

SERMONS UPON ROMANS VIII.

SERMON I.

There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit.—ROM. viii. 1.

IN the former chapter the apostle in his own person represents a believer groaning under the relics of sin, or bewailing the imperfections of his sanctification. Now, because this conscience of indwelling sin may breed in us fears of condemnation, he showeth here what remedy and relief is provided for us by Jesus Christ—‘*There is therefore,*’ &c.

So that the words are an inference from the complaint and gratulation expressed in the last verse of the preceding chapter: though in the godly there remain some sin, yet no condemnation shall be to them. observe here—

1. A privilege: ‘there is no condemnation.’

2. A description of the persons who have interest in it: they are described, first, by their internal estate,—‘To them which are in Christ Jesus;’ secondly, by their external course of life—‘Who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit.’

[1.] There is a denial of the prevailing influence of the corrupt principle—‘They walk not after the flesh.’

[2.] Their obedience to the better principle is asserted and affirmed—‘But after the spirit.’

Three points I shall touch upon,—

1. That it is a great felicity not to be obnoxious to condemnation.

2. That this is the portion of the true christian, or such as are in Christ.

3. Those who are in Christ obey not the inclinations of corrupt nature, but the motions of the spirit.

Doct. 1. It is a great privilege not to be obnoxious to condemnation: there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ.

To understand this, you must consider—

First, What condemnation importeth.

Secondly, How we came by this exemption.

First, What condemnation importeth? The terror of it is unspeakable when it is sufficiently understood; and therefore, by consequence, our exemption and deliverance from it is the greater mercy.

In the general, condemnation is a sentence dooming us to punishment. Now, particularly for this condemnation—

1. Consider, Whose sentence this is. There is *sententia legis* and *sententia judicis*—the sentence of the law and the sentence of the judge. The sentence of the law is the sentence of the word of God, and that is either the law of works or the law of grace. The damnatory sentence of the law concludeth all under the curse, for ‘all are under sin :’ Gal. iii. 10, ‘For as many as are under the works of the law are under the curse ; for it is written, Cursed is he that continueth not in all things that are written in the book of the law to do them.’ So all the world is guilty before God, Rom. iii. 10. But the gospel, or the law of grace, denounceth damnation to those that believe not in Christ, and obstinately refuse his mercy : Mark xvi. 16, ‘He that believeth not shall be damned ;’ and also against them that love not Christ and obey him : 1 Cor. xvi. 22, ‘If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be accursed.’ This is the sentence of the law. But then there is *sententia judicis*—the sentence which the judge passeth upon a sinner, and is either—

[1.] The ratifying of that sentence which the word denounceth, be it either law or gospel ; for what ‘is bound in earth is bound in heaven ;’ and God condemneth those whom his word condemneth ; so that for the present wicked men have a sentence against them ; they are all cast in law, ‘condemned already,’ as it is John iii. 18. If men were sensible of their danger, they would be more earnest to get the sentence reversed and repealed before it were executed upon them ; they are not sure of a day’s respite ; it is a stupid dulness not to be affected with this woful condition ; there is but a step between them and death, and they mind it not.

[2.] As pronounced and declared. So it shall be at the last day by the judge of all the earth : Acts xvii. 30, ‘Because he hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness ;’ and 2 Thes. i. 8, ‘He shall come in flaming fire, taking vengeance on all them that know not God, and obey not the gospel.’ Then the sentence is full and solemn, pronounced by the judge upon the throne, in the audience of all the world. Then it is final and preemprory, and puts men into their everlasting estate. And then it is presently executed ; they go away to that estate to which they are doomed. Of this the scripture speaketh : John v. 39, ‘They that have done evil shall arise to the resurrection of damnation.’ It is miserable to be involved in a sentence of condemnation by the word ; now that shuts up a sinner as in a prison, where the door is bolted and barred upon him till it be opened by grace. But doleful will their condition be who are condemned by the final sentence of the judge, from which there is no appeal nor escape nor deliverance.

