

## Galatians 2:20 (Walter Biggar Scott) 132326

Two Trees of Paradise: God's Grace And Man's Responsibility, Concluding Appeal. (2:20)

If, beloved reader, you are in Christ Jesus, then your walk is to be according to new creation order (Gal. 6:16). God cannot own anything short of His beloved Son, both for your blessing and responsibility. You are set in the heavens in the Son of the Father—"Ye in Me," such is your glorious position, and now your one business of life is to walk as Christ, to express Christ—"I in you" (John 14:20). The responsible man is gone—"crucified with Christ"—that the new man before God alone might live (Gal. 2:20).

But if, dear reader, you are yet on the ground of your personal and unanswered responsibility, then let us tell you frankly that you are lost. It is for the believer alone that life and responsibility center in Christ, for thee they are as wide apart as ever. Thou art not on thy trial—thou art "condemned already." The judgment of the great white throne has been anticipated in the judgment of the cross for all who believe. But for every soul of Adam's race who rejects the work of Christ, there remains nothing "but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation" (Heb. 10:27). No sinner can ever unite or conciliate those truths—life and responsibility. Oh unsaved friend thou halt never tasted the fruit of life eternal. Yet both the "tree" and "river" of life are free to thee. O that thou would'st eat, then thou would'st "never die"! O that thou would'st drink, then thou would'st "never thirst"! Is paradise with its no night, no curse, no tear, no death, nothing to thee? Has its ever open pearly gates, its jasper walls, and golden street, and the thrice blessed Lord of Glory and Lamb of God as fresh from His cross—"as it had been slain," no power to win thy heart? Are the baubles of earth worth more in thy estimation than the crown of gold, the harp of God, the palm of victory, the robe of white? Is hell not worth escaping? Is heaven not worth gaining?

But the closing act in the drama of life will come, and thy history with its known and unremembered actions, its motives, thoughts, and counsels, its words, prayers, and resolutions will be faithfully disclosed. God will be the revealer of all, and memory and conscience will set their seal to the divine accuracy, to the unerring truthfulness of these God-written records of human responsibility. "And I saw a great white throne and Him that sat on it, from whose face the earth, and the heaven fled away: and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God [lit. the throne]: 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. 20:11-15).

Here we have the final scene of all. The throne-great and white, denoting vastness and purity-is set up, and the wicked only, those then morally dead, appear before it. The saints will be there to judge (1 Cor. 6: 2, 3), and the angels to execute the judgment. This awful judicial assembly will hold its sitting in ETERNITY, for the earth and heaven will have passed away. The wicked will be maintained in space by omnipotent power, no sheltering rocks and hills to screen them from the gaze of the Son of Man who will judge (John 5:27). Instead of the two trees which stood in the garden of the first man (Gen. 2.), we have the same truths represented by the "books of works" and the "book of life." An irrecoverably bad nature which man cannot help, for he was born into the world with it, will not form the ground of judgment, but the responsible actions are alone in question, hence the books of works (see also Eph. 5:5, 6) are opened and judgment passed accordingly. But was the sovereign gift of life not presented to the ruined and responsible man? It was. Was it accepted? The book of life is opened—its pages are carefully scanned: Alas, alas! grace too had been rejected. Judgment is thus placed on a twofold ground—first, according to works; second, by the rejection of grace.

May the Lord, in His abounding grace, preserve the reader from the fearful, eternal doom—cast into the lake of fire. Amen.