

SERMON VIII.

And were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.—VER. 3.

THE last discourse I handled these words, ‘fulfilling the desires,’ or wills, ‘of the flesh and of the mind.’ The Apostle had before in general shewed how that the conversation of all men in the state of nature is in the lusts of the flesh. And by ‘lusts of the flesh’ there, he means the lusts of corrupt nature in general, as *flesh* in Scripture is often taken. But not contented with that, he doth particularise the lusts which are in the hearts of men, which in their lives they do fulfil, dividing them according to that division of nature, of soul and body. ‘Fulfilling the desires of the flesh;’ that is, of the body, or those lusts which the soul partakes in by reason of the body; all those sensitive lusts, both of the outward senses, and of the inward senses, the fancy, and the like. ‘And of the mind;’ that is, those lusts which John calls lusts of the eye, which are purely reasonable, and which have their seat merely in the understanding and mind, and those rational faculties; ‘fulfilling the wills of the flesh and of the mind.’

I opened to you the difference of these two in the former discourse, and I shewed that, according to the Scriptures, all the sins of men, and all the lusts in the hearts of men, are reduced to these two heads. Either those which we have common with beasts, or at leastwise are seated in those faculties which are common to beasts; or else such as are common to us with devils. I told you, that either there are those lusts which are in the most sensitive part of the outward senses, or those which are in the fancy, the objects whereof are buildings, and a thousand other artifices of men, beauty, and the like, or else they are the lusts which are in the rational part, purely such, as pride in any excellency, envy, and the like. I discoursed at large of these things; I shall only add this:—

I reduce many of those lusts in the hearts of men to the fancy, not because beasts who have fancies are capable of them, as to see an excellency in buildings and beauty and the like; these things fanciful beasts are not capable of. Yet because the fancy is by participation reasonable in a man, hence it is that men are capable of many lusts in their fancies, whereof they see no image in a beast, and yet they are not properly the lusts of the mind, because they are not purely intellectual, but the soul is drenched in them by reason of its conjunction with the flesh. I only add that, to explain what I said in the last discourse. I would not have repeated so much, but only in order to somewhat more that I mean to speak at this time, concerning these lusts of the mind; and so I shall come to the other part of the verse: *And were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.*

Concerning these lusts I shall give you one or two general rules, and so come off. I shall not go about now to set down notes and signs of what is the master-lust in men, a thing which elsewhere I have largely handled; but I shall only give you some *two or three general rules* concerning lusts, and concerning the lusts of the mind especially.

The first whereof is this: That these lusts do vary, according as men’s

natural tempers or their understandings, and the degrees thereof, are more or less. In men of understanding, lusts of the mind prevail most; and in fools, sensual pleasures, in meat and drink, and the like, and in the natural comforts of the body. And they are diversified thus according as the natural constitution or natural elevation of the spirits of men are, according to the various elevation or advancement of the understanding; for man, being a rational creature, and reason being the chief principle in him, he useth that little understanding he hath to find out what will suit him most, what he can have dearest contentment in, and accordingly he pitcheth upon and prosecuteth by nature that. Though a man hath all lusts in him, yet he prosecuteth those things with the dearest contentment which that poor small understanding he hath counteth most excellent. Hence therefore, according to the variation of men's understandings, it comes to pass that their lusts are ordinarily pitched higher or lower. In worldly objects, there is a great deal of difference in the excellency of them. Some are more abstracted from the gross substance of things, as I may so speak; some are more spiritual and more airy. And as you see among living creatures, there are some that live upon a finer kind of food than others; birds, you know, live upon a finer kind of food than beasts; and there is one bird, the chameleon, that lives, as some say, merely upon air. So the spirits of men, the more airy and intellectual they are, the finer is that food that nourisheth their lusts. Therefore your great philosophers of old, that were wise men, pitched upon moral virtues, and upon civility, and placed their happiness in them; and their wisdom was so strong in them that even that did judge mere sensual pleasures to defile the soul, which they apprehended to be the most noble of creatures, and out of the greatness of their spirits they would not stoop to what was base; they thought it most unfit for an elevated soul to serve any creature less than itself; but as for virtue, and morality, and the like, they thought that these were meet for the understanding and soul of a man. Yet because they took not God in these things, hence it came to pass that these were lusts, though lusts of the mind, as I shewed you likewise the last discourse.

