
THE MAN'S DREAM

JUDGMENT DAY is not something that many of us want to think about as we live our lives from moment to moment. It naturally makes us feel uncomfortable and moves our thoughts quickly in another direction. In this room of the house of the Interpreter, Bunyan brings us to this reality that we all must face one day.

The biblically informed heart knows and understands that death transports us all into an entirely new state of existence never experienced here in these mortal bodies. Further, it is known that this future mode of existence is not one of unconscious eternal sleep, but rather a distinct, continuous revelation where the blazing purity of a holy God becomes all-consuming. Everything that has preoccupied our days here on Earth—our pets, our toys and all other earthly objects—will vanish at a single stroke, and either unceasing bliss or unceasing misery will be our eternal portion.

There are two visions that lay close to the Puritan heart. The first is the "beautiful" vision—when the glory of God bursts in upon the redeemed soul at the moment of death. This is the time when spiritual eyes are opened and he who died now lives and becomes "transfixed with wonder, love and praise."

The second is called the "horrific" vision. This, obviously, is not to be desired but rather feared. In this, the careless and indifferent come face to face with the object of their rebellion. Here the skeptic, the doubter and the mocker will learn that there really is

a God who hates sin. This is the moment of disclosure when apostasy from a good and gracious God will be displayed for the entire moral universe to see. This is the time when eternal wretchedness will consume the unrepentant and the pit yawns to receive its own. Dante's words will forever ring true: "Abandon hope all ye that enter here."

The deepest caves of the ocean shall convulse and release their dead. All the graves and sepulchers, all the hidden crypts and burial plots shall upheave and set free from the dust of the earth all those who have lived in enmity with their Maker. In like fashion, the "dead in Christ" shall also rise from the earth and be transformed—not as bodiless spirits but as spiritual bodies—into the embrace of that great Substitute and Surety of their soul, even Jesus Christ who loves them with an eternal love.

Interpreter turns to Christian and asks this very poignant question, "Hast thou considered all these things?" What a thoughtful balanced answer he gives, "Yes, and they put me in hope and fear." Hope and fear ought to be twin companions which follow us all the days of our lives. 1 Peter 1:13 and 17 says as much, "Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ ... And if ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear."
