

The Dais of God and Christ

THE SETTING RIGHT of every matter and act is a question with which God will deal ere His ultimate is attained. Even in the case of the saints it is not a matter which is avoided or evaded. The Great White Throne judging will effectually settle all matters as regards those who appear before its session, but none who can claim the salvation which is in Christ Jesus, by faith, will be among the number who will stand there. At the dais of God the proceedings are entirely different from those at the Great White Throne, and in the case of the saints there are features which are entirely lacking in the case of those who come before the Great White Throne. What eventuates from the dais is not therefore to be compared with it, for it is God's *saints* who appear before Him (Rev. 20:11-15).

EVANGEL ENSURES SALVATION

The evangel has taught us that we enjoy the greatest possible benefits through it, and these may be tersely summed up in that precious statement: Nothing, consequently, is now condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus (Rom. 8:1). We readily rejoice, then, that our God, in Christ Jesus, has so firmly and irrevocably settled that problem to our blessing and His own glory. We cannot come into any position which will minimize salvation or take it from us. Salvation is not decided before the dais, and it is not in any sense in question there. Why, therefore, do we read of our presentation at the dais of God (Rom. 14:10), and our manifestation at the dais of Christ (2 Cor. 5:10)?

THE DAIS EXAMINES OUR WALK

The use of the term "judgment seat" has tended to give a misleading color to this statement; the word tribunal has been suggested, but there are features of its usage which make it unsuitable. The Greek term is conveyed by dais or platform; these are quite impartial words (Acts 7:5; John 19:13). Literally it is the standing room afforded for establishing of a definite position; there one steps to state his case with a view to its examination by the Lord (1 Cor. 4:4), and the setting right of any necessary items thereof. This is prior to His award. While not a judicial bench for condemnation, few of us seem to have attained to a clear appreciation of its function; or the reason for it in God's dealings with His saints. In coming to this portion of the Roman epistle it were well if we make some attempt to obtain at least a broad understanding.

SALVATION INCOMPLETE UNTIL THE BODY IS DELIVERED

This question of our having to step before the dais of God arises from our walk - the extent to which we have truly expressed the evangel in our living. In our progress through the Roman epistle we have seen that, as saints, we are to walk in newness of life. At the same time, though sin's body has become inert, sin is not yet eliminated from our body; we are to reckon ourselves as dead to sin and alive to God (Rom. 6:4-11); for we await the future deliverance of our body when our salvation becomes a completed matter (Rom. 8:23).

Meanwhile, our logical divine service is to present our bodies a sacrifice, living, holy and well-pleasing to God. And, insofar as we are transformed by the renewing of our mind, we shall escape configuration to this eon, which position will be most estimable when we are manifested at the dais (Rom. 12:1,2).

OBEDIENCE TO FAITH IS OUR DIVINE SERVICE

Saints, though blessed of God, continue to live in the world (1 Cor. 5:10); they are not exempt from the ordinary relations and duties to other humans; in fact, their faith really makes all their living a divine service. Here we touch the aspect which is little appreciated, for we have a distinct tendency to regard divine service as applying only to those engaging specifically in the labor of pastors, teachers and evangelists (Eph. 4:11). Such are certainly rendering service to God and His saints, yet it is special, being a distinct gift from God (1 Cor. 9:17). In the initial consideration, divine service consists in our obedience to the faith; it is our practical living of the evangel in regard to our fellow saints, to our enemies, to humans in general, and to the state.

Romans twelve to sixteen show the evangel in practice. Precepts are given as examples of the practicing of the prior stated doctrine; they detail a divine service which rationally corresponds to our life in Christ. In one sense they may be corrective of any disobedience to the faith, and an exhortation to proper conduct in the Lord. Any

doubt as to the proper course is resolved by the precepts.

