

cribes them as being in a state of non-condemnation; for he asks, "Who is he that condemneth?" There is no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus.

As sinners men are under condemnation. They are exposed to the punishment that is the due desert of their sins. Sin merits punishment. By the infliction of punishment, God expresses his hatred to sin for the good of the orderly part of his universe; but, in his ineffable mercy, he has made provision for remitting it in the meritorious work of Christ. Men continue under condemnation by rejecting God's mercy in Christ. Hence it is said, "He that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God." John iii. 17.

The believer in Christ is not condemned. Looking to his once dead, but now risen and exalted Redeemer, he can say, with gratitude and joy, "Who is he that condemneth?" Jesus when he died was delivered from the condemning power of our sins, which were placed to his account, and the penalty due to which he bore, so far as was necessary for the honouring of the divine law, and the downflowing of divine benevolence to the souls of men. This is the state into which faith in Jesus introduces the soul: a state of freedom from the punishment due to sin; a state of non-condemnation.

But this word, non-condemnation, expresses only negatively the state in which the soul is by union to Jesus. The positive idea is expressed by the word 'justification.' Hence the Apostle's answer to his challenge; 'It is God that justifieth.' To be justified is to be not only freed from condemnation on account of sin, it is to be treated, as regards eternity, as if no sin had been committed. So rich is the provision which God, in the overflowing fulness of his love, has made for men in Christ, that through faith in him not only are we delivered from condemnation, but treated, as regards our everlasting condition, as if we were perfectly righteous,—as if we possessed the righteousness of Christ. Just as our sins were imputed to Christ, and he was treated as if they were his own—"made sin for us,"—so when we believe in him, his righteousness is imputed to us, and we are treated as if it was ours. This is the believer's state. He is an heir of God, a joint heir with Christ. Hence the Apostle specifies, as one of the experimental results of justification by faith, rejoicing in hope of the glory of God. Rom. v. 2. Well may the child of God rejoice in the hope of heaven, seeing the perfect righteousness of Jesus is his title to it.

Unbeliever, you are depriving yourself of precious blessings and the purest and most elevating joys by keeping away from Jesus.