

## SERMON XLIV.

*Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.—ROM. viii. 34.*

IN the former verse, justification is considered as opposite to accusation; now, as opposite to condemnation; there, 'Who shall lay anything to our charge?' here, 'Who is he that condemneth?' With respect to both, we must look upon Christ as our advocate, and God as our judge. Somewhat in this verse concerneth our exemption from the danger of accusation, namely, all the acts of Christ's mediation here mentioned; somewhat in that verse concerneth the question propounded here about condemnation, namely, the sentence of God as our judge. For the answer given there must be repeated, 'Who is he that condemneth? It is God that justifieth.' We need not fear an accuser, because we have an advocate; we need not fear to be cast in the judgment, because we have a favourable judge, who will not justify and condemn too. Thence ariseth this part of the triumphant song which the apostle puts into the mouth of a believer, 'Who is he that condemneth? it is Christ that died,' &c.

In the words we have—

1. A triumphant challenge—*Who is he that condemneth?*

2. The ground of it. It is Christ's mediation—*It is Christ that died,* &c.

1. The challenge—'Who is he that condemneth?' It is meant with respect to God's judgment. In the world the saints have been, and often are condemned, not only to death: James v. 6, 'Ye have condemned and killed the just, and he doth not resist you;' but some, if they had their wills, would adjudge them to the bottom of hell: John xvi. 2, 'They will put you out of the synagogues, as well as kill you;' that is, curse, and condemn you to hell, which is the second death. But their rash censures are not ratified in heaven; their cursing hurts no more than their absolution benefiteth us; therefore this is not the meaning. The words relate to the supreme court. What fear is there of condemnation by God, when he declareth his mind concerning the justification of such as believe in Christ? Now God hath expressly said 'that he that believeth shall not come into condemnation;' and who dareth to contradict his sentence? False teachers may deny this comfort to the penitent believers, and make their hearts sad whom God would not have made sad, but God will not retract his grant; and the sentence of any judge on this side God needeth not to be stood upon. It is on their part presumption, and usurpation of the throne of God, and their act cannot do us harm; we stand or fall to our own proper lord and master.

2. The ground of the challenge. We are acquitted from condemnation on Christ's account. This blessing runneth in the channel of his mediation; four branches of it are here mentioned—(1.) Christ's death; (2.) Resurrection, with a 'yea rather;' (3.) His exaltation at the right hand of God; (4.) His intercession for us; all which would

be in vain, and lose their effect, if any condemnation were to be feared by us. From the whole observe—

*Doct. 1.* That freedom from the fears of condemnation is one great privilege of true and sound believers.

*Doct. 2.* That our triumph over the fears of condemnation ariseth from the several acts of Christ's mediation.

*Doct. 1.* For the first point, that freedom from the fears of condemnation is one great privilege of true and sound believers.

What a great privilege it is, will appear—

1. By the dreadfulnes of the sentence.

2. The difficulty to get rid of these fears.

3. The sure and solid grounds of a believer's peace.

1. The dreadfulnes of the sentence. To condemn is to adjudge to punishment; and for God to condemn is to adjudge us to everlasting punishment. The final sentence is set down, Mat. xxv. 41, 'Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.' In the general they are pronounced cursed; but in particular there is

[1.] The *pœna damni*, the loss of God's favour and presence and glory. They depart from God, who made them at first after his image; from the Redeemer, whose grace was offered to them, but slighted by them; from the Holy Ghost, who strove with them to sanctify them, and reduce them to God, till they quenched all his motions, and expelled him out of their hearts. The disciples wept when Paul said, 'Ye shall see my face no more;' but what anguish will fill the hearts of the reprobate when God shall say to them, 'Ye shall never see my face more; you are now cut off from all hopes and possibility of salvation for ever. Wicked men banish God out of their company now: Job xxi. 14, 'Depart from us; for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways.' God will then be even with them, and banish them out of his presence; not from his essential presence, for that is with them to their everlasting misery; but from his gracious presence, which is the everlasting delight of the saints, and from all possibility of acceptance with him.

[2.] *Pœna sensus*, 'into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.' (1.) Into fire, not purifying, but tormenting; for so hell is a place of torment, and a state of torment: Luke xvi. 24, 'I am horribly tormented in this flame;' and ver. 25, 'He is comforted, and thou art tormented;' ver. 29, 'That they come not into this place of torment.' (2.) It is for duration, everlasting fire. It had a beginning, but will never have an end. The saints in all their troubles can see both banks and bottom; they never met with any such hard condition, but it had an end; but here there still remaineth a fearful looking for more fiery indignation from the Lord. The glory which they refused is everlasting glory, and the torments which they incur are everlasting torments. (3.) It is said, 'Prepared for the devil and his angels.' This showeth the greatness of the misery of the wicked. The devil and his angels must be their everlasting companions; they who entertained his suggestions in their hearts shall then remain for ever in his company and society. As Christ with his blessed angels and saints make one kingdom or family, living together in perpetual blessedness;

so the devil and his angels, and the wicked, make one society, living together in perpetual misery. This is the sentence of condemnation—the christian notion of it.

2. The difficulty to get rid of these fears.

[1.] We all deserve condemnation upon many accounts, both upon the account of original sin: Rom. v. 18, 'As by the offence of one judgment came upon all to condemnation, so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all to justification of life.' Our actual offences make it more our due; for 'the wages of sin is death,' Rom. vi. 23. The second death as well as the first.

[2.] In our natural estate we were actually condemned by the sentence of the law, which is confirmed by the gospel, if we refuse the offered remedy: John iii. 18, 19, 'He that believeth not, is condemned already;' and ver. 12, 'This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil.'

