

Romans 2:1-16

Meditation

A.A. Hodge

Confession of Faith

SALVATION IS BY GRACE THROUGH FAITH

It is here taught (1) That all men sin from the commencement of moral agency. (2) That back of this their nature is morally corrupt, indisposed to all good, and inclined to all evil. (3) That this moral corruption is so radical and inveterate that men are by nature “disabled” with respect to right moral action. (4) That this condition is innate from birth and by nature this representation agrees with universal experience. All the children of men, of all ages, nations, and circumstances, and how ever educated, invariably sin as soon as they become capable of moral action. A universal fact must have a cause universally present. This can only be found in the common depravity of our nature.

(2) With all the teachings of Scripture. (a) It declares that all men are sinners. (Rom. 1, 2, and 3:1–19.) (b) That sinful actions proceed from sinful hearts or dispositions. (Matt. 15:19; Luke 6:43–45.) (c) That the disposition which prompts to sinful action is “sin,” a moral corruption. (Rom. 6:12,14,17; 7:5–17; Gal. 5:17,24; Eph. 4:18,19.)

(d) That this corruption involves moral and spiritual blindness of mind, as well as hardness of heart and vile affections. (1 Cor. 2:14,15; Eph. 4:18.) (e) That this moral corruption and prevailing tendency to sin is in our nature from birth. (Ps. 51:5; Eph. 2:3; John 3:6.) (f) That men in their natural state are “dead” in trespasses and sins. (Eph. 2:1; John 3:4,5.) And (g) That consequently they can be restored by no “change of purpose” nor “moral reformation” upon their part, but only by an act of almighty power called “a new birth” “a new creation,” “a begetting,” “a quickening from the dead.” (Eph. 4:24, 2:5,10; John 3:3; 1 John 5:18.)¹

1A. A. Hodge, *The Confession of Faith*, (Simpsonville, SC: Christian Classics Foundation) 1997.

CHAPTER 2

<450201> ROMANS 2:1-2

1. Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest: for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself for thou that judgest doest the same things.

1. Propterea inexcusabilis es, O homo, quicumque judicas: in quo enim judicas alterum, teipsum condemnas; eadem enim facis dum judicas.

2. But we are sure that the judgment of God is according to truth against them which commit such things.

2. Novimus autem quod iudicium Dei est secundum veritatem in eos qui talia agunt.

This reproof is directed against hypocrites, who dazzle the eyes of men by displays of outward sanctity, and even think themselves to be accepted before God, as though they had given him full satisfaction. Hence Paul, after having stated the grosser vices, that he might prove that none are just before God, now attacks saintlings (*sanctulos*) of this kind, who could not have been included in the first catalogue. Now the inference is too simple and plain for any one to wonder how the Apostle derived his argument; for he makes them *inexcusable*, because they themselves knew the judgment of God, and yet transgressed the law; as though he said, “Though thou consented not to the vices of others, and seemest to be avowedly even an enemy and a reprover of vices; yet as thou art not free from them, if thou really examinest thyself, thou canst not bring forward any defense.”

For in what thou judgest another, etc. Besides the striking resemblance there is between the two Greek verbs, κρίνειν and κατακρίνειν (to judge and to condemn,) the enhancing of their sin ought to be noticed; for his mode of speaking is the same, as though he said, “Thou art doubly deserving of condemnation; for thou art guilty of the same vices which thou blamest and reprovest in others.” It is, indeed, a well-known saying,

— that they who scrutinize the life of others lay claim themselves to innocence, temperance, and all virtues; and that those are not worthy of any indulgence who allow in themselves the same things which they undertake to correct in others. *For thou, judging, doest the same things*: so it is literally; but the meaning is, “Though thou judgest, thou yet doest the same things.” And he says that they *did* them, because they were not in a right state of mind; for sin properly belongs to the mind. They then condemned themselves on this account, — because, in reproving a thief, or an adulterer, or a slanderer, they did not merely condemn the persons, but those very vices which adhered to themselves.^{f62}

2. *But we know that the judgment of God*, etc. The design of Paul is to shake off from hypocrites their self-complacencies, that they may not think that they can really gain any thing, though they be applauded by the world, and though they regard themselves guiltless; for a far different trial awaits them in heaven. But as he charges them with inward impurity, which, being hid from the eyes of men, cannot be proved and convicted by human testimonies, he summons them to the tribunal of God, to whom darkness itself is not hid, and by whose judgment the case of sinners, be they willing or unwilling, must be determined.