2. Consider, The punishment to which men are condemned. And that is twofold, either the *poena damni*, the loss of a heavenly kingdom ; they are shut out from that : ‘But the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into utter darkness : there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth,’ Mat. viii. 12 ; or *poena sensus*, the torments and pains they shall endure, called the ‘damnation of hell,’ Mat. xxiii. 33. Both together are spoken of : Mat. xxv. 41, ‘Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.’ Words that should cut a sinner to the heart, if he had any feeling of his condition. Now, to be exempted from condemnation to

this punishment is the greater mercy. It is enough to heighten in our thoughts the greatest sense of the love of God, that we are freed from the curse, that Jesus hath 'delivered us from wrath to come,' 1 Thes. i. 10; that we are as brands plucked out of the burning; but much more when we consider that we shall be admitted into God's blessed presence, and see him as he is, and be like him, 1 John iii. 2; and for the present that, 'being justified by faith, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life,' Tit. iii. 7. The apostle expresseth both parts of the deliverance in one place: 1 Thes. v. 9, 'For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ.' Mark the antithesis, 'Not to wrath, but to obtain salvation,' which should increase our sense of the privilege, that, when others lie under the wrath of God, we shall see him and love him and praise him in heaven to all eternity.

3. How justly it is deserved by us, by reason of original and actual sins, both before and after conversion. Original sin,—for the scripture telleth us, Rom. v. 16, 'The judgment was by one to condemnation;' and again in ver. 18, 'By the offence of one, judgment came upon all to condemnation.' All Adam's children are become guilty before God, and liable to death, or brought into such an estate wherein they are condemnable before God. So by many actual sins it is deserved by us. As we are 'by nature children of wrath,' Eph. ii. 3; so for a long time we have 'treasured up wrath against the day of wrath,' Rom. ii. 5. We have even forfeited the reprieve which God's patience allowed to us, and have more and more involved ourselves in condemnation. Till we comprehend our great need of pardon and exemption from condemnation we cannot understand the worth of it. Nay, we have deserved this condemnation since conversion.

He doth not say here, 'There is no sin in us,' but, 'There is no condemnation.' Sin in itself is always damnable, and our redemption doth not put less evil into sin; but in strict justice we deserve the greater punishment: this is another consideration that should endear this privilege to us.

4. How conscience standeth in dread of this condemnation. For if 'our own hearts condemn us,' 1 John iii. 20, they are a transcript of God's law, both precept and sanction; and therefore do not only check us for sin, and urge us to duty, but also fill us with many hidden fears, which sometimes are very stinging. When we are serious, the more tender the heart is, the more it smiteth for sin: Rom. i. 32, 'Who knowing the judgment of God, that they that commit such things are worthy of death.' In your consciences you will find an inward conviction that God is your judge, and will call you to an account for the breach of his law. We feel this, living and dying: Heb. ii. 15, 'Who were all their lifetime subject to bondage through fear of death;' and 1 Cor. xv. 56, 'The sting of death is sin,' only it is more piercing and sharp when we die.

Secondly, Let us inquire how, or upon what reasons we come to have this exemption from condemnation.

This is—

1. Upon the account of Christ's satisfaction to God's justice. We all in our natural estate lie under the curse and wrath of God; but

Christ was 'made a curse for us' to 'redeem us from the curse of the law,' Gal. iii. 13. And the apostle telleth us, 2 Cor. v. 21, that 'he was made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.' Christ became a sacrifice for sin to appease God towards us; he was made a public instance of God's penal justice, that we might be made an instance of God's merciful justice, or that God might deal with us in a way of grace, upon the account of the righteousness of Christ.

2. Upon the account of the new covenant grant: John v. 24, 'Verily verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation.' Christ would have us mark this as a certain and important truth, for escaping eternal death and obtaining eternal life are not trifles; and God's faithful word is interposed that such an one shall not come into condemnation, verily, verily. Well then, the gospel, or new covenant, offereth pardon and exemption from condemnation to that death which the law hath made our due, to all those who will come under the bond of it.