So likewise those among the Jews that were raised higher than the heathens, accordingly the lusts of their minds were raised higher also. The zeal that Paul had for the law was a lust of the mind, for it was without God. 'They have a zeal, but not according to knowledge,' saith he, Rom. x. 2; without a directing of it to God as the chiefest end. And this also I understand to be part of the meaning of that place, which is pat and express for this, in 1 Peter i. 14; where, writing to the Jews, he bids them that they should not fashion themselves according to their former lusts in their ignorance; and among other arguments he hath this, ver. 18, 'Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers.' That Jewish religion which they stuck in, and which they had received by tradition from their fathers, even this was one part of the object of those former lusts in their ignorance, according to which he bids them, ver. 14, not to fashion themselves. And thus likewise experience shews this to be true; for you shall find that as men grow up in years, and so grow up in wisdom, accordingly their lusts vary; as they grow more wise, so they live more intellectual lives, and grow up more to lusts of the mind. Therefore covetousness, which is plainly a lust of the mind, prevails most in old age; whereas prodigality, which is a lust of the fancy, prevails in youth more. Why? Because men grow wiser. Lusts therefore are varied in men according as their understandings grow higher or lower.

The second thing that I shall say unto you is this : That of the two, the lusts of the mind are the strongest in men, and they are the greatest. They are the strongest lusts, for they have the greatest compass. If a man confine himself to sensual pleasures, he hath a greater narrow; but if to lusts of the mind, pride and the like, he hath a larger field to run in; for desire of credit and the like ariseth from a thousand things, out of all sorts of excellencies, of what kind soever. And such lusts now a man seeks continually to uphold. Men are given to sensual lusts occasionally, but these lusts of the mind, they act the great part of men's lives. Yea, many sins are abstained from in relation to the lusts of the mind; the lusts of the mind will devour other lusts, and keep them under for credit's sake, and the like. The lusts of the mind have the largest revenues of comfort of any other, because they can fetch it out of anything; whatsoever one hath that is excellent, apparel, beauty, wit, learning, riches, power, buildings,—‘Is not this great Babel, that I have built by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty?’—whatsoever it is, all these feed the lusts of the mind. Therefore now many lusts that have seemed to have other names, as the love of money, it is not properly the love of money itself, but it is a lust of the mind that makes a man given to it; it is to uphold his state among his neighbours and his rank, to erect a name and leave a posterity after him, to have said, he died worth so much; all these are the lusts of the mind. And likewise, as they are the strongest because they are of the largest compass, so they are the strongest because they have the most reasonings for them. Therefore when you come to turn to God, you do not stick so much at parting from sensual lusts, as those lusts that hold the debate with you, that bring reason to plead for them, as the repute of friends, the holding correspondency with others, and the like. These are the great roots, like those which, I take it, you call tap-roots, that every tree hath; all the little roots may be easily pulled in pieces, but these stick; they are the last repented of, when one comes to cast off the old man. And the ground of this is, because the strength of a man lies in his reason, therefore to part with those lusts that lie in the rational part, the strength of a man shews itself to the utmost there. Therefore, in 2 Cor. x. 4, the Apostle speaks of reasonings, and high thoughts, and strongholds in men that are to be pulled down, when Christ comes to convert; these are they that keep a man from turning. All the great ordnance that natural corruption hath lies in this tower of the mind, (as Aristotle called the soul, *arx animæ*.) As for other lusts, reason itself is against them, and the more reason a man hath, the more the folly of them is discovered; but for these lusts there is a great deal of reason. A man shall lose but his humour in parting with the one; but he loseth his honour, his repute, and the like, in parting with the other. Other lusts do not persuade by reason; no, reason is fain to condescend unto them, because they please the man and he can have no other happiness, but reason itself is against them; but now for the lusts of the mind, all the strength of reason takes part with them.

And therefore let me give you a third rule also, and that is this : That of all lusts they are the deceitfullest. You have that phrase given in Scripture, ‘deceitful lusts.’ Other sensual lusts do but deceive by promising more than they can perform, by tempting you; but these, a man may live in them, and not see them, and so they deceive most, for natural men judge nothing sinful but what hath a gross action. Now all such aerial lusts as these, which are the lusts of the mind, have no such gross action, nay, the objects of them are things lawful, yea, commendable. Other lusts in the

sensitive part are more turbulent, more violent, and so more discernible, and in that respect they deceive least. Like poison that is in the bowels, which makes a man roar, and so is more discerned than poison taken in at the nose, into the head, which kills before it is felt, because it strikes that part which should feel; so the lusts of the mind, being seated in that part which should discern, possessing that part, they take the senses away, and in that respect deceive most. The eye sees not the bloodshed that is in itself, but will see a spot that is on the hand, or upon another member. The understanding doth not so easily, being corrupted, reflect upon itself; therefore the lusts of the mind are more deceitful.

