

GREAT RESOLUTIONS

Program Forty

The Judgement Seat of Christ

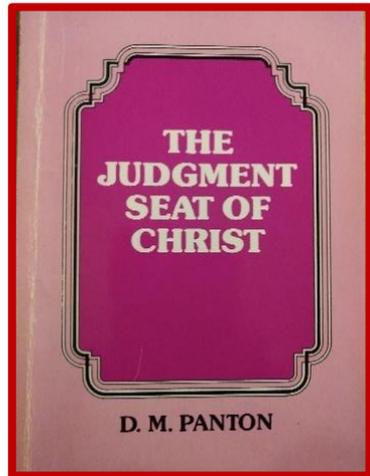
Since the time of the Reformation most believers have had the assurance of their standing in the Lord by faith. We thank the Lord that the great truth of justification by faith was brought out of obscurity into the light through Martin Luther and others. This good foundation has been relied upon by many ever since. We are saved by faith, not by works. Our eternal salvation is by grace through faith alone.

D. M. Panton treasured this truth. He wrote, "It is the joy and wonder of God's Grace that all saving merit in our Lord's life and death becomes ours on simple faith: for by grace have ye been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, that no man should glory (Eph. 2:8)." Thank the Lord we who have received God's life are eternally secure! This blessed assurance is a great comfort to us. However, in his study of the word, Panton realized there was another side to this truth.

Yes, we are saved by faith, but what about after we are

saved? What does the Bible say about our living? Since we are saved by faith and eternally secure, does it matter how we live our earthly life? These and similar questions were being considered at the beginning of the twentieth century. As we learned, Robert Govett and D. M. Panton after him, were forerunners in the study of these matters. They highly valued the good foundation of justification by faith that had been recovered during the Reformation but also soberly considered Paul's word to take heed how we build upon this foundation (1 Cor. 3:10). Govett and Panton saw that the Bible teaches that believers do have some responsibility in the building work, which involves how we live and serve as Christians in our lifetime.

Panton felt commissioned to release these and other deeper truths to the Christian community. To this end he produced and edited the magazine *Dawn*. Panton also authored other works. Two important books he wrote are *The Rapture* and *The Judgment Seat of Christ*. In these books he challenges believers to give thought to verses like 2 Corinthians 5:10: "For we must all be manifested before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done through the body according to what he has practiced, whether good or bad." Panton also brings Romans 14:10 to the believer's attention: "For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God."



Panton felt the judgement seat of Christ was a serious

matter that few Christians adequately understood or paid attention to. He wrote that the judgement seat of Christ is about our living, not our standing, and points out that believers will be judged not for our faith, but for our walk. Though it is true that our eternal salvation is by faith and not by works, the judgment at the judgment seat of Christ will be based on our living and works.

Reward by Works

Panton showed that although we are justified and have life by faith, the Bible is clear that there will be a reward or punishment given to God's children when the Lord returns. These will be based on our living and works. "By faith we are incorporated into Him," Panton said. "Eternal life thus rests forever on simple, saving faith." (*JSOC*, p. 4)

But Panton reminds us of what Paul wrote to his younger coworker Timothy that believers should serve as good soldiers to fight for the Lord's interests, and that we are like athletes running a race to win a crown and like farmers laboring to harvest crops for God's satisfaction. Therefore, in our living, we should suffer as unentangled soldiers, contend lawfully as athletes, and be diligent as farmers (2 Tim. 2:3-6). These examples show the matter of responsibility and accountability to the Lord in our living and service. Panton felt that these truths should not remain unknown or ignored.

Accountability

Panton taught that we must give account of our stewardship before God. This is a matter of our Christian responsibility. Whether we have done good or evil, had a

living that was holy or sinful, were faithful or unfaithful, or were wise or foolish in our service, we all must give account to the Lord. We all will be examined by the Lord, who will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness and make manifest the counsels of the hearts, that praise may be to each one from God (1 Cor. 4:5).

At the judgement seat of Christ some believers will suffer loss. This will not be the loss of salvation, but the losing of the reward of reigning with Christ during the millennial kingdom. On the other hand, some believers will be rewarded for serving as faithful and prudent slaves whom the master set over His household to give them food at the proper time (Matt. 24:45-47). These stewards faithfully used their gifts and invested their talents (25:14-30).

Life is by faith; reward is consequent on works done after faith. The Scriptures are clear that some believers will receive a reward, and some will suffer loss.

The Reward

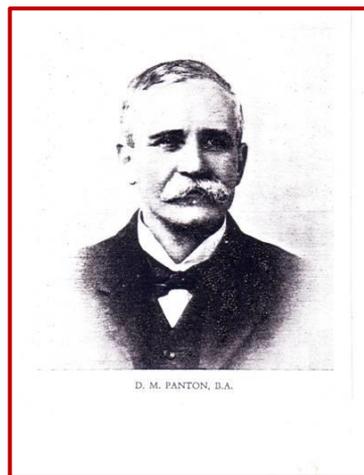
The proper teaching of the New Testament is that not all believers will receive the reward to reign with Christ in the coming thousand-year kingdom. Witness Lee points out, “Only the overcomers will be kings with Him in the millennium. The kingship with the Lord Jesus in the coming age will be a reward to the overcoming saints” (*The History of the Church and the Local Churches*, p. 48).