[3.] Our consciences own it, that where there is guilt there will be condemnation; and therefore 'our own hearts condemn us,' 1 John iii. 20. And unless this condemnation be reversed, and that upon good grounds, we can have no firm and solid peace within ourselves. Conscience speaketh aloud this truth, and is the more to be regarded; partly because—

(1.) The fears of the guilty creature are founded in the nature of God, his holiness and justice. His pure holiness: Hab. i. 13, 'Thou art of purer eyes than to behold iniquity.' It is a natural truth that sin is displeasing to God, and maketh the sinner hateful and loathsome to him, and worthy to be cast off and punished by him. God's holiness is at the bottom of all our fears. We fear his wrath, because it is armed with an almighty power; we fear his power, because it is set a-work by his justice; we fear his justice, because it is awakened by his holiness, which cannot endure sin and sinners: 1 Sam. vi. 20, 'And the men of Bethshemesh said, Who is able to stand before this holy Lord God?' So also on the other hand, all men's security ariseth from a misprision of God's nature, as if he were not so holy: Ps. l. 21, 'Thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself,' not much offended with sin. Now, for the justice of God: Rom. i. 32, 'They knew the just judgment of God (*δικαίωμα*, his righteous dealing,) that they that do such things, are worthy of death.' He hath revealed his wrath from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men. Men are convinced in their own consciences, that they are liable to his condemnation and judgment. The barbarous people of Melita had a sense that divine vengeance followed sinners: Acts xxviii. 4, 'He is a murderer, whom, though he hath escaped the sea, vengeance suffereth not to live.' Therefore till God's justice be appeased a man can have no satisfaction in him.

(2.) The next reason, because of the deepness of the impression. The conscience of sin is not easily blotted out; man is conscious to himself that he hath offended God, and deserved his wrath; and this trouble and fear is not easily appeased, nor the wounds of conscience healed. The apostle still goeth upon this argument against the Jews, that the sacrifices could not make the worshipper perfect as appertaining to the conscience, Heb. ix. 9, that is, perfectly remove the guilt, or

the fear of condemnation and punishment, Heb. x. 2. The worshippers were never so purged as to have no conscience of sin; so that the expiation and purging out of sin is no slight thing.

(3.) After grace received much of our old bondage remaineth with us; for 'all their life-time they are subject to bondage,' Heb. ii. 15. We carry these shackles with us to heaven's gates. Which cometh to pass, partly through the imperfection of our graces: 1 John iv. 17, 18, 'Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment, because as he is so are we in the world. There is no fear in love, but perfect love casteth out fear, because fear hath torment: he that feareth is not perfect in love.' It is possible a man may be justified; but because his love doth not prevail to a greater obedience to God or conformity to Christ, therefore some of that fear which hath torment in it yet remaineth, and we have not that confidence which may embolden us against the fears of condemnation, or the terrors of the judgment. As faith worketh by love, and love produceth its effect, which is obedience to God and conformity to Christ, the fear of being condemned is cast out, and the conscience is more soundly established. And partly because God seemeth to revive these condemning fears by many harsh corrections, which look very wrath-like. An instance we have, 1 Kings xvii. 18. The woman of Sarepta, when her only son died, said to Elisha, 'What have I to do with thee, thou man of God? art thou come to call my sin to remembrance, to slay my son?' She thought that that providence intimated that God began to reckon with her about her sins; this may be a mistake, for God's providence must be expounded by his word. The grievous bitterness is intended for good, not for evil; to prevent condemnation, not establish it as the concluded determination and sentence of our judge: 1 Cor. xi. 32, 'We are chastened of the Lord that we may not be condemned with the world.' However, you see these fears are soon revived in us by bitter and grievous providences, which make us unravel all our hopes, and question whatever God hath done for us. And partly too, God may do it by some judicial impression on the conscience: Job xiii. 26, 27, 'Thou writest bitter things against me, and makest me possess the iniquities of my youth; thou puttest my feet into the stocks, and lookest narrowly unto all my paths; thou settest a print upon the heels of my feet.' He speaketh there as if God did pursue him as one that was not justified. The wounds of a healed conscience may bleed afresh, and sins long ago committed may be raked out of their graves, and like walking ghosts stare in the face of conscience; and they may be apt to suspect all is wrong, and that they are still liable to the condemnation of God. God may permit this upon new provocations, when we walk not humbly and cautiously with him, and do not cherish the fervency of our love to him, and the tenderness of our consciences. Now all this showeth how hard a matter it is to get rid of the fear of condemnation. Before justification there is guilt, law, conscience against us—the law condemneth, hearts condemn, and God himself seems to condemn us; after justification, imperfection of grace, sharp afflictions, and sad thoughts about past sins, these seem to condemn us.

3. The sure and solid grounds of a believer's peace. Before our conscience can be established these three things must be done—

[1.] God's honour secured.

[2.] The law satisfied.

[3.] The conditions of the gospel fulfilled.

[1.] God's honour secured by a fit demonstration of his justice and holiness, which are the two attributes which do revive our guilty fears. His justice concerneth the rewarding of the obedient, and punishing the transgressors according to his law. The government of the world is secured by keeping up the honour of his justice: Gen. xviii. 25, 'Shall not the judge of all the earth do right?' and Rom. iii. 5, 6, 'Is God unrighteous who taketh vengeance? God forbid; how then shall God judge the world?' Certainly the government of the world is not provided for if there be not a means to keep up the honour of his justice; for God is not to be looked upon as a private party wronged, but the governor and judge of the world, who must have satisfaction, or declare his righteousness. His holiness must be demonstrated also, or his displeasure against sin, which is sufficiently done by the sufferings of Christ, which put an everlasting brand upon sin: Rom. viii. 3, 'God sending his own Son, in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh.' At Golgotha we have the truest sight of sin.