Moreover, *the truth* of judgment will in two ways appear, because God will punish sin without any respect of persons, in whomsoever it will be found; and he will not heed outward appearances, nor be satisfied with any outward work, except what has proceeded from real sincerity of heart. It hence follows, that the mask of feigned sanctity will not prevent him from visiting secret wickedness with judgment. It is, no doubt, a Hebrew idiom; for *truth* in Hebrew means often the inward integrity of the heart, and thus stands opposed not only to gross falsehood, but also to the outward appearance of good works. And then only are hypocrites awakened, when they are told that God will take an account, not only of their disguised righteousness, but also of their secret motives and feelings.^{f63}

<450203> ROMANS 2:3-10

<p>3. And thinkest thou this, o man, that judgest them which do such things, and doest the same, that thou shalt escape the Judgment of God?</p>	<p>3. Existimas autem, O homo, qui judicas eos qui talia faciunt, et eadem facis, quod ipse effugies iudicium Dei?</p>
<p>4. Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness, and forbearance, and long-suffering; ^{f64} not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?</p>	<p>4. An divitias bonitatis ipsius tolerantiaequae, ac lenitatis contemnis; ignorans quod bonitas Dei te ad poenitentiam deducit?</p>
<p>5. But, after thy hardness and impenitent heart, treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God;</p>	<p>5. Sed, juxta durtiam tuam, et cor poenitere nescium, thesaurizas tibi iram in diem irae et revelations justii iudicii Dei;</p>
<p>6. Who will render to every man according to his deeds:</p>	<p>6. Qui redditurus est unicuique secundam ipsius opera:</p>
<p>7. To them who, by patient continuance in well-doing, seek for glory, and honor, and immortality, eternal life;</p>	<p>7. Iis quidem, qui per boni operis perseverantiam, gloriam et honorem et immortalitatem quaerunt, vitam aeternam;</p>
<p>8. But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath,</p>	<p>8. Iis vero qui sunt contentiosi, ac veritati immorigeri, iniustitiae autem obtemperant, excandescentia, ira, tribulatio,</p>
<p>9. Tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile:</p>	<p>9. Et anxietas in omnem animam hominis perpetrantis malum, Iudaei primum simul et Graeci:</p>
<p>10. But glory, honor, and peace, to every man that worketh good; to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile.</p>	<p>10. At gloria et honor et pax omni operanti bonum, Iudaeo primum simul et Graeco.</p>

3. *And thinkest thou, O man,* etc. As rhetoricians teach us, that we ought not to proceed to give strong reproof before the crime be proved, Paul may

seem to some to have acted unwisely here for having passed so severe a censure, when he had not yet proved the accusation which he had brought forward. But the fact is otherwise; for he adduced not his accusation before men, but appealed to the judgment of conscience; and thus he deemed that proved which he had in view — that they could not deny their iniquity, if they examined themselves and submitted to the scrutiny of God's tribunal. And it was not without urgent necessity, that he with so much sharpness and severity rebuked their fictitious sanctity; for men of this class will with astonishing security trust in themselves, except their vain confidence be forcibly shaken from them. Let us then remember, that this is the best mode of dealing with hypocrisy, in order to awaken it from its inebriety, that is, to draw it forth to the light of God's judgment.

That thou shalt escape, etc. This argument is drawn from the less; for since our sins are subject to the judgment of men, much more are they to that of God, who is the only true Judge of all. Men are indeed led by a divine instinct to condemn evil deeds; but this is only an obscure and faint resemblance of the divine judgment. They are then extremely besotted, who think that they can escape the judgment of God, though they allow not others to escape their own judgment. It is not without an emphatical meaning that he repeats the word man; it is for the purpose of presenting a comparison between man and God.

4. *Dost thou despise the riches?* etc. It does not seem to me, as some think, that there is here an argument, conclusive on two grounds, (*dilemma*,) but an anticipation of an objection: for as hypocrites are commonly transported with prosperity, as though they had merited the Lord's kindness by their good deeds, and become thus more hardened in their contempt of God, the Apostle anticipates their arrogance, and proves, by an argument taken from a reason of an opposite kind, that there is no ground for them to think that God, on account of their outward prosperity, is propitious to them, since the design of his benevolence is far different, and that is, to convert sinners to himself. Where then the fear of God does not rule, confidence, on account of prosperity, is a contempt and a mockery of his great goodness. It hence follows, that a heavier punishment will be inflicted on those whom God has in this life favored; because, in addition to their other wickedness, they have rejected the fatherly invitation of God. And though all the gifts of God are so many

evidences of his paternal goodness, yet as he often has a different object in view, the ungodly absurdly congratulate themselves on their prosperity, as though they were dear to him, while he kindly and bountifully supports them.

