

SERMON VIII.

Knowing that Christ, being raised from the dead, dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him. For in that he died, he died unto sin once; but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God.—
 ROM. VI. 9, 10.

THAT I may the better explain the drift of these words, let us take the apostle's method along with us. His intent is to prevent an abuse of the doctrine of the gospel, which publisheth the free grace of God to sinners: 'Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound.' From hence some did infer that therefore under the gospel they might take liberty to sin; the more their sins were, and the greater they were, the more they should occasion God to manifest the abundance of his grace upon them. The apostle answereth this—

1. By way of detestation: 'Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? God forbid!'

2. By way of confutation. The argument by which he confuteth it is our baptismal vow and engagement: 'How shall they that are dead to sin live any longer therein?' To clear this, he explaineth our baptismal vow in the two branches of it, dying to sin, and living to righteousness; the one direct, and the other consequential. Directly, 'We are baptized into the death of Christ,' ver. 2, but so as that 'we also rise again to newness of life,' ver. 4, 5, for we are united to Christ as dying and rising, and we are by virtue of the union to express a conformity to both: ver. 5, 'For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection.' He proveth the former part, ver. 6, 7, 'Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin, for he that is dead is freed from sin.' The latter he begins to prove, ver. 8, 'If we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him.' How live with him? As our spiritual death was answerable to the death of Christ, so our spiritual life must be answerable to his resurrection from the dead; as we have a copy and pattern for the mortifying sin in his death, so we have also a copy and pattern for newness of life in his resurrection; and therefore we do not in vain believe that we shall live spiritually and eternally with him: 'Knowing that Christ, being raised from the dead, dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him. For in that he died, he died unto sin once, but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God.'

The better to state the analogy and proportion between Christ's resurrection and our rising to the life of grace first and then of glory afterward, the life of Christ after his resurrection is set forth by two things—(1.) The perpetuity or immortality of it; (2.) The perfection and blessedness of it.

First, The perpetuity and immortality of it is delivered in three expressions—

1. Actual dying again is denied: 'Christ, being raised from the dead, dieth no more.' Christ's resurrection was not a return to a single

act of life, or life for a while, to show himself to the world, and no more; but to an immortal endless estate.

2. His further liableness or subjection to death is denied: 'Death hath no more dominion over him.' That is thus expressed for two reasons—

[1.] Death had once dominion over Christ; when he gave up himself to die for us, he for a while permitted, yea, subjected himself to the power of it; but Christ overcame death, and put an end to its power by his resurrection: Acts ii. 24, 'Whom God raised up, having loosed the pains of death, because it was impossible that he should be holden of it.'

[2.] To show that Christ died not only to expiate sin, but to take away the dominion and power of it in believers; therefore it is said, 'Death hath no more dominion over him,' he took away sin, by which death reigneth; he did enough both as to the satisfying God's justice and our deliverance.

3. Any further need of his dying again is denied: 'In that he died, he died unto sin once;' that is, he hath done his work; his death needeth not to be repeated; he died to sin once, not in regard of himself, for in him was no sin, but as charged with the sins of his people; he sufficiently took away sin, both as to guilt and power.

Secondly, The perfection and blessedness of his life is intimated: 'In that he liveth, he liveth unto God.' This expression may imply either the holiness of his life in heaven, or the blessedness of it.

1. The holiness. When Christ was raised from death to life again, he liveth to God wholly, seeketh to promote his glory in the world; he liveth with God and to God; with God, as he is set down at the right hand of majesty, and administereth the mediatorial kingdom for his glory, as indeed God hath a great deal of honour from Christ as mediator: Phil. ii. 11, 'That every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.'

2. The blessedness of it. Christ always lived to God, even before his death: John viii. 29, 'And he that sent me is with me. The Father hath not left me alone, but I do always those things that please him.' Why, then, is he said after his resurrection to live to God? *Ans.*—As freed from our infirmities; he liveth a glorious life: Luke xx. 28, 'He is not the God of the dead, but of the living; for all live to him;' though they do not live to the world, they live to God. Those that are departed out of this world have another life; the souls of the just are already in the hands of God, and their bodies are sure to be raised up at the last day. So Christ liveth to God.

Doct. That the due consideration of Christ's being raised from the dead doth mightily promote the spiritual life in us.

This will be evident if we consider what advantage we have by Christ's resurrection.

