

men, and young women, look to the Son of God, and it shall be one of the days of the Son of man to you. O that look that Christ shall give to his own children when time shall be no more, when they shall be led with the Lamb about the rivers of living waters! Are ye all content! Will ye say nothing against it? Then, I say, if it be so, which I fear not, blessed be he who embraces the Son of God; and cursed be the man or woman which takes him not. Since ye are standing before the mountain of cursing or blessing, I intreat you, look to the Son of God, that Serpent that can heal you from all your stings and iniquities.

Now, to him that can persuade you, and will one day stand to judge you, be praise for evermore. *Amen.*

SERMON VII.

2 COR. v. 10. *For we must all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ, &c.*

ERE it be long, that in Eccles. xii. 3. shall be made true, 'The strong man shall fail, and the keepers of the house shall wax pale, and the strongest of men shall return to their long home, and time shall be no longer; and the arch-angel shall summon all families to appear before the judgment-seat, when the sea shall render up its dead.' There shall be an innumerable number standing before Christ, and he shall tell them all that ever they did. And must not that be the Messiah!

There are three dark days strangers to Christ are to meet with.

The *first* dark day is the day of death, when death shall sit down upon their eye-lids; how dreadfully dark a day shall that be?

The *second* dark day is, when they shall enter into everlasting torments; will not that be a darkful day to the wicked; on the doors of their orisons it shall be written, 'Out of this there is no redemption!'

The *third* dark day is, when they must come to be judged before Christ.

And, on the contrary, there are three days of joy to the godly.

The *first* day of joy, is the day of death, which is their coronation day, wherein the shadow shall fly away, ignorance, darkness, and affliction, shall fly away, and there shall be a pleasant day.

The *second* day of joy is, when they shall enter into eternity. The gate thereof is of God!

The *third* day of joy is, when they shall stand before the tribunal of Christ, and meet with that blessed sentence, 'Come, ye

blessed of my Father.' Ye that obey the first *come*, shall also obey the last *come*.

In the words, the apostle is vindicating his ministry, because of the contempt that was put upon it. And in them are these three.

First, Would ye know why I am so faithful? Because of the expectations of heaven, which he was persuaded of after the pins of this tabernacle were taken out.

Secondly, The fear of God.

Thirdly, The love of Christ, so in the 14th verse. The text place, 'terror constrains me, but love is stronger.' So here are three things.

First, Here is a general assertion, that there is not one since the days of Noah, but he will be at the day of judgment.

Secondly, The great influence it had on Paul, it made him watchful and circumspect; he said, 'We must all stand before the tribunal of God.'

Thirdly, The end why we must come to judgment, we must receive according to what is done in the flesh, whether good or evil. The righteous shall have that word, *come*; and the wicked shall have that word spoken to them, *depart*. Which points out that happiness of the godly, and the misery of the ungodly, Rev. xx. 12. 'John sees both small and great stand before the Lamb.'

Four or five things tell us, 'That we must all stand before the tribunal of God.'

First, The promises that must be accomplished, Isa. xlv. 23. It is said, 'every knee shall bow, and every tongue shall confess;' this says, there is an approaching judgment. The cursed knee that never bowed before shall be constrained to bow in that day, or it shall be broken to pieces.

Secondly, The convictions of the conscience when sinning, say, 'There is a judgment.'

Thirdly, Do not these terrors that stranger to Christ meet with, when death looks them in the face, say, 'There is a judgment?'

Fourthly, Do not the afflictions of the saints say, 'That there is a judgment?'

Fifthly, There will be a most visible difference betwixt the godly and the wicked, and that will not be until the day of judgment. For clearing of it, take these considerations.

First, Many pass through the world for saints, and have the approbation of it, and yet shall meet with that word, 'Depart from me, I know you not.' From this I press these three things.

First, To value less the approbation of the world; for the world will say, 'Ye shall go to heaven, and yet shall go to hell.'

Secondly, Value divine approbation; that is no matter who hate thee, if Christ love thee. *Thirdly*, Study to try the reality of

your state; go not down with this strong delusion, that ye are going to heaven, when yet ye are going to hell.

