

CHAP. VII.

On Mortification of Sin—shewing how the Believer is dead to sin in Christ—what effects this produces in him, and how it is manifested in his putting off the old man with his deeds.

THE apostle Paul says expressly, that, “If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.” None, who know any thing of Christ, will dare to venture to deny it. God hath revealed no possible way to eternal life in his most holy word, but the free, sovereign gift which he has made of it in his Son; nor any other way of conveying spiritual and eternal life to us, but by his Spirit. The record or testimony, which the Lord has given us in the Holy Bible of his ways with his people, is from the beginning to the end of it so full of the same spirit, that there is no getting rid of the term without absolutely rejecting the whole word of God. The fountain of eternal life is in God. “With thee,” says the Psalmist, “is the fountain of life.” It is conveyed through Jesus Christ, by whom all things are and were created. The free grant of it is recorded in the ever-

lasting gospel, which is the only way whereby we come to the knowledge of it, of our title to it, and also to the possession and enjoyment of it. It is the eternal spirit who is called the spirit of God and of Christ, that makes the conveyance of it effectual to us. Our eternal life consists in the abiding and indwelling of the Holy Ghost. This eternal life is conveyed to us in and with our new and second birth; which is styled, a *being born again*, a *new creation*, and the *workmanship of God*. And the effect of it is styled, a *new creature*.

Mortification of sin proceeds from this, as the effect from the cause. It is the fruit of this spiritual life, thus communicated to the regenerate soul. It most naturally and necessarily follows upon it. *The man in Christ*, who is by regeneration and conversion to the Lord a new creature in Christ Jesus, hath in his new nature received from the Holy Spirit a perfect hatred, an entire aversion, and contrariety to all the sin, impurity, and sinfulness inherent in his fallen nature. And as life is opposite to death, purity to impurity, holiness to sin, spirituality to carnality; so there is now felt and experienced a severe combat between sin and grace, which reside and dwell in one and the same person:

from hence forward therefore, the inward conflict is perpetual, as each strives for mastery. Hence proceeds the absolute necessity for the believer to be sober and to watch unto prayer. The apostle suits his exhortation most exactly to the case. "This I say then, walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things which ye would. But if ye be led by the Spirit, ye are not under the law^a." It is of vast importance to the believer in Jesus to have clear and scriptural views of what he is, as the subject both of sin and grace. We have Paul's personal experience of it recorded in his Epistle to the Romans^b. He says he saw another law in his members warring against the law of his mind, and bringing him into captivity to the law of sin which was in his members. This caused him most bitterly to exclaim, "O wretched man that I am." As the child of God is led to view and consider what actually passes within himself, and as he compares it with what the apostle has declared, he finds that the one case is explanatory of the other. This leads him to study himself in the

^a Gal. v. 16, 17, 18.

^b Chap. vii.

various motions and operations of *inherent sin*, and *inherent grace*. From hence he will practically learn that in himself, *i. e.* in his fallen nature, dwelleth nothing that is good. Grace does not sanctify sinful nature, but leaves it as it was. Our Lord gives us a most exact account of this when he says, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the spirit is spirit." Nothing but sin and corruption is introduced into our nature by the one life; nothing but holiness, grace, and purity by the other. There is no holiness in our fallen nature, nor sinfulness in our new. It is absolutely necessary that the believer should see and acknowledge the truth of this; because although sin received its death-wound in him the first moment he was quickened by the Holy Ghost with spiritual life, and though he hungers and thirsts after Christ, has real communion with him, and is under the influence and reign of grace, at seasons he feels, that, notwithstanding with the mind he serves the law of God, yet with the flesh he serves the law of sin; so that every ordinance, every providence, every case, every circumstance, every temptation, and every experience proves to him, that he is every moment, in his fallen nature, carnal, sold under sin, and that, when he

would do good, sin which dwelleth in him acts under one form or other to prevent him; so that the good that he would he does not; but the evil which he would not, that he does. This is matter of the greatest grief, and it creates much perplexity to the mind of the new-born soul how to account for it. He learns from it the necessity of attending to what the apostle says, "If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die; but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body ye shall live^c." He sees how absolutely necessary it is for him to die to sin, and to have it perfectly mortified within him, that he may get above its love, power, deceit, and influence. He finds, that, though his affections to sin are deadened as to sinful pleasures, and though the old man is indeed put off concerning the former conversation, yet he is not put to death. He remains still alive, and is sometimes very active, though he lies in chains, and is under the power and dominion of mighty and victorious grace; yet, as he plainly perceives, this does not amount to a mortification, a killing and destroying of the inward principles of sin in him. He is led to consider the nature of that mortification, which the scriptures speak most generally of, and ex-

