

## SERMON XXV.

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THE DAY OF JUDGMENT ASSERTED.

*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.—Acts xvii. 31.*

ST. PAUL perceiving the idolatry at Athens, "his spirit was stirred in him:" (verse 16:) *παράξυνο*, his spirit "was soured and embittered" in him. Paul was a bitter man against sin: that anger is without sin, which is against sin. Or the word may signify, he "was in a paroxysm, or burning fit of zeal:" and zeal is such a passion as cannot be either dissembled or pent up; with this fire he dischargeth against their idolatry: "Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious. For as I passed by, and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription," *Άγνωστοῦ Θεοῦ*, "To the unknown God." (Verses 22, 23.) Nor doth the apostle only declaim against the false god, but declare to them the true God; and he doth it *ab effectu* ["from the effect"]: "That God who made the world and all things therein, is Lord of heaven and earth." (Verse 24.) To create is the best demonstration of a Deity. And this God, being every where by way of repletion, (Jer. xxiii. 24.) cannot be locally confined: He "dwelleth not in temples made with hands." (Acts xvii. 24.) And though in former times, when the veil of ignorance was drawn over the face of the world, God seemed less severe,—"The times of this ignorance God winked at;" *Ἰπερίδων ὁ Θεός*: he did, as it were, "overlook" them, not taking the extremity of the law,—yet "now he commandeth all men every where to repent." (Verse 30.) And if it be asked, "Why *now* repent? Why may we not take our full sleep?" the reason is, Because *now* is the broad daylight of the gospel, which, as it discovers sin more clearly, so [it more clearly discovers] judgment upon sinners: "He hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world."

Which words are God's alarm to the world, to awaken it out of security. This is a sweet, yet dreadful point. When St. Paul discoursed of judgment to come, "Felix trembled." (Acts xxiv. 25.) He that is not affected with this truth, hath a heart of stone.

For the illustration of this, there are six things I shall discuss:—

- I. *That there shall be a day of judgment.*
- II. *Why there must be a day of judgment.*
- III. *When the day of judgment shall be.*

IV. *Who shall be the Judge.*

V. *The order and the method of the trial.*

VI. *The effect or consequent of it.*

I. I begin with the first : *that there shall be a day of judgment.*—  
There is a twofold day of judgment :—

1. *Dies particularis*, “a particular judgment.” At the day of death, immediately upon the soul’s dissolution from the body, it hath a judgment passed upon it : (Heb. ix. 27 :) “Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was : and the spirit shall return unto God that gave it.” (Eccles. xii. 7.) As soon as the breath expires, the soul receives its particular sentence, and knows how it shall be with it to all eternity.

2. There is *dies universalis*, “a general day of judgment ;” which is the great assizes, when the world shall be gathered together. And of this the text is to be understood : “He hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world.” I might empannel a whole jury of scriptures, giving-in their verdict to this ; but in the mouth of two or three witnesses the truth will be confirmed :—“God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.” (Eccles. xii. 14.) “Every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof,” *εν ημερα κρισεως*, “in the day of judgment.” (Matt. xii. 36.) *Now* is the day of arrears ; *then* will be the day of account. “For he cometh, for he cometh to judge the earth :” (Psalm xcvi. 13 :) the ingemination denotes the certainty and infallibility of his coming.

II. *Why there must be a day of judgment.*

1. *That God may execute justice on the wicked.*—Things seem to be carried here in the world with an unequal balance. The “candle of God shines upon the” wicked : (Job xxix. 3 :) “They that tempt God are even delivered.” (Mal. iii. 15.) Diogenes, seeing Harpalus, a thief, go on prosperously, said [that] surely God had cast off the government of the world, and minded not how things went here below. “There shall come in the last days scoffers, saying, Where is the promise of his coming ?” (2 Peter iii. 3, 4.) Therefore God will have a day of assizes, to vindicate his justice : he will let sinners know, that long forbearance is no forgiveness.

