

## SERMON VII.

*Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him.*—ROM. VI. 8.

THE apostle now proveth the second part, that we are planted into the likeness of his resurrection. He proveth it as a necessary consequent of the antecedent privilege, 'Now if we be dead with Christ,' &c.

In the words—(1.) A supposition; (2.) The truth thence inferred; (3.) The certainty of the inference.

1. The supposition, there—

[1.] The thing supposed, 'Being dead with Christ.' What that is we have explained already. All that I shall now add is, that in scripture it implieth two things—

(1.) Conformity with Christ in his sufferings. So we have a saying like that in the text: 2 Tim. ii. 11, 'It is a faithful saying; for if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him;' which presently is explained, ver. 12, 'If we suffer, we shall also reign with him.'

(2.) It implieth mortification of sin. So it is understood here, if we have communion and fellowship with his death, for the mortification of sin.

[2.] The term of proposal, conditionally, 'If we.' The particle *if* hath sometimes the notion of a caution: See that ye be dead with Christ; sometimes it is a note of relation, when one privilege is deduced from another; as here, if we partake of the effect and likeness of his death in dying to sin, we shall partake of the effect and likeness of his resurrection in being quickened to live in holiness and righteousness all our days. Dying to sin, and newness of life, are inseparable; if we have the first, we shall have the other also; they are branches of the same work of regeneration, and both proceed from the same cause, union with Christ.

2. The truth hence inferred, 'We shall also live with him.' This is meant both of the life of grace and of the life of glory, regeneration and resurrection; the one is to newness of life, the other is to everlasting bliss and happiness. Regeneration is the Spirit's begetting us to the image and nature of God our heavenly Father; and resurrection is for the perfecting of that likeness; which is, it is true, perfect in part here, in the soul: 2 Cor. iii. 18, 'We all with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, as even by the Spirit of the Lord.' Hereafter both in body and soul: Phil. iii. 21, 'Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his own glorious body, according to the wonderful working whereby he is able to subdue all things to himself.' As to degrees: 1 John iii. 2, 'When he shall appear we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.' As to kinds, both in holiness and happiness: 1 Cor. xv. 49, 'As we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.' Now we are conformed to his image in afflictions: Rom. viii. 29, 'He hath predestinated us to be conformed to image of his Son.' We look like him in the form of a

servant, then we shall be like him as the Lord from heaven heavenly. Therefore the life of glory in heaven must not be excluded.

3. The certainty of the inference, *πιστεύομεν*. It is not a matter of opinion and conjecture, but of faith; we are certainly persuaded of the truth of it. We must distinguish of this truth; for it may be considered two ways—

[1.] As a general maxim or proposition; so it is absolutely true, 'Those that are dead with Christ shall live with him.' This is an article of faith to be believed *fide divina*.

[2.] As it is applied to us, or as it is ground of our particular confidence; so it is true hypothetically or upon supposition, and our confidence can be no greater than the evidence of our qualification: 'If we be indeed dead with Christ, we in particular shall also live with him.' It is but a rational conclusion from two premises; one of which is of divine revelation, the other of inward experience, namely, that 'I am dead with Christ,' therefore 'I believe that I shall live with him.' It is an act both of faith and reason, an act of faith by participation, as it buildeth on a principle of faith.

*Doct.* Those that are dead with Christ have no reason to doubt but that they shall also live with him.

1. I shall speak of the condition, 'If we be dead with Christ.'
2. Of the benefit, 'They shall live,' spiritually and everlastingly.
3. Of our certain apprehension, 'We believe.'

First, of the presupposed condition, 'If we be dead with Christ.'

1. Who are dead with Christ.
2. How necessary this order is. The one will show us that it is not an over-strict, but a comfortable condition; the other, that it is a condition absolutely necessary to subsequent grace.

1. Who are dead with Christ?

[1.] Such as own the obligation which their baptism and profession puts upon them; that 'reckon themselves dead indeed unto sin,' Rom. vi. 11; that make account they are under a vow and bond, wherewith they have bound their souls. The careless mind it not; but sincere christians acknowledge that the debt lieth upon them, they being solemnly engaged to Christ to do it. The apostle saith, Rom. viii. 12, 'We are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh.' As the Jew by circumcision is bound to observe all the ritual of Moses, Gal. vi. 3, so christians by baptism are bound to crucify the flesh and obey the Spirit. What say you? Are you at liberty to do what you list, or under a strict bond and obligation to die unto sin? Let your lives answer for you.

