

## Coming Judgment of the Secrets of Men

A Sermon Delivered on Lord's Day Morning, July 12th, 1885, by  
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At the Metropolitan Tabernacle, Newington

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

It is impossible for any of us to tell what it cost the apostle Paul to write the first chapter of the epistle to the Romans. It is a shame even to speak of the things that are done of the vicious in secret places; but Paul felt it was necessary to break through his shame, and to speak out concerning the hideous vices of the heathen. He has left on record an exposure of the sins of his day that crimson the cheek of the modest when they read it, and makes both the ears of him that heareth it to tingle. Paul knew that this chapter would be read, not in his age alone, but in all ages, and that it would go into the households of the most pure and godly as long as the world should stand; and yet he deliberately wrote it, and wrote it under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. He knew that it must be written to put to shame the abominations of an age that was almost past shame. Monsters that revel in darkness must be dragged into the open that they may be withered up by the light. After Paul has thus written in anguish he bethought himself of his chief comfort. While his pen was black with the words he had written in the first chapter, he was driven to write of his great delight. He clings to the gospel with a greater tenacity than ever. As in the verse before us he needed to mention the gospel, he did not speak of it as "the gospel," but as "*my gospel*." "God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ, according to *my gospel*." He felt he could not live in the midst of so depraved a people without holding the gospel with both hands, and grasping it as his very own. "*My gospel*," saith he. Not that Paul was the author of it, not that Paul had an exclusive monopoly of its blessings, but that he had so received it from Christ himself, and regarded himself as so responsibly put in trust with it, that he could not disown it even for a instant. So fully had he taken it into himself that he could not do less than call it "*my gospel*." In another place he speaks of "*our gospel*;" thus using a possessive pronoun, to show how believers identify themselves with the truth that they preach. He had a gospel, a definite form of truth, and he believed in it beyond all doubt; and therefore he spoke of it as "*my gospel*." Herein we hear the voice of faith, which seems to say, "Though others reject it, I am sure of it, and allow no shade of mistrust to darken my mind. To me it is glad tidings of great joy: I hail it as '*my gospel*.' If I be called a fool for holding it, I am content to be a fool, and to find all my wisdom in my Lord."

"Should all the forms that men devise Assault my faith with treacherous art,  
I'd call them vanity and lies, And bind the gospel to my heart."

Is not this word "*my gospel*" the voice of love? Does he not by this word embrace the gospel as the only love of his soul—for the sake of which he had suffered the loss of all things, and did count them but dung—for the sake of which he was willing to stand before Nero, and proclaim, even in Caesar's palace, the message from heaven? Though each word should cost him a life, he was willing to die a thousand deaths for the holy

cause. "My gospel," saith he, with a rapture of delight, as he presses to his bosom the sacred deposit of truth.

"My gospel." Does not this show his courage? As much as to say, "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth." He says, "my gospel," as a soldier speaks of "my colours," or of "my king." He resolves to bear this banner to victory, and to serve this royal truth even to the death.

"My gospel." There is a touch of discrimination about the expression. Paul perceives that there are other gospels, and he makes short work with them, for he saith, "Though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let me be accused." The apostle was of a gentle spirit; he prayed heartily for the Jews who persecuted him, and yielded his life for the conversion of the Gentiles who maltreated him; but he had no tolerance for false gossellers. He exhibited great breadth of mind, and to save souls he became all things to all men; but when he contemplated any alteration or adulteration of the gospel of Christ, he thundered and lightnined without measure. When he feared that something else might spring up among the philosophers, or among the Judaizers, that should hide a single beam of the glorious Sun of Righteousness, he used no measured language; but cried concerning the author of such a darkening influence, "Let him be accursed." Every heart that would see men blessed whispers an "Amen" to the apostolic malediction. No greater curse can come upon mankind than the obscuration of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Paul saith of himself and his true brethren, "We are not as many, which corrupt the word of God;" and he cries to those who turned aside from the one and only gospel, "O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you?" Of all new doctrines he speaks as of "another gospel, which is not another; but there be some that trouble you."

As for myself, looking at the matter afresh, amidst all the filthiness which I see in the world at this day, I lay hold upon the pure and blessed Word of God, and call it all the more earnestly, my gospel—mine in life and mine in death, mine against all comers, mine for ever, God helping me: with emphasis—"my gospel."

Now let us notice what it was that brought up this expression, "My gospel." What was Paul preaching about? Certainly not upon any of the gentle and tender themes, which we are told nowadays ought to occupy all our time; but he is speaking of the terrors of the law, and in that connection he speaks of "my gospel."