Not knowing that the goodness of God, etc. For the Lord by his kindness shows to us, that it is he to whom we ought turn, if we desire to secure our wellbeing, and at the same time he strengthens our confidence in expecting mercy. If we use not God's bounty for this end, we abuse it. But yet it is not to be viewed always in the same light; for when the Lord deals favorably with his servants and gives them earthly blessings, he makes known to them by symbols of this kind his own benevolence, and trains them up at the same time to seek the sum and substance of all good things in himself alone: when he treats the transgressors of his law with the same indulgence, his object is to soften by his kindness their perverseness; he yet does not testify that he is already propitious to them, but, on the contrary, invites them to repentance. But if any one brings this objection — that the Lord sings to the deaf as long as he does not touch inwardly their hearts; we must answer — that no fault can be found in this case except with our own depravity. But I prefer rendering the word which Paul here uses, *leads*, rather than *invites*, for it is more significant; I do not, however, take it in the sense of driving, but of leading as it were by the hand.

5. *But according to thy hardness*, etc. When we become hardened against the admonitions of the Lord, impenitence follows; and they who are not anxious about repentance openly provoke the Lord. ^{f65}

This is a remarkable passage: we may hence learn what I have already referred to — that the ungodly not only accumulate for themselves daily a heavier weight of God's judgments, as long as they live here, but that the gifts of God also, which they continually enjoy, shall increase their condemnation; for an account of them all will be required: and it will then be found, that it will be justly imputed to them as an extreme wickedness, that they had been made worse through God's bounty, by which they ought surely to have been improved. Let us then take heed, lest by unlawful use of blessings we lay up for ourselves this cursed treasure.

For the day, etc.; literally, *in the day*; but it is put for εἰς ἡμέραν, for the day. The ungodly gather now the indignation of God against themselves, the stream of which shall then be poured on their heads: they accumulate hidden destruction, which then shall be drawn out from the treasures of God. The day of the last judgment is called the day of wrath, when a reference is made to the ungodly; but it will be a day of redemption to the faithful. And thus all other visitations of God are ever described as dreadful and full of terror to the ungodly; and on the contrary, as pleasant and joyful to the godly. Hence whenever the Scripture mentions the approach of the Lord, it bids the godly to exult with joy; but when it turns to the reprobate, it proclaims nothing but dread and terror.

“A day of wrath,” saith Zephaniah, “shall be that day, a day of tribulation and distress, a day of calamity and wretchedness, a day of darkness and of thick darkness, a day of mist and of whirlwind.”
(^{<360115>}Zephaniah 1:15.)

You have a similar description in ^{<290202>}Joel 2:2, etc. And Amos exclaims,

“Woe To You Who Desire The Day Of The Lord! What Will It Be To You? The Day Of The Lord Will Be Darkness, And Not Light.”
(^{<300518>}Amos 5:18.)

Farther, by adding the word *revelation*, Paul intimates what this day of wrath is to be, — that the Lord will then manifest his judgment: though he gives daily some indications of it, he yet suspends and holds back, till that day, the clear and full manifestation of it; for the books shall then be opened; the sheep shall then be separated the goats, and the wheat shall be cleansed from the tares.

6. Who will render to every one, etc. As he had to do with blind saintlings, who thought that the wickedness of their hearts was well covered, provided it was spread over with some disguises, I know not what, of empty works, he pointed out the true character of the righteousness of works, even that which is of account before God; and he did this, lest they should feel confident that it was enough to pacify him, if they brought words and trifles, or leaves only. But there is not so much difficulty in this verse, as it is commonly thought. For the Lord, by visiting the wickedness of the reprobate with just vengeance, will recompense them with what

they have deserved: and as he sanctifies those whom he has previously resolved to glorify, he will also crown their good works, but not on account of any merit: nor can this be proved from this verse; for though it declares what reward good works are to have, it does yet by no means show what they are worth, or what price is due to them. And it is an absurd inference, to deduce merit from reward.

