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JMJ

U.I.O.G.D.

Ave Maria!

Jesus, Mary, Joseph, we love You, save souls

O God come to our assistance. Jesus, Mary, Joseph please make haste to help us!

+ + + Jesus, Mary, Joseph + + +

THE CHRISTIAN'S LAST END = Volume 5

EIGHTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

### The Reason for the Last Judgment

*“Give an account of thy stewardship.” St. Luke 16:2.*

Is it not an article of faith that every man shall be judged immediately after death, and sent into eternal glory or eternal torments? Why, then, should men appear again to hear another sentence? Is not the first one good and just enough, as it is pronounced by an infallible Judge? Not a doubt of it! What is, then, the object of a new examination and judgment? Will the last judgment perhaps make some change in the first? Not at all; the sentence once uttered shall not be recalled. On the last day each one shall hear the same sentence that was pronounced on him at the particular judgment on the last day of his life, at the moment of death, and no other. If I am then condemned to hell, I shall certainly hear in the last judgment the words: “Depart, accursed!” If I am then admitted to the kingdom of heaven, I shall certainly hear on the last day the words: “Come, ye blessed!” What is then the use of a general judgment. Several reasons are assigned for it, from which I shall select two principal ones, the first of which concerns God, and the second us mortals. The first I shall speak of today

*I. There must necessarily be a general judgment that God may publicly, in the sight of the whole world, make good His lessened honor.*

*II. There must necessarily be a general judgment, that God may publicly, in the sight of the whole world, justify His now incomprehensible providence.*

I. Why do most men give God so little of the honor due to Him, and are so backward in fearing and loving Him? Because they have but a dark knowledge of His majesty. We do not know what a great Lord He is, and how worthy of honor, fear and love. It is true, God is the absolute Lord and Master of all time, of every moment of our lives. But we often refuse to act on this truth; we show by our conduct that we believe quite the contrary, for we mispend our precious time given us by God in a most foolish manner, wasting it in idleness, vanity, gluttony, the lusts of the flesh, and useless amusements. God is almighty, and present in all places; at any moment He has the power of reducing us to nothing, if such is His will. We often refuse to act on that knowledge; otherwise should we, poor, despicable creatures as we are, so often rebel against Him, offend Him so audaciously, and before His very eyes trample His law under foot? God is the sworn Enemy and Chastiser of sin, and His infinite justice will not allow the least transgression to go unpunished, unless it has been fully atoned for. We often refuse to act on that knowledge; otherwise should we dare to offend Him so presumptuously? Do we not falsely imagine that we are free from all punishment when we spend whole weeks,

months and years in sin, calmly and quietly, as if there were no one in heaven or on earth from whom we have anything to fear? We separate the divine mercy and justice from each other, and imagine that justice must always give way before and yield to mercy; we look on justice as an idle attribute of God, that never upholds its rights and leaves everything to mercy. God is good, we say; God is patient; He is ready to forgive, and therefore it makes little matter how one lives. Thus, through want of a proper knowledge of God, His honor is often lessened and despised. Hence there must come a time in which God will avenge His honor, and publicly show before the world what He is. And that will be the last day of general judgment, which is therefore called in Holy Writ “the day of the Lord.” Then shall all see how bitter is the hatred God has against sin and the sinner, and how He will not allow the smallest transgression to go unpunished; for He will demand an account even of an idle word or thought; nay, He will judge the justices and holiest works of men, and put them to the proof to see if they are according to His will and pleasure. All shall then see that God has no respect for persons; rich and poor, noble and lowly, prince and peasant, master and servant, mistress and maid; great and small shall be cited before Him in the same order, without distinction of rank, and each one shall receive the reward or punishment due to his works. Therefore, the prophet Isaias calls this day cruel: “Behold, the day of the Lord shall come, a cruel day, and full of indignation, and of wrath, and fury, to lay the land desolate, and to destroy the sinners thereof out of it” (Is. 13:9).

