



Twentieth Sunday after Trinity

The Collect.

O ALMIGHTY and most merciful God, of thy bountiful goodness keep us, we beseech thee, from all things that may hurt us; that we, being ready both in body and soul, may cheerfully accomplish those things which thou commandest; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

42 And he commanded us 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)

Perhaps it is owing more to the doubt of the common inquirer that Christ would ever, in view of His great Compassion, exercise authority as a firm and unyielding Judge, than to any lack of confidence that He is **ABLE** to execute that judgment upon humanity. We constantly learn of His deep compassion and kindness in His miracles of healing, forgiveness, and grace; yet, the New Testament does not stop at these acts of mercy. If we will know the whole of His Person, we must read the whole of His Book. Truly, He is Judge of both the quick and the dead, but also an executor of wrath and vengeance upon those who are wicked and rebellious. The title of Judge, when applied to Christ, is no metaphor, for He is truly and actually Judge. He is, first of all, our Bondsman and Redeemer. Then He has become our Advocate at the Bar of God. Finally, He has become Judge of all things. Is anyone more qualified to Judge us under the Law than He who is the Author of that Law? The collective legal minds of Harvard pale before His Mind of Law and Justice. They may imitate His expertise, but can never attain to any approximation of it. He is the High Judge whose verdicts and decisions are not subject to appeal or review. If there is the least morsel of evidence that our hearts are motivated by love of God, He will not remember the sins on the docket. If He recognizes our hearts as having received and believed in His Holy Name, the evidence against us will be dismissed. Our Adversary (or prosecuting attorney), we are told, will not be present when we go before the Judgment Seat.

You may deny the role of Christ as Judge by quoting from the following text: *Though I bear record of myself, yet my record is true: for I know whence I came, and whither I go; but ye cannot tell whence I come, and whither I go. Ye judge after the flesh; I judge no man. And yet if I judge, my judgment is true* (John 8:14-16) In so doing,

you would err in reading only the text that suited you. Christ came as Savior. His role as Savior ends when a man takes his final breath – then cometh the judgment: *And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.* (Hebrew 9:27-28) Unto those who eagerly look for His Coming, these are those for whom there can be no dread of conviction by the Judge of hearts and Souls, Christ is Savior as long as time remains, but when that curtain of time is removed, He immediately becomes Judge.

The Lord has been long suffering toward us. He is patient and loving, yet many are rebellious to His Face and reject all that He bled and died to grant. When our characters are completely incorrigible, they have become reprobate to God. We reject God's loving approach through the agency of Holy Spirit – His yearnings and His small still Voice – until, though these continue, we have grown dull of feeling and hearing. Speaking of hearing, I learned from a medical professional (who has a ministry to the dying) at a recent convocation that the last sense we lose at death is the sense of hearing. The last reality that the dying may experience are those words of love and prayer that are uttered at the point of death. It is almost as if the Lord delays His closing the door of salvation until the very last moment – for it is by hearing that we are led by faith. *So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.* (Romans 10:17)

When the righteous, at length, close their eyes in that long sleep, they go before Christ as righteous souls. It is not that Christ exempts these from the hard provisions of the law, for they have indeed committed sin. But He has washed those sins away by His redeeming love and grace at the moment of their conversion to Him. He does not overlook their sins – for they are **no more**. They come before Him with that imputed righteousness granted by Christ and His suffering once and for all. All who are under that blood of the Lamb, sacrificed from before the Foundation of the World, will have attained that legal righteousness granted in Christ who satisfied the Law on our behalf.

Those who linger in the mud and vomit of their sins and depravity, and never come before the King with a repentant heart, shall face utter terror at the Coming of Christ. They are open belligerents to His Kingdom. At the time of His coming, the lines of battle are drawn and clear. We shall all stand on one side or the other. Those Remnant of Israel (all Christians of all time) shall be drawn into the Camp of the Saints as the legions of the Anti-Christ and His beastly system shall converge from the four quarters of the world to destroy this last outpost of faith and Godliness. Consider how small will that remnant be when they are surrounded by the evil forces of the whole world? It is never the quantity of belief, but the quality of belief, that gains favor with God. *And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them. And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.* (Revelations 20:7-10) After this momentous event, we are told, comes the White Throne Judgment. If your name is not found in the Book of Life, the Judge has no choice but to bind you over to Hell.

If you know this Judge at the last Day, you will not fear or tremble. You know

that He is full of Love and Truth. He has kept His Word to you through all the years of your following Him. He will not cast you out, or disown you. Can you imagine the terror of going before the Judge on that Last Day with the seal of "unbeliever", or "unregenerate", or "blasphemer" stamped in your forehead? Perish the thought! How will you go before the Judge of your Soul on that Day?