

And how nimble are they? The angel Gabriel in a short time came from heaven to the earth, Dan. ix. 21. As the helm turns the ship instantly whither the steersman will: so the body in an instant will move which way the soul will.

4. The bodies of the faints, at the resurrection, shall be very firm and strong, 1 Cor. xv. 43. 'It is raised in power.' Through frequent labour and sickness, the strongest body begins to languish: but at the resurrection we shall be of a strong constitution; then there will be no weariness in the body, nor faintness in the spirits. This may comfort you who now conflict with many bodily weaknesses. This weak body shall be raised in power; the body, which is now a weak reed, shall be like a rock.

5. The bodies of the faints at the resurrection shall be immortal, 1 Cor. xv. 53. 'This mortal shall put on immortality;' our bodies shall run parallel with eternity, Luke xx. 36. 'Neither can they die any more.' Heaven is an healthful climate, there is no bill of mortality there. If a physician could give you a receipt to keep you from dying, what sums of money would you give? At the resurrection Christ shall give the saints such a receipt, Rev. xxi. 4. 'There shall be no more death.'

II. The second privilege believers shall have at the resurrection, is, They shall be openly acquitted at the day of judgment.

OF THE DAY OF JUDGMENT.

Qu. XXXVIII. *WHAT benefits do believers receive from Christ at the resurrection?*

Ans. 1. Their bodies shall be raised up to glory, and shall be openly acquitted at the day of judgment, and crowned with the full and perfect enjoyment of God to all eternity.

2. *They shall be openly acquitted at the day of judgment.* This is to be laid down for a position, that there shall be a day of judgment, 1 Cor. v. 10. 'For we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ.' This is the grand assizes; the greatest appearance that ever was: Now Adam shall see all his posterity at once. We must all appear; the greatness of men's persons doth not exempt them from Christ's tribunal: kings and captains are brought in trembling before the Lamb's throne, Rev. vi. 15. We must all appear, and appear in our own persons; not by a proxy.

Q. 1. *How doth it appear that there shall be a day of judgment?*

Ans. Two ways. 1. By the suffrage of scripture, Eccl. xii.

9, 12, 14. 'For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing.' Pſal. xcvi. 13. 'For he cometh, for he cometh to judge the earth.' The reduplication denotes the certainty, Dan. vii. 9. 'I beheld till the thrones were caſt down, and the Ancient of days did ſit, whoſe garment was white as ſnow. The judgment was ſet, and the books were opened.'

2. It appears from the petty ſeſſions kept in a man's own conſcience; when a man doth virtuously, conſcience doth excuſe him, when evil conſcience doth arraign and condemn him. Now, what is this private ſeſſion kept in the court of conſcience; but a certain fore-runner of that general day of judgment, when all the world ſhall be ſummoned to God's tribunal?

Q. *Why muſt there be a day of judgment?*

Anſ. That there may be a day of retribution, when God may render to every one according to his work. Things ſeem to be carried very unequally in the world: the wicked do ſo proſper, as if they were rewarded for doing evil; and the godly do ſo ſuffer, as if they were puniſhed for being good. Therefore, for the vindicating of God's juſtice, there muſt be a day, wherein there ſhall be a righteous diſtribution of puniſhments and rewards to men, according to their actions.

Q. 3. *Who ſhall be judge?*

Anſ. The Lord Jeſus Chriſt, John vi. 22. 'The Father hath committed all judgment to the Son.' It is an article in our creed, that, Chriſt ſhall come to judge the quick and the dead. It is a great honour put upon Chriſt; he who was himſelf judged, ſhall now be judge, he who once hung upon the croſs, ſhall ſit upon the bench. Chriſt is fit to be judge, as he partakes both of the manhood and Godhead.

1. Of the manhood: being clothed with the human nature, he may be viſibly ſeen of all. It is requiſite the judge ſhould be ſeen, Rev. i. 7. 'Behold, he cometh with clouds, and every eye ſhall ſee him.'