3. The certainty is considerable, which resulteth or ariseth from these two grounds. It is just with God to pardon them, and to exempt them from condemnation who take sanctuary at his grace, and devote themselves to him: 1 John i. 9, 'If we confess and forsake our sins, he is just and faithful to forgive them.' 2 Tim. iv. 8, we read of a 'crown of righteousness, which the righteous judge shall give at that day.' *Justum est quod fieri potest.* God may do it or not do it, he is not unjust if he doth it; and *justum est quod fieri debet.* This latter is understood here, because of the fulness of the merits and satisfaction of Christ, and his truth in his promises; he must judge men according to the law of grace, and give them that which his promise hath made their due.

4. There must be an appeal to the gospel, where this grace is humbly sued out by the penitent believers; for God is sovereign, and must be sought unto. Appeals from court to court, and from one tribunal to another, are often set down in scripture, as Ps. cxxx. 3, 4, 'If thou, Lord, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand? But there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared.' No man could escape condemnation and the curse if the Lord should deal with us in strict justice; but from the tribunal of his strict justice we appeal to the throne of grace, where favour and pardon is allowed to us upon certain equitable and gracious terms. According to the old terms, who is able to appear in the judgment before God? A sinner must either despair, or die, or run for refuge to this new and blessed hope: so Ps. cxliii. 2, 'Enter not into judgment with thy servant, O Lord, for in thy sight shall no man living be justified.' An innocent creature must beg his mercy, and devote himself to his fear.

I proceed to the second proposition—

Doct. 2. That this privilege is the portion of those that are in Christ.

1. I shall here show you what it is to be in Christ.

2. How we come to be in Christ.

First, what it is to be in Christ. The phrase noteth union with him. There is certainly a real, but spiritual, union between Christ and his

members, which I have often described to you. But late cavils make it necessary to speak a little more to that argument. All that I will say now is this—

1. That it is more than a relation to Christ as a political head.

2. That the union of every believer with Christ is immediate.

1. That it is more than a relation to Christ as a political head. I prove it, because it is represented by similitudes taken from union real as well as relative; not only from marriage, where man and wife are relatively united, but from head and members, who make one body; not a political, but a natural body: 1 Cor. xii. 12, 'For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ;' also by the similitude of root and branches, John xv. 1-3. Yea, it is compared with the mystery of the trinity and the unity that is between the divine persons: John xvii. 21-23, 'That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: and the glory which thou gavest me I have given them, that they may be one, as we are one. I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one.' Which, though it must not be understood in the utmost strictness, yet at least there is more than a relation; as also by reason it is not only a notion of scripture, but a thing effected and wrought by the Spirit on God's part: 1 Cor. xii. 13, 'We are by one Spirit baptized into one body,' and by confederation one with another: Cant. ii. 16, 'I am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine.' Christ is ours, and we are his; and he is also in us, and we in him. It is such a real conjunction with Christ as giveth us a new being, that Christ becometh to us the principle and fountain of a spiritual life: 1 John v. 12, 'He that hath the Son hath life.' Christ is the stock, we the graft; he is the vine, we the branches; therefore we are said to be 'planted together in him,' Rom. vi. 5; so that we may grow and live in him. We are united to him as the body is to the soul; all the members of the body are quickened by the soul; the second Adam becometh to all his members *πνεῦμα ζωοποιού*, a quickening spirit, 1 Cor. xv. 45, as giving them life, not only by his merit and promise, but the influence of his Spirit, which life is begun here, and perfected in heaven. It is begun in the soul, Phil. iii. 20, and Rom. viii. 10, but it is perfected both in body and soul in heaven, for the Spirit is life to the body 'because of righteousness;' and if 'the Spirit of him that raised Christ from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.' So that a vivifical influence is the fruit of this union, which showeth that our union with Christ is not only a union with him as a political head (as the king is head and governor of all his subjects), but such a conjunction as maketh way for the lively influence of the Spirit of grace, as well as obligeth us to subjection to him, and obedience to his laws.