1. It evidenceth the verity of christian religion, and that Christ was no deceiver, for his resurrection is a sufficient attestation to the dignity of his person and offices: Rom. i. 4, 'Declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by his resurrection from the dead;' Acts xvii. 31, 'He hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath

ordained, whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.' This is a strong and undeniable argument that Christ is the Son of God, the saviour and judge of the world. Where lieth the force of the argument? Christ died in the judgment and repute of the world as a malefactor; but God justified him, when he would not leave him under the power of death, but raised him up, and assumed him unto glory, thereby visibly declaring unto the world that the world was mistaken in him, that he was indeed what he gave out himself to be, the Son of God, and the judge of the world, to whom is given power over all flesh, either to save or destroy them, according to his covenant. This argument supposeth—

[1.] That there is a God, sufficiently represented to us by other means.

[2.] That whatsoever exceedeth the power of nature, or course of second causes, is done by this God.

[3.] Among all the miracles, this of raising a dead man to life is the greatest; the cure of a disease is not so much.

[4.] That if this be done to a person unjustly accused and condemned in the world, it is a justification of his cause before all the world, and a sure mark of divine testimony.

[5.] The cause between Jesus Christ and those that condemned him was, that he made himself to be the Son of God, and saviour and judge of the world; this he evidenceth himself, and this was preached by his disciples. Surely the supreme and just governor of the world would not justify a cheat and imposture, and so far permit the devil to deceive in his name as to change the course and order of nature, and so far directly to work against it as to raise a man from the dead. Now it is a mighty advantage to the advancement of the spiritual life to be sure of the religion that requireth it at our hands, much of it being against the inclination of corrupt nature; for then there is no tergiversation or excuse, as if our rule were uncertain, or that we did trouble ourselves more than needeth us of absolute necessity.

2. It showeth us the perfection of his satisfaction; there needeth no other sacrifice to abolish sin; for it is said in the text, 'In that he died, he died unto sin once,' and elsewhere the unity of the mediator and the sacrifice is pleaded to show the perfection of it. The unity of the mediator: 1 Tim. ii. 5, 'There is one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus;' and Heb. x. 14, 'By one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified;' and Heb. ix. 28, 'Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many.' The ground of this argument standeth thus: That Christ came to take away sin, the benefit which the world needeth. Either he hath done it sufficiently, or not done it; if sufficiently, we have what we desire; if not, it must be *either* because other mediators were necessary to supply his defects. But where are they? Who can challenge this honour as authorised by God, and recommended to the world as Christ was? Or what can they do beyond what he hath done? No; there is but one mediator. *Or else* because another sacrifice or offering was necessary, because this could not attain its end, then Christ needed again to undergo death; for the single sacrifice did not the work, which was the taking away of sin. But this was enough to ransom all souls; no other

propitiatory sacrifice was necessary. Why, how doth it appear? By the resurrection; for when Christ was raised from the dead, our surety and mediator (which were the qualities he took upon himself) was let out of prison, and dismissed, as having done what he undertook: Isa. liii. 8, 'He shall be taken from prison and from judgment.' The debtor may have confidence the debt is cancelled when the surety is let out of prison and walketh freely abroad. When Christ is risen from the dead, and advanced to a glorious condition, surely his merit is full enough, and he hath a perfect release and discharge, as having done his work, and needeth no more to come under the power of death, which is a great encouragement to us to set about the destruction of sin. Christ hath paid a full ransom to purchase grace to make our endeavours effectual.

3. It is a visible demonstration of the truth of the resurrection and life to come. For Christ, who would be an example to us of all painful and self-denying obedience, would also be a pattern of the glory and felicity that should ensue. Therefore, after a life of holiness and sufferings, he died and rose again, and entered into the glory that he spake of, which is a great encouragement to us to follow his steps; for all this is a pledge of what shall be done in us. It is said, 1 Peter i. 21, 'That God raised him from the dead and gave him glory, that our faith and hope might be in God.' The resurrection of Christ, and the consequent honour and glory put upon him, is the great prop and foundation of our faith and hope. Certainly it much concerneth us to believe the truth of the resurrection and the reality of the unseen glory, else all holiness, patience, self-denial, and practical godliness would fall to the ground. Now, when our teacher, who hath told us of these things, hath given sufficient evidence of the truth of them in his own person, by his own rising from the dead, and his own ascending into glory, it helpeth mightily to silence the objections of unbelief. The thing is not incredible nor impossible. Christ in our nature did arise from the dead, and ascend up into heaven; nay, it is not only possible, but certain; for Christ is risen and entered into glory as our forerunner, Heb. vi. 20, to make the way accessible to us, and to seize upon it in the name and right of all true believers, and secure a landing-place for them after the storm of this world is over. Whenever they die, their place is ready for them, there is a friend on shore ready to receive them. So elsewhere: 1 Cor. xv. 20, 'Christ is risen as the first-fruits.' His resurrection is a certain proof that other men shall have a resurrection also, as by a handful of the first-fruits the whole harvest was blessed and consecrated to God. The first-fruits did not bless the tares, the cockle or the darnel, or the filthy weeds that grew among the corn, these are not carried home into God's barn; but penitent believers may be confident of a joyful resurrection. If we be reconciled by his death, we may much more expect to be saved by his life.