2. As he partakes of the Godhead: he is of infinite prudence to underſtand all cauſes brought before him; and of infinite power to execute offenders. He is deſcribed with ſeven eyes, Zech. iii. 9. to denote his prudence; and a rod of iron, Pſal. ii. 9. to denote his power: he is ſo wiſe, that he cannot be deſuded; and ſo ſtrong, that he cannot be reſiſted.

Q. 4. *When will the court ſit, when will the time of judgment be?*

Anſ. For the *quando*, or the time of the general judgment, it is a ſecret kept from the angels, Mat. xxiv 36. 'Of that day and hour knows no man, no not the angels of heaven.' But this is ſure, it cannot be far off: one great ſign of the approach of the day of judgment, is, 'That iniquity ſhall abound, Mat. xxiv. ſure then this day is near at hand, for iniquity did

never more abound than in this age, and lust grows hot, and love grows cold. This is certain, when the elect are all converted, then Christ will come to judgment: as he that rows a ferry-boat, stays till all the passengers are taken into his boat, and then he rows away: so Christ stays till all the elect are gathered in, and then he will hasten away to judgment.

Q. 5. *What shall be the modus or manner of trial?*

Ans. 1. The citing of men to the court. The dead are cited as well as the living. Men, when they die, avoid the censure of our law-courts; but at the last day, the dead are cited to God's tribunal, Rev. xx. 12. 'I saw the dead small and great stand before God.' This citing of men will be by the sound of a trumpet, 1 Theff. iv. 26. And this trumpet will sound so loud, that it will raise men out of their graves, Mat. xxiv. 31. Such as will not hear the trumpet of the gospel sound in their ears *repent and believe*, shall hear the trumpet of the archangel sounding, *arise and be judged*.

2. The approach of the judge to the bench.

First, This will be terrible to the wicked. How can a guilty prisoner endure the sight of the judge? If Felix trembled when Paul preached of judgment, Acts xxiv. 25. how will sinners tremble when they shall see Christ come to judgment? Christ is described (sitting in judgment) with a fiery stream issuing from him, Dan. vii. 10. Now the Lamb of God will be turned into a lion; the sight of Christ will strike terror into sinners. As when Joseph said to his brethren, 'I am Joseph whom ye sold into Egypt, they were troubled at his presence,' Gen. xlv. 4. Now how did their hearts smite them for their sin! so, when Christ shall come to judgment, and say, 'I am Jesus whom ye sinned against, I am Jesus whose laws ye have broken, whose blood ye despised; I am now come to judge you:' O what horror and amazement will take hold of sinners! they will be troubled at the presence of their judge.

Secondly, The approach of Christ to the bench of judicature will be comfortable to the righteous. (1.) Christ will come in splendor and great glory. His first coming in the flesh was obscure, Isa. liii. 2. He was like a prince in disguise: but his second coming will be illustrious, 'he shall come in the glory of his Father, with the holy angels,' Mark vii. 38. O what a bright day will that be, when such a number of angels, those morning stars, shall appear in the air, and Christ the Sun of righteousness shall shine in splendor above the brightest cherub? (2.) Christ will come as a friend. Indeed, if the saints' judge with their enemy, they might fear condemning: but he who loves them, and prayed for them, is their judge: he who is their husband is their judge, therefore they need not fear but all things shall go well on their side.

Thirdly, The trial itself, which hath a dark and a light side. (1.) A dark side. It will fall heavy on the wicked: the judge being set, the books are opened, Rev. xx. 12. the book of conscience, and the book of God's remembrance; and now the sinner's charge being read, and all their sins laid open, their murder, drunkenness, uncleanness, Christ will say, sinners, what can you plead for yourselves, that the sentence of death should not pass? The wicked being convicted will be speechless. Then follows that dismal sentence, Mat. xxv. 41. *Ite maledicti*, 'depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.' He that said to God, 'depart from me;' Job xxi. 14. and to religion, *depart from me*; must now hear that word pronounced from his judge, *depart from me*; a dreadful sentence, but righteous, Psal. li. 4. The sinner himself shall cry, guilty: though the wicked have a sea of wrath, yet not one drop of injustice. And when once the sentence is past, it is irreversible, there is no appealing to an higher court. (2.) The trial hath a light side: it will be for increasing the joy and happiness of the righteous. The day of judgment will be a day of jubilee to them.