2. That the union of every particular believer with Christ is immediate, person with person. The thing is plain; for the scripture saith often that Christ is in us, and we are in Christ; and therefore it is not said truly that we are united with the church first, and by the church with Christ. Christ, who is the head of the church, is the head of every particular member of the church; and he that doth not hold the

head and abide in him presently withereth, and can bring forth no fruit. The only place produced with any pretence for that fond conceit is 1 John i. 3, 'That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us, and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his son Jesus Christ.' From whence they conclude that our union and communion is first with the apostles and then with Christ, not immediately, but mediately: we have communion with the church, and we have communion with them, and their communion is with the Father and the Son; but the quite contrary is true, that by faith we have first union and communion with Christ, and then with his church, because of the common relation to Christ. Well, but the apostle saith that ye may have communion with us, and truly our communion is with the Father and the Son. Communion and fellowship with us is not meant of communion between the apostles and them, but that you may have like fellowship with God and Christ as we have; *ὡς καὶ ὑμεῖς*, that ye also, that you may have communion as we have; and what is that *καὶ ἡ κοινωνία ἡμετέρα*; as if he had said, The communion of which I speak is communion with the Father and his Son Jesus Christ; that is, we have communion with God and Christ, and we desire that you may have also the same communion. Though the thing be evident in itself, yet I shall add reasons, not my own, but another's—that is, Episcopius, a man from whom all the modern divinity is derived, as is evident by their homilies and printed discourses. Though they are severe and tragical upon the memory of that blessed servant of God, John Calvin, yet methinks they should not differ from their great master in divinity; now, saith he, upon the place, "This opinion that we are united first to the apostles and then to God is with all diligence to be refuted. First, because it is absurd in itself; and secondly, because of the absurd consequences which are deduced from it."

[1.] "It is absurd in itself", because our communion followeth our union. But our union is not with the apostles themselves, but with Christ; for the apostles are not united to Christ as apostles with a saving union, but as believers; they are united to Christ in the same manner that we are; and so we are all brethren. Now, a brother is not united to the father by his brother, but immediately; for there is no subordination in a family, but a collateral respect to their common parent; as they are apostles, they are instruments whom God employeth to work that in us by which we may be united, not to them, but to God, and Christ immediately, and so have communion with him; so the apostle saith, 1 Cor. xi. 2, 'I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.' I will add, and not only the whole church, but particular believers, are said to be married to the Lord, Rom. vii. 4, 'The union and conjunction is with him immediate, and in this office all ministers or pastors are equal with the apostles, only that they first and immediately were sent by God for this work.'

[2.] "For the absurd consequences that may be drawn from thence"—namely, that our union is necessary with some men or company of men—that is, some church, before we can have union and communion with God and Christ. Which by degrees, saith he, introduce the papacy; for if such an union be with any men first necessary, certainly with those that first delivered christian doctrine; but because they

abide not for ever, others were to be substituted in their place that immediately depended on them, and so onward; and before we have union and communion with God and Christ we must have communion with their successors, how much soever they have degenerated from pure christianity in doctrine, worship, and government; but, saith he, there is no such necessity. Every single believer, the lowest and least among them, have an equal immediate union and communion with Christ; for the apostles and all other pastors do only preach the gospel to no other end but to bring souls to God, and have authority over us to no other end; therefore what can be more absurd than that our union with any church or head of the church should be necessary before our union with Christ should be obtained?"

I proceed to the second thing which I proposed—viz., to open to you, Secondly: How we come to be in Christ. This is by regeneration, or the converting work of his Spirit. Conversion consists of three parts:

1. There is in it a turning from the creature to God.
2. From self to Christ.
3. From sin to holiness.

1. From the creature to God; that is, from the false happiness to the true—from all false ways of felicity here below, to God, as enjoyed in heaven. Certainly our conversion may be understood by our aversion or falling off from God. Now we fell from God to the creature: Jer. ii. 13, 'My people have forsaken me.' We sought our happiness, apart from God, in the enjoyment of some sublunary contentment; therefore till God be our end, there is no use of means. *Intentio est finis ultimi, electio est mediorum*,—there is no choice of means without intention of the end. And Christ as mediator is to be considered as a means to come to God: John xiv. 6, whose favour we have forfeited, and not only forfeited, but despised; for whilst we are satisfied with our worldly enjoyments, we care not whether God be a friend or an enemy. Worldliness is carnal complacency or well-pleas'dness of mind in worldly things, in the midst of soul dangers: Luke xii. 19, 'I will say to my soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry.' And the very first faith is a recovery out of this infatuation, or a settling our minds on eternal life: 1 Tim. i. 16, 'For a pattern to them that should afterwards believe on him to life everlasting;' and so in many other places. Whole christianity is a coming to God by Christ: Heb. vii. 25; and that is the reason why faith cannot be in the heart of one that is yet entangled in the false happiness: John v. 44, 'How can ye believe, which receive honour one from another, and seek not the honour that cometh from God only?' Which is to be understood not only *meritorie*, but *effective*, because while they are entangled in the false happiness, Christ is of no use to them; neither will they mind any serious return to God as their felicity and portion.

2. From self to Christ. For we are to flee from wrath to come, or the condemnation deserved by our apostasy and defection from God: Mat. iii. 8, 'O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from wrath to come?' Heb. vi. 18, 'Who have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before us.' Therefore none are in Christ but those that thankfully receive him, and give up themselves to him: John i. 12,

'To as many as received him : ' 2 Cor. viii. 5, 'They first gave themselves unto the Lord ;' that is, venturing on his promises, gave up themselves to the conduct of his word and Spirit, and trust themselves entirely in Christ's hands, while they go on with their duty and pursuit of their true and proper happiness.

3. From sin to holiness, both in heart and life. For we 'are called to be holy,' and must flee not only from wrath but sin, which is the great make-bate between us and God ; and therefore we need not only reconciling but renewing grace, which is accompanied in us by the 'Spirit of sanctification : ' 2 Thes. ii. 13, 'Who hath chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth.' The Spirit beginneth it, as the fruit of God's elective love ; and by faith and the use of all holy means doth accomplish it more and more, for he acts in us as the Spirit of Christ, and as we are members of his body, for framing us and fitting us more and more for his use and service. The third proposition observed in the text was,—

Doct. 3. Those who are in Christ obey not the inclinations of corrupt nature, but the motions of the spirit. This is brought in here as a fruit and evidence of their union with Christ, and interest in non-condemnation ; for being united to Christ, they are made partakers of his Spirit ; and they that have the Spirit of Christ will live an holy and sanctified life. The spirit first uniteth us to Christ, and sanctifieth and separateth the soul for his dwelling in us ; and the effects of it are life and likeness. We live by virtue of his life : Gal. ii. 20, and walk as he walked : 1 John ii. 6, or else our union is but pretended.

But let us more particularly consider this evidence and qualification. They walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit ; where we will enquire :—

1. What is meant by flesh and spirit. By flesh is meant corrupt nature ; by the spirit the new nature, according to that noted place : John iii. 6, 'That which is born of flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.'

2. Both serve to those that are influenced by them as a guiding and inciting principle. The flesh to those that are 'after the flesh,' and the spirit to those that are 'after the spirit : ' Rom. viii. 5. The flesh guideth and prompteth us to those things which are good for the animal life, for things of sense are known easily, and known by all. Carnal nature needeth no instructor, no spur ; it doth pollute and corrupt us in all sensual and earthly things ; but spiritual and heavenly things are out of its reach : 2 Pet. i. 9, and it inclines as well as guideth ; for the things that we see, and feel, and taste, easily stir our affections, 'Demas hath forsaken us, having loved the present world.' Yea, 'tis hard to restrain them, and it is not done without some violence : Gal. v. 24, 'They that are in Christ have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts thereof ;' that the spirit or new nature doth both guide and incline is clear by those expressions : Heb. viii. 10, 'I will put my laws into their minds, and write them in their hearts, and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people.'