Besides, how has not the honor of Jesus Christ suffered; how does it not still suffer among men? Despised, publicly persecuted, unjustly condemned, He was seen hanging on a disgraceful cross in the presence of a multitude. The Jews still look on Him as a blasphemous impostor, who was justly sentenced by their forefathers on account of his crimes, and nailed to a cross; infidels refuse to acknowledge Him as their God; and how many wicked, proud, and tepid Catholic Christians are there not who are ashamed of Him and of His humble Gospel? Who hardly deign to bend the knee before His altar in the public churches where He is exposed for adoration? “He,” says St. Augustine, “who has been unjustly judged shall one day judge the world in justice.” For the same reason He has selected the valley of Josaphat as the scene of His judgment; for that place is in the neighborhood of the scene of Jesus' sufferings for the salvation of the world. There men have seen Him in the extremity of torment and degradation; and in the same place He must be seen in the height of honor and glory. Then shall all peoples and nations adore Him whom before they either did not know, or did not wish to know, or, having known Him, did not honor as they should have done. “Every knee shall bow to me,” in heaven, on earth, and under the earth, “and every tongue shall confess to God” (Rom. 14:11). There we have the first just reason why there should be a general judgment appointed for the whole world; namely, that restitution of His injured honor may be made publicly to our God and Saviour. “The Lord alone shall be exalted in that day.” And at the same time He will publicly justify His admirable providence with which He governs the world.

II. Nothing is more incomprehensible to us mortals than the manner in which God acts with us in this world; and again, there is nothing that gives rise to more complaints, doubts, murmuring, nay, even blasphemies, not merely amongst heathens and heretics, but Catholics, too, than the wonderful inscrutability of the divine decrees. This very circumstance is the cause of there being so many atheists in the world, who think and say that there is no God, or that, if there be one, He takes no concern about the affairs of mortals; He allows things to go as they please; He permits the crooked to appear straight; everything in the world happens according to the free will of men; wind and weather, heat and cold, rain and sunshine, peace and war, happiness and misery, health and sickness, a short or a long life, all these things are the result of chance, or else of the action or wickedness of men. It is true that many things are ordained that seem quite irregular and unjust according to our ignorant views, so that it appears impossible that they should come from a God of infinite wisdom, justice, mercy and love. We see and learn by daily experience that, for instance, a young, clever, and learned man dies prematurely, although his life would have been useful and necessary; while on the other hand an old, worn-out man continues to live, although he is good for nothing, and only a burden to himself and others. We see a father in the bloom of age and health hurried off suddenly by death from his wife and children, the latter thus becoming poor orphans who have great difficulty in finding bread enough to keep off the pangs of hunger; but

another remains alive who is like a roaring lion in his home, ill-treating wife and children, drinking all their earnings, and reducing them to beggary.

The poor laborer is cast down on a bed of sickness for a long time, although his work is the only means he has of procuring a livelihood; while another, who has no need to work, is kept in good health, although he makes a bad use of it for sin and vice and public scandal. One abounds in wealth and makes a wrong use of it; another is poor, who, if he had riches, would do much for the honor and glory of God. The best, dearest, and most beautiful child, the one whom the parents are most anxious to keep alive, dies; while the stupid, ugly, decrepit child remains alive, although they would readily have given him to God. Children die before Baptism, although if they had been kept alive for the space of an hour they would have been freed from original sin and have been happy in heaven; and on the other hand, a young man dies in the state of sin who, if he had been taken off at an early age, would not have been lost forever. Not a few who, having attained a high degree of perfection, fall into grievous sin and are lost eternally; while on the other hand many who have for a long time led bad lives are converted and go to heaven. We see how God chastises and punishes a man, although He allows another, who is equally deserving of punishment, to get off scot-free. We see and generally experience that many sinners and wicked men enjoy prosperity, wealth and honor in the world, and live in pleasures and delights; while most of the good and pious, who try to serve God faithfully and zealously, and to fulfill His holy will in all things, spend their days in poverty, misfortune, contempt, and sorrow, overwhelmed with trials, persecuted by others, and oppressed on all sides. Well may we exclaim with Jeremias: "Why, oh, Lord, doth the way of the wicked prosper: why is it well with all them that transgress and do wickedly? Thou hast planted them, and they have taken root: they prosper and bring forth fruit." Why is that? Why dost thou decree that he who serves thee truly should live in sorrow and affliction, while he who contemns and despises thee passes his life in repose, joy and pleasure? "How long, oh, Lord! Shall the wicked make their boast? How long shall they utter and speak wrong things? How long shall all the workers of iniquity talk?" (Ps. 93:3, 4.) How long shall they exult in honors and riches? The drunken glutton sits at table clad in purple, and enjoys himself, although he is a great sinner; while the just Lazarus is poor and despised, and cannot obtain even the crumbs thrown to the dogs. Why is that so? Why is virtue laughed at and oppressed, and vice exalted and honored? Why does wickedness sit on a throne and justice lie on the bare earth? Why is this, oh, Lord?