[2.] They make conscience of it, and seriously address themselves to perform it: Gal. v. 24, 'They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts;' they have begun to do it, and still go on to do it more and more; for this is a continued action, not the work of a day, but of our whole lives. They have not only retrenched the desires of the flesh, but seek to mortify and subdue them, and perform their promise so solemnly made to God.

[3.] They obtain the effect in such a degree that the reign of sin is broken, though sin itself be not utterly extinct in us. They do no longer live in their old slavery and bondage, as those do who obey

every foolish and hurtful lust that bubbleth up in their hearts. A man's condition is determined by what is in the throne habitually, and governeth our lives and actions. There are two warring principles in us, full of enmity and repugnancy to each other—the flesh and the spirit; but one reigneth, which constituteth the difference between the carnal and the renewed. In the carnal, flesh reigneth; but in the regenerate the Spirit hath the mastery, and is superior and most powerful; so that a christian showeth himself to be spirit rather than flesh; otherwise it could not be said, 'That which is born of the Spirit is spirit,' John iii. 6. The acts of sin are disowned acts, and he may say with Paul, 'It is not I, but sin that dwelleth in me.' Sin is against the bent and habit of our wills.

[4.] They subtract the fuel of their lusts, as they wean themselves from earthly things, and show such contempt of the world that the good things which they enjoy by God's allowance are not a snare to them. For the apostle saith of those that set their affections on things above, and not on things on earth, 'Ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ,' Col. iii. 2, 3. It is the divine and heavenly life which they seek to live. Well, then, here is a brief and plain description of those who are dead with Christ in four things—(1.) They make conscience of their solemn vow in baptism, wherein they promised to put off the former lusts of their ignorance, and the corrupt conversation that flowed from them. (2.) They are busily at work in it, and it is their daily endeavour. (3.) They prevail so far that sin is a-dying, and grace groweth in strength and power. (4.) They continue faithful in that purpose; and their savour of earthly things is deadened, and their hearts are still working towards God and heaven.

2. It is a condition absolutely necessary to obtain subsequent grace. For—

[1.] The graces of the Spirit cannot thrive in an unmortified soul; therefore then we set about our duty in the right order when we begin with mortification in the first place, and thence proceed to the positive duties of the new life. Faith will not thrive in a proud, unhumbed, impenitent heart: John v. 44, 'How can ye believe, which receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour that cometh from God only?' Nor will the love of God ever bear sway where sensual and worldly love is in such strength and prevalency: 1 John ii. 15, 'If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.' Vain pleasures divert us from our great hopes, or the pleasures that are at God's right hand for evermore: 1 Peter i. 13, 'Be sober, and hope to the end.' Sobriety is a holy moderation or sparing use of worldly delights; they behave themselves as in their journey. Well, then, we must die before we can live in purity and holiness, and seek that glory which Christ now enjoyeth with God in heaven. We must put off our old rags before we can put on the garments of righteousness.

[2.] The longer corruption is spared it groweth the worse; for the more it venteth itself by inordinate and sinful desires, the more it acquireth strength, and secures its interest more firmly in the soul. Every act strengtheneth the habit, and then it groweth into an inveterate custom: Jer. ix. 3, 'They bend their tongues for lies, but they are

not valiant for the truth upon the earth ; for they proceed from evil to evil, and they know not me, saith the Lord.' Therefore the apostle: 1 Peter iv. 2, 3, 'That he should no longer live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God. For the time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in licentiousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings and abominable idolatries.' Alas! sin is too deeply rooted and ingrained in our natures already, and that hindereth the coming on of the divine life ; either we never receive the grace of regeneration, being so stiffened and hardened in our sins, or else it hath more corruption to grapple with, so that all our days there is more to do to keep it alive in our souls.

[3.] Till sin be mortified, the good we pretend to is but a covering and hiding of our loathsome lusts: James iv. 8, 'Cleanse your hands, ye sinners, and purify your hearts, ye double-minded.' Many being taxed for their evil and inordinate life will say, they hope their hearts are good. If the heart were good, the life would be better ; the sinner must cleanse his hands. Others are plausible in their carriage, but their fleshly and worldly lusts were never soundly mortified, therefore hypocrites must cleanse their hearts. Here the operation of the Spirit beginneth. Our Lord saith, Mat. xxiii. 25, 26, 'Cleanse first that which is within the cup and the platter, that the outside may be clean also.' Many external acts may be counterfeited, or overruled and influenced by by-ends ; the purity of the outside is loathsome to God without the purity of the heart. Pharisees are compared to 'whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness ; so ye outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within are full of hypocrisy and iniquity,' Mat. xxiii. 27, 28. So Luke xi. 44, 'Ye are as graves which appear not, and the men that walk over them are not aware of them ;' not as a grave when new, but a grave when overgrown with grass. The Jews buried out of the city in the fields ; they thought themselves defiled by coming too near the dead. Men may be fair in outward guise and show, but in heart the most noisome and polluted that can be. So that mortification is necessarily requisite to vivification ; we must die before we can live.