3. That those who are under the prevalency of the one principle cannot wholly obey and follow the other is clear ; for those two are contrary : Gal. v. 17, 'The flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit

against the flesh;' and contraries cannot subsist together in an intense degree. They are contrary in their nature, contrary in their tendency and aim, contrary in their rule: Gal. vi. 16. The one carrieth us to God and heaven, the other to something pleasing to present sense; the one is fed with the world, the other with heaven. They are contrary in their assisting powers, Satan and the Spirit of God; the good part is for God; and the flesh, which is the rebelling principle, is on the devil's side: 1 John iv. 4. Satan by the lusts of the flesh taketh men 'captive at his will and pleasure:' 2 Tim. ii. 26, 'That they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will and pleasure;' but the Spirit of God is assisted by the author of it, the Holy Ghost: Eph. iii. 16, 'Strengthened by the Spirit with might in the inner man.' They are irritated by the spirit or the flesh, presenting different objects, of sense and faith. The flesh hath this advantage, that its objects are near at hand, ready to be enjoyed; but the objects of faith are to come—lie in an unseen world, only they are greater in themselves, and faith helpeth to look upon them as sure enough: Heb. xi. 1.

4. That every christian hath these two principles in himself; the one by nature, is called flesh; the other by grace, is called spirit. God's best children have flesh in them. Paul distinguisheth in the former chapter betwixt 'flesh' and 'spirit,' 'the law of the members,' and 'the law of the mind:' Rom. vii. 18, 23, as two opposite principles inclining several ways.

5. Though both be in the children of God, yet the spirit is in predominancy; for the acts of the flesh are disowned: 'not I, but sin that dwelleth in me;' and a man's estate is determined by the reign of sin, and grace in a man converted to God. The spirit, or renewed part, is superior, and governeth the will, or whole man, and the flesh is inferior, and by striving seeketh to become superior, and draws the will to itself; so that the heart of a renewed man is like a kingdom divided.—Grace is in the throne, but the flesh is the rebel which disturbeth and much weakeneth its sovereignty and empire. It must needs be so, otherwise there would be no distinction between nature and grace. A man is denominated from what is predominant in him, and hath the chiefest power over his heart: if it be the flesh, he is carnal; if the spirit, he is regenerate, or a new creature; if his heart be set to seek, serve, please and glorify God, and doth prefer Christ before all the world: Phil. iii. 8. Then he hath not only a spirit contrary to the flesh and the world, but a spirit prevailing above the flesh and the world: 1 Cor. ii. 12, for 'We have not received the spirit of the world, but the Spirit of God.' Then the government of the soul is in the hands of grace.

6. The prevalency of the principle is known, not only by the bent and habit of our wills, but our settled course of life. By our walk, for it is said in the text, 'They that walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit.' A man is not known by an act or two, but by the tenor of his life. Those that make corrupt inclination their ordinary guide and rule, and the satisfaction thereof their common trade, they are carnal and in the flesh, and so cannot please God: Rom. viii. 5; but those whose business it is to serve, please and glorify God, and their end to enjoy him, and by whom this is diligently and uniformly pursued, they

‘walk after the spirit;’ because they ‘live in the spirit, they walk in the spirit:’ Gal. v. 25.

I come to apply this discourse.

Use 1. Is information.

1. That condemnation yet remaineth upon all those that are out of Christ; for that promise, ‘there is no condemnation,’ hath an exception, limiting it to those that are in Christ. Carnal men think God will not deal so severely as to condemn them; but there is no comfort hence to them. The scripture propoundeth privileges with their necessary limitations and restrictions; where sin remaineth in its power and strength, the law condemneth men, conscience convinceth them, and God will condemn them also. So the brutes are more happy than they, who follow their pleasure without remorse, and offend not the law of their creation as they do; and when they die, death puts an end to their pains and pleasures at once; but those that walk after their lusts, are but christians in name, certainly they are not made partakers of the spirit of Christ; for if they did live in the spirit, they would walk in the spirit, and none but such can escape condemnation. They that walk after the flesh are without God, and without Christ; but every one will shift this off from himself, but the works of the flesh are manifest: Gal. v. 19. Many men visibly declare that they walk not after the spirit, by their drunkenness, adultery, wrath, strife, malice, and envy; others more closely live only to satisfy a fleshly mind; now whether openly or closely, if they cannot make out their living after the spirit, they walk after the flesh.