4. Christ by his resurrection is the cause of our life; for Christ liveth in heaven as a quickening head, who will give the spirit of grace to all his members, to change their hearts, and to bring them into the life of God: John xiv. 19, 'Because I live, ye shall live also.' Christ is the fountain of all life. The life of believers is derived from

the life of Christ, without which it could not subsist. If he had remained under a state of death, he were not in a capacity to convey life to others, and so had neither been a fountain of grace or glory to us; therefore his resurrection is the fountain-cause of our living to God; having first purchased grace for us, he is risen to apply it, and bring us into possession of it. Therefore he sendeth his Spirit into the hearts of his people, even that same Spirit by which he was raised up to a new life: Rev. i. 18, 'I am he that liveth and was dead, and behold I am alive for evermore.' He liveth for ever to make and keep us alive. Now this is a mighty encouragement to us, that we live by virtue of Christ's endless life. When the fountain faileth, the stream may be dried up, but that cannot be, and therefore we are encouraged to expect our supplies from him.

5. Christ's life after his resurrection is a pattern of ours, both as to the immortality and perfection of it.

[1.] The immortality. Christ, when he rose again, rose to an eternal immortal life. He shall die no more; he is no more obnoxious to death. The phrases that express the immortality of Christ's life are suited to our case, that he may the better be propounded as a pattern to us, both of what we ought to endeavour ourselves, and of what his Spirit doth work in us.

(1.) Being raised, he dieth no more. We should once so fix and settle our hearts to live to God that we should no more return to our old course and our old bondage. There are some who are always dying, and rising, and dying again, that return to their old sins, and lick up their vomit, and after they are washed wallow in the mire. These never died in good earnest, for then they would so die unto sin once as not to revert to it any more; but to be repenting of sin, and committing of sin, and then repenting and committing again, showeth our mortification is not sincere. A bone often broken in the same place is very hard to be set again. Relapses make our case to be more dangerous; if it be into open sinful courses, it showeth our repentance is not sincere. Men are sick of sin; but when that trouble is over, they presently are as bad as they were before: Prov. xxiv. 11, 'As a dog returneth to his vomit, so a fool returneth to his folly.' Their hearts were never changed, their renounced sins and fleshly practices are as dear to them as ever. True repentance will produce a constant perseverance in well-doing; but if the unclean spirit returneth, after it seemed to be cast out, Luke xi. 24, we never parted in good earnest. Was your repentance sincere, and will you taste of the bitter waters again? Indeed we must distinguish of relapses.

(1st.) As to the degrees of sin, there are infirmities which we cannot avoid while we are in the body; and there are iniquities which we can and ought to avoid. A man that is troubled with vain and distracting thoughts in prayer may be troubled again, but of gross and wilful sins we never soundly repented if we cease not from them, *μιᾶσματα κόσμου*, 'the pollutions of the world,' spoken of 2 Peter ii. 20. Doth a man repent of his uncleanness that often falleth into it, as often as the occasion returneth? So again—

(2d.) As to the seasons of sinning, we must distinguish between the acts repeated before any repentance professed or after. An issue

when it is new made, before the orifice of the wound be well closed, may bleed afresh after it is bound up. So before we are thoroughly recovered, sin will be breaking out; as in Lot's double incest; Samson's returning often to Delilah, when God had rebuked him for his sin; Peter's treble denials; his heart was not thoroughly touched and moulded as yet; this was as one continued sin.

(3d.) As to the manner of the return, if it be frequently, readily, easily, this will infer a habit; for a habit serveth *ut quis facile, iucunde, constanter agat*. Now though some sins solicit us more than others, yet uprightness requireth that we should keep ourselves from our iniquity: Ps. xviii. 23, 'I was also upright before him, and I kept myself from my iniquity.' So that repentance which consists only in sorrow for sin, and such trouble for it as doth not mortify it, is but like thawing a little in the sunshine, or giving weather, soft at top and hard at bottom. True repentance is a thorough change of heart and life; therefore to repent and go on still in our trespasses is no sound repentance.

