

SERMON XIII.

And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin, and the Spirit is life because of righteousness.—ROM. VIII. 10.

THE text is manifestly a prolepsis, or a preoccupation of a secret objection against our redemption by Christ. If believers die as well as others, how are they freed from death? Questionless, Christ was sent into the world to abolish the misery brought in by Adam's sin; now death was the primary punishment of sin: Gen. ii. 17, 'In the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die;' and this remaineth on believers. The apostle answereth in the words read,—

First, By supposition, 'if Christ be in you;' that he might fix the privilege on the persons to whom it properly belongeth.

Secondly, By concession, 'The body is dead because of sin.'

Thirdly, By correction, 'And the Spirit is life because of righteousness.'

First, The supposition showeth that the comfort of the privilege is drawn from the spiritual union which believers have with Christ: 'If Christ be in you.' Secondly, the concession granteth what must be granted, that death befalleth believers; their bodies return to the dust as others do. But, thirdly, the correction is, that they are certain to live for ever with Christ both in body and soul; and this upon a two-fold ground; first, there is a life begun, which shall not be quenched, but perfected. 'The Spirit is life;' the ground and procuring cause is Christ's righteousness. Sin deprived them of the life of grace, and forfeited the life of glory; but here the righteousness of Christ hath purchased this life for us, and the Spirit applieth it to us.

Doct. That Christ in believers, notwithstanding death, is a sure pledge and earnest to them of eternal life both in body and soul.

This point will be best discussed with respect to the several clauses in the text—the supposition, the concession, the correction, or contrary assertion.

1. The supposition—'If Christ be in you.' Here I will prove to you, that a true christian is one that doth not only profess Christ, but hath Christ in him: 2 Cor. xiii. 5, 'Know ye not that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye are reprobates?' that is senseless, stupid wretches, not accepted of God: so Col. i. 27, 'Christ in you the hope of glory.' Now Christ is in us two ways, objectively and effectively: objectively, as the object is in the faculty, or the things we think of and love are in our hearts and minds; so Christ is in us, as he is apprehended and embraced by faith and love; so he is said, Eph. iii. 17, 'To dwell in our hearts by faith;' and again, 'He that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him,' 1 John iv. 18. Which is not to be understood of the acts only, but the habitual temper and dispositions of our souls; for else by the ceasing of the acts, the union at least in our hearts would be broken off. Secondly, effectively, so Christ is in us by his Spirit and gracious influence. Now, the effects of his Spirit are—first, life, he is become the principle of a new life in us: Gal. ii. 20, 'Christ liveth in me; and the life that I live in the flesh, I live by

the faith of the Son of God.' Where he is, he maketh us to live; and we have another principle of our lives than ourselves or our own natural or renewed spirit. Secondly, Likeness or renovation of our natures: Gal. iv. 19, 'Until Christ be formed in you.' The image of Christ is impressed on the soul: 2 Cor. v. 17, 'if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature.' It is all to the same effect, our being in Christ, or Christ's being in us, for both imply union, and the effect of it a near conformity to Christ in holiness. Thirdly, Strength by the continued influence of his grace to overcome temptation: 1 John iv. 4, 'Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome him, because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.' The Spirit keepeth afoot God's interest in the soul against all the assaults of the devil; so for the variety of conditions we pass through: Phil. iv. 12, 'I know both how to be abased and how to abound; everywhere, and in all things I am instructed both to be full, and to be hungry; both to abound, and to suffer need;' so for all duties that we are called unto: 1 Cor. xv. 10: 'By the grace of God I am what I am; and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain, but I laboured more abundantly than they all, and yet not I, but the grace of God which was in me;' and Heb. xiii. 21, 'Working in you that which is pleasing in his sight through Jesus Christ.' Now, you see what it is to have Christ in us; none but these are real Christians.

(1.) Because we must first be partakers of Christ before we can be partakers of any saving benefit purchased by him, as members are united to the head before they receive sense and motion from it. Christ giveth nothing of his purchase to any but to whom he giveth himself first, 1 John v. 12. And to whom he giveth himself, to them he giveth all things needful to their salvation.