Let us come at once to our text. It will need no dividing, for it divides itself. First, let us consider *that on a certain day God shall judge mankind*; secondly, on that day *God will judge the secrets of men*; thirdly, when he judges the secrets of men, *it will be by Jesus Christ*; and fourthly, *this is according to gospel*.

I. We begin with the solemn truth that **ON A CERTAIN DAY GOD WILL JUDGE MEN**. A judgment is going on daily. God is continually holding court, and considering the doings of the sons of men. Every evil deed that 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 assize.

As each man passes into another world, 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.

There is a judgment also passing upon nations for as nations will not exist as nations in another world, they have to be judged and punished in this present state. The thoughtful reader of history will not fail to observe, how sternly this justice had dealt with empire after empire, when they have become corrupt. Colossal dominions have withered to the ground, when sentenced by the King of kings. Go ye and ask to-day, "Where is the empire of Assyria? Where are the mighty cities of Babylon? Where are the glories of the Medes and Persians? What has become of the Macedonian power? Where are the Caesars and their palaces?" These empires were forces established by cruelty, and used for oppression; they fostered luxury and licentiousness, and when they were no longer tolerable, the earth was purged from their polluting existence. Ah me! what horrors of war, bloodshed, and devastation, have come upon men as the result of their iniquities! The world is full of the monuments, both of the mercy and the justice of God: in fact the monuments of his justice, if rightly viewed, are proofs of his goodness; for it is mercy on the part of God to put an end to evil systems when, like a nightmare, they weigh heavily upon the bosom of mankind. The omnipotent, Judge has not ceased from his sovereign rule over kingdoms, and our own country may yet have to feel his chastisements. We have often laughed among ourselves at the idea of the New Zealander sitting on the broken arch of London Bridge amid the ruins of this metropolis. But is it quite so ridiculous as it looks? It is more than possible it will be realized if our iniquities continue to abound. What is there about London that it should be more enduring than Rome? Why should the palaces of *our* monarchs be eternal if the palaces of Koyunjik have fallen? The almost boundless power of the Pharaohs has passed away, and Egypt has become the meanest of nations; why should not England come under like condemnation? What are we? What is there about our boastful race, whether on this side of the Atlantic or the other, that we should monopolize the favour of God? If we rebel, and sin against him, he will not hold us guiltless, but will deal out impartial justice to an ungrateful race.

Still, though such judgments proceed every day, yet there is to be a day, a period of time, in which, in a more distinct, formal, public, and final manner, God will judge the sons of men. We might have guessed this by the light of nature and of reason. Even heathen peoples have had a dim notion of a day of doom; but we are not left to guess it, we are solemnly assured of it in the Holy Scripture. Accepting this Book as the revelation of God, we know beyond all doubt that a day is appointed in which the Lord will judge the secrets of men.

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. The heralds will fly through the realms of death, and summon those who sleep in the dust: for the quick and the dead shall all appear before that judgment-seat. John says, "I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God;" and he adds, "The sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them." Those that have been so long buried that their dust is mingled with the soil, and has undergone a thousand transmutations, shall nevertheless be made to put in a personal appearance before the judgment-seat of Christ. What an issue will that be! You and I and

all the myriad 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 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, and the saints shall judge the world. 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. All men shall stand before the one great judgment-bar; evidence shall be given concerning them all, and a righteous sentence shall go forth from his mouth who knows not how to flatter the great.

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. We have seen an age in which reformation has been commanded, in which mercy has been presented, in which expostulation and entreaty have been used, and there ought at last to come a day in which God shall judge both the quick and the dead, and measure out to each the final result of life. It ought to be so for the sake of the righteous. They have been slandered; they have been despised and ridiculed; worse than that, they have been imprisoned and 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. Neither 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? What is that day to you? To you it should be 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 with blood redeemed with power and brought forth out of the corruption of the age into the holiness in which they walk with God. 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. One day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. 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. When the apostle addressed the Grecian sages at Athens he said, "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 Saviour 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. Before the judgment-seat shall every man and woman in this house give an account of the things done in the body, whether they be good or whether they be evil. Thus saith the Lord.