I. At that day Christ their judge will own them by name. Those whom the world scorned, and looked upon as precisians and fools, Christ will take by the hand, and openly acknowledge them to be his favourites. What is Christ's 'confessing of men,' Luke xii. 8. but his openly acknowledging them to be precious in his eyes?

II. Christ as judge will plead for them. It is not usual to be both judge and advocate, to sit on the bench and plead; but it shall be so at the day of judgment.

First, Christ will plead his own blood for the faints. *These persons I have paid a price for, they are the travail of my soul, they have sinned, but my soul was made an offering for their sin.*

Secondly, Christ will vindicate them from all unjust censures. Here they were strangely misrepresented to the world, as proud, hypocritical, factious; Paul was called a seditious man, the head of a faction, Acts xxiv. 5. But at the day of judgment Christ will clear the faints' innocency, then he will 'bring forth their righteousness as the light.' Psal. xxxvii. 6. As he will wipe off tears from their eyes, so dust from their name. Moses, when he was charged with ambition, that he took too much upon him, comforted himself with this, 'To-morrow will the Lord shew who are his,' Numb. xvi. 5. So may the faints, when reproached, comfort themselves with the day of judgment; then will Christ say who are his; then shall the faints come forth as the wings of a dove covered with silver.

Thirdly, Christ as judge will absolve them before men and

angels, as Pilate said of Christ, 'I find no fault in this man,' John xviii. 38. So will Christ say of the elect, I find no fault in them, I pronounce them righteous. Then follows, 'come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom.' Mat. xxv. 34. As if Christ should say, *O ye happy ones, the delight of my soul, the fruit of my sufferings, stand no longer at the bar. Ye are heirs apparent of the crown of heaven, enter and take possession.* At the hearing of this sentence, with what ravishing joy will the saints be filled? This word, *Come, ye blessed,* will be music to their ear, and a cordial to their heart.

Fourthly, Christ will mention before men and angels all the good deeds the saints have done. Mat. xxv. 35. 'I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat; I was thirsty and ye gave me drink.' You that have wept in secret for sin, that have shewn any love to Christ's name, that have been rich in good works, Christ will take notice of it at the last day, and say, 'well done, good and faithful servants.' He himself will be the herald to proclaim your praises; thus it shall be done to the man whom Christ delights to honour.

Fifthly, Christ will call his saints from the bar, to sit upon the bench with him to judge the world, Jude 14. 'Behold the Lord cometh with ten thousand of his saints, to execute judgment upon all.' 1 Cor. vi. 2. 'Know ye not that the saints shall judge the world?' The saints shall sit with Christ in judicature, as justices of peace with the judge: they shall applaud Christ's righteous sentence on the wicked, and, as it were, vote with Christ. This, as it is a great honour to the saints, so it must needs add to the sorrows of the wicked, to see those whom they once hated and derided, sit as judges upon them.

Sixthly, The saints shall be fully crowned with the enjoyment of God for ever. They shall be in his sweet presence, 'in whose presence is fulness of joy,' Psal. xvi. 11. and this shall be for ever: the banner of God's love shall be eternally displayed: the joys of heaven are without intermission and expiration, 1 Thess. iv. 17. 'And so shall we be ever with the Lord.'

U/e. As it is sad news to the wicked, they shall 'not stand in judgment,' Pl. i. 5. They shall come to judgment, but they shall not stand in judgment, viz. they shall not stand acquitted, they shall not stand with boldness, but sneak and hang down their head, and not be able to look their judge in the face: so it is great consolation to the godly. When the apostle had said, 'The Lord shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and the trump of God;' he presently adds, 'Wherefore comfort one another with these words,' 1 Thess. iv. 16, 18.

1. The day of judgment is comfort, in respect of weakness of grace. A Christian is ready to be troubled, to see his grace

so minute and imperfect; but, at the last day, if Christ find but a drachm of true grace, it shall be accepted. If thine be true gold, though it be many grains too light, Christ will put his merits into the scales, and make it pass current.