^c Rom. viii. 13.

hort to, which is a mortification of the outward acts of sin, and of an external course of living in iniquity. And as these are but the effects of an inward mortification, which is the consequence of eternal life begun in the soul by the Holy Ghost, he considers more distinctly, and applies himself more closely to search into, this very important subject. And from the scriptures he finds, that the spiritual mortification of sin by the efficacy of Christ's death consists not in a partial abstinence from this or the other corruption, nor in being kept from partial falling into sin, nor in being without sin; but that it extends its influence over the whole body of sin, in its life, love, guilt, power, and dominion:—that this is not effected by any thing without us, nor any performances of ours; but that we must look wholly to Christ for it, and can only partake of the fruits and effects of it, as we have actual communion with him in his death by the influence of the Holy Ghost. The apostle is upon this great subject in the sixth chapter of the Romans. This is a great and important truth, that, as believers in Christ, ye are transplanted into Christ, into the likeness of his death, and have an actual participation of the blessed consequences thereof. He saith, “ Know ye not, that so many of us as were

“baptized into Jesus Christ were bap-
 “tized into his death?” You are by
 virtue of your union with Jesus in-
 terested in his crucifixion, death, burial,
 and resurrection. Baptism is a solemn
 memorial of this: “Therefore we are
 “buried with him by baptism into
 “death; that like as Christ was raised
 “up from the dead by the glory of the
 “Father, even so we also should walk
 “in newness of life.” Baptism is but
 once administered, because regeneration
 is but once wrought. And Christ being
 once revealed by the Holy Ghost, his
 great salvation is applied, and the rege-
 nerate are partakers of all the blessings
 contained in his death and resurrection.
 “For if we have been planted together
 “in the likeness of his death, we shall
 “be also in the likeness of his resurrec-
 “tion.” And being quickened by vir-
 tue of our union with Christ and interest
 in his resurrection up to a spiritual and
 endless life, we receive therefrom an
 eternal blow and death to all our inward
 sin, lusts, and corruptions. “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.”

By virtue of Christ's bearing our sins
 in his own body on the tree, our old
 man being then and there nailed to the

cross and crucified with him, we have an eternal discharge from the imputation of all our sin, inherent and external, with the complete mortification of the whole body of it, and an everlasting victory over all its guilt, love, power, and dominion, in the one perfect offering and everlastingly efficacious death of OUR GREAT HIGH PRIEST, CHRIST JESUS. To which the apostle adds, by way of confirmation, "For he that is dead is freed from sin;" *i. e.* believers in Christ, as united to him and one with him in his death, are dead to the law by the body of Christ. This is the doctrine of Paul in the words which have been cited from his epistle to the church of Christ at Rome. Our Lord Jesus represented all his people, and acted as their substitute. The Father laid on him all their sins both original and actual. He was clad and wrapped about with the whole body of the sins of the elect. He bore the whole guilt, impurity, and demerit contained in them, as truly as he was clothed with a body of flesh. And he died for that, which we by nature are in, and for which we could never make atonement. He died in the likeness of sinful flesh, with all the iniquities, sins, and transgressions of his people on himself. He died once, and *but once*; because the sacrifice of

himself, as God-man Mediator, was everlastingly effectual to answer every end, and accomplish every design, for which the Father in his infinite wisdom appointed it. And his people were in union with him, represented by him, and interested in all the virtue and efficacy of his mediation. His death is the death and everlasting destruction of all the sins of his people. By it he conquered the damning, and also the reigning power of it. The whole body of sin and death received its death-wound, when Christ died, *the just for the unjust*. There is not any part, member, affection, lust, or corruption in the body of sin, but what was actually mortified by the obedience of our Lord unto death. All its heart-strings were broken, when Christ expired on the cross. Hence the apostle saith, "I am crucified with Christ." Herein consists the believer's perfection. He is a member of Christ, a partaker of all the benefits of his death, eternally complete in him, and without all fault before the throne of God. This must be truly known, spiritually understood, received, and believed from the testimony of God in his word, to the intent the believer may enjoy the benefit of it. He cannot get above sin in its guilt, nor overcome its power, until he has received his perfect discharge from his original