(2.) Where Christ once entereth, there he taketh up his abode and lodging, not to depart thence; dwelling noteth his constant and familiar presence; he doth not sojourn for a while, but dwelleth as a man in his own house and castle. There is a continued presence and influence, whereby they are supported in their christianity; 'He dwelleth in us, and we in him, and we know that he abideth in us by his Spirit:' 1 John iii. 24, and John xiv. 23, 'If a man love me he will keep my words, and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and take up our abode with him.' Not a visit and away, but a constant residence: John xv. 5, 'He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit.'

(3.) Where Christ is, he ruleth and reigneth; for we receive him as our Lord and Saviour: Col. ii. 6. 'As ye received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him.' We received him, that he may perform the office of a mediator in our hearts, and teach us, and rule us, and guide us by his Spirit. All others know him by hearsay, but these know him by experience; the testimony of Christ is confirmed in them. Others talk of Christ, but these feel him; others have him in their ears and tongues, but not in their hearts; or if the heart be warm and heavenly for a fit, it quickly falleth to the earth again. Then here doth our true happiness begin, to find Christ within us; this is that which giveth the seal to Christ without us, and all the mysteries of redemption by him; for you have experienced the power and

comfort of it in your own souls; you find his image in your hearts, and his Spirit conforming you to what he commandeth in the word, and have a suitableness to the gospel in your souls; you may look with an holy confidence for help to him in all your necessities, when others look at him with strange and doubtful thoughts, because nearness breedeth familiarity, and the sense of his continual love and presence begets a holy confidence to come to him for mercy and grace to help; in short, when others have but the common offer, you have a propriety and interest in Christ. Christ without us is a perfect Saviour, but not to you; the appropriation is by union; he came down from heaven, took our nature, died for sinners, ascended up into heaven again to make intercession at the right hand of the Father; all this is without us. Do not say only there is a Saviour in heaven; is there one in thy heart? There is an intercessor in heaven, is there one in thy heart? Rom. viii. 26, 'But the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.' He was born of the virgin, is he formed in thee? Gal. iv. 19. He died, are you planted into the likeness of his death? Rom. vi. 5. He is risen from the dead; do you know the power of his resurrection? Phil. iii. 10. Are you raised with him? Col. iii. 1. He is ascended, are you ascended with him? Eph. ii. 6. Christ without us established the merit, but Christ within us assureth the application.

Secondly, I come now to the concession, 'The body is dead, because of sin.' Here observe the emphasis of the expression, 'the body is dead;' not only shall die, or must die, but is dead. He expresseth himself thus for two reasons, first, because the sentence is passed: Gen. ii. 17, Heb. ix. 27, 'It is appointed for all men once to die.' Therefore, as we say of a condemned man, he is a dead man, by reason of the sentence passed upon him; so by reason of this sentence, our body is a mortal body, liable to death, sentenced, doomed to death, and must one day undergo it. The union between it and the soul after a certain time shall be dissolved, and our bodies corrupted. The execution is begun; mortality hath already seized upon our bodies, by the many infirmities tending to, and ending in, the dissolution of nature. We now bear about the marks of sin in our bodies, the harbingers of death are already come, and have taken up their lodging aforehand. The apostle saith, 'in deaths often.' How many deaths do we suffer, before death cometh to relieve us, by several diseases, as colics, meagrim, catarrhs, gout, stone, and the like? All these prepare for it; and therefore this body, though glorious in its structure, as it is the workmanship of God, is called a vile body, as it is the subject of so many diseases; yea, and itself is continually dying: Heb. xi. 12, 'Therefore sprang there even of one, and him as good as dead.' We express it, a man hath one foot in the grave.

[2.] The reason is assigned, 'Because of sin.' Death is the most ordinary thing in the world, but its cause and end are little thought of. This expression will give us occasion to speak of both its meritorious cause, and its use and end; both are implied in the clause, 'Because of sin.'

(1.) It implieth the meritorious cause. Death is not a natural accident, but a punishment; we die not as the beasts die, or as the

plants decay ; no, the scripture telleth us by what gate it entered into the world, namely, that it is an effect of the justice of God for man's sin : Rom. v. 12, ' By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin.' And it is also by covenant, therefore called wages, Rom. vi. 23. Sin procured it, and the law ratifies it. Ay, but doth it so come upon the faithful ? I answer, though their sins be forgiven, yet God would leave this mark of his displeasure on all mankind, that all Adam's children shall die, for a warning to the world. Well then, sin carries death in its bosom, and to some this death is but a step to hell, or death to come ; it is not so to the godly ; yet in their instance, God would teach the world the sure connexion between death and sin ; whosoever hath been once a sinner, must die.

