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C. THE JUDGMENT.

I. THE FACT OF THE JUDGMENT.

1. DISTINCTLY TAUGHT IN THE OLD TESTAMENT.

Psa. 96:13—"For he cometh, for he cometh to judge the earth: he shall judge the world with righteousness, and the people with his truth." While this passage refers more particularly to the rewarding of the righteous, yet the idea of judgment is here. Both reward and punishment are involved in the idea of judgment.

2. THE NEW TESTAMENT.

Acts 17:31—"Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead." Heb. 9:27. Just as it is "appointed unto men once to die" so it is appointed unto men to appear before the judgment. There is no more escape from the one than from the other.

It is part of the burden of both the Old and New Testament message that a day of judgment is appointed for the world. God's kingdom shall extend universally; but a judgment in which the wicked are judged and the righteous rewarded is necessary and in order that the kingdom of everlasting righteousness may be established upon the earth.

3. THE CONSCIENCE OF ALL MANKIND CORROBORATES THE TEACHING OF THE SCRIPTURES WITH REGARD TO THE CERTAINTY OF A COMING JUDGMENT.

This is true of both the individual and universal conscience. The discoveries of tablets as well as the history of all peoples establish this fact. This is enforced by Eccl. 11:9; 12:14—a book which is in a very real sense a book of worldly philosophy, narrating, as it does, the experiences and observations of a man who judged all things from the view-point of “under the sun,” i. e., without special reference to any revelation from above.

4. THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST IS A SURE AND CERTAIN PROOF WHICH GOD HAS GIVEN TO MEN OF A COMING JUDGMENT.

Acts 17:31 (quoted above). Here is “assurance” in the sense of proof or ground of evidence. The context is suggestive: God had long borne with the sins of men, and in a sense, overlooked them. Therefore men have thought that God would continue to do so. But no, this shall not be; there is a day of judgment coming, the evidence of which lies in the fact of the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

II. THE JUDGE—CHRIST.

John 5:22, 23, 27; 2 Tim. 4:1; 2 Cor. 5:10; Acts 10:42; 17:31. The Man of the Cross is the Man of the Throne. Note the expression “Because he is the Son of Man.” That indicates His fitness to judge: He can sympathize. But He is equal with the Father. This too indicates His competency to judge, for it implies omniscience. The texts which speak of God as judging the world are to be understood as referring to God the Son. No appeal can be made from the Son to the Father.

III. THE NATURE OF THE JUDGMENT.

The erroneous idea that there is to be one great general judgment which is to take place at the end of the world, when all mankind shall stand before the great white throne, is to be guarded against. The judgments of the Bible differ as to time, place, subjects, and results.

1. THERE IS A JUDGMENT THAT IS ALREADY PAST —THE JUDGMENT AT THE CROSS.

John 5:24; 12:31; 2 Cor. 5:21; Gal. 3:13; 1 Pet. 2:24. At this judgment bar Satan was judged and his power over the believer broken. Here also the sins of the believer were judged and put away.

2. THERE IS A PRESENT JUDGMENT WHICH IS TAKING PLACE DAILY IN THE LIFE OF THE BELIEVER.

1 Cor. 11:31, 32; 5:5; 1 Tim. 1:20; cf., for illustration, 2 Sam. 7:14, 15; 12:13, 14. This continual judgment must be going on in the life of the believer or there will be judgment from God because of the consequent failure to grow in grace. There must be constant and continual judging of sin as it comes up in the believer's life (1 John 1:5-7).

3. THERE IS A FUTURE JUDGMENT.

a) Of the Saints.

1 Cor. 3:8-16; 2 Cor. 5:10; 1 Cor. 4:5. This is to be a judgment with reference to the works, not the salvation, of the believer. It is called "the judgment seat of Christ." That the saints are here referred to is clear from 2 Cor. 5:1, 5, 7, 9; also 1 Cor. 4:5 which says that those who are judged "shall have praise of God." This is not true of the wicked. This is a judgment, not for destiny, but for adjustment, for reward or loss according to our works, for position in the kingdom; every man according as his work shall be.

b) Of the Living Nations.

Matt. 25:31-46. This judgment will take place at the coming of Christ with His saints. Note three things in this chapter: first, the marriage supper of the Lamb (vv. 1-13); second, the judg-

ment of the saints (vv. 14-30); third, the judgment of the living nations (vv. 31-46). This is not a general judgment of good and bad, for there are three classes here. "My brethren" can hardly refer to the saints, for then it would be "inasmuch as ye have done it unto yourselves, ye have done it unto me." Nor is the Church in this judgment, for she is already translated and rewarded as we have seen. The Church no more belongs to the nations than does Israel. The nations are those who deal with Israel through the great tribulation. The "brethren" are probably the Jewish remnant who have turned to Christ during the great tribulation and whom the Antichrist has severely persecuted as also have many of the wicked nations, like Russia today. This is a judgment of nations that are living; there is no mention of the dead.

c) Of the Great White Throne.

Rev. 20:11-15. It is called the final judgment and takes place at the close of the millennium, after the judgment of the living nations (Matt. 25). It is a judgment of "the dead"; no mention is made of the living in connection therewith.

Note the difference between the judgments of the Living Nations and of the Great White Throne: the former at the beginning, the latter at the close of the millennium; one deals with the living, the other with the dead; one deals with conduct towards "the brethren," the other with general sins recorded in the books.

d) Of Israel.

Ezek. 20:33-44; Psa. 50:16-22. Takes place probably at the end of the great tribulation.

e) Of the Fallen Angels.

Jude 6; 2 Pet. 2:4. Believers are associated with Christ in this judgment (1 Cor. 6:3).