[2.] His law satisfied, and the authority thereof kept up: Gal. iv. 5, 6, 'Christ was made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.' Christ was made under the law moral, which all are subject unto; as obedience unto natural parents, Luke ii. 51; positive and ceremonial, which the Jews were bound to obey, Mat. iii. 15; more particularly, the law of a redeemer and saviour; so he was obliged to die for us: Ps. xl. 6-8, 'Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire; my ears hast thou opened: burnt-offering and sin-offering hast thou not required. Then said I, Lo, I come; in the volume of the book it is written of me: I delight to do thy will, O my God; yea, thy law is in my heart.' This was the noblest piece of service, or the highest degree of obedience, that ever could be performed to God: Rom. v. 19, 'By the obedience of one shall many be made righteous;' Phil. ii. 8, 'And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, the death of the cross;' and Heb. v. 8, 9; 'Though he was a son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; and being made perfect, he is become the author of eternal salvation unto all that obey him;' and was carried on with such humility, patience, and self-denial, resignation of himself to God, faith on him, and charity and pity to men, that such an act of love, and such a piece of service or obedience, cannot be done by men or angels. Then for the penalty and curse—'He was made a curse for us,' Gal. iii. 13. Our curse and condemnation is legible in what Christ endured for us, the loss in his desertion, pain in his agonies and bloody sweat, and painful and shameful death. They were not light things which Christ endured, but such as extorted prayers, tears, and strong cries.

[3.] The conditions of the gospel are fulfilled.

(1.) I take it for granted that the gospel maketh sufficient provision against the condemnation of believers: John v. 24, 'Verily, verily, I

say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth in him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but hath passed from death to life.' This being the great result of the gospel, Christ prefixeth his Amen, Amen; implying that it is a truth worthy to be respected and credited. And this is the truth, that the penitent believer, when God cometh to judge of men, shall not fare ill in the judgment.

(2.) That this is done upon condition that we take God's remedy; so it is propounded: Mark xvi. 16, 'He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned.' The gospel hath a sanction as well as the law, both promise and threatening, and all upon the condition which God hath imposed.

(3.) That the promise doth consist of something the party is willing of; and the condition of what the promiser will have, but the receiver is not so ready to perform. The accepting the benefit promised is not so great a matter in ordinary contracts; but in God's covenant, being not a matter of sense, it is somewhat to be willing to accept: Isa. lv. 1, 'Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money: come ye, buy and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price: Rev. xxii. 17, 'And the Spirit and the bride say, Come; and let him that heareth say, Come; and let him that is athirst come; and whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely.' But God, besides the benefit of the creature, respects his own glory, and the recovery of the creature to himself from the devil, world, and flesh, which the creature is most backward unto. Every man would be freed from condemnation, and saved from hell. Now God hath promised that which we would have, that we may yield to that which naturally we would not have; we would have pardon, but God will have subjection; therefore it is said, Heb. v. 9, 'And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto them that obey him.' We would have the second death to have no power over us; but God will have us holy, and that we should consent to our duty. We would not be condemned, but God will have us walk, not after the flesh, but after the Spirit, and so hath granted non-condemnation to such, Rom. viii. 1; those that are true christians, and consent to the duty of the new covenant. The honour of God is concerned in our subjection to him, and the honour of Christ, who redeemed us to God, Rev. v. 8, as our comfort is concerned in being exempted from the fears of condemnation.

(4.) The more explicitly the condition is fulfilled, the more is our comfort and assurance, and the more may we make the bold challenge of faith; that is, the more clearly we obey the sanctifying motions of the Spirit, and mortify the desires of the flesh: 1 John iii. 21, 'If our hearts condemn us not, we have confidence towards God;' Gal. v. 18, 'If we be led by the Spirit, we are not under the law,' *i.e.*, the condemning sentence thereof. Where worldly lusts bear a sway, a man is under the law, not under grace. He that liveth in a state of sin carrieth his sting and wound about him, and hath the matter of debts<sup>1</sup> and fears in his own bosom, and cannot attain to the true courage and boldness of the saints. As the flesh and spirit are at war in our

<sup>1</sup> Qu. 'doubts'?—Ed.

hearts, so are law and grace; as the spirit prevaieth against the flesh, so doth grace prevail against our law-fears. The same was intimated, Rom. viii. 14, 15. Well then, if we would depend on the everlasting merits of Christ, we must accept the blessed covenant, wherein God hath promised to discharge the sincere and upright from condemnation, and look to the sureness of our claim, that we do not allow ourselves in any voluntary disobedience to Christ.

*Use*, is information.

1. It showeth us the bad condition of wicked men, who have within themselves an accusing conscience, and above themselves a condemning judge; and thence it is they dare not look inward or upward. They dare not look inward; all their pleasures are but stolen waters, and bread eaten in secret, Prov. ix. 17, delights gotten by stealth, when they can get conscience asleep; as servants feast themselves in a corner when they can get out of their master's sight. Nor upward; they dare not entertain themselves with serious thoughts of God: their hearts condemn them, and they look upon him as one that doth ratify, and is ready to execute the sentence; and therefore every remarkable dispensation of God puts them in a fright: Job xv. 2, 'And fill his belly with the east wind;' ver. 21, 'A dreadful sound is in his ears.' Now this is a miserable condition, when we have no sound peace and quiet within ourselves. If they do not always feel the stings of conscience, they are always subject to them; for the present, a stupid conscience is their disease, the benumbing lethargy of the soul; if they make a shift to shake off these thoughts, death will revive their fears, and that may surprise them in an instant: 1 Cor. xv. 56, 'The sting of death is sin.' Oh, how much better is it with the sound and serious believer, who preserveth most tenderness of conscience, and yet hath most peace, hath a higher sense of his duty than others have, and yet can, with greater satisfaction than others do, depend on the merit of Christ, and look for acceptance with God!