(2.) Its end and use, ' The body is dead because of sin : ' that is, the relics of sin are not abolished but by death ; there is a twofold end and use of death to them that are in Christ.

First, To finish transgression and make an end of sin. We groan under the burden of it, while we are in our mortal bodies, Rom. vii. 24. But when the believer dieth, death is the destruction of sin, rather than of the penitent sinner ; the veil of the sinful flesh is rent, and by the sight of God we are purified all in an instant ; and then sin shall gasp its last, and our physician will perfect the cure which he hath begun in us, and we shall be presented faultless before the presence of God.

Secondly, To free us from the natural infirmities which render us incapable of that happy life in heaven which is intended for us. The state of Adam in innocency was blessed, but terrene and earthly, a state that needed meat, drink, and sleep. If Christ would have restored us to this life, it may be death had not been necessary, and the present state of our bodies needed not to be destroyed, but only purified ; but our Lord Jesus had a higher aim : Eph. i. 3, ' Who hath blessed us with spiritual blessings in Christ.' Adam enjoyed God among the beasts in paradise ; we enjoy God among the angels in heaven ; it is a divine and heavenly life that he promiseth, a life like that of the blessed angels, where meat, and drink, and sleep hath no use. Now this nature that we now have, is not fitted for this life ; therefore Paul telleth us : 1 Cor. xv. 50. ' That flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God ; that is, that animal life which we derived from Adam cannot inherit the kingdom of God. Therefore we need to bear the image of the heavenly, which cannot be till this terrene and animal life be abolished. To this end God useth death. So that which was in itself a punishment, becometh a means of entrance into glory ; the corn is not quickened unless it die : 1 Cor. xv. 36, 37, 38. The believers that are alive at Christ's coming must be changed, ver. 51, 52. Christ himself by death entered into glory ; therefore whatever is animal, vile, and earthly, and weak, must be put off, before we are capable of this blessed estate.

(3.) The cause of this mortality is, ' Because of sin.' Had it not been for sin, we had never had cause to fear dissolution ; there had been no use for coffins and winding sheets ; nor had we been beholden to a grave, to hide our carcase from the sight and smell of the living ; there was a *posse mori* in innocency, else death could not be threatened

as a penalty ; but there was a *posse non mori*, or else immortality could not be propounded as the reward of obedience ; therefore man is mortal, *conditione corporis* ; but immortal, *beneficio conditori* ; God could have supported him. Well then, death must make sin odious ; or else sin allowed will make death terrible.

3. We come to the assertion or correction, ‘The Spirit is life because of righteousness.’ In which observe,—

[1.] That believers have a life, notwithstanding death. Though death be appointed by God, and inflicted upon believers as well as others, yet they live, notwithstanding this death : John xi. 25, ‘He that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live.’ The fountain of life can raise him when he will ; no bands of death can hinder his quickening virtue. Though the union between body and soul be dissolved, yet not their union with God.

[2.] This life is to be understood of body and soul. It is only indeed here said life, but he explaineth himself in the 2d ver. ‘If the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus 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.’ Man is compounded of a body and soul ; death deprives him of his body for a time, only the body shall at last be reunited to partake of the happiness of the soul.

(1) The soul, being the noblest part, is presently, and most happily provided for, being sanctified and purified from all her imperfections, and is brought into the sight and presence of God : Luke xx. 38, ‘They all live to God.’ And they are gathered to the great council and assembly of souls, Heb. xii. 23. There they serve God day and night, and are under a happy necessity of never wandering from their duty, and no longer busied to maintain a war against sin, but we are always employed in lauding, praising, and blessing God, and delighting in him. Well then, this is the happiness of the faithful, that though they put off the body for a time, yet the soul hath an eternal house, to which it retireth, and remains not only in the hand of God, but enjoyeth the sight and love of God : 2 Cor. v. 1, ‘For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.’