and actual guilt, by believing in the blood and righteousness of JESUS. The apostle puts believers on considering what they are in Christ. "Likewise reckon ye yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin^d." A believer should view himself one with Christ in his death, and reckon himself to be what Christ is. Did he die the death? die to sin? The believer is discharged from the imputation of all sin, guilt, and condemnation, on the footing thereof; so that he may well say, "Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin." The believer is legally represented by Christ, —is what he is, —dead to sin in him, —holy, as he is holy, —righteous, as he is righteous, and, as thus viewed by his heavenly Father, shines in his sight, in the person and work of Christ, holy, righteous, pure, and complete in him. So saith the apostle speaking to the Colossians: "And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your minds by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled in the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy, unblameable, and unproveable in his sight^e." Christ is the representative of his people. And he represents them in himself, holy, unblameable, and unre-

^d Rom. vi. 11.^e Col. i. 21, 22.

proveable in the sight of *his Father and our Father, his God and our God.*

When it is given the believer to view the everlasting perfection and sufficiency of Christ's salvation; and when he is led by the Holy Spirit to look on himself as one in Christ and with him in all the perfection of his holiness, righteousness, and oblation, and to trust thereon for his eternal discharge from all his sin, and for his everlasting perfection before the Lord, then he triumphs as being justified from all things. He believes now that there is no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus. This leads him to seek for real and growing fellowship with him in his death, in all the benefits of it. The Holy Ghost gives the believer clear and spiritual conceptions of these truths. The believing mind is exercised in spiritual contemplations on them; and hereby, through the influence of the Holy Spirit, the believer is led into actual communion with Christ, and experiences the power and efficacy of his death, which produces in him such effects as these. His heart is purified from the guilt of sin by faith in the virtue and value of our Lord's most precious bloodshedding. His mind is at peace with God, believing he hath freely forgiven him all trespasses. And having

in the light of the word and spirit a believing perception of Christ as his holiness, purity, and perfection, he feels the influence thereof in all his spiritual faculties, and throughout his whole spiritual frame. It leaves its sanctifying influence on the mind and affections. It leads the believer to hate all sin, both inward and outward, carnal and spiritual wickedness, with a perfect and immutable hatred. He loathes, and most sincerely mourns at, the least rising of inward corruption. He longs for perfect conformity to Christ, and to be delivered from the very in-being of sin; which will be the case with him, when he is delivered from his present state of warfare, and introduced by Christ into the kingdom of glory. These are the fruits and effects of our being dead to all sin, even to the whole body of it, in Christ. Our union with Christ in his death and our communion with Christ by faith therein are the foundation of all our death to sin. Here is our complete mortification of it. *It is in Christ's obedience unto death, as our surety; who hath removed our transgressions from us, as far as the East is from the West.* The believer is without all sin in Christ. Like as Immanuel was perfectly free from all sin inherently, though he once was made sin, and bore all the

sins of his people in his own body; so the believer, notwithstanding he has a body of sin inherent in his fallen nature, is yet in God's sight as perfect in Christ, as if he were entirely without it; because he is wholly absolved from it, and it is not imputed to him: *the blood of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, cleanseth him from all sin.* This is the doctrine of the book of God. And in the union of the believer with Christ and in interest *in* and communion *with* him in his death is founded his *complete mortification.* And all the strength which he receives from Christ to mortify sin in its fruits and effects is the effect of it. The believer from the word and spirit learns to know that he is accepted in the beloved,—that he is beloved by the Father with the same love, wherewith Christ is loved,—that we appear in his view, and are *in his sight*, what Jesus is, and are justified, and freely, fully, and irrevocably pardoned. From the spiritual belief of these eternal truths the whole body of sin inherent in him receives its death-wound; which will one day, *viz.* at the disunion of soul and body by death, end in his complete deliverance from it, so that he will be as truly without sin in him as Christ himself. The believer is led by the Holy Spirit to see that all exhortations con-