2. *That God may exercise mercy to the godly.*—Here piety was the white which was shot at : they who prayed and wept, had the hardest measure ; those Christians whose zeal did flame most, met with the fiery trial : “For thy sake we are killed all the day long ; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.” (Rom. viii. 36.) “The saints,” as Cyprian saith, “are put in the wine-press, and oft the blood of these grapes is pressed out.” God will therefore have a day of judgment, that he may reward all the tears and sufferings of his people. They shall have their crown and throne and white robes : (Rev. vii. 9 :) though they may be losers for him, they shall lose nothing by him.

III. *When the day of judgment shall be.*—It is certain, there shall be a judgment ; uncertain, when. The angels know not the day ;

nor Christ, neither, as he was man. (Matt. xxiv. 36; Mark xiii. 32.) And the reason why the time is not known is,

1. *That we may not be curious.*—There are some things which God would have us ignorant of: “It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power.” (Acts i. 7.) We must not pry into God’s ark, or intermeddle with his *arcana imperii* [“secrets of government”]. “It is a kind of sacrilege,” as Salvian speaks, “for any man to break into the Holy of holies, and enter into God’s secrets.”

2. God hath concealed the time of judgment, *that we may not be careless.*—We are always to keep sentinel, having our loins girt and our lamps burning, not knowing how soon that day may overtake us. “God would have us live every day,” saith Austin, “as if the last day were approaching:”\*

*Omnem crede diem tibi diluxisse supremum.*—HORATIUS *Epist.* lib. i. ep. iv. 13.†

This is the genuine use [which] our Saviour makes of it: “Of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven. Take ye heed, watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is.” (Mark xiii. 32, 33.)

But though we cannot tell precisely when this day of the Lord shall be, yet in probability the time cannot be far off: “He that shall come will come, and will not tarry.” (Heb. x. 37.) Chrysostom hath a simile. “When,” saith he, “we see an old man going on crutches, his joints weak, his radical moisture dried up; though we do not know the just time when he will die, yet it is sure he cannot live long, because nature’s stock is spent. So, the world is decrepit, and goes, as it were, upon crutches: therefore it cannot be long before the world’s funerals, and the birth-day of judgment.” The age which St. John wrote in was “the last time;” (1 John ii. 18;) in the Greek it is *εσχάτη ώρα*, “the last hour:” then surely the time we now live in may be called “the last minute.” “For he cometh to judge the earth:” (Psalm xcvi. 13:) not *בְּיָמָיו*; “He shall come;” but, *בְּשָׁעָה קְרִיבָה* “He cometh;” to show how near the time is. It is almost day-break, and the court is ready to sit: “The Judge standeth at the door.” (James v. 9.)

Verily, if security, apostasy, decay of love, inundation of sin, revelation of Antichrist, be made in scripture the symptoms and prognostics of the last day, (Matt. xxiv. 37—39; 1 Tim. iv. 1; Matt. xxiv. 12; 2 Tim. iii. 1—5; 1 John ii. 18,) we having these gray hairs among us, the day of judgment cannot be far off.‡

IV. *Who shall be the Judge?*—I answer, The Lord Jesus Christ. Thus it is in the text: “He will judge the world by that man whom he hath ordained;” that man who is God-man. We must take heed of

\* *Ideo latet ultimus dies, ut observentur omnes dies.*—AUGUSTINUS.

† “Believe that every morning’s ray

Hath lighted up thy latest day.”—FRANCIS’S Translation.

‡ *Non secus ac flavescens arista colonus colligit pro foribus adesse messem.* “In like manner as the husbandman, when the ears of corn become yellow, concludes that the harvest is near at hand.”—EDIT.

judging others; this is Christ's work: "The Father hath committed all judgment unto the Son." (John v. 22.)\* He who once had a reed put into his hand,—his Father will now put a sceptre into his hand; he who had a purple robe put upon him in derision, shall come in his Judge's robes; he who hung upon the cross, shall sit upon the bench. There are two things in Christ which do eminently qualify him for a Judge:—

1. *Sagacitas*, "prudence and intelligence," to understand all causes that are brought before him. He is described with seven eyes in Zech. iii. 9, to note his omniscieny: (Heb. iv. 13 :) he is like Ezekiel's wheels, "full of eyes." (Ezek. x. 12.) Christ is *Καρδιουργός*, "a Heart-searcher:" he doth not only judge the fact, but the heart, which no angel can do.