There must be a general judgment, that the Lord God may publish and justify in the sight of heaven and earth the hidden decrees and dispositions of His providence; that He may answer the questions and complaints that arise from the ignorance or wickedness of men, who do not now understand His arrangements; that He may show each one the weighty reasons He had in acting as He has done; in a word, on that day He will cause all presumptuous blasphemers to wonder at the justice and holiness of those decrees that they looked on as unjust. He will cause all the Angels of heaven, all men on earth, all the demons in hell to cry out with David: "Thou art just, oh, Lord, and thy judgment is right" (Ps. 118:137). "Therefore judge not before the time, until the Lord come," before forming an opinion on what you see; wait till the coming of the Lord at the end of the world, "who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts" (I Cor. 4:2).

In the beginning of the world, when God created light, He went to see and examine it: "and God saw the light, that it was good" (Gen. 1:4). He acted in the same manner with regard to His other works, the earth, the animals, the moon, the stars; each one He examined in particular and found it good. Why did He examine all together after He had seen each one in particular and found it good? This was an image of what He is to do at the end of the world. At first God looked at each work in particular, and then He considered all His works in general, and gave testimony that they were all very good; at the end He will show His works to men to be examined and considered. In the particular judgment, which takes place immediately after the death of each one, He will show to the soul what He did specially for it, while on the last day He will bring on the stage all the works of His Providence, and present them to men to be examined publicly, so that every one, convinced of their justice and wisdom, may confess that they are very good that all that God has done with us from the beginning of the world is very good. Parents! you lost your beloved child by a premature death, while the decrepit one remained alive; but on that day, when you shall examine the works of God, you will confess that it

is very good. Children! you have lost father or mother and have become poor orphans; and on that day you will acknowledge that this decree of the Almighty was very good. That this man is rich, that one poor; this one healthy, another sickly; one well formed, another crippled; one held in honor, another despised; one a servant, another the master; one leads a laborious, the other an idle life. We cannot now understand this difference. But wait; wait till the works of God are all placed before your eyes on that day, then at last you shall confess that they are very good, that everything has been rightly and justly ordained, and that the world could not have been governed better. You who, in the midst of your crosses and trials, must see the wicked prospering, and all their affairs apparently succeeding, be comforted with the thought of that day! Now, you cannot see everything; but then you will understand all, and will say: Now I behold all the works of God, and they are very good; everything is most right and just.

And what conclusion shall we now draw from this for our instruction? It follows of itself; namely, that we must in the first place not scrutinize curiously the decrees and providence of the Almighty, much less should we murmur or complain on account of them, for we are now incapable of investigating or understanding them thoroughly; and secondly, we should always submit ourselves and all belonging to us in all circumstances to the holy will of God and His all-wise Providence, perfectly confident that whatever He does with us must be for the very best. Amen.

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