2. It showeth us what course to take, in case our heart doth condemn us. What must we do? Sit down in despair and die? No; but examine the matter seriously.

[1.] Conscience must not be despised, partly for its nearness to us; it is God's spy in our bosoms. Whom shall a man believe, if not his own conscience? Who knoweth us better than ourselves? 1 Cor. ii. 11, 'For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him?' This judge cannot be suspected of rigour, or partiality, or ill-will; what is nearer, what is dearer to us than ourselves? And partly because of its relation to God; it is called 'the candle of the Lord,' Prov. xx. 27. It is in the place of God to us, and therefore, if it condemn us—may not God much more?—its checks and reproaches are a warning from God; it acteth in his name, and citeth us before his tribunal; and therefore we must not smother and put off troubles of conscience till God put them away. Partly because of the rule it goeth by, which is the law of God, evident, either by the light of nature: Rom. ii. 15, 'Which show the work of the law written in their hearts; their consciences also bearing them witness, and their thoughts in the meanwhile either accusing, or else excusing one another;' or by the light of scripture: Prov. vi. 22, 'Bind

my commandment on thy heart ; when thou goest, it shall lead thee ; when thou sleepest, it shall keep thee ; when thou walkest, it shall walk with thee ;' it doth but repeat over the law of God to you. It will be heard once ; better hear it now, while you have opportunity to correct your error.

[2.] The matter must be discussed, that you may resolve to do as the case shall require.

(1.) In some cases there is an appeal from court to court. In what court doth conscience condemn you? In the court of the law? You ought to subscribe the condemnation is just, to own the desert of sin ; and if God should bring it upon you, he is righteous: Nehem. ix. 33, 'Thou art just in all that is brought upon us, for thou hast done right, but we have done wickedly.' But there is a liberty of appeal from court to court: you may take sanctuary at the Lord's grace, and humbly claim the benefit of the new covenant: Ps. cxxx. 3, 4, 'If thou, Lord, shouldest mark iniquity, O Lord, who shall stand? but there is forgiveness with thee, that thou shouldest be feared;' and Ps. cxliii. 2, 'And enter not into judgment with thy servant, for in thy sight shall no man living be justified.' Deprecate the first court, and beg the favour of the second.

(2.) In other cases there is an appeal from judge to judge. Suppose conscience condemn you in the gospel court, that you are not a sound believer; the case must not be lightly passed over; but you must examine whether there be a sincere bent of heart in you towards God, yea or no. When others question or impeach your sincerity, you appeal to heaven, as Job did, 'My witness is in heaven.' The case is somewhat different when your own hearts question it: but yet you must see whether the judgment of conscience be the judgment of God. Conscience is a judge, but not the supreme judge. It may err both in acquitting and condemning: in acquitting, when from a judge, it becometh an advocate, excusing the partialities of our obedience; so in condemning, when from a judge it becometh an accuser, and exaggerateth incident frailties beyond measure. God may sometimes speak peace in the sentence of his word, when he doth not in the feeling of conscience. Beg of God to interpret your case. Our sincerity is best interpreted by a double testimony. It is well if it be so clear that a single one serveth turn: Rom. ix. 1, 'I say the truth in Christ, I lie not; my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost;' and Rom. viii. 16, 'And the Spirit itself bearing witness with our spirits, that we are the children of God.'

(3.) Suppose the worst, that you have no relief by an appeal from court to court, or from judge to judge, yet there is a passing from state to state still allowed us: John v. 24, 'And shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death to life.' You are in a state of condemnation, but you must get out of it as fast as you can, take the same course that a condemned man would. What is that?

(1st.) Acknowledge the justice of it; see you be affected with it. Christ justifieth none but the self-condemned; for he came to seek and to save that which was lost: Luke xviii. 13, 14, 'God be merciful to me a sinner. I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be



abased, and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.' You have no plea but that of a sinner.

(2dly.) Take heed of resting in this estate, or going on in your sins. There is *sententia lata*, but *dilata*: Eccles. viii. 11, 'Because sentence against an evil doer is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil.' There is nothing but the slender thread of a frail life between you and execution; get it repealed quickly, or you are undone for ever—'Their damnation slumbereth not,' 2 Peter iii. 3. God is slow in executing the sentence, as being willing that men should repent; yet it will be executed, it is every day nearer and nearer.

(3dly.) Embrace the offer of the gospel, and set yourselves in the way of your recovery. Christ hath delivered us from wrath to come, but you must upon warning 'flee from wrath to come,' Mat. iii. 7. And then that sentence of death, which you have received in yourselves, will be repealed. The door of grace is always open to those 'who have fled for refuge, to lay hold of the hope set before them,' Heb. vi. 8.

(4thly.) Make your qualification more explicit, by a holy and heavenly life: 1 Thes. v. 8, 9, 'But let us who are of the day be sober, putting on the breast-plate of faith and love, and for an helmet, the hope of salvation: for God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ.' The more you live upon the other world, and in a strict obedience to God, the sooner you will make out your qualification: 2 Cor. i. 12, 'For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity we have had our conversation in the world.'