2. *Potestas*, "strength," whereby he is able to be revenged upon his enemies. Christ is armed with sovereignty: therefore the seven eyes are said to be "upon one stone," (Zech. iii. 9,) to denote the infinite strength of Christ; and he is described with seven horns. (Rev. v. 6.) As Christ hath an eye, to see; so he hath a horn, to push: as he hath his balance, so he hath his sword: as he hath his fan and his sieve, so he hath his lake of fire. (Rev. xx. 10.)

V. *The order and method of the trial.*—Where observe, 1. *The summons*; 2. *The Judge's coming to the bench*; 3. *The process and trial itself.*

1. *The summons to the court.*—And that is by the sounding of a trumpet: "The Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God." (1 Thess. iv. 16.) St. Jerome saith, that, whatever he was doing, he thought he heard the noise of this trumpet sounding in his ears: *Surgite, mortui*: † "Arise, ye dead, and come to judgment." Note,

(1.) *The shrillness of the trumpet.*—It shall sound so loud, that the dead shall hear it.

(2.) *The efficacy of the trumpet.*—It shall not only startle the dead, but raise them out of their graves. (Matt. xxiv. 31.) ‡ They who will not hear the trumpet of the ministry sounding, but lie dead in sin, shall be sure to hear the trumpet of the archangel sounding.

2. *The manner of the Judge's coming to the bench.*—Christ's coming to judgment will be glorious, yet dreadful.

(1.) *It will be glorious to the godly.*—The apostle calls it, *επιφανείαν τῆς δόξης*, "the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ." (Titus ii. 13.)

(i.) Christ's *person* shall be glorious. His first coming in the flesh

\* *Judicium erit totius individuae Trinitatis, quoad consensum et autoritatem; Christi vero, quoad visibilem actum, promulgationem, et executionem.* "The judgment will be the office of the whole undivided Trinity, as regards consent and authority; but of Christ, in respect of the visible act, its promulgation and execution."—EDIT. † HIERONYMUS in *Matthæum*.

‡ *Verè vos magna, vos tubæ terribilis, quæ petras scindit, inferos aperit, vincula mortuorum dirumpit: hæc autem omnia citius peragenda quam sagitta in aère transit, in momento, in ictu oculi.* "That truly must be a great voice, a terrible blast of the trumpet, which rends rocks, opens hell, snaps the chains of the dead in sunder: but all these things are to be done more quickly than an arrow cleaves the air, 'in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye.'"—EDIT.

was obscure; his glory was veiled over; (Isai. liii. 2, 3;) all who saw the man, did not see the Messiah. But his second coming will be in *vigore et fulgore*, "very illustrious and resplendent." He shall "come in the glory of his Father;" (Mark viii. 38;) that is, he shall wear the same embroidered robes of majesty as his Father.

(ii.) Christ's attendants shall be glorious. He "shall come with all his holy angels." (Matt. xxv. 31.) These sublime, seraphic spirits, who for their lustre are compared to "lightning," (Matt. xxviii. 3,) are *Christi satellitium*, part of "Christ's train and retinue." He who was led to the cross with a band of soldiers, shall be attended to the bench with a guard of angels.

(2.) *Christ's coming to judgment will be dreadful to the wicked.*—At the coming of this Judge, there will be *ignis conflagrationis*, "a fire burning round about him." He "shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ." (2 Thess. i. 7, 8.) When God did give his law upon the mount, "there were thunders and lightnings; and Mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke, because the Lord descended upon it in fire." (Exod. xix. 16, 18.) "If God was so terrible at the giving of the law, O how terrible will he be when he shall come to require his law!"\*

3. *The process or the trial itself.*—Where observe, (1.) *The universality*, (2.) *The formality*, (3.) *The circumstances, of the trial.*

(1.) *The universality of the trial.*—It will be a very great assizes; never was the like seen: "For we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ." (2 Cor. v. 10.) Kings and nobles, councils and armies, those who were above all trial here, have no charter of exemption granted them; they must appear before Christ's tribunal, and be tried for their lives: neither power nor policy can be a subterfuge. They who refused to come to "the throne of grace," (Heb. iv. 16,) shall be forced to come to the bar of justice. And the dead as well as the living must make their appearance: "I saw the dead, both small and great, stand before God," &c. (Rev. xx. 12.) We do not use to cite men to our courts when they are dead; but at that day the dead are called to the bar: and not only men, but angels: "The angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day." (Jude 6.)