Life for the believer is not a casual matter, but calls for the most serious considerations. Before the dais we are to give account to God (Rom. 14:11,12). This is for His glory, and should also be for our fullest blessing. When we bow the knee and acclaim God before His dais, it ought to be the climax of what we have been effecting in our living, for if we have followed the leading of the spirit of His Son (Rom.8:14), the possession of each saint, then there will be no question of any requital for bad, but rather the requital for the good which, by the power of His grace, we have effected (2 Cor. 5:10). Let us duly note that the word requital contains no undesirable idea; it is equally at home when used with the words good or bad. It indicates the fulfillment of all obligation by a recompense, which is a full equivalent, as discerned by God's righteousness.

OUR DEEDS ARE TO THE LORD

Our scriptural position is that all we do should be as to the Lord and not to men (Eph.6:8,9). Our compensation is from Him (Col.3:23-25). It is the enjoyment of an allotment from the Lord. That He will bestow this compensation is affirmed when it is said that he who is injuring will be requited for that which he injures. The word injure is especially instructive; injury is that which is UN-JUST, not as in English something which arises accidentally. Any unjust actions (injuries), done by the saints, will be set right.

To view matters comprehensively requires a realization of the fact that God has saved us, and this involves our living to Him, which is not merely in regard to any special service in the way of ministering His Word, but also in all our contact both with saints and with the remainder of humanity. There will be fruit and payment for the service done in response to any administration God gives. This calls for propriety in discharge, for the pastor, evangelist or teacher may become disqualified in such labor (1 Cor.9:24-27). For our divine service, flowing from our faith, we will receive our requital for the good or the bad which we have done in the body. Grace makes us debtors to live according to God, and this is really the great question of our accounting at the dais (2 Cor.5:10; Gal.6:7,8; Rom.8:12).

THE NEW LIFE IS A RECOGNITION OF GOD

The new life which the saints enjoy calls for, and should result in, conduct of a very high character. The broadest view of it requires that our life should be the fullest possible acknowledgement and acclamation of God. This is the great intention and requirement of Deity, and it is true not only of the reverent in the present, but also of the irreverent ultimately. This is intimated to us when the Scriptures counsel us not to judge or scorn our fellow believers (Col. 1:9,10; Rom. 14:1-4).

GOD'S ATTITUDE OUGHT TO BE OURS

Even the believer that has a mind so feeble and defective that he rarely succeeds in rendering to God true and full recognition, and his growth in realization of Him is meager. To judge, in this connection, is to assume a position which God reserves entirely for Himself because He alone is fitted to discharge such a task (Rom.14:3-10). And to scorn a saint is to disapprove of one whom God has taken to Himself. Obviously, to say the least, we are not superior to God! That we are to be presented at the dais of God ought to exclude any judging of our fellow believers; *there* we cannot judge, but must be confined to the account of *ourselves* to God; *there* we must bow the knee and acclaim *Him*. Shall our account to God be that we have judged or scorned one whom He did not so deal with, and thereby have placed ourselves in a position which was contrary to God? Rather should our attitude and activity be that of endeavoring to aid our brethren, and to see that we do not snare or stumble any (Rom.14:11-13).

It becomes clear that we have a great and onerous path before us, a path in which it is easy for us to fail and become unjust to our brethren, and so injure them. This can occur in many ways, and in connection with many matters, when we regard life in all its details and in relation to the many kinds and conditions of humans with whom we come in contact (Rom. 14:15).

Is it not our delight to understand that our God, in Christ Jesus, has removed every possibility of condemnation from us? He has made our salvation sure and secure, yet He has arranged to set right all the acts of His saints. For those acts in our accounts which are proper in His sight, we shall have the compensation of our allotment, but what is detrimental in our conduct, that will be requited also. And would we, as His saints,

have it otherwise? Surely the evangel brings to us the spirit which leads us to desire and intend that every thought, word and deed be in subjection to Him as our Lord (2 Cor.10:5). If we have in the slightest degree failed to achieve that which corresponds to the righteousness of the new life, then we surely wish such failings rectified, even though it may bring us loss. And, for even this, we shall thank Him and rejoice that He is able where we have failed.

Let us welcome the fact that God has made provision for any debits of our accounting to be discharged by His righteousness and ability (1 Cor.4:5). Only thus may we properly and confidently look forward to the applause of our great God and Saviour in regard to our divine service. Meanwhile, may we make full use of His enabling grace!

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