

## Christian Retirement

Part 78

By [Thomas Reade](#)

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### ON THE DAY OF JUDGMENT

He who said, "Behold, I am coming soon! My reward is with me, and I will give to everyone according to what he has done," will soon appear seated on his great white throne, as the glorified God-man, the judge of the living and the dead. How all absorbing should the consideration of this period be! And yet, alas! how little does it interest the minds of thoughtless millions! Occupied with ten thousand vanities, men seldom think upon, much less prepare for death and judgment. The ever-varying concerns of life fill up each fleeting hour, until, reaching the verge of their earthly existence, they are hurried, in all their unpreparedness, into the presence of their God. Oh! that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end.

The day of judgment will be a day of final separation. Now, the wheat and the tares grow together; but then, we shall discern between the righteous and the wicked between him that serves God, and him that serves him not. Many who were first in the estimation of men, will be found last in the sight of God; while many who were last in the esteem of the world, will be exalted in the presence of saints and angels. The once flaming professor of godliness will be cast into outer darkness, when his secret thoughts shall be revealed to an assembled world. Self-love, spiritual pride, vain-glory, and a thousand unhallowed springs of action, will then be disclosed to his utter confusion, and prove the worthlessness of his boasted righteousness.

What self-reproaches, what gnawings of conscience—that worm which never dies—will tear the hearts of those who were once enlightened and tasted of the heavenly gift, yet apostatized from the faith, through the fear of man or love of the world; thus manifesting that their hearts were never right with God. What dismay and anguish will be seen in the countenances of others, who, when on earth, despised the riches of divine mercy, or trifled away their day of grace. The man of business, whose time was engrossed in amassing wealth as his chief good; the voluptuary, who devoted all his powers to sinful pleasures; the man of ambition, who sacrificed his conscience to the idol of worldly greatness; the man of science, (falsely so called,) who disdained to bend his reason to divine revelation,—will each be found to be a fool and a madman; while the holy, self-

denying believer in Jesus, whose life was counted madness, and his end to be without honor, will appear most glorious when his lot is among the saints.

"Remember me, Oh! Lord, according to the favor that you bear unto your people; Oh! visit me with your salvation, that I may see the felicity of your chosen, and rejoice in the gladness of your people, and give thanks with your inheritance."

Would we be found among the redeemed in the day of judgment, we must be willing to drink of their cup. Jesus was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; and his people have ever been an afflicted people. The offence of the cross has not ceased, for, "as he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now." "All that will live godly in Christ Jesus, shall suffer persecution." The poison of the old serpent is as active and deadly in its nature as ever. It is only through the restraining power of God, when its destructive effects are checked. "If the world hates you," said our blessed Lord, "you know that it hated me before it hated you." "The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you." Oh! then, you servants of Jesus, do not be afraid of those who kill the body, and, after that, have no more that they can do. Your souls are safely guarded by your almighty Savior; because he lives, you shall live also.

This world is designed to be a place of trial. The enemies of Jesus may, for a season, be permitted to harass his church. But He who is in the midst of her, is omnipotent. The very storm which threatens her destruction shall be overruled to promote her stability and purity. The triumphing of the wicked is short. Oh! what fearfulness will seize upon the enemies of Zion, when her king shall be revealed from heaven in flaming fire, to take vengeance on those who know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ; and when he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all those who believe. Then will the pilgrim's sigh be exchanged for the song of heaven.

"The trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised." But, Oh! how awful the thought; some shall awake to "shame and everlasting contempt." This doom Jesus pronounced when on earth; "whoever shall be ashamed of me, and of my words, in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels." Ashamed of Jesus! Yes,—thousands of 'decent Christians', who, while they dread to commit acts of gross immorality, lest a stain should be affixed to their character, are not afraid to deny Christ before men. They are ashamed to appear in the rank of his faithful followers; they shrink from the imputation of being righteous over-much. They are willing to conform to the duties and decencies of religion, as far as the world approves, and common custom sanctions; but beyond this, they dare not go. They love the praise of men, more than the praise of God.