(2.) *The formality of the trial.*—Which consists in the opening of the books: "The judgment was set, and the books were opened." (Dan. vii. 10; Rev. xx. 12.) There are two books [that] will be opened:—

(i.) *The book of God's omniscency.*—God not only observes, but registers, all our actions: "Thou numberest my steps." (Job xiv. 16.) The word there, ספר "to number," † signifies "to put a thing into the book:" as if Job had said, "Lord, thou keepest thy day-book,

\* *Si talis sit horror venientis, qualis erit judicantis!*—AUGUSTINUS.  
 700 liber. "Whence is derived *sepher*, 'a book.'"—EDIT.

† *Unde*

and enterest down all my actions into the book." We read of God's "book of remembrance:" (Mal. iii. 16 :) this book will be produced at the last day.

(ii.) *The book of conscience.*—Let there be never so much written in a book, yet, if it be clasped, it is not seen. Men have their sins written in their conscience; but the book is clasped: (the searing of the conscience is the claspings of the book :) but when this book of conscience shall be unclasped at the great day, then all their hypocrisy, treason, atheism, shall appear to the view of men and angels.\* (Luke xii. 3.) The sins of men shall be written upon their forehead, as with a pen of iron.

(3.) *The circumstances of the trial.*—Where consider four things: (i.) The impartiality, (ii.) The exactness, (iii.) The perspicuity, (iv.) The supremacy.

(i.) *The impartiality of the trial.*—Jesus Christ will do every man justice: he will, as the text saith, "judge the world in righteousness." It will be *dies δικαιοκρισίας* ["a day of equitable judgment"]: justice holds the scales. The Thebans did picture their judges blind, and without hands: *blind*, that they might not respect persons; *without hands*, that they might take no bribes.† Christ's sceptre is "a sceptre of righteousness." (Heb. i. 8.) He is no *προσωποληπτης*, or "respector of persons." (Acts x. 34.) It is not nearness of blood [that] prevails: many of Christ's kindred shall be condemned. It is not gloriosness of profession: many shall go to hell with Christ in their mouths: "Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?" (Matt. vii. 22;) yet though they cast out devils, they are cast out to the devil. It is not the varnish of a picture that a judicious eye is taken with, but the curiousness of the work: it is not the most shining profession [which] Christ is taken with, unless he see the curious workmanship of grace in the heart, drawn by the pencil of the Holy Ghost. Things are not carried there by parties, but *æquâ lance*, "in a most just balance:" Christ hath true weights for false hearts. There are no fees taken in that court: the judge will not be bribed with a hypocritical tear, or a Judas-kiss.‡

(ii.) *The exactness of the trial.*—It will be very critical. Then will Christ "thoroughly purge his floor." (Matt. iii. 12.) Not a grace or a sin but his fan will discover. Christ will at the day of judgment make a heart-anatomy; as the surgeon makes a dissection in the body, and doth criticize upon the several parts: or, as the goldsmith doth *δοκιμαζειν*, "bring his gold to the balance and touchstone," and *πειραζειν*, "pierce his gold through, to see if it be right and

\* *Cunctis agminibus patebunt universa scelera tua.*—BERNARDUS. "All thy crimes shall lie open to the view of the assembled universe."—EDIT. † REUSNERUS.