(2.) Death hath no dominion over him; so should not sin have over us. After all our care sin will be troublesome, but it must be kept out of the throne. If men forsake not known wilful sins, they are wicked men; sin reigneth, and the power of it is no way broken; therefore let it not have dominion, so as to draw you to a sensual life, or command your thoughts and affections, or ingross your time and strength: Ps. xix. 13, 'Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me, so shall I be upright and free from the great transgression.' As to the merit, there needeth not another sacrifice; and to the conveyance and making over the blessings of the gospel, there needeth not another covenant. So as to the application, there needeth not another regeneration or total conversion unto God; as also our baptism, which is the sign of it, needeth not to be repeated or reiterated, though the acts of our faith and repentance need often to be repeated. For all known sins it is expressly required; for sins of ignorance and lesser escapes, they are pardoned of course, and as they are retracted in a general repentance. Well, then, let us so rise to newness of life as never to return to our old sins again, at least let them not have dominion over us. Baptism is the sacrament of our regeneration and implanting into Christ, and reception into God's family; and as we are born but once, so we are but once new-born. Being once received into God's family, we are never cast out thence: being once adopted into the number of his children, we are never disinherited. No; 'The gifts and calling of God are without repentance,' Rom. xi. 29.

[2.] As to the perfection and blessedness of it, 'In that he liveth, he liveth unto God.' This is—

(1.) A pattern and copy of the spiritual life here upon earth.

(2.) A pledge and assurance of our glorious life in heaven. The one is our duty, the other is our reward.

(1.) The spiritual life is a living to God, as Christ liveth with God and to God. As mediator he liveth with God, is set down at his right hand; so should we live in communion with God, be much and often in company with him; in our whole course we should always

set him before us, walking as in his eye and presence: Ps. xvi. 8, 'I have set the Lord always before me.' It is his law we live by, in his presence we stand, his work we do, his glory we seek; for our great end is the pleasing and glorifying of God: Gal. ii. 19, 'For I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God;' Rom. xiv. 7, 8, 'For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself; for whether we live, we live unto the Lord, and whether we die, we die unto the Lord; whether we live therefore or die, we are the Lord's.' Christ gave us a pattern of a holy, obedient, and heavenly life in his conversation here on earth; and in heaven we must still write after his copy; we must be Christ's, as Christ is God's, and then all things are ours: 1 Cor. iii. 23, 'All are yours, for you are Christ's, and Christ is God's.' Wholly devote your time and strength and service to him. God must be your solace and your strength, and your beginning, end, way and all. When you awake, you should be still with him, Ps. cxxxix. 18; all the day long you should keep in his eye: Prov. xxiii. 17, 'Be thou in the fear of the Lord all the day long.' In all your actions, your intention must be to please and glorify him: 1 Cor. x. 31, 'Whether therefore ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.'

(2.) Our glorious life in heaven; that is a living unto God indeed, for there we have nothing else to mind but God. We are admitted before the throne of his glory, to be with him for evermore. Now, if Christ be there, we shall be there also; for if we follow him, we shall fare as he fared: John xii. 26, 'Where I am, there shall my servant be;' John xvii. 24, 'Father, I will that those also whom thou hast given me may be with me where I am.' So John xiv. 3, 'If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself, that where I am there ye may be also.' Our Saviour desireth to have the faithful in heaven with himself; it is a thing which his heart is set upon; and he presents the efficacy of his merits and obedience to this end and purpose, that the great work of the restitution of lost man may obtain its end and effect, and his mystical body may be brought together to one place, that they may ever laud and praise and glorify God. Many in the world cannot endure the presence and company of the saints; Christ cannot be in heaven without them. Now the spiritual life issuing itself into the heavenly is a great encouragement to us to go on in our duty and obedience.

Use. Let us often and seriously think of him 'who died for our offences, and rose again for our justification,' Rom. iv. 25, and improve it—

1. For the destruction of sin. Christ died that he might destroy sin, and take away sin. If he had not fully done his work, he could not rise again, or, if risen, he needed to return once more to die. But Christ dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him. By raising up Christ, God showeth that he received the death of his Son as a sufficient ransom for our sins, and all that believe in him shall have the comfort of it. If he had remained in death, or were still obnoxious to it, his satisfaction should not have been perfect, neither should he have been able to apply the virtue and comfort of it to us; but now, who shall condemn when God justifieth? when Christ is

dead, 'yea, rather risen from the dead,' &c., Rom. viii. 33, 34. If Christ hath paid our debt and borne our sorrows so far that no more is required of him, surely God will never reverse that pardon which was sealed with Christ's blood. The curse and condemnation are terrible indeed, but he hath taken them away, and given us a free discharge.