7. *To them indeed, who by perseverance*, etc.; literally, *patience*; by which word something more is expressed. For it is perseverance, when one is not wearied in constantly doing good; but patience also is required in the saints, by which they may continue firm, though oppressed with various trials. For Satan suffers them not by a free course to come to the Lord; but he strives by numberless hinderances to impede them, and to turn them aside from the right way. And when he says, that the faithful, by continuing in good works, *seek glory and honor*, he does not mean that they aspire after any thing else but the favor of God, or that they strive to attain any thing higher, or more excellent: but they can not seek him, without striving, at the same time, for the blessedness of his kingdom, the description of which is contained in the paraphrase given in these words. The meaning then is, — that the Lord will give eternal life to those who, by attention to good works, strive to attain immortality. ^{f66}

8. *But to those who are contentious*, etc. There is some irregularity in the passage; first, on account of its tenor being interrupted, for the thread of the discourse required, that the second clause of the contrast should be thus connected, — “The Lord will render to them, who by perseverance in good works, seek glory, and honor, and immortality, eternal life; but to the contentious and the disobedient, eternal death.” Then the conclusion might be joined, — “That for the former are prepared glory, and honor, and incorruption; and that for the latter are laid up wrath and misery.” There is another thing, — These words, *indignation, wrath, tribulation, and anguish*, are joined to two clauses in the context. However, the meaning of the passage is by no means obscure; and with this we must be satisfied in the Apostolic writings. From other writings must eloquence be learnt: here spiritual wisdom is to be sought, conveyed in a plain and simple style. ^{f67}

Contention is mentioned here for rebellion and stubbornness; for Paul was contending with hypocrites who, by their gross and supine self-indulgence,

trifled with God. By the word *truth*, is simply meant the revealed will of God, which alone is the light of truth: for it is what belongs to all the ungodly, that they ever prefer to be in bondage to iniquity, rather than to receive the yoke of God; and whatever obedience they may pretend, yet they never cease perversely to clamor and struggle against God's word. For as they who are openly wicked scoff at the truth, so hypocrites fear not to set up in opposition to it their artificial modes of worship. The Apostle further adds, that such disobedient persons *obey* or serve iniquity; for there is no middle course, which those who are unwilling to be in subjection to the law of the Lord can take, so as to be kept from falling immediately into the service of sin. And it is the just reward of outrageous licentiousness, that those become the bondslaves of sin who cannot endure the service of God. *Indignation and wrath*, so the character of the words induces me to render them; for *θυμος* in Greek means what the Latins call *excandescencia* — indignation, as *Cicero* teaches us, (*Tusc.* 4,) even a sudden burning of anger. As to the other words I follow *Erasmus*. But observe, that of the four which are mentioned, the two last are, as it were, the effects of the two first; for they who perceive that God is displeased and angry with them are immediately filled with confusion.

We may add, that though he might have briefly described, even in two words, the blessedness of the godly and also the misery of the reprobate, he yet enlarges on both subjects, and for this end — that he might more effectually strike men with the fear of God's wrath, and sharpen their desire for obtaining grace through Christ: for we never fear God's judgment as we ought, except it be set as it were by a lively description before our eyes; nor do we really burn with desire for future life, except when roused by strong incentives, (*multis flabellis incitati* — incited by many fans.)

9. To the Jew first, etc. He simply places, I have no doubt, the Jew in opposition to the Gentile; for those whom he calls Greeks he will presently call Gentiles. But the Jews take the precedence in this case, for they had, in preference to others, both the promises and the threatenings of the law; as though he had said, "This is the universal rule of the divine judgment; it shall begin with the Jews, and it shall include the whole world."

<450211> ROMANS 2:11-13

11. For there is no respect of persons with God.	11. Siquidem non est acceptio personarum apud Deum.
12. For as many as have sinned without law, shall also perish without law; and as many as have sinned in the law, shall be judged by the law;	12. Quicumque enim sine Lege peccaverunt sine Lege etiam peribunt; quicumque vero in Lege peccaverunt per Legem judicabuntur.
13. (For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified.	13. Non enim Legis auditores justi sunt apud Deum, sed qui Legem faciunt justificabuntur.

11. *There is no respect of persons*, etc. He has hitherto generally arraigned all mortals as guilty; but now he begins to bring home his accusation to the Jews and to the Gentiles separately: and at the same time he teaches us, that it is no objection that there is a difference between them, but that they are both without any distinction exposed to eternal death. The Gentiles pretended ignorance as their defense; the Jews gloried in the honor of having the law: from the former he takes away their subterfuge, and he deprives the latter of their false and empty boasting.