Second consideration. Consider, that at that day before Christ the most secret and darkest things shall be made manifest before angels and men, Eccles. xii. 14. 'God shall bring to light every secret thought.' It will be read out that day, that which never could have been believed to be. From this I shall press these five things. *First*, Study to guard against hypocrisy, though ye go through the world with a golden robe, yet then your hypocrisy shall be made manifest; ye may be hid from men, yet ye are not hid from him that hath seven eyes. *Secondly*, Think, that secret iniquities that day shall be opened; dark graves shall be opened. *Thirdly*, Study to have your thoughts ordered aright; ye shall count for every idle thought. *Fourthly*, Study to purify your spirits. *Fifthly*, Know with what an one ye have to do, he that keeps a register of all that ever we did, and will read it over, and your consciences shall say, *Amen* to it, Rev. xx. 12, 13. Though there were no more but that, it may put you to your duty. There are two grounds for it. 1. To point out the righteousness of Christ; there are some that go to hell, that have not acted sin so much as some of these that go to heaven: 'He will have mercy on whom he will, and whom he will he hardens.' 2. That they may love Christ the more; who, when he has read over all their bill, then he puts it away.

There are four things they shall be judged by. 1. Their faith may believe to get him, but their faith shall fail them; 'The hypocrite's hope shall perish;' hope not builded on Christ shall perish. Cursed be the man that buildeth his hope upon the sea. 2. He will try their hearts.

1. He will try their heart's projects. 2. He will try their thoughts. 3. He will try the desperate wickedness of their hearts, their hatred at his commandments shall be opened. 4. He will try their life. 5. He will try their duties. There will not be a prayer that ye have prayed, but he will try it, and they will be rejected, if they have not these six things in them; 1. The right time. 2. The right end in and about them; many pray, and go to communions for themselves. 3. If they be with formality. 4. If they have not faith. 5. When there is no dependence on Christ, but on their own strength. 6. If trembling be not in them. Many pray, and tremble not; and therefore their prayers are rejected. 7. The talents ye have gotten, it shall be tried how ye have improved them. I trow, many blank preachings shall be produced at that day. And, *lastly*, how ye have improven the means of grace, how ye have embraced Christ.

The *third* consideration. Consider that there are two ways of

appearing before the judgment-seat of God. 1. There is a personal appearance; and that is, after death. 2. There is a public appearance; and that is, after personal appearance. 1. That the justice of God might shine in its exercise. 2. For the consolation of the godly, that they who are called hypocrites may be seen to be the children of God: he shall say to them, come. 3. It is for the terror of the damned. The beholding of these that shall be acquitted, shall increase the pain of the wicked. O what pain will it be to you, to see your acquaintances standing on Christ's right-hand ascending up into heaven, and yourselves on the left-hand, descending into hell? 4. The day of your appearance shall be a day of the strong exercise of joy and sorrow, the strong exercise of love and hatred. Many will then cry, cursed be the day wherein I was born! It will be a day of gloominess, and one knee shall smite against another.

And again, O what a blessed company will be singing at that day, blessed is the Lamb! Some crying, blessed be the day wherein I was born! And some crying, cursed be the day wherein I was born!

From this I press these two things; *First*, that ye study, by all means, that the valley of decision be not the valley of sorrow, that ye be not one of these that shall weep and howl in that day. *Secondly*, Study to improve your time well: for as death shall leave you, judgment shall find you. See that ye be not found in an estrangement from Christ.

The *fourth* consideration. Consider, that the sentence that Christ shall pass when ye come before his judgment-seat, shall be a righteous sentence; he is the righteous judge, and his decree shall stand. He will say, 'Friend, I have done thee no wrong.' I know not whether love or justice shall shine brightest in that day; ye shall see it, when it shall be said to men, 'Go to everlasting fire:' and to others, 'Come, ye blessed of my Father:' there will be no reduction of that just decreet. Or, *First*, by Christ that is preached to you now, ye shall be judged at that day; authority is given to him to judge, because he is the Son of man, John v. 27. *Secondly*, He not only has authority to judge, but must judge for consolation to the godly, that they may appear with boldness before the throne, in that he is their husband, elder brother, and friend. *Thirdly*, For the greater condemnation of the wicked, that undervalue Christ, who will cry forth then, 'What fools were we, who did so undervalue precious Christ!' *Fourthly*, It is for his glory, that he, who was destroyed of men, will yet have men to stoop to him as sovereign Lord.