2. For the new life ; Christ is both the cause and the pattern of it His Spirit is the cause of it, and his life in heaven is the copy after which we must write.

[1.] His Spirit is the cause of it, who quickeneth our dead souls, therefore if you be entered into God's peace, have sued out your atonement, you may expect to be saved by his life : Rom. v. 10, ' If when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son much more, being reconciled, shall we be saved by his life ; ' that is, by him who now liveth, and sitteth at the right hand of God, and there intercedeth for grace necessary, that we may live unto God. He that intercedeth wanteth no will ; and he that saith that all things are put into his hands, wanteth no power.

[2.] Christ is the pattern of this new life which we are to live in the world. Christ is the great agent to promote God's kingdom and glory ; but his Spirit engageth us in the same design. As long as we live, we should live unto God ; we are raised up from the grave of sin that we should be to the praise of his glorious grace. The christian's life is a life whereby we glorify God. See this life be begun in you, and see it perfected more and more. Be Christ's, as Christ is God's : Heb. vii. 25, ' He is able to save unto the uttermost all those that come unto God through him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for us. Christ liveth ; we need not doubt of a supply. He gives life as creator to the smallest worms : ' In him was life,' John i. 4. He can quicken us when dead and dull ; he came into the world for this purpose : John x. 10, ' I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly ; ' and he is gone out of the world to heaven for this purpose : Eph. iv. 10, ' He ascended far above the heavens, that he might fill all things.' He is filled with the Spirit to communicate it to his members ; he is not weak when we are weak, but able to do above what we can ask or think.

3. As concerning the life of glory, we have it by Christ also : 1 John v. 11, ' This is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.' The door which is shut against us by our sins is opened by Christ. Let us follow his precepts and example, and depend upon his grace, and you cannot miscarry. Christ hath brought life and immortality to light, assured us of an endless happiness after death. Heathens had but a doubtful conjecture of another life ; we have an undoubted assurance, and that is some great stay to us.

4. Concerning the troubles and afflictions that we meet withal. As to the troubles of the church of God, he is alive and upon the throne ; he can never cease to live and reign : Ps. cx. 1, ' The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand until I make thy foes thy footstool.' The enemies of his kingdom must bend or break, first or last.

5. Against death. Christ hath broken the power of it ; as it hath no dominion over him, so it cannot totally seize upon his members ; in

their better part they still live to God as soon as they die; and' as to their bodies, 'The body is dead because of sin, but the spirit is life because of righteousness,' Rom. viii. 10, 15; 1 Cor. xv. 55-57, 'O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law; but thanks be to God, who hath given us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ;' Job xix. 25, 'I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand the last day upon the earth,' &c. But what is this to us? As it hath no dominion over him, so not over us; the power is broken, the sting is gone. If our flesh must rot in the grave, our nature is in heaven. Christ once died, and then rose again from the dead. Now this doth mightily secure and support us against the power and fears of death, that we have a saviour in possession of glory, to whom we may commend our departing souls at the time of death, and who will receive them to himself; one that hath himself been upon earth in flesh, then died and rose again, and is now in possession of endless blessedness. He is lord of that world we are going into. All creatures there do him homage, and we ere long are to be adjoined to that dutiful happy assembly, and partake in the same work and felicity.

SERMON IX.

Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.—ROM. VI. 11.

THE *protasis* or foundation of the similitude was laid down ver. 9, 10; the *apodosis* or application of it to the case in hand in this verse. The foundation is Christ's example and pattern, dying and rising; now, after this double example of Christ's death and resurrection, we must account ourselves obliged both to die unto sin and rise again to newness of life: 'Likewise reckon ye also yourselves,' &c. In which words—

1. Our duty, which is conformity or likeness to Christ dying and living.

2. Grace to perform this duty, *ἐν τῷ Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ τῷ Κυρίῳ ἡμῶν*, *through* or *in* Jesus Christ; by virtue of our union with him we are both to resemble his death and resurrection.

3. The means of enforcing this duty, *λογίζεσθε*, reckon; Vulgar, *existimate*; Erasmus out of Tertullian, *reputate*, consider with yourselves; others, *colligite et statuite*.

Doct. That all who are baptized and profess faith in Christ dying and rising from the dead are under a strong obligation of dying to sin and living to God through the grace of the Redeemer. Here—

1. I shall consider the nature of the duties of being dead to sin and alive to God.

2. The correspondency; how they do answer the two states of Christ; as Christ dieth to sin for the expiation of it, and after death reviveth and liveth to God, so we.

3. The order; first death, then the resurrection from the dead; so first dying to sin, then being alive to God.