I now proceed to

*Doct. 2.* That our triumph over the fear of condemnation mainly ariseth from the several acts of Christ's mediation.

1st. His death is mentioned—'It is Christ that died;' that is, he hath expiated our sins by his death, and obtained release and pardon for us: and then, 'Who shall condemn?' This will appear—

[1.] By the notions by which it is set forth: a ransom, a mediatorial sacrifice, and a propitiation. A ransom—*λύτρον ἀντὶ πολλῶν*, Mat. xx. 28; *ἀντίλυτρον*, 1 Tim. ii. 6. A ransom is a price given to a judge, or one that hath the power of life and death, to save the life of one capitally guilty, and by law bound to suffer death, or some other evil of punishment. This was our case: God was the supreme judge, before whose tribunal man standeth guilty, and liable to death and condemnation; but Christ gave himself as a ransom in our stead, to save us from the condemnation which we had deserved: Job xxxiii. 24, 'Deliver him from going down to the pit; I have found a ransom.' From the beginning of the world Christ was known to be a redeemer, who saved the world by a ransom paid; no other way could the effects of the Lord's grace be communicated to us. We receive mercies freely, but they were dearly purchased by Christ. The second notion is that of a mediatorial sacrifice: Isa. liii. 10, 'He shall make his soul an offering for sin;' so Eph. v. 2, 'He gave himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God, for a sweet-smelling savour.' Sin is a wrong done to God, and therefore there must be something offered to God in our

stead, by way of satisfaction, before he would quit his controversy against us. This Christ hath done. All that was signified by the ancient sacrifices and offerings was accomplished by him: they were slayed, killed, burned, all which are but shadows of what our Lord endured. He is the true and real sacrifice, wherein provoked justice doth rest satisfied, his wrath appeased, and we that were loathsome by reason of sin, made acceptable and well-pleasing unto God. The third notion is that of a propitiation: 1 John ii. 2, 'He gave himself a propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but for the sins of the whole world;' and Rom. iii. 25, 'Whom God set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood.' This implieth God's being pacified and appeased, so as to become propitious and merciful for ever to sinful man; in which sense he is also said to make reconciliation for the sins of his people: *ἰλάσκεσθαι*, Heb. ii. 17, whereby is meant God's being reconciled to us. This was the great end why Christ died for us, to appease God's wrath and displeasure, and to reduce us into grace and favour with him again, by tendering a full compensation to God for all our sins.

[2.] The effects ascribed to it—

(1.) Sin is expiated or purged out: Heb. i. 3, 'When he had by himself purged our sins, he sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.' As God would not be appeased without a ransom, sacrifice or satisfaction, so could not sin be purged out without bearing the punishment. So the conscience is said to be 'purged from dead works by the blood of Christ,' Heb. ix. 4; and Rev. i. 5, 'He hath washed us from our sins in his blood;' that is, done that which will remove the guilt and pollution of it when it is rightly applied to us; and so he is said to 'finish transgression, and make an end of sin,' Dan. ix. 24; that is, to destroy the reign of sin, and to seal up the roll and handwriting that was against us, that it may not be imputed and brought into the judgment.

(2.) The sin is pardoned, and the sinner justified: Eph. i. 7, 'In whom we have redemption in his blood, the forgiveness of sins.' That is the great benefit which floweth from the death of Christ, which is offered in the New Testament: Acts x. 41, 'To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name, whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins.' And it is sealed and represented in the Lord's supper: Mat. xxvi. 28, 'This is my blood of the new testament, which was shed for the remission of sins.'

(3.) The sanctifying the sinner to God: Heb. xiii. 12, 'Jesus, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate;' Heb. x. 10, 'By the which will we are sanctified by the offering of Jesus Christ once for all;' so Eph. v. 26, 'That he might sanctify and cleanse it, by the washing of water, through the word;' so John xvii. 19, 'That they also might be sanctified through the truth.' In these, and many other places, is meant both our dedication to God, and the renovation of our natures, that qualifyeth for communion with him.

(4.) The consummation, or the perfecting of the sanctified, as Heb. x. 14, 'By one offering he hath perfected the sanctified for ever.' The priests of the law were forced to renew their sacrifices, because

they could not completely take away sin; for 'the law made nothing perfect,' Heb. vii. 19. Could not yield us sufficient expiation for sin, to justify and sanctify the person, so as to open heaven to him, and a free access to God; but Christ hath fully done this; perfected us for ever by one offering. There needeth no other sacrifice, no other satisfaction, to remove the guilt and eternal punishment: John xix. 30, *τετελεσται*, 'All is finished,' or perfected; all is undergone that was necessary for the redemption of the elect; there needed no more to satisfy justice or procure salvation for us.

[3.] The sufficiency of it to these ends and effects.

(1.) From the dignity of the person. He had all fulness in him: a fulness of holiness, Col. i. 9; a fulness of the godhead, Col. ii. 9. He was holy and innocent, and also God; and will not the blood of God cleanse us from all our sins?

(2.) The unity of his office and sacrifice. There is but one redeemer, and one sacrifice; and if but one, this is enough: 1 Tim. ii. 5, 'There is one God, and one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus.' One sacrifice: Heb. x. 12, 'But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down at the right hand of God;' Heb. ix. 26, 'But now once in the end of the world hath he appeared, to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself;' and Rom. v. 18, 'The free gift came upon all, to the justification of life.' The scripture much insists upon this.