‡ *Veniet dies illa, in quâ plus valebunt pura corda quàm astuta verba, conscientia bona quàm marsupia plena: Judæ enim non fallitur verbis, nec flectetur donis.*—BERNARDUS. "The day will come in which pure hearts will be more effectual than crafty words, and a good conscience will be of more avail than full purses: for the Judge will not be deceived with words, nor swayed by gifts."—EDIT.

genuine," and whether there be not a baser metal within; thus the Lord Jesus, whose eyes are "as a flame of fire," (Rev. i. 14,) will pierce through the hearts of men, and see if there be the right metal within, having the image and superscription of God upon it. Paint falls off before the fire; the hypocrite's paint will fall off at the fiery trial: nothing then will stand us in stead but sincerity.

(iii.) *The perspicuity of the trial.*—Sinners shall be so clearly convicted, that they shall hold up their hand at the bar, and cry, "Guilty." Those words of David may be fitly applied here: "That thou mightest be clear when thou judgest." (Psalm li. 4.) The sinner himself shall clear God of injustice. The Greek word for "vengeance," δίκη, signifies "justice:" God's taking vengeance is doing justice. Sin makes God angry; but it cannot make him unrighteous: the wicked shall drink a sea of wrath, but not sip one drop of injustice. Christ will say, "Sinner, what apology canst thou make for thyself? Are not thy sins written in the book of conscience? Hadst thou not that book in thy own keeping? Who could interline it?" Now the sinner, being αυτοκατακριτος, "self-condemned," shall clear his Judge: "Lord, though I am damned, yet I have no wrong done me; thou art 'clear when thou judgest.'"

(iv.) *The supremacy of the court.*—This is the highest court of judicature, from whence is no appeal. Men can remove their causes from one place to another, from the Common Law to the Court of Chancery: but from Christ's court there is no appeal: he who is once doomed here,—his condition is irreversible.

VI. The sixth and last particular is *the effect or consequence of the trial.*—Which consists in three things:—

1. *Segregation.*—Christ will separate the godly and the wicked: "He shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats." (Matt. xxv. 32.) Then will be the great day of separation. It is a great grief to the godly in this life, that they live among the wicked: "Woe is me, that I sojourn in Mesech, that I dwell in the tents of Kedar!" (Psalm cxx. 5.) Wicked men blaspheme God, (Psalm lxxiv. 18,) and persecute the saints. (2 Tim. iii. 12.) They are compared to dogs, (Psalm xxii. 16,) to bulls, (lxxviii. 30,) to lions: (lvii. 4:) they roar upon the godly, and tear them as their prey. Cain kills, Ishmael mocks, Shimei rails. The godly and the wicked are now promiscuously mingled together; (Matt. xiii. 30;) and this is as offensive as the tying a dead man to a living. But Christ will ere long make a separation, as the fan doth separate the wheat from the chaff, as a furnace separates the gold from the dross, or as a searcher \* strains out the spirits from the dregs. Christ will put the sheep by themselves, who have the ear-mark of election upon them; and the goats by themselves: after which separation there follows,

2. *The sentence.*—Which is two-fold:—

(1.) *The sentence of absolution pronounced upon the godly.*—  
"Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for

\* "Scarce, or sarse, a fine hair-sieve."—PHILLIPS and KERSEY.

you from the foundation of the world." (Matt. xxv. 34.) After the pronouncing of which blessed sentence, the godly shall go from the bar, and sit upon the bench with Christ: "Know ye not that the saints shall judge the world?" (1 Cor. vi. 2.) The saints shall be Christ's assessors: they shall sit with him in judicature, as the justices of peace with the judge. They shall vote with Christ, and applaud him in all his judicial proceedings. Here the world doth judge the saints; but there the saints shall judge the world.

(2.) *The sentence of condemnation pronounced upon the wicked.*—*Ite, maledicti*, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." (Matt. xxv. 41.) I may allude to that in James iii. 10: "Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing." Out of the same mouth of Christ proceeds blessing to the godly, and cursing to the wicked: the same wind which brings one ship to the haven, blows another ship upon the rock. *Depart from me*—The wicked once said to God, "Depart:" "They say unto God, Depart from us;" (Job xxi. 14;) and now God will say to them, "Depart from me." This will be a heart-rending word. Chrysostom saith, "This word, 'Depart!' is worse than the fire." "Depart from me, in whose presence is fulness of joy." (Psalm xvi. 11.)