II. 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.

By "secrets of men," the Scripture means those secret crimes which hide themselves away by their own infamy, which are too vile to be spoken of, which cause a shudder to go through a nation if they be but dragged, as they ought to be, into the daylight. Secret offences shall be brought into judgment; the deeds of the night and of the closed room, the acts which require the finger to be laid upon the lip, and a conspiracy of silence to be sworn. Revolting and shameless sins that must never be mentioned lest the man who committed them should be excluded from his fellows as an outcast, abhorred even of other sinners—all those shall be revealed. All that you have done, any of you, or are doing, if you are bearing the Christian name and yet practicing secret sin, shall be laid bare before the universal gaze. If you sit here amongst the people of God, and yet where no eye sees you, if you are living in dishonesty, untruthfulness, or uncleanness, it shall all be known, and shame and confusion of face shall eternally cover you. Contempt shall be the inheritance to which you shall awake, when hypocrisy shall be no more possible. Be not deceived, God is not mocked; but he will bring the secrets of men into judgment.

Specially our text refers to the hidden motives of every action; for 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 out of ostentation, 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, and envies, and prides, and rebellions of the heart—what a disclosure will these make!

All the sensual desires and imaginings of even the best regulated, what foulness will these appear! What a day it will be, when the secrets of men shall be set in the full blaze of noon!

God will also reveal secrets that were secrets even to the sinners themselves, for there is sin in us that we have never seen, and iniquity in us that we have never yet discovered.

We have managed for our own comfort's sake to blind our eyes somewhat, and we take care to avert our gaze from things that it is inconvenient to see; but we shall be compelled

to see all these evils in that day, when the Lord shall judge the secrets of men. I do not wonder that when a certain Rabbi read in the book of Ecclesiastes that God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil, he wept. 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."

The secrets of men will be judged because often the greatest of moral acts are done in secret. The brightest deeds that God delights in are those that are done by his servants when they have shut the door and are alone with him; when they have no motive but to please him; when they studiously avoid publicity, lest they should be turned aside by the praise of men; when the right hand knoweth not what the left hand doeth, and the loving, generous heart deviseth liberal things, and doeth it behind the screen, so that it should never be discovered how the deed was done. It were a pity that such deeds should be left out at the great audit. Thus, too, secret vices are also of the very blackest kind, and to exempt them were to let the worst of sinners go unpunished. Shall it be that these polluted things shall escape because they have purchased silence with their wealth? I say solemnly "God forbid." He does forbid it: what they have done in secret, shall be proclaimed upon the house-tops.

Besides, the secret things of men enter into the very essence of their actions. An action is, after all, good or bad very much according to its motive. It may seem good, but the motive may taint it; and so, if God did not judge the secret part of the action he would not judge righteously. He will weigh our actions, and detect the design that led to them, and the spirit that prompted them.

Is it not certainly true that the secret thing is the best evidence of the man's condition? Many a man will not do in public that which would bring him shame; not because he is black-hearted enough for it, but because he is too much of a coward. That which a man does when he thinks that he is entirely by himself is the best revelation of the man. That which thou wilt not do because it would be told of thee if thou didst ill, is a poor index of thy real character. That which thou wilt do because thou wilt be praised for doing well, is an equally faint test of thy heart. Such virtue is mere self-seeking, or mean-spirited subservience to thy fellow-man; but that which thou doest out of respect to no authority but thine own conscience and thy God; that which thou doest unobserved, without regard to what man will say concerning it—that it is which reveals thee, and discovers thy real

soul. Hence God lays a special stress and emphasis upon the fact that he will in that day judge "the secrets" of men by Jesus Christ.

Oh, friends, if it does not make you tremble to think of these things, it ought to do so. I feel the deep responsibility of preaching upon such matters, and I pray God of his infinite mercy to apply these truths to our hearts, that they may be forceful upon our lives. 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, brethren, with an omniscient God; with One who once knowing never forgets; with One to whom all things are always present; with One will conceal nothing out of fear, or favour 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 in that fierce light which beats upon all things from the throne of God.

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

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! What a difference between the weary man and full of woes, and he that shall then be girt with glory, sitting on a throne encircled with a rainbow! 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 into 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, even he whom the nations abhorred. He shall break them in pieces like a potter's vessel, even those who cast him out as unworthy to live among them. 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 winepress. 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.

If you ask again, Why is the Son of God chosen to be the final Judge? I could give as a further answer that he receives this high office not only as a reward for all his pains, and as a manifestation of his glory, but also because men have been under his mediatorial sway, and he is their Governor and King. At the present moment we are all under the sway of the Prince Immanuel, God with us: we have been placed by an act of divine clemency, not under the immediate government of an offended God, but under the reconciling rule of the Prince of Peace. "All power is given unto him in heaven and in earth." "The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son: that all men should honor the Son, even as they honor the Father." We are commanded to preach unto the people, and "to testify that it is he which was ordained of God to be the judge of quick and dead." (Acts 10:42) Jesus is our Lord and King, and it is meet that he should conclude his mediatorial sovereignty by rewarding his subjects according to their deeds.

