned, is, that it appears to be involved in some of the statements, however certainly it is revealed in other Scriptures.

The fifth chapter of 2 Cor. is remarkably full; but we may pass on, as I have already touched on it at some length. We have only the hope of the saints, save that the manifestation of all before Christ's judgment-seat is revealed there, but without an intimation of the time or circumstances; for which we must look elsewhere.

In the epistle to the Philippians we have a striking testimony to the speciality of the saints' resurrection. In Philippians 3 the apostle says — "That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death." All this is clearly now to be known in this world; but next follows the object he is waiting for — "If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection from the dead." (ver. 11.) The translation is changed according to

the true reading. In the commonly received text it stands as in the authorised version — "the resurrection *of* the dead." But I have no hesitation in saying that this is a mistake, though it is not a question of translation only, but of text. Unfortunately the ordinary Greek Testaments are just as faulty as King James' translators. You must not imagine that the actual condition of the text in a Greek Testament corresponds minutely with the inspired Scripture in its original perfection, any more than the English does, or any other version. What God wrote by the inspired penmen was perfect; but then it is evident that copyists and printers were not inspired, and I am sure the editors were not either. Accordingly we have some of them bad, some good, and some better, while none is such as to exclude enquiry or the need of a discerning judgment. But it is established now, upon all sorts of excellent testimony, and spite of considerably different systems of recension among the editors, and peculiarities in many other ways, that the true text is not τῶν νεκρῶν, but τὴν ἐκ νεκρῶν (the latter of which, I do not doubt, was gradually corrupted into the former). Now, there can be no just question that ἐξανάστασιν τὴν ἐκ νεκρῶν means "the resurrection that is from the dead.\* All the modern critics of just reputation (save one at the beginning of this century) have been obliged, by the weight of diplomatic evidence, to come to one result, and this a very satisfactory one for the truth, especially as none of those who thus settled the text were themselves aware of its bearing; and all of the German editors, at any rate, must be thought inclined to the error which is now cast out of this text. The expression used in the passage for resurrection is the strongest that occurs in God's word. There is a redoubled emphasis in the phrase. It seems to be designed forcibly to express a peculiar, not a collective, resurrection. It is not the usual word "resurrection;" but "out-resurrection" might help to convey the meaning to the English reader. It would not suit the genius of our tongue, I admit; but it may illustrate the original word, by the way, were one to say "If by any means I might attain to [or, arrive at] the out-resurrection *from* the dead." Thus there is a twofold emphasis; one from the word itself, which is used here only in the New Testament; the other from the strong regular phrase for an eclectic resurrection which follows. The true reading then which strengthens the evidence for a special rising of saints from among the dead, is established upon evidence which it would be out of the question to enter into here. But this I may say, that the editors of note (with one strange exception, more than fifty years since), whether believers or rationalists, Romanists or Protestants, High Church or Low Church, no matter who, if they were men competent to give a sound opinion, agree on the point. This result is happy, because the text, as it was, proved a stumbling-block to some who were too much swayed by the critic, who erroneously continued the received text, by some oversight, against his own witnesses. But at present the true text may be regarded as settled as to this verse. Nor is there any just doubt as to the right version. As little doubt ought there to be about the doctrine; for not a resurrection which is a necessity for all, but one of special privilege alone could be such an object of desire to the apostle's heart. He says, as it were, "I care not what the road may be, now that I see Christ and His resurrection. The blessedness of that portion with Him is such in my eyes, that let the path be ever so thorny, painful, and difficult, here am I, ready to go through anything, in order to be in the resurrection of the saints, — that special rising from among the dead."

\* It is not accurate to say that Polybius uses ἀνάστασις and ἐξανάστασις as equivalent. Of the former there is perhaps but one genuine occurrence in his extant remains, the force of which has been much contested; the latter occurs more frequently, but in a somewhat different sense.

As this seems to me the plain scope of the passage, it must be evident that it confirms to the last degree the truth of a special resurrection for the righteous, in which the unjust have no part. A general resurrection, in which everybody must rise as a matter of course, would make the apostle's ardour unaccountable. Nor is it only a "better resurrection," but *prior*; for rising from the dead necessarily supposes that there are dead left behind as yet. As with Christ, so will it be with those who are Christ's.

