

THE WESLEYAN.

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"LET US CONSIDER ONE ANOTHER TO PROVOKE UNTO LOVE AND TO GOOD WORKS."—HEBREWS X. 24.

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DIVINITY.

[FOR THE WESLEYAN.]

THE JUDGMENT-SEAT OF CHRIST.

"We must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ."—11. Cor. v. 10.

THE judicial proceedings of the judgment day are glowingly described in two remarkable visions; and it is a notable coincidence, that these two visions have been granted to two illustrious captives. Daniel, during his captivity in Babylon, beheld the four winds of heaven contending upon the great sea; and while he was striving to account for this singular conflict, he saw four beasts issue from the convulsed ocean. In the midst of the religious and political contentions which these creatures prefigure, the end comes; and then all the nations are required to give an account unto Him "by whom kings reign and princes decree justice." "I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool: his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire. A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him: thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him: the judgment was set, and the books were opened." Dan. vii. 9, 10.

The beloved disciple was comforted, amid the privations of Patmos, by a luminous panorama of "The Day of Judgment." He was now a banished man, enduring a painful exile, because he preferred the favour of God, to the patronage of Domitian. The venerable sufferer, however, repined not—for he knew that he would soon be "where the wicked cease from troubling;" and of this he had an encouraging presage in the discomfiture of Christ's enemies, and in the erection of his tribunal: "And I saw a great white throne and him that sat on it;—and I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God: and the books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life, and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works." Rev. xx. 11, 12.

ALL, both "small and great," will have to encounter this solemn interview with Christ. ALL, of every nation, must "appear before the judgment seat of Christ." The polished inhabitants of Europe—the voluptuous natives of Asia—the persecuted children of Africa—and the enterprising people of America. ALL, of every dispensation—Patriarchs, Jews, and Christians. ALL, of every religious creed and profession—Roman Catholics and Protestants—Churchmen and Dissenters—Arminians and Calvinists—Methodists and Baptists, &c. ALL, of every grade in society—emperors and kings—princes and pontiffs—prelates and lords—priests and laymen. In a word—ALL, from Adam, the progenitor of mankind, down to the last person into whose nostrils the Almighty shall breathe the breath of life, shall appear before "The Judgment-Seat of Christ." And then—

"We must from God be driven,
Or with our Saviour dwell;
Must come at his command to heaven,
Or else—depart to hell."

But before this inconceivable multitude will be assembled together, a great many changes shall take place. There shall be signs and wonders in heaven above, and in the earth beneath, and in the waters under the earth: "blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke. The sun shall be turned into

darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and terrible day of the Lord come."

The universe, as it now exists, presents a most beautiful scene, abounding in all the attractions and varieties of a most gorgeous landscape. The sky above us is painted in azure and gold: it is profusely gemmed with shining pearls, and adorned in the centre with a superb fountain of light, from which streams of beauty and glory are constantly proceeding. Innumerable lakes and rivers are pursuing their undeviating course, and as they rush through the intersecting glens, or calmly breathe through the valleys, they water the earth, and perpetuate its fruitfulness. Seas and oceans are rolling on, bearing upon their bosom the ships of every nation. Splendour and music maintain a wide dominion—every bush sustains a warbler; melody, sweet and various, is held in every grove, "while day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge." Again, the earth is dotted all over with kingdoms and commonwealths, provinces and cities. These comprise superb squares, magnificent promenades, spacious streets; and these again are built up with churches dedicated to the only true and wise God—temples and shrines inscribed "to the lords many, and gods many," whom the heathens "ignorantly worship." Associated with these are theatres and saloons, halls of legislation, and courts of justice; hospitals, and public baths; palaces and prisons; arsenals, colleges, &c. Further, all these are encircled with the productions of genius, and the monuments of art; with the trophies of war, and the acquisitions of research; with the creations of science, the accumulations of industry, and the luxuries of commerce.

But in a little while, all this harmony will be deranged, and all this comeliness deformed. All the cities, kingdoms, and continents of the world—yea, all the worlds, globes, and planets, that compose the vast fabric of nature, shall be engulfed in an ocean of liquid flame, over the highest billow of which "the Angel of the Lord" shall fly, summoning all mankind to appear before "THE JUDGMENT SEAT OF CHRIST." "The heavens and the earth which are now, are kept in store, reserved unto fire, against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men." 2d Peter, iii. 7. The individual and personal changes, however, to be included amongst the events of this tremendous day, will be as wonderful in their operation and consequences, as those to which we have adverted: "Behold," says the Apostle, "I shew you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality." 1. Cor. xv. 51, 52, 53.