2. It informeth us, that we can never have solid peace, till justification and sanctification be joined together. Justification: Rom. v. 1, ‘Being justified by faith, we have peace with God:’ Mat. ix. 2, ‘Son, be of good cheer, thy sins be forgiven thee.’ So for sanctification: 2 Cor. i. 12, ‘This is our rejoicing, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity we have had our conversation in the world.’ Still there are fears of damnation, while sin is in us; but when it is our honest purpose to please God, and we strive against sin, and do in a good measure overcome it, our consciences may be the better, and the sooner settled.

Use 2. For exhortation.

To quicken us to seek after this privilege. Do you fear damnation, or do you not? If not, what grounds of comfort have you? What course have you taken to escape it? If you do fear it, why do you not ‘flee from wrath to come?’ Mat. iii. 7. Why do you not ‘run for refuge?’ Heb. vi. 18. You cannot be speedy and earnest enough in a matter of such concernment.

Again, this calls to those that are in Christ to be sensible of their privilege, so that they may bless God for it. Gratitude is the life and soul of our religion, and it is a cold and dull thanksgiving, only to give thanks for temporal mercies; it cometh more heartily from us when we bless God for spiritual mercies: Ps. ciii. 1, 2, 3, ‘Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits, who forgiveth all thine iniquities, who healeth all thine diseases.’ It also calls to all such, to be tender of their peace. Every sin doth not put you into a state of con-

demnation again, but every known, wilful sin, puts us to get a new extract of our pardon: 1 John ii. 1, 2, 'My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not: and if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, who is the propitiation for our sins.' By sin your title is made questionable, and your claim made doubtful; repenting and forsaking sin is necessary when we have been foiled by sin, that we may have a new grant of a pardon.

SERMON II.

For the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.—Rom. viii. 2.

That these words are brought as a proof of the former assertion, is clear from the causal particle, *For*; but whether they are a proof of the privilege or qualification, is usually disputed. I think of both; as when they are explained will appear. Therefore I shall first open the words, and then suit the proof to the foregoing assertion.

First, In opening the words observe,—

1. Here is law opposed to law.

2. By the one we are freed from the other.

[1.] There is a perfect opposition of 'the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus, to the law of sin and death.' Here is law against law, and the spirit against sin, and life against death. Now, what are these two laws? I think they may be explained by that of the apostle: Rom. iii. 27, 'Where is boasting then? it is excluded; by what law? of works? nay, but by the law of faith.' What is there called the law of works, and the law of faith, is here called the law of the spirit of life, and the law of sin and death; in short, by these two laws is meant the covenant of works, and the covenant of grace.

(1.) The covenant of grace is called the 'law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus.' A law it is, for it hath all the requisites of a law, a precept, and a sanction. They err certainly, that tell us the gospel is no law; for if there were no law, there would be no governor, and no government, no duty, no sin, no judgment, no punishment, nor reward. But of that more by and by.

(2.) A law of the spirit it is. Not only because of its spiritual nature, as it cometh nearer and closer to the soul than the law of outward and beggarly rudiments; and therefore Christ called the ordinances of the gospel, 'spirit' and 'truth:' John iv. 24,—spirit, in opposition to the duties, or the legal administrations, which are called 'carnal ordinances:' Heb. ix. 10; and truth, in opposition to them again, as they are called 'shadows of good things to come,' Heb. x. 1. In this sense the gospel or new covenant, might well be called the law of the spirit; but not for this reason only, but because of the power of the spirit that accompanieth it; as 'tis said: 2 Cor. iii. 6, 'Who hath made us able ministers of the New Testament, not of the letter but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life.' *Lex jubet, gratia juvat*; and the grace of the gospel is the gift of the spirit.