There is then a division of the whole human race into two classes; for God had separated the Jews from all the rest, but the condition of all the Gentiles was the same. He now teaches us, that this difference is no reason why both should not be involved in the same guilt. But the word *person* is taken in Scripture for all outward things, which are wont to be regarded as possessing any value or esteem. When therefore thou readest, that God is no respecter of persons, understand that what he regards is purity of heart or inward integrity; and that he hath no respect for those things which are wont to be highly valued by men, such as kindred, country, dignity, wealth, and similar things; so that respect of persons is to be here taken for the distinction or the difference there is between one nation and another. ^{f68} But if any hence objects and says, "That then there is no such thing as the gratuitous election of God;" it may be answered, That there is a twofold acceptance of men before God; the first, when he chooses and calls us from nothing through gratuitous goodness, as there is nothing in our nature

which can be approved by him; the second, when after having regenerated us, he confers on us his gifts, and shows favor to the image of his Son which he recognizes in us.

12. *Whosoever have sinned without law,* ^{f69} etc. In the former part of this section he assails the Gentiles; though no Moses was given them to publish and to ratify a law from the Lord, he yet denies this omission to be a reason why they deserved not the just sentence of death for their sins; as though he had said — that the knowledge of a written law was not necessary for the just condemnation of a sinner. See then what kind of advocacy they undertake, who through misplaced mercy, attempt, on the ground of ignorance, to exempt the nations who have not the light of the gospel from the judgment of God.

Whosoever have sinned under the law, etc. As the Gentiles, being led by the errors of their own reason, go headlong into ruin, so the Jews possess a law by which they are condemned; ^{f70} for this sentence has been long ago pronounced,

“Cursed are all they who continue not in all its precepts.”
(^{<052726>} Deuteronomy 27:26.)

A worse condition then awaits the Jewish sinners, since their condemnation is already pronounced in their own law.

13. *For the hearers of the law,* etc. This anticipates an objection which the Jews might have adduced. As they had heard that the law was the rule of righteousness, (^{<050401>} Deuteronomy 4:1,) they gloried in the mere knowledge of it: to obviate this mistake, he declares that the hearing of the law or any knowledge of it is of no such consequence, that any one should on that account lay claim to righteousness, but that works must be produced, according to this saying, “He who will do these shall live in them.” The import then of this verse is the following, — “That if righteousness be sought from the law, the law must be fulfilled; for the righteousness of the law consists in the perfection of works.” They who pervert this passage for the purpose of building up justification by works, deserve most fully to be laughed at even by children. It is therefore improper and beyond what is needful, to introduce here a long discussion on the subject, with the view of exposing so futile a sophistry: for the

Apostle only urges here on the Jews what he had mentioned, the decision of the law, — That by the law they could not be justified, except they fulfilled the law, that if they transgressed it, a curse was instantly pronounced on them. Now we do not deny but that perfect righteousness is prescribed in the law: but as all are convicted of transgression, we say that another righteousness must be sought. Still more, we can prove from this passage that no one is justified by works; for if they alone are justified by the law who fulfill the law, it follows that no one is justified; for no one can be found who can boast of having fulfilled the law. ^{f71}

<450214> ROMANS 2:14-16

14. For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves:

14. Quum enim Gentes, quæ Legem non habent, natura quæ Legis sunt faciant, ipsæ, Legem non habentes, sibi ipsæ sunt Lex:

15. Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another;

15. Quæ ostendunt opus Legis scriptum in cordibus suis, simul attestante ipsorum conscientia et cogitationibus inter se accusantibus aut etiam excusantibus,

16. In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ, according to my gospel.

16. In die qua judicabit Deus occulta hominum, secundum Evangelium meum, per Iesum Christum.

14. *For when the Gentiles*, etc. He now states what proves the former clause; for he did not think it enough to condemn us by mere assertion, and only to pronounce on us the just judgment of God; but he proceeds to prove this by reasons, in order to excite us to a greater desire for Christ, and to a greater love towards him. He indeed shows that ignorance is in vain pretended as an excuse by the Gentiles, since they prove by their own deeds that they have some rule of righteousness: for there is no nation so lost to every thing human, that it does not keep within the limits of some laws. Since then all nations, of themselves and without a monitor, are disposed to make laws for themselves, it is beyond all question evident

that they have some notions of justice and rectitude, which the Greeks call preconceptions *προληψεις*, and which are implanted by nature in the hearts of men. They have then a law, though they are without law: for though they have not a written law, they are yet by no means wholly destitute of the knowledge of what is right and just; as they could not otherwise distinguish between vice and virtue; the first of which they restrain by punishment, and the latter they commend, and manifest their approbation of it by honoring it with rewards. He sets nature in opposition to a written law, meaning that the Gentiles had the natural light of righteousness, which supplied the place of that law by which the Jews were instructed, so that they were a law to themselves. ^{f72}

15. *Who show the work of the law*^{f73} *written*, etc.; that is, they prove that there is imprinted on their hearts a discrimination and judgment by which they distinguish between what is just and unjust, between what is honest and dishonest. He means not that it was so engraven on their will, that they sought and diligently pursued it, but that they were so mastered by the power of truth, that they could not disapprove of it. For why did they institute religious rites, except that they were convinced that God ought to be worshipped? Why were they ashamed of adultery and theft, except that they deemed them evils?