Further allusions there are, but they cannot be enlarged on now. The passage read at the beginning of this lecture is at least proved not to stand alone. If we had no Apocalypse, the doctrine of distinctive resurrection would be no strange sound to the student of the New Testament. It is confined to no prophetic book. Not that if it occurred only in the Apocalypse, a just ground would lie for standing in doubt. But we know how much ignorant prejudice there is, and has long been, against the Apocalypse of St. John. Hence I thought it might be desirable to show that, right through the Gospels and Epistles, there is on this subject but one doctrine, which is decidedly adverse to the common view of all, good and bad, rising together. Nothing is lost of truth which the common view owns; but on the Scriptural scheme, how great is the gain! If one were to teach only a resurrection of the righteous, this, I admit, would be rank heresy; for it would blot out the resurrection of the unjust — one of God's most solemn truths in warning to the unbelievers. The truth as God puts it strengthens the difference; for it draws the line most distinctly and overwhelmingly between just and unjust, while all that is true in the other view is retained. It is only what darkens and hinders the truth that is cast away.

In Revelation 20 we find, first of all, that after the beast has been judged and Satan bound, the prophet sees thrones, and persons seated upon them; then appear certain disembodied souls of those who had suffered during the earlier persecutions (Rev. 6); and, finally, others are there who refused the seductions, as well as the terrors, of the closing Apocalyptic scene. (Rev. 13 - 15) But these souls were reunited to their bodies, so that all lived and took part in the first resurrection — these two suffering classes, as well as the enthroned of the first clause of verse 4. Thus there are three distinct groups in the scene.

First, there are thrones, and sitters upon them, to whom judgment was given (not they judged, but judging). Of course these were not spirits. Who ever heard of spirits, absent from the body, seated on thrones? They were men risen and glorified already, and hence the prophet only speaks of "souls" after these. Who were they? They were the hosts who, having been caught up before, came out of heaven with Christ. The chapter before showed us the heavens opened, and the Lord, as a man of war, coming out attended by heavenly armies, who were in the execution of judgment along with Himself. (Rev. 19) They were arrayed in fine linen, bright and pure, which as we know (compare verses 8 and 14) expresses "the righteousness of saints," not of angels. It is not rash therefore to affirm that, although angels no doubt come along with Christ, still those here described as associated with Him in this triumphant style and title, cannot be angels but saints. These are the persons, I cannot question, seen sitting on the thrones.

"And [I saw] the souls," etc. These were others — of course not the same people. As to this, there are men with whom one differs widely who acknowledge it. Indeed it is evident that those already seated on thrones are followed by two other classes, whose souls had to be reunited to their bodies, and of whom (not of the first) it was necessary to say "they lived and reigned with Christ." As to the first, they were on thrones, living and reigning already. The souls, next seen after these, were of those who had suffered for the word of God and the testimony of Jesus, before it was a question of the beast or his image. But last of all came others that suffered later, *i.e.* when they refused to worship the beast or his image, or to accept his mark in their foreheads or in their hands. These two classes being yet in the separate state, had to live and be added to the others who had just come from heaven, and were for some time raised from the dead. But they are all said to have part in "the first resurrection." Plainly, therefore, this phrase does not imply that all who have part in it were raised together; but rather that it embraces all who are raised from among the dead. Long before the thousand years' reign began, the Lord was thus raised; — so were the Old Testament saints, as well as those who compose the Church. Now, we have the earlier and the later Apocalyptic sufferers, caused to live and join those already

viewed on thrones with judgment given them. The earlier martyrs were told that they must wait till their brethren, who should be killed as they had been, should be fulfilled; for the Lord would have the last object of the beast's vengeance included. Now it is complete, the beast being cast into hell. Of all these consists the first resurrection.

Next follows a brief but vivid sketch of the reign for a thousand years. We need not discuss whether it be a thousand years symbolically or literally. Not that I doubt it is to be taken literally. The important point to see and maintain is that it is a long, though limited, time; distinguished in character from what went before, as well as from what follows itself. It is Christ's reign with the glorified saints for a certain defined period (not through eternity). There are striking changes as to conditions and circumstances, but still substantially the heavens and earth that now are; creation delivered from the curse; Satan bound; man blest; the glorified saints in their proper heavenly place; Israel in the inner earthly circle, and the Gentiles in the outer circle; all this combined and going on through the millennium. How it all differs from the old Chiliastic scheme is manifest. Indeed, I am not surprised that grave men rose up against the notion that the Lord Jesus should again live as a man on the earth during the thousand years. Such a view is both unscriptural and repulsive; though it was sorrowful that, in discarding the chaff, Origen and others lost so much of the wheat. But the thoughts of good men like Irenaeus, Justin Martyr, and others, were clogged with elements which ruined their testimony to a great extent, and gave occasion to the philosophising reaction which allegorised almost all. Scripture does not such violence to the spiritual instincts of the children of God, and enables us to hold fast what is good, while we refuse the evil.