(2.) For the body. At the resurrection the soul shall assume its body again. We cannot easily believe that part shall be placed in heaven, which we see committed to the grave to rot there ; but there is no impediment to God’s almighty power : Phil. iii. 21, ‘Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able to subdue all things unto himself.’ This place doth prove that God hath provided for the happy estate of the body as well as the soul. The dead are God’s subjects, put into the hands of Christ ; he must give an account of them : John vi. 40, ‘And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one that seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life, and I will raise him up at the last day.’ They are likewise members of Christ, 1 Cor. vi. 15. Now this mystical body will not be maimed ; they are temples of the Holy Ghost : 1 Cor. vi. 15—temples wherein we offer up to God reasonable service. Now since the Spirit possesseth both body and soul, he will repair his own dwelling-place

which he hath once honoured with his presence, and not let corruption always abide on it. And we have the pattern of Christ; he is the first fruits of them that slept: 1 Cor. xv. 20. The soul hath an inclination to the body still; therefore that our happiness may be complete, a glorified soul shall animate an immortal body.

[3.] The grounds are, first, the Spirit's renewing; secondly, Christ's purchase.

(1.) The Spirit is life. He doth not draw his argument from the immortality of the soul, for that is common to good and bad; the wicked have a soul that will survive the body, but little to their comfort; their immortality is not a happy immortality; but he taketh his argument from the new life wrought in us by the Spirit, which is the beginning, pledge, and earnest of a blessed immortality. The soul is an immortal being, but the new life is an eternal principle of happiness; as soon as Christ beginneth to dwell in us, eternal life is begun in our souls, 1 Johu iii. 15; the immortal seed, 1 Pet. i. 23.

(2.) The meritorious cause is the righteousness of Christ; or the pardon of our sins, and the justification of our persons by the blood and merits of Jesus Christ. When once forgiven, we are out of the reach of the second death: 1 Cor. xv. 56, 'The sting of death is sin.' We are freed from the damning stroke, not the killing stroke, of death; Christ having freed us from the curse of the law, and merited and purchased for us a blessed resurrection, Heb. ii. 14, 15.

Use. Is to enforce the great things of christianity.

There are but two things we need to regard, to live holily and die comfortably. These two have a mutual respect one to another; those that live holily take the next course to die comfortably: 'the end of that man is peace;' and to know how to die well, is the best way to live well; both are enforced by this place.

1. To live holily; there are several arguments from the text.

[1.] The comforts of christianity are not promiscuously dispensed, or common to all indifferently, but suspended on this condition, 'if Christ be in you,' by his sanctifying Spirit. If you be deceived in your foundation, all your life, hope, and comfort, are but delusive things; but when quickened by the renewing grace of the Spirit of Christ, and made partakers of the divine nature, you have then the earnest of your inheritance: Eph. i. 4, 2 Cor. v. 5, 'He who hath wrought us to this same thing is God, who hath given us the earnest of his Spirit.' Others die uncertain of comfort, or, it may be, most certain of condemnation.

[2.] From the concession, the body is dead; sentence is passed, and in part executed; this awakeneth us to think of another world, and to make serious preparation; when the walls of the house are shaken and are ready to drop down, is it not time to think of a removal? The body is frail and mortal, and that is enough to check sin: Rom. vi. 12, 'Let not sin reign therefore in your mortal bodies, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof.' But it is made more frail by actual sin: Gal. vi. 8, 'If we sow to the flesh, of the flesh we shall reap corruption.' Shall we sow to the flesh and pamper the flesh, which must soon be turned into stench and rottenness? Man consulting with present sense carrieth himself as if he were a body only, not a soul; and therefore out

of love to sensual pleasures, he maketh no account of anything but sensual pleasures and satisfactions; but shall we bestow all our time and care upon a body that was dust in its composition, and will shortly again be dust in its dissolution? The body is not only dying, but dead; you think not of it now, but this death cometh before it is looked for. Saul trembled when the spirit answered him: 1 Sam. xxviii. 19, 20, 'To-morrow thou and thy sons shall be with me.' Would you sport and riot away your time, if you should receive such a message? Surely the dust, and stench, and rottenness of the grave, if we thought of it, would take down our pride and check our voluptuousness, for we do but pamper worms' meat; it would prevent our worldliness. All a man's labour is for the body, and usually in a body overcared for there dwelleth a neglected soul. The body is not only the instrument, but the incitement of it; the soul is wholly taken up about the body, but doth the dead body deserve so much care? Death doth disgrace all the seducing pleasures of the flesh, and the profits and honours of the world. Who is so mad as wilfully to sin with death in his eye? Alas! all the pleasures and honours of the world will be vanity and vexation of spirit to us when we come to die.