The *fifth* consideration. Consider, that the day of their com-

pearance before Christ, will be a great day, in these six respects: *First*, In respect of the Judge; he is a Judge, the sight of whom is able to bring you to nothing. *Secondly*, There will be many glorious attendants who will wait on Christ. At that day, his train will be like himself; as is clear, 2 Thess. i. 7, 8. 'When the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels in flaming fire.' &c. 'He shall come with the voice of the archangel,' that is the train that will wait on him at that day. *Thirdly*, In respect of the multitudes that will wait on him at that day: all that ever were since the days of Adam, and shall be at the end of the world, will stand before Christ; and will not that be a mighty train? *Fourthly*, In respect of some great persons, kings and emperors, that shall be judged by him: O! that they were thinking on it, that they might lay down their robes, and take them to another exercise; their robes shall be laid in the dust when they come before Christ. *Fifthly*, It shall be a day wherein many great offences shall be revealed, dark works brought to light. *Sixthly*, In respect of the recompences that shall be made, even heaven and joy for ever to the believer, and hell and horror for ever to the unbeliever, he shall eternally lie under this wrath and curse of God.

I press you with these two words. 1. Ye that are strangers to Christ, how terrible will your condition be! The wicked shall have five prayers in that day. 1. Alas! for the day that ever I heard the gospel. 2. Alas! that ever I took pleasure in sin. 3. Alas! that ever I had a being: 'Cursed be the day that ever tidings were brought to my father, that a man-child was born;' as is clear, Jer. xx. 15, 16, 17, 18. 4. Alas! that I am under the stroke of justice. And, 5. Alas! that I have not a rock to which I may flee. But, 2. what will the answer be, when Christ shall propone that to thee, 'Where is that mouth, O hypocrite, that said, 'I will not have Christ to reign over me?' What will your answer be, when that shall be proposed to you? Matth. xxv. 41. and the first of that sentence is, 'Depart from Me, merciful Me!' What can ye say next? All the sadness of hell is comprehended in these two. 1. The names that he gives them, 'Ye cursed, depart from me. 2. Depart to everlasting fire, with the wicked.'

First, The sentence of the godly, the first word of it is, Come; O but that is a blessed word. *Secondly*, The second word or article is, 'blessed of God.' *Thirdly*, 'Inherit the kingdom,' which is above all the kingdoms of the earth. *Fourthly*, 'Prepared for you before the foundation of the world was laid:' that is an ancient kingdom, where every subject has a crown and a sceptre.

Now we have set life before you. Ye that will embrace Christ, remember, when ye lie down as in the faith of approach-

ing judgment; and when we pray and speak, as having the faith of this; and believe it, all your works shall be put to the touchstone. Now, to this God be everlasting praise. Amen.

A

WORD OF PREFACE

BEFORE THE

S E R M O N.

I WOULD say three things to you. *First*, There shall be no confusion in heaven. It shall not need to be questioned, whether they shall come near God or not; for there shall be none there, but they shall enjoy God as much as though there were none there but themselves. And, *secondly*, believe it, I think, we might be content, that this place were our graves, and this written above it, 'Here lies one dead, sick of love for Christ.' *Thirdly*, Believe it, I think, he is obliged eternally to bless God that wins out of the world without a stain, or a spot in his face; yea, there be some of us, that the greatest atheist here may see that word in Isa. xiv. 10. 'Art thou become like unto us?'

O! what know ye, but some that are here may crucify Christ before they go out of the world? Then this shall be written on our graves, 'Have mind of Lot's wife, and of the land of sins.'

O expectants of heaven! What would ye give for a pass to go there? What should move us to stay? Are ye groaning to be home? Where are your hearts? Are they not up in heaven? Where is your hope? Is it not in heaven? Where is your treasures, desires, and love? Are they not up in heaven? Where are your longings and expectations? Are they not in heaven? O blessed is the Christian that can cast up his eyes to heaven, and say, 'Yonder is my inheritance and portion! There shall I never be sequestered from the blessed vision of Christ, God man!' They will cry out, 'How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob, and thy tabernacles, O Israel! The shout of a king is amongst us!' And,

Lastly, Perhaps there are some here wearying before we begin. What knowest thou, atheist, but there is as much wearying in heaven about thy service, as thou art about this? O! if Christ would come here, and declare his mind, he would make it a thin congregation, if none should bide but saints, I fear that he should say, that not one of twelve, but eleven of twelve should betray him, and but one of twelve should escape! O how few would our number be! I know hypocrisy may be spun with a