In this blessed scene then we see the heavens put in connection with the earth, whereby blessing flows from the Highest down to the least. It is the divinely ordered scheme of blessing, with man in Christ in His rightful headship to God's glory. There are the glorified saints in their proper place. The mount of transfiguration presents distinctively its chief constituents. The Lord Jesus stands the chief of all, with Peter, James, and John; saints but in their unchanged natural bodies on the earth. But do we not also discern Moses representing the dead saints raised, and Elias the living saints changed, in immediate proximity to Christ? The representatives of the risen and the changed, with their Lord, enter the cloud; which is not said of Peter, James, and John, but rather that they feared at the sight; for the cloud was the peculiar sign of Jehovah's presence. There is thus a wondrous nearness vouchsafed to the glorified saints: while these with the Lord will have close links of association with those on earth, they only will enjoy that special and immediate entrance into the presence of God. Truly and in every sense our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ. The saints, still in their natural bodies, did not enter there. Peter erred on this very occasion; so no doubt the millennium will not be exempt. But then the Lord will govern righteously, and His power control all that requires to be kept in check. That age is not characterized by the absolute extinction of evil, but it is by the glorious power of the Lord in government: Satan being restrained from tempting men on earth. Of course all evil is gone for ever from the heavens, as eternity will see it finally banished from the new earth also.

But during the millennial reign of the risen saints with Christ, no more will be seen on the earth than evil kept in check, and its great source expelled for the time, but not yet extinguished, while the beneficent power of God will be conspicuous everywhere. The consequence is, that at the end of the thousand years the Lord will give a proof that, even after the blessed and perfect government of Christ, man is as liable as ever to desert God and His blessing for Satan. No proof of the Lord's goodness, no deliverance outwardly from the thralldom of Satan suffices. If not regenerate, he will instantly fall a prey after the revelation of glory, just as much as now in the presence of God's revealed grace. Satan is let loose once more, as if to test this tremendous experiment. At once the pent-up nations of the earth,

especially from the more distant parts, turn from their righteous benefactor; they prefer Satan! The nations are here put under the symbol of Gog and Magog, with evident allusion to Ezekiel, who gave the fall of the last Gentile foe before the millennium, as the apostle John here gives the last earthly enemy after it. They gather against the earthly Jerusalem, but they rise to fall for ever. Fire from God comes down and consumes them. Thus smitten, they join the rest of the dead whom the first resurrection left behind. The next scene shows all these dead rising for the resurrection of judgment. They are the unjust from the beginning of the world; they must now stand before the great white throne. "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection." The unblest, the unholy await (I will not call it what God has not called it, the second resurrection, but, alas!) "the second death." The issue of divine judgment was so terrible, as well as the character of those that composed it, that it could only be rightly conveyed in these terms of grievous import.

There they stand (verse 12), the great and the small, before the throne (which is the true reading); but where is it? Just before (verse 11) we were told the earth and the heaven fled, and no place was found for them; after which is seen, not thrones, but "a great white throne," before which the dead stand to be judged. Does the Lord appear at this point? On the contrary, it is the disappearing of the whole system of things to which He could come; and therefore, if the Lord wait for that epoch to come, it is impossible that He could be said in any just sense to come into this world (οἴκουμένην). For the earth and the heaven are expressly said to flee at that time; and this, with an additional statement which shows how complete was the dissolution — "no place was found for them." They do not reappear till after the judgment of the dead is closed. Christ's coming to the world is really described in chapter 19, before the millennium. At the end of the millennium there is no coming of Christ, but rather a departure, if you will, of the heaven and the earth that now are. Then we find the dead standing before the throne, books opened, with another book, the book of life, and the dead *judged* out of the things written in the books, according to their works. How comes this? Why are these, without exception, said to be judged according to their works; for it is solemnly repeated, in verse 13, they were judged every man (or each) according to their works? Because they are all unbelievers.

Thus the word of the Lord stands for ever. He had said upon earth that the believer does not come into judgment. Assuredly therefore the believer, manifested as he will be, can never come into judgment; for this would falsify His words who is the truth. The unbeliever alone will be judged. This again strongly confirms, what is otherwise so clear and certain, that we have had already the resurrection of the righteous or believers. Consequently the only persons left in their graves were the unbelievers. Thus all is according to the perfect harmony of the truth of God. The wicked, and they alone, are judged, each according to their works. This could not be if there had been a single believer among these dead. Here again there is no sign of a general resurrection. The unjust are raised at the end, and are judged as the just had been long before, and had judgment given to them without one hint of being judged. Need I remark how the Gospel and the Apocalypse of John coincide? But how, it may be asked, can there be no believers? What becomes of the many righteous who live during the millennium? It is very natural that people should enquire why they are not included in this judgment. But evidently they could not be, and for this simple reason, that it is only *the dead* that stand and are judged, while, on the other hand, there is no ground to believe that a single saint will die during the millennium. The reason is manifest. Satan will not be there, but bound; and Christ will be there, and reign in righteousness. In the absence therefore of him that has the power of death, in the presence of Him that has the power of life, what wonder is it that the righteous of that day should live throughout the whole millennial period, and be every one of them witnesses of the living God, who carries them beyond the limits that were fatal to men, even in the antediluvian state? Notoriously before the flood, not one reached the barrier of a thousand years. But things are ruled no more according to that one man