In the day of judgment, all the visions will be sealed, and all the prophecies will be fulfilled. The race of man, now sixty centuries old, will then be extinct for ever. God will be avenged, and the saints of the Most High shall take the kingdom. The enemies of Christ will be vanquished; the dragon and the false prophet will be burned with fire; "the wicked shall be turned into hell;" and the Messiah shall "put down all rule, and all authority and power."

And besides—The ambitious man will suddenly find himself in the presence of a Judge, who was meek and lowly, while he is forming plans of future aggrandisement, the execution of which would engross half a century. The sordid wretch, who made usury the business of his life, shall be dragged to "The Judgment Seat" of Him who

hath said, "If riches increase, set not your heart upon them;" at the very moment he is striving to add field to field, and barn to barn. The blasphemer will be hurried to the bar of that God who has said, "Swear not at all"—preceded by a volley of oaths, the utterance of which concluded his profane existence. And—

But there are some who deserve to be particularly noticed, for they shall appear very conspicuous before "The Judgment Seat of Christ." Here will be the DEVIL, the old serpent that was cast out of heaven; and there will be ADAM AND EVE, whom he beguiled and tempted. Here will be CAIN, who first shed human blood; and there will be ABEL, the innocent victim of a brother's barbarity. Here will be NOAH, the antediluvian preacher; and there will be his impenitent countrymen, who laughed at his zeal, and derided his piety. Here will be MOSES, and the Israelites that came out of Egypt; and there will be PHARAOH, and his army, who were drowned in the Red Sea. Here will be BELSHAZZAR, the Chaldean, who degraded the vessels of God's temple into the appurtenances of a midnight revel; and there will be DANIEL, the prophet, who told the imperial sensualist that his days were numbered, and his grave prepared. Here will be NABUCHADNEZZAR, the autocrat of the East; and there will be SHADRACH, MESHACH, and ABERNEGO, whom he cast into the fiery furnace. Here will be CYRUS, the Persian, who emancipated the people of God; and there will be ALEXANDER, the Macedonian, who strove to enslave all mankind.

Here, assembled before "The Judgment Seat of Christ," will be the WISE MEN that travelled from the East to see "the King of the Jews;" and there will be the SHEPHERDS, to whom the birth of that King was announced. Here will be JOHN THE BAPTIST, who came to prepare the way of the Lord; and there will be HEROD THE KING, by whom he was beheaded. Here will be JUDAS the apostate, who betrayed his master, and then hanged himself in despair; and there will be PETER, who denied him with oaths and curses, but afterwards wept and repented. Here will be the ROMAN EMPERORS, that did every thing in their power to exterminate the Church; and there will be the PRIMITIVE CHRISTIANS, that patiently suffered, gallantly contended, and nobly died for "the faith once delivered to the saints." Here will be VOLTAIN, and HUME, SPINOSA, and PAINE, and all the deistical philosophers, who employed their erudition and genius to bewilder the understandings, and destroy the souls of men; and there will be LUTHER and CALVIN, BAXTER and KNOX, WHITEFIELD and WESLEY, and all the zealous defenders and preachers of the Gospel, who laboured incessantly, "warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that they might present every man perfect in Christ Jesus."

And now, the predestined hour has at length arrived—the time has come when all must appear before "THE JUDGMENT SEAT OF CHRIST." Behold then!—see, a thousand cataracts of fire are rolling down from heaven—the firmament is torn into shreds—the dome of the world is fallen in—the pillars that supported time are tottering—the sun is rushing from his orbit—the sea and the waves are roaring—the gates of hell are trembling—the powers of heaven are shaking—the everlasting doors are lifting up their heads—and lo, JESUS, attended by the glory of his Father and the holy angels, is issuing forth. He ascends "THE JUDGMENT SEAT." The trumpet is sounded—the books are opened—the trial is concluded—the sentence is pronounced;—some are driven into hell, shrieking "The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved,"—and