(3.) The greatness of his sufferings: Isa. liii. 4-6, 'Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows; yet did we esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted: but he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquities of us all;' Phil. ii. 7, 8, 'But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross;' and Gal. iii. 13, 'Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us; for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree.' Now, christians, all this is offered to our faith: the notions, the effects, or ends; the sufficiency of it to these ends and purposes; the price is paid by Christ, and accepted by God. We partake of these benefits as soon as we perform the conditions of the gospel; but we triumph when more explicitly we declare ourselves to be true and sound christians. God doth not look for an expiatory sacrifice at our hands, but a thorough application of what he hath found out for us. This broad foundation laid is not only free for God to build upon, but for us to build upon: if we would enter into his peace, we must take his yoke upon us, and share with him in all conditions.

2. 'Yea rather, that is risen again.' When the apostle saith 'Yea, rather,' there is some special thing in Christ's resurrection comparatively above his death, which hath an influence upon our justification. What is it? What is the reason of this connection? Was not Christ's dying every way enough to free us from sin, and from con-

demnation by sin? Answer, Yes; but yet the visible evidence was by his resurrection; the apostle saith, 1 Cor. xv. 17, 'If Christ be not risen, then are you yet in your sins;' and again, Rom. iv. 25, 'He died for our offences, and rose again for our justification.' Christ's death would not have profited us if he had been swallowed up by it, or still detained under the power of it. More particularly—

[1.] It is a proof of the truth of his person and office, that he is the Son of God, and the saviour and judge of the world: and therefore usually by this argument the apostles asserted the truth of the gospel, for they were witnesses of his resurrection; and it is said, 1 Peter i. 21, 'God raised him from the dead, that our faith and hope may be in God.' We would not have believed this foundation laid for the great blessings of the gospel had we not so clear a proof. That he is the Son of God is proved: Rom. i. 4, 'Mightily declared to be the Son of God by his resurrection from the dead;' so Acts xiii. 33, 'God hath raised up Jesus from the dead; for it is written, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee.' He was the Son of God from all eternity, but then visibly declared to be so. God did, as it were, by that one act own, pronounce, and publicly declare in the audience of all the world, that Christ was his only-begotten Son, one in substance with him eternally. And as the truth of his person, so of his office, that he was the true Messiah that was to restore the lapsed estate of mankind: Acts v. 31, 'Him hath God exalted with his right hand, to be a prince and a saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and remission of sins.' This was the only sign he would give the Jews, the sign of the prophet Jonah: Mat. xii. 38-40, 'Master, we would see a sign from thee. But he answered and said unto them, An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign, and there shall no sign be given to it but the sign of the prophet Jonas; for as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly, so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.' So elsewhere he speaketh of destroying the temple of his body, and raising it up after three days, John ii. 19. So for his being the judge of the world: Acts xvii. 31, 'Whereof he hath given assurance to all men, in that he raised him from the dead;' namely, that he is Lord and judge. So that by his resurrection all the clouds about his person vanish. The world have satisfaction enough, if they will take it. There lieth this argument in the case: if Christ had been an impostor or false prophet, neither could he have raised up himself, being a mere man, nor would God have raised him up if he had been a mere deceiver; nor could the devil have raised him to life, no more than make a man out of dead matter. Nor can we reply that Lazarus was raised up from the dead, and so others; and yet not the sons of God, nor saviours and judges of the world.

I answer: Christ died, not a natural death, but in the repute of man as a malefactor, by the hand of the magistrate. Lazarus and others did not give out themselves as the saviours of the world, as Christ did; so the truth of his claim was manifested, and made evident by the resurrection. God would not leave him in the power of death, but raised him up, and assumed him into glory. Therefore it appeared the judgment passed on him was not right, and that he was indeed what he gave out himself to be.

[2.] It is a token of the acceptance of his purchase, or a solemn acquittance, a full discharge of Christ as our mediator and surety; he died to pay our debts. Now the payment is fully made when the surety is let out of prison: Isa. liii. 8, 'He was taken from prison, and from judgment.' His resurrection showeth God hath received the death of Christ as a sufficient ransom for our sins. The continuance of the payment showed the imperfection of it; it is a kind of release; Christ did not break prison, but was brought forth: Heb. xiii. 20, 'Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus.' As the apostles would not come out of prison till fetched out, Acts xvi. 38, 39, so here.

He is in a capacity to convey life to others, which, if he had remained in a state of death, he could not do: John xiv. 19, 'Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more, but ye see me; because I live, ye shall live also.' The life of believers is derived from the life of Christ, without which it cannot subsist. If he had been holden of death, he had never been a fountain of grace or glory to us; we have the merit of his humiliation and the power of his exaltation. The scripture putteth a *πολλῷ μᾶλλον* upon the latter: Rom. v. 10, 'Much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life;' meaning thereby his life in glory. His death was for the expiation of sin, but the effectual application of it dependeth on his life; so that the faith of sinners may comfortably rest on Christ as one raised and glorified.

[4.] His resurrection was his victory over death, which is the wages of sin. If Christ be risen from the dead, then is sin conquered; for the sting of death is sin. Therefore his resurrection declareth plainly that sin is done away, and so it is a pattern and pledge to assure us of the forgiveness of sins.

3. His exaltation at the right hand of God—'Who is even at the right hand of God.' This confirmeth all the other ends.

[1.] The truth of Christ's dignity and office: John xvi. 10, 'Of righteousness, because I go to my Father.'