3. After this sentence follows *the execution*.—"Bind the tares in bundles to burn them." (Matt. xiii. 30.) Christ will say, "Bundle up these sinners: here a bundle of hypocrites; there a bundle of apostates; there a bundle of profane: bundle them up, and throw them in the fire." And now no cries or entreaties will prevail with the Judge: the sinner and the fire must keep one another company; he who would not weep for his sins, must burn for them. And it is "everlasting" fire. The three children were thrown into the fire; but they did not stay in long: "Nebuchadnezzar came near to the mouth of the burning fiery furnace, and spake, and said, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, ye servants of the most high God, come forth, and come hither. Then Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, came forth of the midst of the fire." (Dan. iii. 26.) But the fire of the damned is everlasting: this word "ever" breaks the heart; length of time cannot terminate it; a sea of tears cannot quench it. The wrath of God is the fire, and the breath of God is the bellows to blow it up to all eternity. O how dreadfully tormenting will this fire be! To endure it, will be intolerable; to avoid it, will be impossible.

#### USES.

USE I. *Let me persuade all Christians to believe this truth, that there shall be a day of judgment.*—"Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth; and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes: but know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment." (Eccles. xi. 9.) This is a great article of our faith,—that Christ "shall come to judge the quick and the dead:" yet how many live as if this article were blotted out of their Creed! We



have too many epicures and atheists, who drown themselves in sensual delights, and live as if they did not believe either God or day of judgment. The Lucianists and Platonists deny the immortality of the soul: the Photinians hold there is no hell. I have read of the duke of Silesia, "He was so infatuated that he did not believe either God or devil:" \* I wish there be not too many of this duke's opinion. Durst men swear, be unchaste, live in malice, if they did believe a day of judgment? O, mingle this text with faith: "The Lord hath appointed a day in the which he will judge the world." There must be such a day; not only [does] scripture [assert it], but reason confirms it. There is no kingdom or nation in the world but have their sessions and courts of judicature; and God, who sets up all other courts,—shall not he be allowed his? That there shall be a day of judgment, is engrafted by nature in the consciences of men. Peter Martyr tells us that some of the heathen poets have written, that there are certain judges appointed (Minos, Rhadamanthus, and others) to examine and punish offenders after this life.

USE II. See here the sad and deplorable estate of wicked men.—This text is as the hand-writing on the wall, which may make their "knees to smite one against another." (Dan. v. 6.) The wicked shall come to judgment, but they "shall not stand in judgment:" (Psalm i. 5 :) in the Hebrew it is  $\text{וְלֹא יִשְׁתָּׁאֲוּ}$ , They "shall not rise up." When God shall be decked with glory and majesty, his face as the appearance of lightning, his eyes as lamps of fire, and a sword of justice in his hand, and shall call the sinner by name, and say, "Stand forth; answer to the charge that is brought against thee. What canst thou say for thy pride, oaths, drunkenness, &c.? These sins thou hast been told of by my ministers, whom I sent, 'rising up early,' (Jer. vii. 25,) and going to bed late: but thou didst persist in thy wickedness, with a neck of iron, a brow of brass, (Isai. xlvi. 4,) a heart of stone. (Ezek. xxxvi. 26.) All the tools [which] I wrought with, were broken and worn out upon thy rocky spirit. What canst thou say for thyself that the sentence should not pass?" O how amazed and confounded will the sinner be! He will be found speechless; he will not be able to look his Judge in the face: "What then shall I do when God riseth up? and when he visiteth, what shall I answer him?" (Job xxxi. 14.) O wretch, thou that canst now out-face thy minister and thy godly parents, when they tell thee of sin; thou shalt not be able to out-face thy Judge. When God riseth up, the sinner's "countenance" will be "fallen." (Gen. iv. 6.)

