

heaven. Every sinner shall then hear the story of his life published to his everlasting shame. The good shall ask no concealment, and the evil shall find none. Angels and men shall then see the truth of things. Then the great Judge himself shall give the decision: he shall pronounce sentence upon the wicked, and execute their punishment. No partiality shall there be seen; there shall be no private conferences to secure immunity for nobles, no hushing up of matters that great men may escape contempt for their crimes. Evidence shall be given concerning all men, and a righteous sentence shall go forth.

This will be so, and it ought to be so: God should judge the world, because he is the universal ruler and sovereign. There has been a day for sinning, there ought to be a day for punishing; a long age of rebellion has been endured, and there must be a time when justice shall assert her supremacy. It ought to be so for the sake of the righteous. They have been slandered, despised, ridiculed, imprisoned, beaten and put to death times without number: the best have had the worst of it, and there ought to be a judgment to set these things right. Besides, the festering iniquities of each age cry out to God that he should deal with them. Shall such sin go unpunished? To what end is there a moral government at all, and how is its continuance to be secured, if there be not rewards and punishments and a day of account? For the display of his holiness, for the overwhelming of his adversaries, for the rewarding of those who have faithfully served him, there must be and shall be a day in which God will judge the world.

Why doth it not come at once? And when will it come? The precise day we cannot tell. Man nor angel knoweth that day, and it is idle and profane to guess at it, since even the Son of man, as such, knoweth not the time. It is sufficient for us that the Judgment Day will surely come; sufficient also to believe that it is postponed on purpose to give breathing time for mercy, and space for repentance. Why should the ungodly want to know when that day will come? To you it is a day of darkness, and not light. It shall be your day

of consuming as stubble fully dry: therefore bless the Lord that he delayeth his coming, and reckon that his longsuffering is for your salvation.

Moreover, the Lord keeps the scaffold standing till he hath built up the fabric of his church. Not yet are the elect all called out from among the guilty sons of men; not yet are all the redeemed brought forth out of corruption to walk with God in holiness. Therefore the Lord waiteth for a while. But do not deceive yourselves. The great day of his wrath cometh on apace, and your days of reprieve are numbered. Ye shall die, perhaps, before the appearing of the Son of man: but ye shall see his judgment-seat for all that, for ye shall rise again as surely as he rose. "God now commandeth all men everywhere to repent, because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead." See ye not, O ye impenitent ones, that a risen Savior is the sign of your doom. As God hath raised Jesus from the dead, so shall he raise your bodies, that in these you may come to judgment.

Now I call your attention to the fact that "GOD WILL JUDGE THE SECRETS OF MEN." This will happen to all men, of every nation, of every age, of every rank, and of every character. The Judge will, of course, judge their outward acts, but these may be said to have gone before them to judgment: their secret acts are specially mentioned, because these will make judgment to be the more searching. A man may do that which is right from a wrong motive, and so the deed may be evil in the sight of God, though it seem right in the sight of men. Oh, think what it will be to have your motives all brought to light, to have it proven that you were godly for the sake of gain, that you were generous for selfish reasons, or zealous for love of praise, that you were careful in public to maintain a religious reputation, but that all the while everything was done for self, and self only!

What a strong light will that be which God shall turn upon our lives, when the darkest chambers of human desire and

motive shall be as manifest as public acts! What a revelation will that be which makes manifest all thoughts, and imaginings, and lustings, and desires! All angers, envies, prides, and rebellions of the heart—what a disclosure will these make! What a day it will be, when the secrets of men shall be set in the full blaze of noon! It is enough to make the best men tremble. Were it not for thee, O Jesus, whose precious blood hath cleansed us from all sin, where should we be! Were it not for thy righteousness, which shall cover those who believe in thee, who among us could endure the thought of that tremendous day? In thee, O Jesus, we are made righteous, and therefore we fear not the trial-hour; but were it not for thee our hearts would fail us for fear!

Now if you ask me why God should judge, especially the secrets of men—since this is not done in human courts, and cannot be, for secret things of this kind come not under cognizance of our short-sighted tribunals—I answer it is because there is really nothing secret from God. We make a difference between secret and public sins, but he doth not; for all things are naked and open to the eyes of him with whom we have to do. All deeds are done in the immediate presence of God, who is personally present everywhere. He knows and sees all things as one upon the spot, and every secret sin is but conceived to be secret through the deluded fantasy of our ignorance. God sees more of a secret sin than a man can see of that which is done before his face. "Can any hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him? saith the Lord."