Secondly, Let me open the benefit, 'We shall also live with him.' Here—

1. Observe how grace is followed with grace, one part with another. God loveth to crown his own gifts, and we are endeared to him by his own mercies. So it is in the general: Zech. iii. 2, 'Is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?' But some mercies draw on other mercies, and are given in order to them, as mortification in order to vivification, grace in order to glory. God giveth the one that he may give the other ; he maketh one degree of grace a step to the other.

2. Observe how grace is followed with glory, 'We shall also live with him.' One and the same word expresseth both ; life spiritual and eternal is but one life. It is good to observe how many ways the scripture sets forth the connection between the life of grace and the life of glory. Sometimes by that of the seed and crop: Gal. vi. 8, 'He that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.'

No seed no crop; now is our seed-time. Sometimes the first-fruits and the harvest, for the offering of the first-fruits dedicated the whole harvest: Rom. viii. 23, 'We ourselves, who have the first-fruits of the Spirit,' &c. Sometimes to the fountain and the stream, or the river losing itself in the ocean: John iv. 14, 'He that shall drink of the water that I shall give him, shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him, shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.' Sometimes of the pledge and earnest with respect to full and actual possession: 2 Cor. i. 22, 'Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts.' Sometimes to the beginning and accomplishment, or the degree with the top and height. Life is begun by the Spirit, and perfected in heaven. There is a mighty suitableness between life spiritual and eternal: John xvii. 3, 'This is life eternal, to know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.' The life of grace consisteth in knowing and loving God, and the life of glory is the everlasting vision and perfect love of God. Now we are changed by the sight of faith: 2 Cor. iii. 18, 'We all with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord;' then we shall be changed by the beatifical vision: 1 John iii. 2, 'When he shall appear we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.' Our life here and life there is but one life, begun here, and perfected there; here are manifold imperfections, but there is complete blessedness. Sometimes as the morning to high noon, or light of the perfect day: Prov. iv. 18, 'The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more to the perfect day;' here the day breaks, but it is but a little. Sometimes to a man and a child: 1 Cor. xiii. 10-12, 'But when that which is perfect is come, that which is in part shall be done away. When I was a child I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things. For now we see through a glass darkly, but then face to face; now I know in part, but then shall I know even as also I am known.' As it is in the change of ages, so is it between this and the other life. Now all these things show both the sameness of the life, and also the necessity of one degree of grace to another.

3. Observe how fitly this is mentioned as a help to mortification; we should sweeten the tediousness and trouble of the work by thinking of the life that will ensue.

[1.] The life of grace. Conscience calleth upon you for your duty to your creator; and lust hindereth it. Now is it not a great advantage to have a vital principle to incline us to God? By the life of grace we are enabled in some measure to do what is pleasing in his sight: Heb. xii. 28, 'Let us have grace whereby we may serve God acceptably, with reverence and godly fear.' Set about mortification, and you shall have this grace. This should be a great consolation to us, who are so often vexed with guilty fears because of the neglect of our duty.

[2.] The life of glory. Pleasures, honours, and profits seem great matters to a carnal heart, and can do much till you put heaven in the balance against them; as Moses did, Heb. xi. 26, 'Esteeming the

reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt, for he had respect unto the recompense of reward;’ he looked off from one object to another. Alas! when we think of this life, all that we enjoy here is nothing, and should do nothing upon us to gain us from God and our duty to him. We should have such thoughts within ourselves. Shall I take these pleasures instead of my birthright? For this preferment shall I sell my part in heaven? Shall I cast away my soul for this sensual delight? The devil usually prevaleth over men when heaven is forgotten and out of sight. Sure the baptismal vow and engagement hath little hold upon us: 2 Peter i. 9, ‘He is blind and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins.’ These things are fitly coupled.