by whom sin entered into the world, and death by sin. It is the reign of the man Christ Jesus, who will in every sense give life more abundantly, and prove that God did not make man to die but to live. Accordingly every righteous man then living shall live right through without death. So I understand Isaiah 65: 20-22, as asserting that he who dies at a hundred years of age is but a child, and even then dies not, save under special curse. It is the exception which proves the rule. In that day death is not extinct till the close of it, but it is only in direct judgment of sin. That the righteous die is nowhere said. Man will then fill his days; but for this he is indebted to the Second Man, the vanquisher of Satan.

Are we waiting for these things? or are we beguiled into the lie of expecting that what now is must ever be? Still the bright millennium will have an end, and there is revealed an awful scene at the end, when heaven and earth shall pass away. The Lord does not gratify our curiosity by informing us what He will do with the righteous then living; but of this we may be sure, that as those who live are His saints, He will not act beneath Himself but in His wonted grace with them. He must do all that is good and great. We have no claim to ask what He has not told us; we must leave all the unrevealed with Him. It does not concern us. But what does concern men ever is, that which must befall those who have not the Lord Jesus now as theirs. All the wicked dead before the flood or after it, before Christ or after Him, before the first resurrection or afterwards, shall rise; the righteous dead had been raised, the wicked had yet lain dead; but now the dead stand before the throne, and are judged. Two elements enter into this judgment. On the one side, books are open, in which, according to the symbol, their deeds were written, who will then be judged. On the other side is opened the book of life. Human responsibility is there; but also the witness of divine sovereignty. It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment. The grace of life in Christ was refused; death could not be evaded, nor now judgment. Men were judged, each according to his works. The books proclaimed their deeds that they were evil. The book of life was mute; none of their names was found written in it. Thus all the witnesses perfectly agreed. For the books of works demonstrated their just exposure to the wrath of God; while in the book of life there was not a word to deprecate His wrath; and, as it is said here, "if anyone was not found written in the book of life, he was cast into the lake of fire." Not a hint is given of any who were enrolled in it. The only allusion to the book of life is thus purely negative; and every image serves but to increase the solemnity of the scene. No doubt when, before the millennial kingdom, the voice of the Lord Jesus called the risen saints to be with Him, many bodies were gathered out of the sea, and many souls out of hades. But there is nothing said here save about the lost who had been left behind, or those added to them afterwards. For the day of blessedness there was no such thought as ransacking the sea and hades, if I may so say; and most justly and worthily, because it was a simple question of Christ, and those that were His. Such a link was between them — such a mighty power bound them to Christ, that at His voice they instantly arose. But now the knell of the lost tolls in these terrible words: "The sea gave up the dead that were in it; and death and hades gave up the dead that were in them: and they were judged, each according to their works." Whether it was the restless, uncurbed ocean that kept their bodies, or the invisible world that held their souls, both are compelled to yield up their prisoners at last to the Judge. No power could retain, nor secret place could hide them, when the Son of man claimed them for judgment.

The eternal state will not require many words. The truth is, that Scripture gives us but brief explanations of it; probably because we are so little capable in our present condition of estimating its conditions. It is evident that its details cannot be especially calculated to act upon the soul. Still, inasmuch as it was needful for us, and due to God, as it was a part of His goodness and wisdom to tell us of everything, He does make known sufficient to put us in possession of the great distinctive features of eternity.

The only three passages that I think of at this moment, which refer positively and without the mixture of anything else to the eternal state, are found in 1 Cor. 15: 24, 28; in 2 Peter 3: 13; and in Rev. 21: 1-8.

In 1 Cor. 15 Scripture thus speaks of it: "Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and authority and power" (ver. 24); and yet more plainly in ver. 28: "And when all things shall be subdued unto him," etc. The millennial reign is not absolute perfection, except in the source of the power and the condition of the saints above, or the glorified. But as to the earth, there will still be evil — kept down, indeed, by power, though showing its existence throughout that whole era. "And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all."