cerning mortification of sin in the word are built on these gospel truths, as their foundation; and finds in real experience, that nothing saves him from the love, power, guilt, and dominion of sin, so much as the knowledge and belief of his perfect deliverance from the guilt and filth of the whole body of sin by virtue of his union *with* and interest *in* CHRIST JESUS. As the believer hath, in the light of the Holy Spirit, a clear knowledge and belief of his union with Jesus, he is led to seek intimate fellowship with him. And, as this is carried on by the Holy Spirit in the believer's mind, sin dies, corruptions are subdued, and he experiences the truth of this apostolic assertion, that "They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts." They were first crucified in Christ, as they were nailed to the cross with him. And they are crucified in the believer by virtue of Christ's death. The influences of which are put forth in the soul through the gracious energy of the Lord the Spirit; which the believer gives open evidence and manifestative proof of by his putting off the old man with his deeds. The apostle, having set forth the true and perfect mortification of sin in Christ, and shewn how the believer is dead to

all sin *in him* in the fore-mentioned sixth chapter to the Romans, proceeds to exhortation^f: “ Let not sin therefore
 “ reign in your mortal body that ye
 “ should obey it in the lusts thereof.
 “ Neither yield ye your members as in-
 “ struments of unrighteousness unto sin,
 “ but yield yourselves unto God as
 “ those that are alive from the dead, and
 “ your members as instruments of righte-
 “ ousness unto God.” Which is founded
 on the union and communion which be-
 lievers have with Christ; and it is set
 on with energy by the encouragement
 which the apostle gives in verse the
 fourteenth, “ For sin shall not have the
 “ dominion over you: for ye are not
 “ under the law but under grace.” The
 believer is led by the blessed spirit to mix
 faith with his word of promise, and he
 derives strength in believing the faith-
 fulness of God to fulfil it: moreover, as
 long as there is an inward rising against
 sin, and inward groaning, and mourn-
 ing on account of it, this promise can-
 not fail of being accomplished to him;
 and these are, and should be looked on,
 as indisputable evidences thereof. His
 clear apprehensions of his state in Christ
 make spiritual exhortations very sweet
 and suitable to him. Our apostle is on

^f verses 12, 13.

the same subject in his epistle to the Colossians^s. “ For ye are dead, and
 “ your life is hid with Christ in God.
 “ When Christ who is our life shall ap-
 “ pear, then shall ye also appear with
 “ him in glory.” We may see from
 hence, that we should believe more con-
 cerning our being *in Christ* dead to all
 sin, than we feel and experience of it in
 ourselves. Then follows the exhorta-
 tion, “ Mortify therefore your members
 “ which are upon the earth; fornica-
 “ tion, uncleanness, inordinate affection,
 “ evil concupiscence, and covetousness,
 “ which is idolatry.” The believer feels
 the weight and sees the importance of
 these apostolic exhortations. They are
 set home and applied to his heart by the
 Spirit of God. The believer renounces
 his former conversation and walk before
 conversion. which were corrupt accord-
 ing to his deceitful lusts. He walks in
 the Lord’s good ways, and runs with
 alacrity in the paths of divine com-
 mands. His outward walk and conver-
 sation are the true and real fruit of the
 secret and inward communion which he
 hath with Jesus. He walks before the
 Lord unto all well-pleasing, because he
 walks with God, as his God and Father
 in Christ Jesus, in secret and spiritual
 communion.

O thou holy and blessed Spirit! from whom proceed all spiritual life and light, thou art the conveyer of them from Christ the fountain and head thereof to thy church and people. I bless thee, O Holy Ghost! that thou hast communicated this life and light to my soul. I beseech thee to lead me to look to, and believe on Jesus for my complete and everlasting discharge from all sin, and for everlasting purity and perfection before the Lord. Teach me the true scriptural doctrine concerning the spiritual mortification of sin. Thou hast set it before me in thy word, teach me the true method and practice of it. Lead me by faith to view the everlasting virtue and perfection of Christ's most precious bloodshedding. Help me to view my everlasting perfection in Jesus. Shew me my complete discharge and acquittance from all my inward and outward guilt and sin before the Lord, through that one offering which perfects for ever. Lead me into constant fellowship with Jesus in his death. Help me to believe without the least doubt or wavering, my union with Christ, and enable me to improve it, in receiving continual virtue and influence from him in believing, to the deadening and mortifying of every corrupt lust and affection. Do thou help me to put off the old man with his

deeds in my constant walk and conversation. Thus may I walk as the redeemed of the Lord, and be going on with renewed strength. I ask it for the honour of thy name, to whom with the Father and the Son be everlasting praise. Amen.