[4.] Observe how we have all with Christ; we die with him, and we live with him. As we mortify sin by virtue of that grace which he purchased for us by his death, so we hold heaven by his gift, or the grant of that covenant which he hath confirmed by his blood. His dying is the pattern of our mortification, and his life of our happiness and glory. If by his example we first learn to die unto sin, according to his pattern and example we shall have a joyful resurrection to eternal life, for still we fare as Christ fared. He would not be a pattern to us only in his worst estate, but in his best also; we shall be partakers of the same glory which Christ hath at the right hand of the Father, and as we shall live eternally so we shall eternally praise our Redeemer, who deriveth influence to us all along, both in dying and rising.

Thirdly, The certain apprehension we have of this, ‘We believe.’ Here I shall handle—(1.) The necessity of this faith; (2.) The grounds of it; (3.) The profit of believing this.

1. The necessity of believing.

[1.] This life is not matter of sense, but of faith, whether you take it for the life of grace, or the life of glory.

(1.) The life of grace. If you consider the nature of it, which is of the order of things spiritual, and men that judge according to things of sense see no glory in it: 1 Cor. ii. 14, ‘The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit, for they are foolishness to him, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.’ Alas! the rich preparations of grace, which God hath made for us in the gospel, a carnal heart hath no savour for them nor value and esteem of them, is nothing moved with the tender and offer; we must have a higher light to see these things. Besides, the new nature is hidden under manifold infirmities and afflictions: Col. iii. 3, ‘Your life is hid with Christ in God;’ and 1 John iii. 2, ‘It doth not yet appear what we shall be.’ Once more, it is God’s gift, and a matter full of difficulty for them to apprehend that are sensible of their own vileness, and are daily conflicting with so many lusts; that they should be quickened and enabled to live to God is a matter which they cannot easily believe: ‘Shall these dead bones live? O Lord! thou knowest,’ Ezek. xxxvii. 3. It is a hard matter to persuade them that have a great sense of the power of their bewitching lusts that they shall ever overcome.

(2.) For the life of glory, that is also a matter of faith, because it is a thing future, unseen, and to be enjoyed in another world: ‘Now

faith is the substance of things not seen, and the evidence of things hoped for,' Heb. xi. 1.

[2.] The person, office, and power of our Redeemer are all mystical truths: John xi. 25, 26, 'I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die: believest thou this?' that Christ is able to raise the dead to life again now or hereafter.

[3.] The matter is difficult to be believed, that after worms have consumed this flesh it shall be raised again in glory, and at length reign with Christ for ever. Therefore Abraham's faith is so often propounded to the faithful, 'who considered not his own body now dead, nor yet the deadness of Sarah's womb,' Rom. iv. 19; and the apostle showeth us that such a kind of faith shall be 'imputed to us for righteousness,' ver. 24, who believe Christ's resurrection, and then ours. All this showeth the necessity of faith in this case.

2. The grounds of believing this blessed estate, which is reserved for the mortified.

[1.] The infinite love of God, which prepared these mercies for us: Luke xii. 32, 'Fear not, little flock; it is your Father's good pleasure to give you a kingdom;' and 1 Cor. ii. 9, 'Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man the things which God hath prepared for them that love him;' Mat. xxv. 34, 'Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit a kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.' God prepared this glory for us, and by degrees traineth us up for it.

[2.] The everlasting merit of Christ: Heb. ix. 15, 'For this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death for the redemption of transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of the eternal inheritance.' It is by his means that we are redeemed from the guilt and power of sin, and have an eternal inheritance stated upon us. It behoved Christ, for the honour of the divine government, by the intervention of his merit and intercession, to satisfy God's justice, and acquire unto us those things which love and mercy had prepared for us, and among other things that blessed and glorious estate which is to be enjoyed upon the resurrection. This is made sure to the heirs of promise by the death of Christ, which is of everlasting merit, called therefore, ver. 12, 'everlasting redemption.'

[3.] The almighty power of the sanctifying Spirit both to change the soul and raise the body. To change the soul, which is made an act of omnipotency: 2 Peter i. 3, 'According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue.' Therefore it is often compared to creation, which is a making things out of nothing. To raise the body, as he did Christ's: Rom. i. 4, 'And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead;' and will raise the bodies of the faithful, in whom he once dwelled: Rom. viii. 11, 'He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you;' Phil. iii. 21, 'Who shall also change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious

body, according to the wonderful working whereby he is able even to subdue all things to himself.