Thus the characteristic feature of the millennium, here pointed out, is *man* exalted. Jesus Christ is Lord and Head over all things, to the glory of God the Father; but still the prominent thought is man in Him. He that humbled himself is, then, highly exalted. In the eternal state it is not so much the idea of man, so to speak, set thus over creation, but God all in all. We must, however, carefully bear in mind that, if God is said to be all in all, this means not the Father only, but the Son, and the Holy Ghost also. Such is the great distinction of eternity: God is all in all. It is the first lesson the New Testament gives us as to this state; and a very important one it is.

In the next place 2 Peter 3 tells us that righteousness *dwells* in the new heavens and earth. In the millennium righteousness governed. Evil was there, and needed, though it found, control; in eternity it disappears: government is no longer wanted.

We shall find all this confirmed in Rev. 21: 1-8: "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea." One broad physical fact that distinguishes the eternal state from all that had ever been, is the disappearance of the sea. I need not say that the non-existence of the sea would be fatal to everything of natural life, as the world now is. How vast the change then! The fact is, that all mere nature will have completely passed away; the course of dispensations is then over; all will be fixed for ever. The consequence is, that what was necessary as long as the earth was the scene of divine dispensations, and alas! of man's restless projects, with all his corruption and violence, with a ruined lower creation, will find no place then. Animal and vegetable life are no longer in question. God will be all in all.

Again, the new Jerusalem "comes down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband." Before the millennium began, the bride was complete, and the marriage took place on high. It is in vain therefore to think of the Church still going on in process of formation on earth during the millennium. Will any one say that, after the marriage, the bride had still to be completed? Can one conceive an interpretation more full of absurdity? The beautiful truth in the description at the beginning of Rev. 21 is, that though a thousand years had passed, there is an unchanging freshness in the bride — an eternal bloom, if we may use the expression. She comes down to be the tabernacle or dwelling-place of God Himself in this holy and glorious scene. She had been glorified with Christ during the millennium; but might the thought arise that, because God is thenceforward all in all, she had lost her special place? This is answered in the fact that the new Jerusalem descends once more into the new and everlasting creation of God. Of course it had disappeared from below (as also, no doubt, the millennial saints living on earth previously) when all was convulsed, and the elements melted with fervent heat; but now it comes down from heaven into the eternal scene. The new Jerusalem was in eternal blessedness long before, and therefore it more corresponds to the new state. "And I heard a great voice

out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men." It is not "with Israel," or "with nations," but "with men."

Moreover, mark "the tabernacle of *God*." It is not "the tabernacle of Jehovah of Hosts;" it is not "the tabernacle of Jehovah," or of any dispensational name; but it is God, who is all in all. See how this harmonizes with all we have had already. The epistles of Paul and Peter and the Apocalypse, mutually sustain each other. "The tabernacle of God is with men." What is this? It is the new Jerusalem that comes down. It is there that God especially has His dwelling; which now, as never so fully before, takes a place with men. And who are they? Here, it seems to me, you have an answer to the question what became of the righteous saints that were dead. Of the wicked, and their death and judgment, we have had God's history in Rev. 20. Now we have an intimation to meet the desire of the soul, as far as it is just, to know what became of the righteous that had lived during the millennium. They had no part, we saw, in that most unsparing, holy judgment which consigned all who were in it to the lake of fire. "The tabernacle of God [symbol of the glorified Church in which He dwelt] is *with men*." Accordingly with these men He tabernacles, and they are His people, and God Himself is with them, their God. Further, as we are told, "He shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying; neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful. And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely." Then comes the promise.

But another word must not be passed over, for a more solemn declaration there is not — men suffering the wrath of God in this final and fixed eternal condition of all things and all men, when God is all in all. If we have the tabernacle of God as the inner circle; if we have men outside that tabernacle, but still blessed for ever in proximity to it, God Himself tabernacling with them, He their God as they His people, — even in that unchanging state, we have the awful picture of "the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolators, and all liars," who "have their part in the lake of fire." Whatever may be the joy and gladness of the millennium, whatever the holy blessedness of the new heavens and new earth, the very same warrant of God, which gives us to know the eternal privileges of those that are His, declares the eternal ruin and torment of those that despise Him. There is no hope of any change in their condition. The last view that the word of God vouchsafes of eternal blessing, shed by God among men as such when they are brought into the last fixed condition in the new heavens and the new earth, has at the same time the lake of fire with all its endless horrors as the dark background none the less sure, for His enemies of all dispensations.

May our gracious God bless His own word — bless it to His children — bless it as a warning to those that are still impenitent, for Jesus' sake! Surely "the time is at hand." "Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

W.K.