2. It is a comfort to such of the saints who have met with unrighteous judgment in the world, who have been wronged of their estates in law suits, or had their lives taken away by an unrighteous sentence; Christ will judge over things again, and will give a righteous sentence. If your estates have been taken away wrongfully, you shall be restored a thousand-fold at the day of judgment. If you have lost your lives for Christ, yet you shall not lose your crown; you shall wear a garland made of the flowers of paradise, which fade not away.

Branch I. Meditate much upon the day of judgment. Feathers swim upon the water, but gold sinks into it: light feathery Christians float in vanity, they mind not the day of judgment; but serious spirits sink deep into the thoughts of it.

2. The meditation of this last day would make us very sincere. We would then labour to approve our hearts to God, the great judge and umpire of the world. It is easy to carry it fair before men, but there is no dissembling or prevaricating with God; he sees what the heart is, and will accordingly pass his verdict.

2. The meditation of Christ's coming to judge us, would keep us from judging our brethren. We are apt to judge others as to their final state; which is for men to step into Christ's place, and take his work out of his hand, James iv. 12. 'Who art thou that judgest another?' Thou that passeth a rash sentence upon another, thou must come thyself shortly to be judged, and then perhaps he may be acquitted, and thou condemned.

Branch II. So demean and carry yourselves, that at the day of judgment you may be sure to be acquitted, and have those glorious privileges the saints shall be crowned with.

Q. How is that?

Ans. 1. If you would stand acquitted at the day of judgment, then, *1^{ly}*, Labour to get into Christ, Phil. iii. 9. 'That I may be found in him.' Faith implants us into Christ, it ingarrifens us in him, and then 'there is no condemnation,' Rom. viii.

1. There is no standing before Christ, but by being in Christ. *2^{dly}*, Labour for humility. It is a kind of self-annihilation, 2 Cor. xii. 11. 'Though I be nothing.' Christian, hast thou parts and abilities, and dost thou cover them with the vail of humility? as Moses, when his face shone, put a vail over it. If thou art humble, thou shalt be acquitted at the day of judgment, Job xxii. 29. 'He shall save the humble person.' An

humble man judgeth himself for his sins, and Christ will acquit them who judge themselves.

2. If you would stand acquitted at the last day, then keep a clear conscience. Do not load yourselves with guilt, and furnish your judge with matter against you. 'The Lord, saith Paul hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world,' Acts xvii. 21. And how would Paul fit himself for that day? Acts xxvi. 16. 'Herein I exercise myself to have always a conscience void of offence, towards God and towards man.' Be careful of the first and second table, be holy and just. Have hearts without false aims, and hands without false weights. Keep conscience as clear as your eye, that no dust of sin fall into it: they that sin against conscience, will be shy of their judge: such as take in prohibited goods, cannot endure to see the searchers that are appointed to open their packs. 'Christian, thy pack will be opened at the last day, I mean thy conscience; and Christ is the searcher, to see what sins, what prohibited goods thou hast taken in; and then he proceeds to judgment. O! be sure to keep a good conscience; this is the best way to stand with boldness at the day of judgment. The voice of conscience is the voice of God: if conscience doth, upon just grounds, acquit us, God will acquit us, 1 John iii. 21. 'If our hearts condemn us not, then have we confidence towards God.'

3. If you would stand acquitted at the last day, then trade your talents for God's glory; lay out yourselves for God, honour him with your substance: relieve Christ's members: this is the way to be acquitted. He that had five talents traded with them, and made them five talents more; 'his lord said unto him, well done good and faithful servant, Mat. xxv. 21.

4. If you would stand acquitted at the day of judgment, get an entire love to the saints, 1 John iii. 14. 'We know we are passed from death to life,' &c. Love is the truest touch-stone of sincerity. 'To love grace for grace, shews the spirit of God to be in a man. Doth conscience witness for you? Are you perfumed with this sweet spice of love? Do you delight most in those in whom the image of God shines? Do you reverence their graces? Do you bear with their infirmities? A blessed evidence that you shall be acquitted in the day of judgment. 'We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren.'