

The Great Separation

by Horatius Bonar

The sermon emphasizes the importance of being prepared for the judgment of Christ, where the righteous will be rewarded and the wicked will be punished.

Scripture: Matthew 25:31

Topics: "Final Judgment", "Separation of the Righteous and Wicked"

Description

Horatius Bonar emphasizes the profound significance of the final judgment, where Christ, referred to as the Son of Man, will return in glory to separate the righteous from the wicked. He describes the coming of Christ as a powerful event accompanied by angels, where all nations will be gathered before Him for judgment. The sermon highlights the importance of actions taken or neglected towards others as the basis for this separation, with the righteous receiving eternal life and the wicked facing condemnation. Bonar stresses that this judgment is inevitable and will be executed without error, leading to either everlasting joy or punishment. The message serves as a call to reflect on our deeds and their eternal consequences.

Transcript

"When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: and he shall set the sheep' on his right hand, but the goats on the left."--Matthew 25:31, 33.

Let us enter at once into the practical teaching of this parable, leaving its prophetic aspects untouched, as well as its connection with the two previous parables.

The name Christ takes here is the Son of man. This is always his name in connection with judgment. It is Daniel's name for Him in this connection; and it is as Son of man that He is judge of all. We are to be judged by a man like ourselves. It is before a human judge that we shall stand and plead. God takes no advantage of us.

I. The coming. (1.) The Son of man shall come! Yes, He that shall come will come and will not tarry! These heavens shall rend and He shall appear. (2.) He shall come in his glory. Not in weakness, and poverty, and shame; not as a babe, or a carpenter, or a bearer of the sin and curse. (3.) He shall come with all his holy angels, What a retinue! (a) Angels; (b) holy angels; (c) with Him! As his retinue, his attendants, his executioners; as in Daniel. Often have angels visited earth, but never on so awful an occasion.

II. The sitting. It is not a momentary appearance. He comes as the lightning flash, but does not, like it, depart. He takes his seat on a throne,--the throne of glory, not grace now. It is a great work He comes to do; a work not done in a moment. He took his seat when He went up to the Father, and has been thus sitting for ages, for the work was great and long. So when He comes again He "sits," for the work is great and long. It will be thorough, searching, sifting.

III. The gathering. Who shall gather is not here said. In other places angels are mentioned. But the gathering shall be: (1.) It is a gathering of men, not devils. (2.) It is a gathering of nations; all nations; a universal gathering. It is a gathering "before Him"; before his throne; before his face. No hiding, no escaping, no resisting, no refusing! However reluctant, they shall be gathered. He shall see it fully done. Mountains, rocks, seas, cells, cannot hide men on that awful day.

IV. The separating. They come as one great multitude, but soon they are divided. (1.) They are divided into two classes, only two; one good and one evil; sheep and goats. (2.) They are divided by Himself. How He does it we know not. But He shall do it completely, effectually, without mistake,--one mistake. The separation shall be perfect and final. (3.) The sheep are set on the right hand, the place of honour, power, acquittal, favor; the goats on the left, for shame and condemnation.

V. The convicting. He gives the reasons for what He does,--reasons to both classes; these are all summed up in one great reason, viz. : What they did or did not do for Him. The righteous are told that what they did for his brethren they did for Him; the wicked, that what they did not do for his brethren they did not for Him. Thus the one class is made to feel how truly all their works are accepted, and the other left without excuse, not being able to say, Thou wert not here for us to do anything for thee. "Ah, but my brethren were here. Ye did it not to them." This stops their mouth.

VI. The sentencing. This is from the Judge's own lips. Angels may gather them, He must sentence them, for He is Lord and Judge of all. First, He turns to the right, and speaks to the sheep. (1.) Come, have done with all your wanderings and tribulations; come, end your pilgrimage. (2.) Ye blessed--Oh, precious name--the blessed, the "well spoken of"; among men perhaps only cursed! (3.) Blessed of my Father; not of man, nor of me only, but of my Father; beloved of God and blessed of God; this is the beginning, the foretaste of endless blessedness. (4.) Inherit the kingdom; exile, oppression, weariness, end in a kingdom;--they are kings and priests ;--an everlasting kingdom, long since prepared! This is the recompense of toil, and work, and weariness for me,--of every service, however little, done to one of mine. Secondly, He turns to the left, and speaks to the goats.

(1) Depart, come not near me, nor my kingdom. I once said, Come to me, and ye would not; I now say, Depart. (2) Ye cursed; not blessed, but cursed; not merely under the curse, but with the curse poured down. (3) Into everlasting fire,--fire,--everlasting,--prepared for the devil and his angels. Why? Simply ye did me no service! Not ye were drunkards, thieves, liars, Sabbath-breakers; but ye did nothing to me!

VII. The executing. These go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal. "So he drove out the man," is the first execution of judgment. "They enter in through the gates in to the city" is the fulfillment of the gracious verdict. God carries out both his love and his vengeance. He falters not. "Judgment lingereth not, damnation slumbereth not." The day of the carrying out of all God's purposes and sentences will certainly arrive. What shall be the end of them that obey not the gospel! Oh terrible doom! woe, woe, woe, everlasting! What shall be the joy of the saved! Joy unspeakable, the crown of righteousness. These are the two great masses. They are mixed now; they shall be separated soon. The

day of sifting is at hand.

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