Oh, friends, if it does not make you tremble to think of these things, it ought to. These truths ought to startle us, but I am afraid we hear them with small result; we have grown familiar with them, and they do not penetrate us as they should. We have to deal with an omniscient God; with One who once knowing never forgets; with One to whom all things are always present; with One who will conceal nothing out of fear, or favor of any man's person; with One who will shortly bring the splendor of his omniscience and the impartiality of his justice to bear upon all human lives. God help us, where'er we rove and where'er we rest,

to remember that each thought, word, and act of each moment lies open before him.

Another solemn revelation of our text lies in the fact that "GOD WILL JUDGE THE SECRETS OF MEN BY JESUS CHRIST." He that will sit upon the throne as the Vice-gerent of God, and as a Judge, acting for God, will be Jesus Christ. What a name for a Judge! The Savior-Anointed—Jesus Christ: he is to be the judge of all mankind.

This will be, I doubt not, first for the display of his glory. What a difference there will be then between the babe of Bethlehem's manger, hunted by Herod, carried down by night into Egypt for shelter, and the King of kings and Lord of lords, before whom every knee must bow! From the derision of men to the throne of universal judgment, what an ascent! I am unable to convey to you my own heart's sense of the contrast between the "despised and rejected of men," and the universally-acknowledged Lord, before whom Caesars and pontiffs shall bow in the dust. He who was judged at Pilate's bar, shall summon all to his bar. What a change from the shame and spitting, from the nails and the wounds, the mockery and the thirst, and the dying anguish, to the glory in which he shall come, whose eyes are as a flame of fire, and out of whose mouth there goeth a two-edged sword! He shall judge the nations, and break them in pieces like a potter's vessel, even he whom the nations abhorred.

Oh, how we ought to bow before him now as he reveals himself in his tender sympathy, and in his generous humiliation! Let us kiss the Son lest he be angry; let us yield to his grace, that we may not be crushed by his wrath. Ye sinners, bow before those pierced feet, which else will tread you like clusters in the wine-press. Look ye up to him with weeping, and confess your forgetfulness of him, and put your trust in him; lest he look down on you in indignation. Oh, remember that he will one day say, "But those mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay them before me." The holding of the judgment by the Lord Jesus will greatly enhance his glory. It will finally settle one controversy which is still upheld by certain

erroneous spirits: there will be no doubt about our Lord's Deity in that day: there will be no question that this same Jesus who was crucified is both Lord and God. God himself shall judge, but he shall perform the judgment in the person of his Son Jesus Christ, truly man, but nevertheless most truly God. Being God he is divinely qualified to judge the world in righteousness, and the people with his truth.

But harken well, this judgment by Jesus Christ puts beyond possibility all hope of any after-interposition. If the Savior condemns, and such a Savior, who can plead for us? The owner of the vineyard was about to cut down the barren tree, when the dresser of the vineyard pleaded, "Let it alone this year also"; but what can come of that tree when that vinedresser himself shall say to the master, "It must fall; I myself must cut it down!" If your Savior shall become your judge you will be judged indeed. If he shall say, "Depart, ye cursed," who can call you back? If he that bled to save men at last comes to this conclusion, that there is no more to be done, but they must be driven from his presence, then farewell hope. An infinite horror shall seize upon their spirits as the words of the loving Christ shall freeze their very marrow, and fix them in the ice of eternal despair. There is, to my mind, a climax of solemnity in the fact that God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ.

Does not this also show how certain the sentence will be? for this Christ of God is too much in earnest to play with men. If he says, "Come, ye blessed," he will not fail to bring them to their inheritance. If he says, "Depart, ye cursed," he will see it done, and into the everlasting punishment they must go. Even when it cost him his life he did not draw back from doing the will of his Father, nor will he shrink in that day when he shall pronounce the sentence of doom. Oh, how evil must sin be since it constrains the tender Savior to pronounce sentence of eternal woe! Jesus, with his pierced hand, that bears the attestation of his supreme love to men, shall wave the impenitent away; and those lips which bade the weary rest in him shall solemnly say to the wicked, "Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire prepared for

the devil and his angels." To be trampled beneath the foot which was nailed to the cross will be to be crushed indeed; yet so it is, God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ.