[4.] The immutable covenant or promises of the gospel, which always stand firm and stable: 2 Cor. i. 20, 'For all the promises of God in him are Yea, and in him Amen;' Heb. vi. 18, 'That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold on the hope that is set before us.' Hope is put for the thing hoped for, that is, the glorious estate which is reserved in heaven to be enjoyed there; this hope 'is set before us' in the promises, as the prize which we must seek after and the blessedness we must aim at. We 'lay hold upon it' when we consent to God's offer, and we 'fly for refuge' to take hold of this hope; for it is our sanctuary and safety, as the city of refuge was to him that was pursued by the avenger of blood. This is ground of strong consolation in all fears, troubles, and sorrows, in the midst of the infelicities of this life. This consolation is secured by 'two immutable things,' God's promise and oath, which are as unchangeable as his nature; these cannot fail or frustrate our hopes; these give us security of enjoying what we hope, or receiving the reward promised to us.

[5.] The unquestionable right of the mortified, or those that are dead with Christ. There is nothing wanting but the clearing up of our right and title. Now the christian faith proposeth and showeth much good to them as real members of Christ's mystical body: Rom. viii. 13, 'If ye through the Spirit mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live;' and till this be done the whole design of grace is at a stand; we cannot upon other terms expect everlasting blessedness from Christ.

### 3. The profit of believing.

[1.] It strengthens our reason, and helps it to maintain its authority and government against sense and appetite. Reason is a middle faculty, that standeth between things above and things below, and it may be either debased by sense or elevated by faith. The one is easy, because corrupt nature carrieth us to things pleasing to sense, which are near at hand, and carry a great suitableness to our fancies and appetites. The other is difficult, because it dependeth on supernatural grace, for the Spirit's illumination is necessary to faith: 1 Cor. ii. 12, 'Now we have received, not the spirit which is of the world, but the Spirit which is of God, that we may know the things that are freely given to us of God.' Therefore here lieth the benefit we have by faith, to take us off from the life of sense, and to mortify the desires of the flesh, which the nearness of things sensible is apt to irritate and stir up in us.

[2.] The more we believe the stronger and greater is our consolation; as, for instance, our comfort under crosses is more abounding: 2 Cor. iv. 14, 'Knowing that he which raised up the Lord Jesus, shall raise us up also by Jesus;' 2 Cor. iv. 18, 'While we look not to the things which are seen, but to the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.' Our courage against death is more strong: 1 Thes. iv. 18, 'We shall ever be with the Lord.' Our diligence in duties is more unwearied: 1 Cor. xv. 58, 'Wherefore, my beloved brethren, be ye



stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as you know that your labour shall not be in vain in the Lord.'

*Use.* Let us now improve these things that we have been delivering to you.

1. Let us make great conscience of the first part of our duty, 'If we be dead unto sin.' See that the work of regeneration be once begun. The first virtue we receive from Christ is 'the likeness of his death;' that will make way for other things. Christ is dead; let us be dead with him, that to us he may not die in vain. And when it is once begun, let it be carried on to a further increase; adhere still to Christ's dying, and persevere both in your diligence and your dependence. Diligence; do not give over your endeavours of mortifying sin till it be quite gone. Dependence; that you wait for the power of his Spirit, which his death merited for us.

2. As to life, let us encourage ourselves with the hope of it; the same grace that hath begun will also finish the work, when we are prepared by living the life spiritual in the midst of conflicts and temptations. Therefore, while you are studying to please God, wait for it—

[1.] With patience. Christ after his resurrection was not presently glorified; there must be a time to wean us from worldly happiness: 'To make us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light,' Col. i. 12; 'Vessels of mercy which he had afore prepared unto glory,' Rom. ix. 23. In time you shall be delivered; see that you have the beginning and first-fruits, and that you daily grow in grace.

[2.] With earnest longing: Rom. vii. 23, 'O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from this body of death?' 2 Cor. v. 2, 'In this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven.'

3. As to faith.

[1.] Fix it, and be at a greater certainty against all doubts and fears, not only as to your interest, but the truth of the promise of eternal life. These doubts may stand with a sincere faith, but not a confirmed faith; we have much of the unbeliever in our bosoms. Venture all your happiness temporal and spiritual upon this security.

[2.] Improve it; it is the work of faith to overcome the world and the flesh: 1 John v. 4, 5, 'This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?' to overrule our sense and appetite, and to teach us to make nothing of all that would dissuade us against our heavenly interest: Acts xx. 24, 'But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God.' This is the true mortification.