And when he visiteth, what shall I answer him?—Not many years since, the bishops did use to visit in their diocess, and call several persons before them as criminal: all the world is God's diocess; and shortly he is coming [on] his visitation, and will call men to account. Now, when God shall visit, how shall the impure soul be able to answer him? "Where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?" (1 Peter iv. 18.) Thou that diest in thy sin, art sure to be cast at the bar: "He that believeth not is condemned already;" (John iii.

\* *Usque adeo insanus, ut neque inferos neque superos esse dicat.*

18;) that is, he is as sure to be condemned as if he were condemned already. And if once the sentence of damnation be passed, miserable man, what wilt thou do? Whither wilt thou go? \* Wilt thou seek help from God? He is "a consuming fire." Wilt thou seek help from the world? It will be all on fire about thee. From the saints? Those thou didst deride upon earth. From the good angels? They defy thee, as God's enemy. From the bad angels? They are thine executioners. From thy conscience? There is the worm that gnaws. From mercy? The lease is run out. O the horror and hellish despair which will seize upon sinners at that day! O the sad convulsions! Their heads shall hang down, their cheeks blush, their lips quiver, their hands shake, their conscience roar, their heart tremble. What stupifying physic hath the devil given to men, that they are insensible of the danger [which] they are in? The cares of the world have so filled their head, and the profits of it have so bewitched their heart, that they mind neither death nor judgment.

USE III.      EXHORTATION.

BRANCH I. *Possess yourselves with the thoughts of the day of judgment.*—Think of the solemnity and impartiality of this court. Feathers swim upon the water; gold sinks into it: light, feathery spirits float in vanity; but serious Christians sink deep in the thoughts of judgment. Many people are like quicksilver; they cannot be made to fix. If the ship be not well ballasted, it will soon overturn: the reason why so many are overturned with the vanities of the world is, because they are not well ballasted with the thoughts of the day of judgment. Were a man to be tried for his life, he would bethink himself of all the arguments he could, to plead in his own defence: we are all shortly to be tried for our souls; while others are thinking how they may grow rich, let us bethink ourselves how we "may abide the day of" Christ's "coming." (Mal. iii. 2.) The serious thoughts of judgment would be,

1. *A curbing-bit to sin*: "Am I stealing the forbidden fruit, and the assizes so near?"

2. *A spur to holiness*: † "But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness?" (2 Peter iii. 10, 11.)

BRANCH II. *Let us solemnly prepare ourselves for this last and*

\* *A dextris erunt peccata accusantia, a sinistris infinita daemonia, subtus horrendum chaos inferni, desuper Judæ iratus, foris mundus ardens, intus conscientia urens: heu, miser peccator, quò fugies?*—ANSELMUS. "On the right hand will be accusing sins; on the left, innumerable demons; beneath, the horrible gulf of hell; above, an angry Judge; without, a flaming world; within, a burning conscience. Alas, wretched sinner! whither wilt thou fly?"—EDIT. † *Nihil est quod magis proficiat ad vitam honestam, &c.*—AMBROSIUS. "There is nothing that conduces more to a virtuous life than the serious thoughts of judgment."—EDIT.

*great trial.*—That is, by setting up a judgment-seat in our own souls: let us begin a private sessions, before the assizes. It is wisdom to bring our souls first to trial: "Let us search and try our ways." (Lam. iii. 40.) Let us judge ourselves according to the rule of the word, and let conscience bring-in the verdict. The word of God gives several characters of a man that shall be absolved at the day of judgment, and is sure to go to heaven:—

CHARACTER I. The first character is *humility*: "The Lord shall save the humble person." (Job xxii. 29.) Now, let conscience bring-in the verdict. Christian, art thou humble? not only humbled, but humble? Dost thou "esteem others better than thyself?" (Phil. ii. 3.) Dost thou cover thy duties with the veil of humility, as Moses put a veil on his face when it shined? If conscience brings-in this verdict, thou art sure to be acquitted at the last day.

CHARACTER II. *Love to the saints*: "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren." (1 John iii. 14.) Love makes us like God: (1 John iv. 19:) it is *radix omnium virtutum*,\* "the root of all the graces." Doth conscience witness this for you? Are you perfumed with this sweet spice of love? Do you delight in those who have the image of God? Do you reverence their graces? Do you bear with their infirmities? Do you love to see Christ's picture in a saint, though hung in never so poor a frame? This is a good sign that thou shalt pass for current at the day of judgment.