[2.] The validity of Christ's satisfaction; for our surety is not only got out of prison, but preferred; not only discharged, but honoured and rewarded, and appeareth in the presence of God. Christ did in effect say to God, as Judah the patriarch did to Jacob concerning Benjamin, Gen. xliii. 9, 'I will be surety for him: thou shalt require him of me: if I bring him not to thee, and set him before thee, let me never see thy face more, but bear the blame for ever.' So Christ undertaketh to be responsible for these poor creatures. What they owe put upon my score, as Paul said to Onesimus.

[3.] That he is in a full capacity to convey life to others. All weakness is removed from him; his human nature is glorified and seated in heaven, and his divine majesty and glory is restored to him; so that we may reflect upon him with comfort, as a king on the throne, in his royal palace and place of residence. David was king as soon as anointed by Samuel; but when crowned in Hebron, then did he actually administer the kingdom, and reward his servants and followers in the desert. Christ, when lifted up, filleth all things, Eph. iv. 10.

[4.] His victory over his enemies, death and sin; as is fully seen, Ps. cx. 1, 'The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, until

I make thine enemies thy footstool;' and Heb. x. 13, 'From henceforth expecting, till his enemies be made his footstool.'

But there is somewhat peculiar.

(1.) By entering into heaven he hath opened heaven for us. He hath carried our nature thither, our flesh into heaven, and advanced it at the Father's right hand in glory, and so hath taken possession of heaven for, and in the name of, all believers, that in time they may ascend and be partakers of the same glory: John xiv. 2, 'I go to prepare a place for you.' It was prepared before the world began by the decree of God: Mat. xxv. 34, 'Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.' It was prepared in time by the purchase of Christ: Heb. ix. 15, 'For the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, that they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance.' Now he is gone to heaven to pursue and apply that right; gone thither as our harbinger: Heb. vi. 20, 'Whither the forerunner is for us entered;' opened Paradise again to us, which was formerly shut and closed by our sins.

[2.] By this means we have a friend in heaven, who is always at the right hand of God to prevent breaches between him and us: 1 John ii. 1, 'And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous;' as David had Jonathan in Saul's court to give notice of danger, and to interpose, to take off all displeasure conceived against him.' It is a great privilege, unquestionless, to have a friend in the court of heaven to take up all differences between God and us, as a merciful and faithful high priest to answer all accusations of Satan, and hinder wrath from breaking out upon us, as it would do every moment if we had the desert of our sins.

(3.) His being exalted at the right hand of God noteth that honour and power which is put upon the Redeemer. He hath received 'all power in heaven and earth,' Mat. xxviii. 18; and Eph. i. 20, 21, 'God set him at his right hand, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come;' so 1 Peter iii. 22, 'He is gone into heaven, angels, authorities, and powers being made subject to him.' This height of honour to which Christ was exalted shows how much his friends may trust him, and venture their all in his hands: Ps. ii. 12, 'Blessed are all they that put their trust in him;' how much his enemies may fear him; every knee must bow to him;—they must either bend or break, Phil. ii. 10. We have not thoughts high enough of the glory and excellency of Jesus Christ, and therefore the glory and splendour of created things doth soon dazzle our eyes, and our hearts are hardly held up and fortified against these discouragements that we must meet with in his service. Surely, since Christ is in the highest dignity and power with God, and hath all the heavenly hosts and creatures at his command, we should more encourage ourselves in the Lord; for all this power is managed for the comfort and defence of the godly, and the terror and punishment of his and their enemies. This power was given him as God-man, when he entered into heaven, and sat down on the right hand of Majesty.

(4.) Fulness of grace given him to dispense the Spirit to his redeemed

ones : Acts ii. 33, ' Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this which ye now see and hear.' As soon as he was warm in the throne he poureth out the Spirit, that is the first news that we hear from him ; and presently the virtue of it appeared, three thousand souls were added to the church that day. Now that is a pledge of what is continually dispensed in the church ; there is still a Spirit sent forth to convince the unbelieving world, and to conquer the opposing wisdom and power of the flesh ; as also to beget and continue life in his people, that they may actually be put in possession of what he hath purchased for them ; for he hath promised to be with the ministry and dispensation of the word to the end of the world, Mat. xxviii. 20, meaning by that presence, not only his powerful providence, but his convincing and quickening Spirit.

(5.) The actual administration of his kingdom. He ruleth his church, preserveth his people, and subdueth their enemies. The enemies of Christ are of two sorts, temporal and spiritual. First, His temporal enemies are such as oppose his cause and servants, and seek to suppress his interest in the world. The Jews despitefully used him and his messengers, and they had their doom ; wrath came upon them to the uttermost. It is supposed they are intended : Mat. xvi. 28, ' There are some standing here which shall not taste of death till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom.' In a few years the city, temple, and whole polity of the Jews were destroyed, for the erection of the gospel kingdom. The Romans were the next enemy, who endeavoured the extirpation of christianity by several persecutions ; these were next made the footstool of the King of kings, and after some years that vast empire was destroyed by the inundation of barbarous nations, and the residue marched under the banner of Christ. Within a little time, all these nations which oppose Christ's interest, and persecute his servants, are subdued under him, and either broken in pieces by sundry plagues and judgments, or else brought to submit their necks to Christ's blessed yoke. There is no standing out against the King whom God hath exalted at his right hand. Secondly, The spiritual enemies of Christ's kingdom are sin, Satan, and death, each of which hath a kingdom of its own, opposite to the kingdom of Christ. The apostle telleth us ' that sin reigned unto death,' Rom. v. 21 ; but he exhorteth, Rom. vi. 12, ' Let not sin reign in your mortal bodies ;' and he promiseth, ' that sin shall not have dominion over you,' Rom. vi. 14. Satan hath a kingdom opposite to Christ ; he is called ' the prince of this world,' by usurpation, John xii. 31. And the devils are called, Eph. vi. 12, ' Rulers of the darkness of this world.' The ignorant, superstitious, carnal part of the world falleth to his share ; but Christ hath cast him out, and will still go on to do it. Death hath an empire and kingdom : Rom. v. 14, ' Death reigned from Adam to Moses ;' and verse 17, ' By one offence death reigned.' Now, for the destruction of these powers was Christ exalted at the right hand of God, and by degrees he doth destroy and subdue them ; yet this destruction is not so universal but that sin and Satan and death doth still continue ; yet though there be not a total destruction of them, there is an absolute subjection of them to the throne of the mediator. They cannot do