And lastly, Of all lusts they are the worst lusts, as having the most sinfulness in them; for the greatest idolatry is here. Therefore, both in the Colossians and in the Ephesians, you shall find that when he speaks of covetousness, which is an intellectual lust, still he puts a difference, and an emphasis upon it, from other lusts. ‘Covetousness,’ saith he, ‘which is idolatry;’ because the greatest idol is that which the mind is set upon, and because that is a lust of the mind, he puts that emphasis upon it. Other lusts are idolatry too, but they are but outward idolatry; this is inward, and so the worst of the two. And so much now in brief for that which I thought to speak more concerning the fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind. I come now to the latter part of the verse:—

And were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.—The general scope of the Apostle in these words—that I may give you that first—is to make a general conclusion concerning the corrupt estate of man by nature, not only in respect of original sin, though that is eminently intended, but as involving all that he said before. It is, I say, a general conclusion that involveth all that he said before, with an addition of these three things—

1. With an addition of the first cause of the corruption of all men’s hearts and lusts; they are so ‘by nature,’ saith he.

2. With an addition of the punishment that is due to men in this natural condition, both in respect of their natures and their first birth, as also in respect of all their sins which in that state they continue in; they are ‘children of wrath.’ And—

3. With an addition, or rather a conclusion, of universality. It is every man’s case, saith he. He had parted it before; some things he had said of the Gentiles: ‘You—you Gentiles—hath he quickened, who were dead in sins and trespasses, wherein in times past ye walked.’ Some things likewise he had said of the Jews: ‘amongst whom we—we Jews—also had our conversation.’ But now, in the close of all, he puts them both, Jews and Gentiles, together: ‘and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.’

I say it is, in the first place, a general conclusion that involveth all, not only because it comes in at the last, and so is as it were the total sum, but that same word *λοιποί* takes in all that went before; and were as well as others by nature thus and thus, namely, ‘we were all by nature dead in sins.’ We are all by nature in the state of nature, for so ‘by nature’ is also taken, as I shall shew you anon. ‘We all by nature,’ one as well as another, ‘walked according to the course of the world,’ and were subjected to the devil. In a word, whatsoever he had said before of lusts, or whatsoever a man is by nature, his intent is to involve it here in these words, and to bring down upon all, all that he had spoken.

And as it holds forth a general conclusion, involving all that went before; so, secondly, it shews especially the original ground of all that corruption that is in men’s hearts: it is by nature, it is by birth, and it is our nature.

For it is clear and plain that his scope all along is to hold forth the cause of all the corruption that is in men : therefore he calls it the 'wills of the flesh and of the mind.' The flesh is the cause of lusts, lusts are the cause of action, and nature is the cause of both, of all. And therefore—

In the third place, you have the punishment due to men in the state of nature, yea, to men in their very first birth. They are 'children of wrath' in that state, for all the lusts and sins they commit ; and they are children of wrath even in the very womb, before they commit any actual sin.

And, lastly, he speaks universally of all, both Jew and Gentile ; 'we were all by nature,' &c. So you have the general scope cleared, and the reason of it. I shall now come to open the phrases.

First, for this phrase, *by nature*.

Pelagius, who was against original sin, gave this interpretation : that 'by nature' was meant *vere et germane, ἀληθῶς καὶ γνησίως*, they were truly, really, children of wrath ; so the Scholiast hath it, and so Cyril reads it also. And that interpretation we will not omit, although it is not the utmost meaning of what is here intended. For 'by nature' in Scripture is meant oftentimes, 'truly, really ;' as, for example, in Gal. iv. 8, Ye worshipped those that 'by nature were no gods ;' that is, those that were not truly gods, that were gods only in opinion, not really so. So by being 'children of wrath by nature,' is to be really and truly such. But that which makes this opinion fall short of the true sense is this : for to what end should the Apostle say they were really and truly the children of wrath ? There were none held they were in opinion children of wrath ; but there were those who held that they were so, not by nature, but by imitation or custom ; therefore it is to no purpose it should be brought in here to that sense.

The Syriac translation adds this : they were *plane, plene*, wholly children of wrath, not in one part, but in the whole nature. But that is held forth, as I have said, in the words before. For it was an observation I made, grounded upon the words in the last discourse, that it is seated in the whole man.

But to come to that meaning which indeed the Apostle aims at, and therefore I will call it the first, for I do but mention the other, which though they are true, yet they are not the ultimate scope of the Apostle here.

1. Therefore 'by nature' is in opposition to imitation or to custom, which yet is *altera natura*, as Aristotle uses the word (and so does the Scripture too) in the second book of his Ethics. Virtues, saith he, are not *φύσει*, are not by nature, as *νοτίαι*, as the common seeds of knowledge in the minds of men are. So that what is innate in us, bred with us, which we have from the principles of nature, which is interwoven with our natures, that is said to be by nature. And therefore now, in one word, according to all languages, that which is the inclination of any one, the natural disposition, that which a man is naturally addicted unto, is said to be by nature. The Apostle therefore, having spoken of the lusts of the mind and of the flesh in the words before, his meaning here is that these are natural unto men ; they are the very inclination of their minds, the natural frame of their hearts. And so now it hath an emphasis in it, that what we are by reason of original corruption, which he had called *flesh* before, is nature in all men. And though he only saith, we are 'children of wrath by nature,' yet this wrath must be for something ; for God is not angry for what is not sin ; therefore it implies that our natural disposition, all those lusts which he had mentioned, and that flesh which is the mother of these lusts, that is that which is man's nature. And so now the scope of the Apostle is plainly and clearly

