

under sentence of death, our soul comes into direct contact, and immediate touch with the holy God. It brings us living and striking knowledge of him, with whom we have to do. The sin was terrible. But God used it for this end: that through it we should come to a better understanding of his holiness.

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“WHEN GOD SHALL JUDGE THE SECRETS OF MEN.”

They who conscientiously devote a portion of their time to God, and try to know him, are few. Prayer, church-attendance and good works can be practiced without actual engagement with God. In many prayers the soul fails of appearing before God, and of having God appear to the soul. Many people go to church and come home again, without having met the Lord, or having been met by him. Even though during sermon time the mind was engaged with Divine things, by itself, this was not being busy with God. And as to good works, it needs scarcely be said, that we can fill up an entire day with them, without so much as devoting one thought to him, who inspired us to do them. O, there is little, actual business done with the Living God.

Thus far we only had in mind confessing, believing Christians, who practice prayer, who live for their church, and do good works. Think now of the unchurched multitudes, who are not worldly in any bad sense, but rather cultivate seriousness of thought, who honor virtue and admire higher

ideals. And what do we find even with the noblest and best of them, of a being busy with God? And of those who live only for business, and after that for pleasure, it must be confessed with shame, that there are no dealings with God at all. Add to this the people who are outspokenly wicked and godless in society at large, and others again who are indifferent to all higher interests, and we see, that the number of those who give but a small part of their time to fellowship with God is very, very small.

It must also be felt, if we may so express it, that in his love for the world, all this must be very painful to God. For God so loved the world, that he gave it his only-begotten Son. He imparted unto it susceptibility to know him, and to love him in return. Only a small part of this world bears the Christian name. And in this small part, that has been baptized, even there there are but very few, who day by day turn their soul and mind to him, and enter into his secret communion. All the rest pass by on the other side. They are filled with other things. And the knowledge of his Name and Being is scorned by them.

But according to the Scripture, this is certain, that soon or late the moment comes for every one, in which God shall compel him, to deal exclusively, and with nothing else than, with himself alone. He has appointed a day for this. And for whatever man this day breaks, in it he shall have to appear before God, and God shall overtake him with his Majesty, and shall take such possession of him, that he shall not be able

to think of anything save God. That day is the day of judgment.

In the representation of this day of judgment art has done much harm. As art it could not do otherwise than work with the representation. For this it borrowed its material and image from an earthly court of justice, with the millions and the millions that have ever lived on earth as defendants before God's holy tribunal. It could not do this otherwise, and this has been done in a masterful way by more than one pencil or pen. It should not be forgotten however, that it is the outward representation of what is chiefly of a spiritual significance. And the spiritual act in judgment can not be pictured. So that when infidelity came in, which denies the judgment, it made use of the outward representation, by which to turn the matter itself into ridicule, and to show its impossibility. Where would there be room for these millions and millions of people to stand? How much time would it take to give each individual a hearing, even to the particulars of every word and thought? It is said to be a day, and for every family it would require more than a year.

Our confession struck a truer note, when in view of the spiritual nature of the judgment, it spoke of it as the opening of the books of conscience. With this understanding of it, the judgment is a review, in one clear vision, of the whole life; an immediate sight of totals, where before we only reckoned with the unpaid accounts of each moment. The judgment is a settling of accounts. What we owe God, and what is our due for deeds

done either good or evil, are recorded side by side. This is the teaching of Scripture. For we must all appear, "says the apostle," before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad (2 Cor. 5:10). And every accountant knows what accounting here means, and what it implies, that in the judgment, God shall give us his bill in toto, accompanied with explanations, so that we shall be convinced in the conscience that the account is correct and just. We shall have the total result, the entire resumption of our life, from childhood on, shown unto us with such certainty, as to exclude every suggestion of doubt.