But I have somewhat to say unto you that ought to reach your hearts, even if other thoughts have not done so. I think that God hath chosen Christ, the man Christ Jesus, to judge the world that there may never a cavil be raised concerning that judgment. Men shall not be able to say, "We were judged by a superior being who did not know our weaknesses and temptations, and therefore he judged us harshly, and without a generous consideration of our condition." No, God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ, who was tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin. He is our brother, bone of our bone, flesh of our flesh, partaker of our humanity, and therefore understands and knows what is in men. He has shown himself to be skilful in all the surgery of mercy throughout the ages, and at last he will be found equally skilful in dissecting motives and revealing the thoughts and intents of the heart. Nobody shall ever be able to look back on that august tribunal and say that he who sat upon it was too stern, because he knew nothing of human weakness. It will be the loving Christ, whose tears, and bloody sweat, and gaping wounds attest his brotherhood with mankind; and it will be clear to all intelligences that however dread his sentences, he could not be unmerciful. God shall judge us by Jesus Christ, that the judgment may be indisputable.

But harken well—for I speak with a great weight upon my soul—this judgment by Jesus Christ puts beyond possibility all hope of any after-interposition. If the Saviour condemns, and such a Saviour, 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 Saviour 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. To the guilty the judgment will indeed be a

"Great day of dread, decision, and despair."

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 be driven to say, "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 Saviour to pronounce sentence of eternal woe! I am sure that many of us have been driven of late to an increased hatred of sin; our souls have recoiled within us because of the wickedness among which we dwell; it has made us feel as if we would fain borrow the Almighty's thunderbolts with which to smite iniquity. Such haste on our part may not be seemly, since it implies a complaint against divine long-suffering; but Christ's dealing with evil will be calm and dispassionate, and all the more crushing. 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.

It seems to me as if God in this intended to give a display of the unity of all his perfections. In this same man, Christ Jesus, the Son of God, you behold justice and love, mercy and righteousness, combined in equal measure. He turns to the right, and says, "Come, ye blessed," with infinite suavity; and with the same lip, as he glances to the left, he says, "Depart, ye cursed." Men will then see at one glance how love and righteousness are one, and how they meet in equal splendor in the person of the Well-beloved, whom God has therefore chosen to be Judge of the living and dead.

IV. I have done when you have borne with me a minute or two upon my next point, which is this: and **ALL THIS IS ACCORDING TO THE GOSPEL**. That is to say, there is nothing in the gospel contrary to the solemn teaching. Men gather to us, to hear us preach of infinite mercy, and tell of the love that blots 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, or falsehood. 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, if they will 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, an exceeding justice in the judgment, and an exceeding terror in the sure rewards of transgression.

"According to my gospel," saith Paul; and he meant that the judgment is an essential part of the gospel creed. 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 from the dead; he ascended into heaven and sitteth on 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.

The judgment is according to our gospel, and in times of righteous indignation its terrible significance seemeth a very gospel to the pure in heart. I mean this. I have read this and that concerning oppression, slavery, the treading down of the poor, and the shedding of blood, and I have rejoiced that there is a righteous Judge. I have read of secret wickedness among the rich men of this city, and I have said within myself, "Thank God, there will be a judgment day." Thousands of men have been hanged for much less crimes than those which now disgrace gentlemen whose names are on the lips of rank and beauty. Ah me, how heavy is our heart as we think of it! It has come like a gospel to us that the Lord will be revealed in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. (2 Thess. 1:8) The secret wickedness of London cannot go on forever. Even they that love men best, and most desire salvation for them cannot but cry to God, "How long! How long! Great God, wilt thou for ever endure this?" God hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world, and we sigh and cry until it shall end the reign of wickedness, and give rest to the oppressed. 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. Too many have kept back these truths, and thus the bone has been taken out of the arm of the gospel. Its point has been broken; its edge has been blunted. 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. Ho, ho, sir surgeon, you are too delicate to tell the man that he is ill! You hope to heal the sick without their knowing it. You therefore flatter them; and what happens? They laugh at you; they dance upon their own graves. At last they die! Your delicacy is cruelty; your flatteries are poisons; you are a murderer. 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. It becomes every true minister of Christ to 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. Wherefore flee to Jesus this day, O sinners. O ye saints, come hide yourselves again beneath the crimson canopy of the atoning sacrifice, that you may be now ready to welcome your descending Lord and escort him to his judgment-seat. O my hearers, may God bless you, for Jesus' sake. Amen.

Portion of Scripture read before Sermon—John 12:37-50.

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