this: further to aggravate and set out that corruption and sinfulness that is in the hearts of men. Ye are not only ‘children of wrath,’ saith he, and deserve eternal damnation, which was that that hung over your heads for all the actual sins you have committed, of which he had spoken before, but further, even ‘by nature,’ and for your very natures, and the inclinations thereof, even for the very nature that is in you,—he brings it in as a further addition and aggravation,—even for this also you are the children of wrath. ‘By nature;’ it is that which a man doth being left to nature; as in Rom. ii. 14, the Gentiles do by nature the things of the law, from their natural principles that are in them; so ‘by nature’ is that principle that is in a man that is *principium motus*, the principle of all his actions. For everything works according to its nature, as Aristotle tells us.

2. ‘By nature’ imports not only that it is a man’s nature, but that his birth is a cause some way or other, or a foundation, of his being thus corrupt. ‘By nature;’ it is taken for the nativity; it is φύσει, and it is all one with birth. As now, in Rom. ii. 27, the Gentiles are called ‘the uncircumcision by nature,’—that is, by birth, not in respect of their constitution, but in respect of a privilege that the Jews had by birth which the Gentiles had not; as privileges you know go by birth,—so in Gal. ii. 15, in opposition thereunto, saith he, ‘we who are Jews by nature,’ that is, who have the privilege of Jews by birth. And so Paul saith he was born a Roman,—that is, he was Roman by nature. In the same sense the Gentiles were called ‘uncircumcision by nature,’ too, that the Jews were called ‘Jews by nature.’ Now to me that is evidently the meaning of the Apostle here, and that for these reasons:—(1.) Because he changes the phrase, which is an observable thing. In the second verse he had said they were children of disobedience, ἐν τοῖς νόμοις τῆς ἀπειθείας, but here τέκνα; which though it signifies a child at large, yet, more expressly and properly, it signifies a child begotten. His using that phrase here, in distinction from the other in the second verse, when he speaks of disobedience, imports that they were thus by birth. I will not trouble you to confute a criticism which Zanchy hath, because the confutation of it is obvious. Then, (2.) he adding besides that, ‘and were by nature the begotten children of wrath,’ as I may so interpret it. And, which is observable too, he doth not say, ‘which are the children of wrath by nature,’ but in the Greek it is, ‘which were children by nature of wrath;’ so as ‘by nature’ comes in between, to shew that they were thus by birth. And there is this third reason, too, why when he saith ‘by nature’ he specially means ‘by birth:’ because it is spoken plainly and clearly in opposition to that pride of the Jews in the privileges they had by their birth: for the Jews, you know, stood much upon it that they were the children of Abraham. Now the Apostle, as is evident, speaks point-blank in opposition to that. We, saith he,—namely, we Jews,—though we pride ourselves that we have Abraham to our father, we are children of wrath; that is, we are so by birth, as well as others; namely, as well as the poor Gentiles, whom the Apostle, in Gal. ii. 15, speaking according to the vulgar opinion of the Jews, calls, ‘sinners of the Gentiles.’ Though you stand upon it that you are the children of Abraham, and that you are Jews by nature, that is by birth, yet, as God told the Jews afterwards, you had a father before Abraham, in whom ye sinned, and so you are ‘children by nature’—that is, by birth—‘of wrath as well as others.’

3. ‘By nature’ is taken here for the whole state of nature, from a man’s birth until God turn him. He shews what they were, not only in respect of their first birth, but of that continued state which they stood in before they were converted, which we call the state of nature. And this is an excellent

place for the confirmation of that phrase. He doth not simply mean only their estate by birth,—for the Apostle's scope, and the Holy Ghost's, is always general, and in a latitude,—but he doth comprehend their whole state from their birth all their days, while they fulfilled the lusts of the flesh and of the mind. Whatever state they had by birth, whatever state they stood in during the time of their unregeneracy, it was all a state of nature; and they were in that state of nature children of wrath. So nature is taken, and so it is clearly taken here. For 'by nature' here in ver. 3 is spoken in opposition to what the Apostle afterwards saith, as Erasmus well observes, in the 5th verse, 'by grace ye are saved.' So that now the state of nature, and the state of grace, is that which the Apostle here intends. And that he speaks of an unregenerate condition, the words 'were by nature' import clearly; that is, while they were in a state of nature. His scope is therefore to shew what naturally, without grace, their condition was; and therefore, ver. 11, in the winding up of all, he speaks of the whole estate: 'Remember,' saith he, 'that ye were once Gentiles.' And thus the Scripture always speaks. Ps. lvi. 3, 'They are gone astray from the womb;' they were not only corrupt in the womb, but gone astray from the womb. So in Gen. viii. 21. speaking of original corruption, saith he, the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth; that is, even from a babe, as in Exodus the phrase is used, as I shall shew afterwards.