any more than Christ permitteth; they cannot hurt those whom God hath given to Christ, in a deadly manner; they cannot hinder the bringing them unto the heavenly kingdom. He doth annihilate the guilt of sin by his death; the dominion, by the power of his Spirit. In the despisers and refusers of his grace sin continueth in its absolute power, but still in a subjection to the throne. The wrath of the mediator is seen in their condemnation and destruction. Satan is destroyed as to his princely power, but so as we must use the means still; at last he shall be judged. Death is 'the last enemy that shall be destroyed,' 1 Cor. xv. 26. It will be finally destroyed in the resurrection. For the present it serveth Christ's ends, 1 Cor. iii. 22.

4. His intercession for us. This is a notable prop to faith.

[1.] Christ presents himself, and the merit of his sacrifice, before the face of God, to preserve us in his favour: Heb. ix. 24, 'He appeareth before God for us.' As the high priest did enter with blood into the holy place: Lev. vi. 7, 'The priest shall make an atonement for him.' If he did not interpose before God night and day, how should the accusations of Satan be repelled, breaches prevented, a mutual correspondence preserved between us and God?

[2.] He doth interpose his love, will, and desire for our salvation, and all grace that is necessary thereunto, in all our difficulties, conflicts, and temptations. To intercede is the part of an inferior towards a superior; thus is Christ as mediator to God: John xiv. 16, 'I will pray the Father.' He is to ask his own glory, Ps. ii. 8; therefore what grace is necessary for us. It is a comfort Christ doth not forget us now in heaven, as Pharaoh's butler forgot Joseph, Gen. xl. 23; but it is much more a comfort that he will take notice of our particular case, that he knoweth us by name, and our necessities and wants, and doth particularly intercede for us. Nay, he is mindful of us when we are not mindful of ourselves, for his intercession doth make way for the effectual application of his grace to us when we think not of it. He obtaineth first the convincing, then sanctifying, then comforting Spirit.

[3.] To prevent breaches: 1 John ii. 1, 'We have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.' An advocate, so he is opposite to our accuser. And Heb. ii. 17, 'He is a merciful and faithful high priest in things appertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people.' Merciful to undertake, faithful to accomplish; merciful to us, faithful to God; merciful in dying, faithful in interceding, and so mindful of us at every turn. Surely it is the office of a saviour to be God's instrument in procuring our discharge; if we ourselves should only plead for pardon, having carried ourselves so unworthy of it, it would be uncomfortable to us; but he that hath redeemed us pleadeth for us; we do not go to God alone.

[4.] He presents our prayers, which are made acceptable to God, not as coming from us, but as perfumed with his merits: Heb. viii. 2, and Rev. viii. 3, 'And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer, and there was given to him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of the saints.' He hath intendered his own heart by suffering hunger, contempt in the world, exile, weariness, pain of body, heaviness of mind: Heb. iv. 14-16, 'Seeing then, that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus



the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession ; for we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in a time of need.' Therefore come boldly for such mercies as we stand in need of. He knoweth the heart of a tempted man.

*Use.* You see then, what abundant cause we have to triumph and glory in Christ. You have his humiliation as the ground of your comfort ; his exaltation, which qualifyeth him to apply it to you, and work it in you ; the merit and power. If he had not wrought our deliverance, long might we have borne the wrath we deserved, and had no means to help ourselves. If he should not make continual intercession for you, the remnant of your sin would still bring damnation ; if he did not hide your nakedness, and procure your daily pardon, you would every day be your own destroyers ; nay, you would not be an hour longer out of hell ; if he did not bring you to God, you could have no comfortable access to him in any of your wants and necessities ; if he leave you to yourselves to resist one temptation, even to the foulest sins, how quickly would you be borne down, and wallow like a swine in the mire ! We can, with Jonah, easily raise the storm, but we know not how to allay it. All, from first to last, must be given and ascribed to God in Christ.

## SERMON XLV.

*Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?—ROM. viii. 35.*

THE triumph over the evil of sin being ended, the apostle beginneth his triumph over afflictions. Here observe—

1. The challenge—*Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?*

2. The evils enumerated—*Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?*

1. The challenge,  $\tau\acute{\iota}\varsigma$  for  $\tau\acute{\iota}$  ;—who for what. The things mentioned are spoken of as a person ; but the chief difficulty is about the meaning of that clause, 'the love of Christ'—Whether it be meant of our love to Christ, or Christ's love to us. Reasons may be given on both sides. (1.) That it is meant of our love to Christ ; for tribulation is not like to alienate Christ from us, but us from Christ. This doth rather tend to draw us from loving God, than God from loving us. (2.) That it is meant of Christ's love to us, because it is very unlikely that the apostle would boast of the constancy of his own love ; it is more comely to triumph in God's love to us than our love to God. What shall we then determine in the case ? I answer, It is meant of both, Christ's love to us, and our love to Christ, but principally of the love of God in Christ to us. First, The object—'us ;' it is we are in danger