Reward, Pantton stated, “is a recompense for service rendered; a ‘prize’ gained by conduct; a wage paid for labour accomplished. ‘Do good,’ our Lord says, ‘and your reward shall be great (Luke 6:35).’” Judgment begins at the house of God (1 Pet. 4:17), that is, with the Lord’s own

children. There will be a testing of that which believers have built in their lifetime. Panton said, “The foundation is not tested; it is, as Isaiah says, already a tried Stone: it is the superstructure which the fire searches. No believer will be put on trial for his standing, but for his walk; not for his faith, but for his works; not for his life, but for his living; not for his foundation, but for his superstructure. The fire itself will prove each disciple’s work of what sort it is.” (*JSOC*, p. 21)

Paul helps us know that believers will be rewarded for building up the Body of Christ with gold, silver, and precious stones in their Christian life (1 Cor. 3:12-14). This building takes place as believers minister Christ in the church meetings (14:26), and in the preaching of the gospel (9:16-17). Paul also encourages us to pursue toward the goal of the fullest enjoyment and gaining of Christ for the prize, which will be the uttermost enjoyment of Christ in the millennial kingdom (Phil. 3:14).

The Lord will render a reward to each one according to his work. The judgment of the believers will take place at the judgment seat of Christ at His coming back. This will be after all the dead saints have been resurrected and all the living ones have been raptured. The judgment seat will be set up in the air for Christ to judge all His genuine believers. This judgment will determine whether the believers will receive a reward or some kind



of punishment. First Corinthians 3:8 says, “each will receive his own reward according to his own labor.” The Lord tells us in Revelation 2:23 that “all the churches will know that I am He who searches the inward parts and the hearts; and I will give to each one of you according to your works.” At the end of the Bible the Lord declares, “Behold, I come quickly, and My reward is with Me to render to each as his work is (Rev. 22:12).”

Different Judgements

The Bible reveals that there will be different judgments at different times.

The judgment seat of God or of Christ will take place before the millennium, immediately after Christ’s coming back. This judgment is on believers and is concerning how they lived their Christian life (1 Cor. 4:4-5; 3:13-15). All the resurrected and raptured believers will be judged at the judgment seat of Christ. The result will be reward or punishment in the millennial kingdom.

Another judgement is at the throne of glory on the earth, also immediately after Christ’s return. Christ will judge those nations who remain at the time of His coming. At this judgment the Lord will separate people as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. The people will be rewarded or punished based on how they treated the suffering believers during the time of the great tribulation. (Matt. 25:31,32).

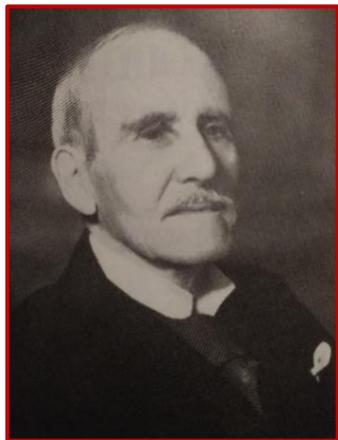
The judgement at the great white throne is the eternal judgment of God upon the dead unbelievers who will be eternally punished in the lake of fire. This judgment on the unbelievers is revealed in Revelation 20:11-15 and will be carried out after the millennium.

The believers judged at the judgment seat of Christ will be recompensed for the things they have done, according to what they have practiced, whether good or bad (2 Cor. 5:10). While we are still living in the flesh on the earth (at home in our body), we should endeavor to live a life that is pleasing to the Lord. Then the Lord, at His coming, may reward us for our deeds.

Conclusion

Panton teaches that according to the Scriptures, before the millennium is brought in by Christ's coming back, the believers will be judged at the judgment seat of Christ in order to determine whether they will receive a dispensational reward or a punishment.

Since believers will be judged at the judgment seat of Christ in the air, we don't want to live as disobedient or negligent Christians. Neither should we neglect this teaching or be lethargic in this church age. It has been over one hundred fifty years since these great truths were opened to the Lord's people. We should not criticize the revelation of these kingdom truths as many have and still do because it does not fit traditional theology. Panton said, "Our discovery of this truth at the judgment seat will be too late." (*SSOT*, p. 7). May we live an overcoming life of watching and waiting for the Lord's return and be joyful to go forth to meet Him. We don't want to wait to give heed to



these things or be like the slave who said in his heart, My master delays (Matt. 24:48).

Marty Robert and Bill Lawson

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