So that 'by nature' eminently importeth these three things:—1. That their natures were defiled with all sorts of inclinations unto evil; all those lusts of the flesh and of the mind which he had spoken of before, were natural unto them, for which they were children of wrath. 2. That the way of conveying this to them, or how they came to be so at first, how their natures were thus originally corrupted, it was not by imitation or custom, but it was by birth. And, 3. that all the while they walked in those lusts they were in a state of nature, under which, and in which, while they continued, till such time as they came into a state of grace, they were children of wrath. This, I say, I take to be the comprehensive meaning of the Apostle in this conclusion of his discourse of lusts.—So that now I have opened to you that first phrase, *and were by nature.*

The second phrase is, *children of wrath*;—

Which, as I have formerly said, is a Hebraism; and so, according to the Hebrew language, you read of a child of captivity, a child of the resurrection, a child of disobedience, and the like. It is either taken actively or passively.

1. *Actively*, thus: what a man is addicted to, what he seeks after, he is said to be a child of. As a man is said to be a child of wisdom,—'Wisdom is justified of her children,'—so wicked men are said to be children of disobedience, ver. 2; that is, addicted to disobedience, it is taken actively. So, in a way of opposition, Peter exhorts them, in 1 Pet. i. 14, that they would be children of obedience,—so the phrase is in the Greek, we translate it 'obedient children,' it comes all to one; but, I say, in the Greek it is 'children of obedience,' as here in ver. 2 it is 'children of disobedience,'—that is, addict yourselves, as children to such a father, to do the will of God.

2. *Passively*, thus: a 'child of the captivity;' that is, one led into captivity. So Jesus Christ is called the Son of God's love, or the child of his love, Col. i. 13. We translate it, 'his beloved Son;' but in the original it is, the 'Son of his love,' because that God hath cast his love upon him. So in 2 Pet. ii. 14, one that is accursed to death is called (we translate it 'cursed children,' but it is) 'children of the curse,' as here, 'children of

wrath.' So in Matt. xxiii. 15, he is made a 'son of hell,' worse than he was before; that is, one whose due hell is. As we use to say, such a one the gallows is his due; that is, if we should speak according to the Hebrew language, one that is the child of the gallows; so a son of hell, a son of wrath, a son of the curse. You have it also in 1 Sam. xx. 31, and in 2 Sam. xii. 5. So now, as before it is taken actively, 'a child of disobedience;' so here, a 'child of wrath' is taken passively: and both according to the analogy of the Hebrew phrase.

It doth sometimes imply one that is designed by God's decree to death and damnation; as, in John xvii. 12, Judas is called a son of perdition; that is, one who is ordained by God to perdition; as Christ was called the Son of his love, because he was ordained to be the object of his love. But so it is not here meant that they were the children of wrath by God's decree, because he speaks of men that were converted. Therefore the meaning is plainly this, that they were in a state in which they were not only worthy of wrath, but wrath was due to them, yea, according to a just sentence, wrath was pronounced against them; it was not only their desert, but they were in that state wherein wrath went out against them, they stood under the sentence of wrath, and were so adjudged. You have the phrase plain and express in Deut. xxv. 1, 'If there be a controversy between men, and they come unto judgment, that the judge may judge them; then they shall justify the righteous, and condemn the wicked. And it shall be, if the wicked man be worthy to be beaten, the judge shall cause him to lie down,' &c. In the original it is, 'If he be a son,' or a child, 'of beating;' that is, if he be one that is found that it is his due to be beaten, and that the judges have condemned him. So now, to be a child of wrath, it is one not only to whom wrath is due, but one that, according to the sentence of the great Judge, wrath is pronounced against, sentence is given forth. So in that place I mentioned before, 2 Sam. xii. 5, saith Solomon there, 'He shall surely die;' in the original it is, 'He is a son of death.' It was a sentence pronounced by the king, as of a judge that gave out a sentence. Therefore we translate it, 'He shall surely die;' he was not only one that deserved death, but one that was appointed and sentenced thereunto.

So now you have what is meant by a 'child of wrath.' It is one that is passively under, and obnoxious unto, and over whom the wrath of God hangeth, unto whom, and to which estate, the sentence of wrath and condemnation is gone out from the great King; so that he must alter his estate if he will get out of wrath.