[3.] We come now to the corrective assertion, and there is the life promised for body and soul; this breedeth the true spirit of faith: 2 Cor. iv. 13, 14, 'We having the same spirit of faith, (according as it is written, I believed, therefore have I spoken), we also believe, therefore speak, knowing that he that raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise us up also.' The true diligence and godliness: 1 Cor. xv. 58. 'Be stedfast and unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, for your labour shall not be in vain in the Lord.' And patience: Rom. ii. 7, 'Who by patient continuing in well doing, seek for glory, immortality, eternal life.' Christians! we that have souls to save or lose, and have an offer of happiness, shall we come short of it for want of diligence, and spend our time in eating and drinking, and sporting, or in the service of God?

[4.] It is the effect both of the Spirit's renewing, and the righteousness of Christ. Both call for holiness at our hands, as the effect of the renovation of the Spirit, and our title to the righteousness of Christ; so that this life doth not belong to us unless we are in Christ, and walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit: Rom. viii. 1. Which begun this discourse—the double principle and ground of hope enforceth it.

2. To die comfortably. Christianity affordeth the proper comfort against death, as it is a natural and penal evil; a natural evil it is, as it puts an end to present comforts; it is a penal evil too, as it maketh way for the final judgment, Heb. ix. 27. Heathens could only teach them to submit to it out of necessity, or as a debt they owed to nature, or an end of the present miseries; but christianity, as the sting of it is gone, 1 Cor. xv. 56. As the property is altered: 1 Cor. iii. 22, 'Death is yours,' and that upon solid grounds; as the life of grace is introduced and sin is forgiven, and the conclusions drawn from thence. First, The life of grace introduced. How bitter is the remembrance of death to the carnal man, much more the enduring of it. A dying body and a startling conscience maketh them afraid of everlasting death; and so much sin as you bring to your death-bed, so much

bitterness you will have ; so much holiness so far you have eternal life in you ; and the more it is acted in the fruits of holiness, the more comfort : Isa. xxxii. 17. A little without is grievous, when all is amiss within. Secondly, Sin is forgiven upon the account of the righteousness of Christ, for we shall then be soiled if found in no other righteousness than our own : Phil. iii. 8, 9, 'That I may be found in him, not having my own righteousness.' In short, the worst that can befall believers is, that it is the death but of a part, the worst and basest part, and that but for a season. The bodies of the saints shall not always lie in the grave : nor can it be imagined they shall perish as the beasts ; no, but be raised up from the grave, and their vile bodies be changed like unto the glorious body of their Redeemer.

SERMON XIV.

If the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus 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.—Rom. VIII. 11.

The Apostle is answering a doubt, How there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ, since death, which is the fruit of sin, yet remaineth on the godly ? Answer—

1. By concession, that sin is indeed the seed and original of mortality : 'the body is dead because of sin.' Not only the carnal undergo it, but the justified ; though the guilt of sin be taken away by a pardon, and the dominion and power of it be broken by the Spirit of Christ, yet the being of it is not quite abolished ; and as long as sin remaineth in us in the least degree, it maketh us subject to the power of death.

2. By way of correction—he opposeth a double comfort against it. Destruction by sin is neither total nor final. First, not total ; it is but a half death : ver. 10. 'The Spirit is life because of righteousness.' Secondly, nor final ; it hath a limit of time set, which when it is expired, the body shall have a happy resurrection, and that by virtue of the same Spirit by which the soul is now quickened. So that mark—both parts receive their happiness by the Spirit—the soul and the body ; the soul though it be immortal in itself, yet the blessed immortality it hath from the Spirit ; the 'Spirit is life because of righteousness ;' and the dead body shall not finally perish, but be sure to be raised again by the same Spirit : 'If the Spirit of him.'

In the words we have—

1. The condition upon which the resurrection is promised, 'If the Spirit.'

2. The certainty of performance set forth. [1.] By the author or efficient cause, 'He that raised up Jesus from the dead.' [2.] 'By his Spirit that dwelleth in you,' the way and manner of working.

1. The condition. A resurrection is necessary, but a happy resurrection is limited by a condition : Phil. iii. 11, 'If by any means.'