CHARACTER III. *A penitential frame of heart*: "Repentance unto life." (Acts xi. 18.) Repentance unravels sin, and makes it not to be: "In those days the iniquity of Israel shall be sought for, and there shall be none." (Jer. l. 20.) A great ball of snow is melted and washed away with the rain: great sins are washed away by holy tears. Now, can conscience bring-in the evidence for thee? Dost thou tune the penitential string? "Thou that hast sinned with Peter, dost thou weep with Peter?" † And do thy tears drop from the eye of faith? This is a blessed sign [that] thou art judgment-proof; and that when thy iniquities shall be sought for at the last day, "they shall not be found."

CHARACTER IV. *Equity in our dealings*: "Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? or who shall stand in his holy place?" *Mundus volis*, "He that hath clean hands." (Psalm xxiv. 3, 4.) Injustice doth sully and defile the hand. What saith conscience? Is thy hand clean? It is a vain thing, to hold the Bible in one hand, and false weights in the other.

Beloved, if conscience, upon a scripture-trial, give-in the verdict for us, it is a blessed sign that we shall lift up our heads with boldness at the last day. Conscience is God's echo in the soul; the voice of conscience is the voice of God; and if conscience upon an impartial trial doth acquit us, God will acquit us. "If our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God." (1 John iii. 21.) If we

\* AUGUSTINUS.  
AMBROSIUS.

† *Qui secutus es Petrum errantem, sequere penitentem!*—

are absolved in the lower court of conscience, we are sure to be absolved at the last day in the high court of justice. It were a sweet thing for a Christian thus to bring himself to a trial. Seneca tells us of a Roman who every day called himself to account: *Quod malum sandisti?* "What infirmity is healed? Wherein art thou grown better?" Then he would lie down at night with these words: *O quàm gratus somnus!* "O how sweet and refreshing is my sleep to me!"

USE IV. CONSOLATION. *Here is a fountain of consolation opened to a believer.*—And that in three cases:—in case of, 1. *Discouraging fear*, 2. *Weakness of grace*, 3. *Censures of the world*.

CASE I. Here is comfort in case of *discouraging fear*.—"O," saith a believer, "I fear, my grace is not armour of proof; I fear, the cause will go against me at the last day." Indeed, so it would, if thou wert out of Christ: but as, in our law-courts, the client hath his attorney or advocate to plead for him, so every believer, by virtue of the interest, hath Christ to plead his cause for him: "If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." (1 John ii. 1.) What, though Satan be the accuser, if Christ be the Advocate? Christ never lost any cause [that] he pleaded. Nay, his very pleading alters the nature of the cause: Christ will show the debt-book crossed with his own blood; and it is no matter what is charged, if all be discharged. Here is a believer's comfort:—his Judge will be his Advocate.

CASE II. Here is comfort in regard of *weakness of grace*.—A Christian, seeing his grace so defective, is ready to be discouraged: but, at the day of judgment, if Christ find but a drachm of sincerity, it shall be accepted. If thine be true gold, though it may be light, Christ will put his merits into the scales, and make it pass current. He that hath no sin of allowance, shall have grains of allowance. I may allude to that in Amos ix. 9: *Ne lapillus in terram*, "Yet shall not the least grain fall to the earth." He that hath but a grain of grace,—not the least grain shall fall to hell.

CASE III. It is comfort in case of *censures and slanders*.—The saints go here through strange reports,—*δια δυσφημίας και ευφημίας*, "through evil report and good report." (2 Cor. vi. 8.) John Baptist's head in a charger is a common dish now-a-days: it is ordinary to bring-in a saint beheaded of his good name. But at the day of judgment Christ will unload his people of all their injuries; he will vindicate them from all their calumnies. Christ will be the saints' compurgator: he at that day will present his church *sine maculâ et rugâ*, "not having spot or wrinkle." (Eph. v. 27.)