If you ask me whose wrath it is; I answer, it is not indeed in the text, but, as I shall shew you afterward, it is the wrath of God, working eternal punishment. Wrath in Scripture signifies punishment as from a judge; as, for example, Rom. xiii. 1, 5, 'Be subject to the higher powers, not for wrath,'—that is, not for punishment's sake, which comes from the wrath of the prince or the magistrate,—'but for conscience's sake.' So that to be children of wrath is to be children of the punishment which the great Judge of heaven and earth hath ordained; and it noteth out that the wrath of God is the author of that punishment, as I shall shew you when I come to make observations. In Eph. v. 6, that which is here the 'children of wrath,' is there called the wrath of God. 'The wrath of God,' saith he, 'cometh upon the children of disobedience;' for the wrath of God, as it implies punishment, so it imports also that he is as the author and executioner of that punishment. So that, in a word, whilst that men are in this condition, or take men simply considered as they are by nature in their very

first birth, and while they continue in that estate, they are children of the wrath of God, and the wrath of God abides upon them, as John iii. 36. Wrath is their portion from the Almighty. And as they are children of the wrath of God, so of that punishment which his wrath and indignation will inflict eternally upon them, and they stand under the sentence of it. So that until their estate be altered, God himself cannot do otherwise, but he must out of wrath inflict punishment upon them. And let me give you one place to open it; see Job xx. 23, 29, compared. He mentioneth three manifold curses that are upon men, over whom the wrath of God hangeth; and saith he, ver. 23, 'When he is about to fill his belly, God shall cast the fury of his wrath upon him, and shall rain it upon him while he is eating.' And what is the conclusion in the 29th verse? 'This is the portion of a wicked man from God, and the heritage appointed him.' Mark, he is a child of wrath; of whose wrath? Of the wrath of God, that abideth upon him, that hangs as a cloud over his head, and God will rain it upon him while he is eating; and this is his portion, it is his due, nay, saith he, it is the heritage appointed unto him by God, a heritage which is gone out by a decree from God, either from his eternal decree, as Judas was a child of perdition, or at leastwise from a decree that goes forth out of God's court, out of his word, whereby he standeth under the sentence of wrath.—And so now you have the second phrase opened, 'and were children of wrath.'

The last is this, *even as others*. The meaning whereof, in one word, is this, only I shall give you a parallel phrase for it, We Jews as well as Gentiles. So you have it, Eph. iv. 17, 'Walk not as other Gentiles walk;' or, *even as others*, that is, even as all the rest of mankind, of what nation soever they be, circumcised or uncircumcised, bond or free; let them be born in what condition soever they will, noble or base, rich or poor, high or low, we are all by nature the children of wrath, we Jews as well as Gentiles Which doth imply these two particulars:—

1. The commonness of this condition; that it is the condition of all mankind, one as well as another, Jew as well as Gentile.

2. The equality of this condition; 'even as others,' in the same manner, in the same degree; others are children of wrath, so are we, we Jews, even as the profanest men in the world.

So you have the full scope and meaning, so far as the phrase goes, of these words: 'and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.'

I shall come now to the observations which do arise out of them, which will further open and explain them.

Obs. 1.—The first observation is founded upon that first interpretation I gave you, which was to shew this: That that flesh or corruption, which was the ground of all those lusts, which were the ground of all the sins in men's lives spoken of before; that this flesh and those lusts are man's nature. So, I told you, 'by nature' is taken, both in Scripture and common acceptation. It is a saying that Austin quoteth out of Plato, though, I take it, the place is not now extant in the works of Plato, because it is perished: *Homines natura sunt mali*—that men are evil by nature. Neither can they ever be brought, saith he, to seek after that righteousness which mankind ought to seek after. This was the speech of a heathen. It is, I say, a man's nature, as he is a man. 1 Cor. iii. 3, 'Whilst there are contentions among you, are ye not carnal?' That is, are you not flesh? are ye not corrupt? And what follows? 'Do not ye walk'—*περιπατεῖτε*—'according to men?'—that is, according to your kind, according to that nature and disposition that is in men. Everything acts according to its kind; thus to be carnal and subjected to