Without reason then is the power of the will deduced from this passage, as though Paul had said, that the keeping of the law is within our power; for he speaks not of the power to fulfill the law, but of the knowledge of it. Nor is the word *heart* to be taken for the seat of the affections, but only for the understanding, as it is found in ^{<052404>}Deuteronomy 24:4,

“The Lord hath not given thee a heart to understand;”

and in ^{<422425>}Luke 24:25,

“O foolish men, and slow in heart to believe.”

Nor can we conclude from this passage, that there is in men a *full* knowledge of the law, but that there are only some seeds of what is right implanted in their nature, evidenced by such acts as these — All the Gentiles alike instituted religious rites, they made laws to punish adultery, and theft, and murder, they commended good faith in bargains and contracts. They have thus indeed proved, that God ought to be

worshipped, that adultery, and theft, and murder are evils, that honesty is commendable. It is not to our purpose to inquire what sort of God they imagined him to be, or how many gods they devised; it is enough to know, that they thought that there is a God, and that honor and worship are due to him. It matters not whether they permitted the coveting of another man's wife, or of his possessions, or of any thing which was his, — whether they connived at wrath and hatred; inasmuch as it was not right for them to covet what they knew to be evil when done.

Their conscience at the same time attesting, etc. He could not have more forcibly urged them than by the testimony of their own conscience, which is equal to a thousand witnesses. By the consciousness of having done good, men sustain and comfort themselves; those who are conscious of having done evil, are inwardly harassed and tormented. Hence came these sayings of the heathens — “A good conscience is the widest sphere; but a bad one is the cruelest executioner, and more fiercely torments the ungodly than any furies can do.” There is then a certain knowledge of the law by nature, which says, “This is good and worthy of being desired; that ought to be abhorred.”

But observe how intelligently he defines conscience: he says, that reasons come to our minds, by which we defend what is rightly done, and that there are those which accuse and reprove us for our vices; ^{f74} and he refers this process of accusation and defense to the day of the Lord; not that it will then first commence, for it is now continually carried on, but that it will then also be in operation; and he says this, that no one should disregard this process, as though it were vain and evanescent. And he has put, *in the day*, instead of, *at the day*, — a similar instance to what we have already observed.

16. *In which God shall judge the secrets of men.* ^{f75} Most suitable to the present occasion is this periphrastic definition of judgment: it teaches those, who willfully hide themselves in the recesses of insensibility, that the most secret thoughts and those now completely hid in the depths of their hearts, shall then be brought forth to the light. So he speaks in another place; in order to show to the Corinthians what little value belongs to human judgment, which regards only the outward action, he bids them to wait until the Lord came, who would bring to light the hidden things of

darkness, and reveal the secrets of the heart. (<460405> 1 Corinthians 4:5)
 When we hear this, let it come to our minds, that we are warned that if we wish to be really approved by our Judge, we must strive for sincerity of heart.

He adds, *according to my gospel*, intimating, that he announced a doctrine, to which the judgments of men, naturally implanted in them, gave a response: and he calls it *his* gospel, on account of the ministry; for the authority for setting forth the gospel resides in the true God alone; and it was only the dispensing of it that was committed to the Apostles. It is indeed no matter of surprise, that the gospel is in part called the messenger and the announcer of future judgment: for if the fulfillment and completion of what it promises be deferred to the full revelation of the heavenly kingdom, it must necessarily be connected with the last judgment: and further, Christ cannot be preached without being a resurrection to some, and a destruction to others; and both these things have a reference to the day of judgment. The words, *through Jesus Christ*, I apply to the day of judgment, though they are regarded otherwise by some; and the meaning is, — that the Lord will execute judgment by Christ, for he is appointed by the Father to be the Judge of the living and of the dead, — which the Apostles always mention among the main articles of the gospel. Thus the sentence will be full and complete, which would otherwise be defective.