And all this is "ACCORDING TO THE GOSPEL." That is to say, there is nothing in the gospel contrary to this solemn teaching. Men gather to us, to hear us preach of infinite mercy, and tell of the love that blows out sin; and our task is joyful when we are called to deliver such a message; but oh, sirs, remember that nothing in our message makes light of sin. The gospel offers you no opportunity of going on in sin, and escaping without punishment. Its own cry is, "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." Jesus has not come into the world to make sin less terrible. Nothing in the gospel excuses sin; nothing in it affords toleration for lust, or anger, or dishonesty. The gospel is as truly a two-edged sword against sin, as ever the law can be. There is grace for the man who quits his sin, but there is tribulation and wrath upon every man that doeth evil. "If ye turn not, he will whet his sword; he hath bent his bow, and made it ready."

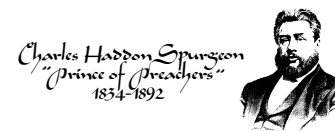
The gospel is all tenderness to the repenting, but all terror to the obstinate offender. It has pardon for the very chief of sinners, and mercy for the vilest of the vile, as they forsake their sins; but it is according to our gospel that he that goeth on in his iniquity, shall be cast into hell, and he that believeth not shall be damned. With deep love to the souls of men, I bear witness to the truth that he who turns not with repentance and faith to Christ, shall go away into punishment as everlasting as the life of the righteous. This is according to our gospel: indeed, we had not needed such a gospel, if there had not been such a judgment. The background of the cross is the judgment-seat of Christ. We had not needed so great an atonement, so vast a sacrifice, if there had not been an exceeding sinfulness in sin, and an exceeding justice in the judgment.

"According to my gospel," saith Paul. If I had to sum up the gospel, I should have to tell you certain facts: Jesus, the Son of God, became man; he was born of the virgin Mary; lived a perfect life; was falsely accused of men; was crucified, dead, and

buried; the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven to the right hand of God; from whence he shall also come to judge the quick and the dead. This is one of the elementary truths of our gospel; we believe in the resurrection of the dead, the final judgment, and the life everlasting.

Brethren, we must preach the coming of the Lord, and preach it somewhat more than we have done; because it is the driving power of the gospel. "The Lord will be revealed in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel." Too many have kept back these truths, and thus have blunted the edge of the gospel. The doctrine of judgment to come is the power by which men are to be aroused. There is another life; the Lord will come a second time; judgment will arrive; the wrath of God will be revealed. Where this is not preached, I am bold to say the gospel is not preached. It is absolutely necessary to the preaching of the gospel of Christ that men be warned as to what will happen if they continue in their sins. Shall we keep men in a fool's paradise? Shall we lull them into soft slumbers from which they will awake in hell? Are we to become helpers of their damnation by our smooth speeches? In the name of God we will not!

Every true minister of Christ should cry aloud and spare not, for God hath set a day in which he will "judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel." As surely as Paul's gospel was true, the judgment will come. Therefore flee to Jesus this day, O sinners. And O ye saints, come hide yourselves again beneath the crimson canopy of his atoning sacrifice. □



THE COMING JUDGMENT

by C.H. Spurgeon

"In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel"—Rom 2:16

There is a judgment that is going on daily. God continually holds court, and considers the doings of the sons of men. Every evil deed they do is recorded in the register of doom, and each good action is remembered and laid up in store by God. That judgment is reflected in a measure in the consciences of men. Those who know the gospel, and those who know it not, alike, have a certain measure of light, by which they know right from wrong; their consciences all the while accusing or else excusing them. This session of the heavenly court continues from day to day, like that of our local magistrates; but this does not prevent but rather necessitates the holding of an ultimate great and final judgment. As each man passes into the next life, there is an immediate judgment passed upon him; but this is only the foreshadowing of that which will take place in the end of the world.

By judging is here meant all that concerns the proceedings of trial and award. God will judge the race of men; that is to say, first, there will be a session of majesty, and the appearing of a great white throne, surrounded with pomp of angels and glorified beings. Then a summons will be issued, bidding all men come to judgment, to give in their final account. You and I and all the myriads of our race shall be gathered before the throne of the Son of God. Then, when all are gathered, the indictment will be read, and each one will be examined concerning things done in the body, according to that he hath done. Then the books shall be opened, and everything recorded there shall be read before the face of