In our automatic counting-machines, the cipher of whatever is put in, appears at once in sight. The addition takes place of itself. This is the image of our life. And he who throughout all of life has refused to notice the cipher, that showed itself each day, will in the judgment day suddenly see the total amount, in which nothing has been forgotten, and against which nothing can be said. There will be an opportunity to verify it, but this will do no good. A mistake in this account is unthinkable. And with the sudden clearing of the light of the conscience, which will illumine all of life, there will nothing rest, save the acknowledgement that God is just.

This is nothing to him, who believed and fell asleep in Jesus. The end will reveal to him also a terror-striking shortage, but on the opposite side of the page will appear the atonement by Christ, which covers everything. His judge is his

Savior. And liberated from the curse, he enters into eternal blessedness.

But this opening of the book of the conscience will be terrible for those who died without Christ. Conversion will then be too late. There can be no more hiding in Christ. No more part can be obtained in the atonement. There is nothing of good to balance the immeasurable guilt. And the sinner must faint under the weight of a sentence, that is read to him in his own conscience. And this will be the eternal pain in his inmost self, of the worm, that restlessly gnaws, without ever dying; and of the heat in his conscience of the fire, that shall never be extinguished. There is no need of any torture from without, to be added unto this. The fire itself within is the eternal punishment, and this inner consumption of self will be as a cancer, that shall eat into all his being, and corrupt his entire existence. Even as cancer on the outside occasions no pain, but that which eats into the vitals within, so will the punishment begin from the conscience and go through all his existence.

This will be "the knowledge of God" on the part of those, who here on earth, have not willed to know the grace of God. This knowledge of Divine grace is twofold. On one side, here on earth, through faith, it is a knowledge of God that saves. "This is eternal life that they may know Thee, the only true God." But on the other side there is a knowledge of God, which only comes after death, in the judgment, but which for this very reason brings no eternal life, but eternal death. In the earth it was

lightly asserted, that there was no God, or that nothing of him was known, or that there was no need to concern oneself about him. But after death one stands before this disregarded God, feels the terror of his all-pervading presence, and is no longer able, try what he may, to escape from him. For this is not the end of the judgment, that immediately after it, life can be continued in the old forgetfulness, as though there were no God. No, the self-destroying impression received of God, at the moment of the actual judgment, continues, and is never effaced again. It is recorded of devils that they well know that God is, and that they tremble. And all who in this life have evaded God, will come in the judgment, and after it, to the terrible discovery, that they have been mistaken. They will see with their own eyes, that God really exists and they also will tremble.

Behind the veil of visible things in this life, and back of the mists of our earthly limitations, one can cover himself with the pretence that God is not seen, and thus persuade himself that there is no God, because willfully he does not see him. But all this ends with death. Then this veil will be rent from the top to the bottom, these mists will lift themselves, every pretence will fall away, and the majesty of the Lord God will appear, and disclose itself in all its glory.

The knowledge of God, which was not desired in life, will then come of itself, and deluge the lost. But it will be a repulsive knowledge, which will not draw them toward God, but will make them recoil from before his terribleness. And

wherever they may look, there will be nothing behind which to hide from the sight of the majesty of God. It then becomes the heat of a sun which does not cherish, but sears. The Scripture calls it hell, and so it is, but only by what God through his sacred presence makes it. If God could be done away, or if one could withdraw himself from the Eternal, or hide from before his Face, hell would be ended. But this is impossible. God's holy presence will not cease to deluge the lost, and that is eternal death. It is well with him, therefore, who in this life has sought the knowledge of God in Christ. After death this knowledge will be for him the drinking in of Divine sympathy. But woe to him who shall only learn to know God in the judgment. For him this knowledge will be nothing but horror.

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“DYING HE WORSHIPPED.”

In connection with the knowledge of what lies beyond the grave the moment of dying is deeply significant. The way in which we see others die, and in which we die ourselves, contributes to our knowledge of God. In this hour many things that stood between God and the soul fall away. We then stand on the threshold of the unseen life, and the words of the Psalmist: “Our feet stand within thy gates, O Jerusalem,” are applicable to the entering in through the gates of the new Jerusalem.

Let us take dying in this connection in its real true sense. Dying is an act. In our natural