Oh! all you Christians of this highly-favored age, who refuse to deny yourselves, to take up the cross, and to follow Christ through evil report and good report, how

overwhelming will be your condemnation! When standing before his judgment-seat, methinks the glorified Savior will say—Behold, you cowardly professors, that noble army of martyrs, now standing at my right hand, who lived in the days when PAGAN ROME bathed its sword in the blood of my saints. In the view of racks and tortures, of savage beasts, of flames and crosses, they confessed me, their God and Savior. When the awful crisis came—deny or die—they freely yielded up their lives to death, for my sake and the Gospel's. See also this glorious company of the faithful, who lived in the days when PAPAL ROME issued its bloody mandates against my chosen flock. These also chose to die, rather than bear the mark of the beast, and worship his image. But you, double-minded professors, denied me in the midst of outward peace and personal security, when my Gospel was faithfully preached, and my followers were protected by the laws of your country. What, then, deterred you from confessing me before men? Was it something more dreadful than racks and flames? Hear, Oh heavens, and be astonished! These wretched souls denied me, only lest they should encounter the shyness of friends, the cold looks and unkind speeches of carnal relatives, the raillery of unbelievers, the sacrifice of some temporal gain, or the crucifixion of some beloved lust. They preferred sin and the world to my favor and heaven; therefore, they shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone.

Such will be the doom of all faint-hearted and false-hearted professors of the Gospel, who shrink from suffering, who dread to sustain the consecrated cross. The word of God, which cannot be broken, expressly declares that "the fearful and unbelieving, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death."

The day of judgment, so full of horrors to the wicked, will be a day of blessedness to the righteous. The voice of the archangel, and the trumpet of God, will announce the joyful hour of deliverance. Their sleeping dust shall be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye. They shall be made like unto Christ's glorious body, and dwell forever with the Lord. Oh blissful state, when sin shall no longer defile nor sorrow distress; when Satan shall never again be permitted to tempt or terrify the sheep of Christ.

The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night. When men are saying peace and safety, then sudden destruction comes upon them, and they shall not escape. As it was in the days of Noah, so shall the coming of the Son of man be. How important, then, is a spirit of watchfulness and prayer! Blessed are they, who, with their loins girded, and their lamps burning, are waiting for the coming of their Lord; yes, looking for and hastening unto the coming of the day of God. But let us remember the foolish virgins. Have we oil in our vessels with our lamps? Without the indwelling Spirit, an outward profession will avail us nothing. Oh! how awful was the cry when the approach of the Bridegroom was announced, "Our lamps are gone out." They slept in carnal security, and awoke to endless horrors.

Then would they have entered the heavenly mansion, but "the door was shut;" and, being once closed, was closed forever.

Nothing will stand the test of death and judgment but the religion of the heart, a real union to Christ by faith. Every earthly thing, when weighed in the balance of eternity, is less than nothing, and vanity. Yet, strange to tell, the smallest trifle can drive futurity from our minds, until taught the value of the soul at the cross of Christ. Have we experienced the converting grace of God? How wonderful is the power of the Spirit in the regeneration of a sinner! He turns the wilderness into a fruitful field, and makes all things new. Do we loathe our once beloved sins, and love the once neglected Savior? Are our affections tending heavenward, which before were buried in the earth?

How happy is the believer in Jesus! He is filled with joy and peace. Knowing in whom he has believed, he can repose with calm reliance on the faithfulness of his Redeemer. While journeying through the wilderness, he feeds upon the heavenly manna, and is refreshed by living water from the smitten Rock. The pillar of fire, and the cloud, guide and protect him. Underneath and around him are the everlasting arms. He realizes the sweetness of the promise, "The beloved of the Lord shall dwell in safety by him, and the Lord shall cover him all the day long." And as he approaches the banks of Jordan—the cold stream of death which rolls between him and his promised rest—he hears a voice from heaven proclaiming, "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth; yes, says the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors, and their works do follow them." Full of faith and hope, he falls asleep in Jesus, and enters into the joy of his Lord. Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright, for the end of that man is peace.

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