lusts is the nature of man, it is according to his kind. Therefore, to follow this phrase a little more, in Mark vii. 20 our Saviour Christ saith, 'That which cometh out of the man, that defileth the man. For from within,' saith he, 'out of the heart of man, proceed evil thoughts,' &c. That is, what cometh from the nature of man, from his natural disposition, from the intrinsical principles which his nature and heart is made up of, that defiles the man. Therefore a man is said to sin *de proprio*, of his own, as the devil is likewise said to do, in John viii. 44. And a man's lusts, as I said before, are called his own lusts. And as what comes from within, as all sort of sins do, argues this to be a man's nature; so likewise what a man takes in from without, what it is he lives in, what is his element, argues his nature too. As a thirsty man, you may know what his disposition is within by what he takes in from without; or, as it is with a fish, it is natural to it to live in the water, to drink in water: so a man is compared to a fish, that doth continually drink in water, in Job xv. 16, 'How much more abominable and filthy is man, which drinketh iniquity like water?' And hence now it is that men are never weary of sinning, nay, though haply they may spend their natural spirits in sinning, yet their lusts are never weary. As they cannot cease from sin, as Peter saith, so they are never weary in it. Why? Because it is their nature, it is natural to them to sin. As the eye, because it is natural to it to see, is never weary of seeing; the eye indeed may be weary thus, for want of bodily spirits, and so men may be weary of sinning; but if there could still come spirits to the eye, it would never be weary of seeing. Why? Because it is natural to it to see. And so it is with all the lusts in the hearts of men, it is their nature. Hence it is that infants will sin without being taught. 'A child left to himself,' saith Solomon, Proverbs xxix. 15, 'bringeth his mother to shame.' Do but leave him to himself, and his very nature will carry him on to it. And, Ps. lviii. 3, 'The wicked go astray from the womb, speaking lies.' A child that never heard a lie in his life, never knew what a lie was from another, yet he will tell a lie, he will do it from himself, and he doth it from the very womb; the nature of man will seek out these inventions, as Ecclesiastes hath it, chap. vii. 29.

You may see the reason therefore—besides what is matter of humiliation, which I shall mention afterwards—why grace, though it be in a man's heart, yet doth not thrive there, further than the Holy Ghost doth in a supernatural way accompany it; and why sin thrives so fast. The reason is, because sin is thy nature, it is that which thou hast as thou art a man; thou walkest as a man whilst thou sinnest. That which Æsop said to his master, when he came into his garden and saw so many weeds in it, is applicable unto this. His master asked him what was the reason that the weeds grew up so fast and the herbs thrived not? He answered, The ground is the natural mother to the weeds, but a stepmother to the herbs. So the heart of man is the natural mother to sin and corruption, but a stepmother to grace and goodness; and further than it is watered from heaven, and followed with a great deal of care and pains, it grows not.

And likewise, if it be thy nature, walk in a continual fearfulness of it; though thou hast mortified a lust never so much, yet there is a root remaining, as Job hath it, chap. xiv. 8, 'Though the root thereof wax old in the earth, and the stock thereof die in the ground; yet through the scent of water it will bud, and bring forth boughs like a plant.' So it is with us. Why? Because it is nature. Therefore fear in all thy ways. I was afraid, saith David, Ps. xxxviii. 16, lest my foot should slip. And in ver.

18, that which we translate, 'I was sorry for my sin,' I find that it is, I was 'cautelous,' I was 'fearful' for my sin, fearful still lest I should slip: I will declare it, and confess it, use all means against it, because it is my nature.

And you see the reason also why that corruption is never got out of you; no, not till you die. Why? Because it is involved, it is blended, it is mingled with your nature; it is like the ivy in the wall,—it is the old comparison that the fathers used, but I shall give you another. It is like the leper's house in Lev. xiv. 45. The leprosy could never be got out till house and all were pulled down. It is a note of that sin that dwells in us, as the Apostle's phrase is, Rom. vii. 17. It is enwrapped in thy nature, that thou wilt never get it out. Like a house that standeth upon a foundation that hath saltpetre in it, it will never be got out, do what you can; so is it here.

Obs. 2.—The second observation is this: That to sin, as it is thy nature, thy natural inclination, so thou hast it by birth; for so I told you, 'by nature' is also taken for birth, and it is clear to be the Apostle's scope here. For he had shewn all the external causes of sin, the world and the devil; the internal cause, the flesh, which causeth lusts. Now what is the cause of this flesh? Nature, saith he, your birth. 'And were by nature,' that is, by birth, 'children of wrath, as well as others.' I need not quote many places for it, the Scripture is abundant in it. 'Man born of a woman,' saith Job, 'is filthy and abominable.' And, 'that which is born of the flesh is flesh.' And not only that which is born, but that which is conceived. So saith David, Ps. li. 5, 'I was conceived in sin.' And his meaning is, to shew that not only as soon as he was born he was sinful; but, saith he, I was sinful too in my very conception. Look, when first I had the nature of man communicated to me, then was I a sinner; that which conveyed my nature to me, as birth doth, and conception doth before birth, that which did constitute me a man, did constitute me a sinner likewise, made me a sinner. Therefore men are not only said to be 'transgressors from the womb,' as in Isa. xlvi. 8, and to 'go astray from the womb,' as in Ps. lviii. 3, but in the womb also; for so, you see, David speaks of himself. Austin, who was one of those that most cleared this doctrine of the corruption of man by nature, against Pelagius that called it in question,—for God doth clear truths still as they are controverted,—forbore on purpose to call it natural sin, or sin in man's nature, because if it should be so called, the Manichees, that held there was a God which was the cause of all evil in man's nature, would have been emboldened and encouraged by it in their error; therefore he called it original sin: for he was the first that gave it that title, though it agrees with the Scripture; he might have called it the other, for it is all one. And he called it so, not only because it is the original of all sin else, the womb in which all sin is conceived,—'When lust hath conceived,' saith James, chap. i. 15, 'it bringeth forth sin,'—but chiefly because it is *ab origine* in man, from the time that the foundation of a man's nature is laid. That which at once giveth him his nature, gives him sin with it; it is from the very first moment of conception, elder indeed than that which we call birth, or his being brought forth out of the womb into the world; it is when a man begins first to be a man, and must necessarily be then.

Now when he saith, 'we are by nature'—meaning by 'nature' a man's birth—'the children of wrath,' it implies two things. It implies that whatsoever is sin is conveyed to a man in his conception; and that he hath it

by nature, one part of the sinfulness as well as the other. Both these I am to open and to make good. The Apostle doth not speak here merely of our inherent corruption; but if there be any other sinfulness which a man contracts by birth, he hath it by nature. Now, you know that our divines do make, and most truly and rightly according to the Scriptures, a twofold sinfulness, which we have hereditary to us, as from our first parents. The first is, the guilt of that first act of sinning which Adam committed; and the second is, an inherent corruption, or 'flesh,' the inclinations to all sin, derived as the punishment of the guilt of that fact. Here therefore lies two things before us, for the Apostle plainly means both; for whatsoever makes a man a child of wrath, obnoxious to the wrath of God in his first conception, that is it he intendeth. Now it is not only inherent corruption that makes us children of wrath, but it is also the guilt of that first act. Nay, we could never have had inherent corruption to be as a sin in us, if we were not some way involved in the guilt of that first act; and both these are by nature. Now, that we should have inherent corruption, that that should be propagated by birth and generation, there is a more easiness in it. Why? Because everything begets its like; out of an unclean thing you cannot bring a clean; it must needs be that such a nature as the father had, for inherent qualifications, such a nature the child must have. But that a man should be guilty of that act that Adam committed, that this should be by nature, and by the law of nature too,—which yet to me clearly the Apostle holds forth, not simply by a prerogative law of God, but by a law of nature,—this seems difficult. These two things therefore I would open to you, though briefly, yet so as to clear the point. I will begin with the first.

First, To speak in general, when we say the guilt of an act is conveyed by birth, by nature—

1. It is not, as some would have it, the sin of the act of generation in the parents, it is not that which is conveyed to the child. Some would have that the meaning of that of David, in Ps. li. 5, 'In sin my mother conceived me,' as if the guilt which cleaves to such actions were that which David intended. But that cannot be his meaning; for it is most certain that when Adam did first beget his son Cain, he did not convey to him the sin of that act of begetting, for the act itself is lawful, and whatsoever sin cleaves unto it is not that which is conveyed; but it was his first sin, the guilt of that, which he conveyed to him. Now, if Adam himself did not convey the guilt of the act of begetting, then certainly other parents do not; and David would never have humbled himself so for his mother's sin in conceiving of him, but it was that sin he was guilty of, and that pollution of nature that arose from thence.

2. It is not simply the coming as from Adam which doth thus defile our natures, or by which we contract the guilt of that act of his. For if you could suppose that a man or a woman had been made out of Adam after his fall, as Eve was made out of him before his fall,—mark what I say,—if God had taken a rib from Adam after he fell, and made a man or a woman out of it, this man or woman would not have been sinful. The instance of Christ is clear; for he is directly called the son of Adam, Luke iii., in respect of the matter he was made of, and made in the womb too; yet because he came not into the law of generation and conception in the natural way, therefore he was excepted, and sin could not seize upon him. So that it goes by birth, and by nature, by generation, that is certain.

Secondly, Therefore, to shew you how the inherent corruption is derived,

for these are but the two generals to both, that defilement of nature, that flesh that is seated in us—

1. It is not founded simply upon this, that there is a participation of like from like. That is not all the ground; it is a partial cause, but it is not a total cause. It is a cause, and therefore Job saith, 'Can a man fetch a clean thing out of an unclean?' But yet it is not the whole cause. Why? Because then every father, according to the proportion of that inherent sinfulness that is in his nature, should beget a child in the like proportion. I say, if that traduction were the total cause of like in the parent and like in the child, if this were the rule simply and wholly, then take a wicked man that begets children in his elder years, when he is more wicked, and hath more corruption of nature in him a hundred times than when he was young, those children would be proportionably more wicked than his elder children; and the more wicked men would still have the more wicked children. Therefore it must be by some other standing law of nature that is equal; and the standing law of nature, it doth not beget like in a gradual, but in a substantial way. Yet—

2. It is the common law of generation that like from like is the ground of the propagation of inherent corruption; and it was the justest law of nature that could be made. For God did put this difference between angels and men: angels should all be single persons, by and of themselves; they were all immediately created by God himself, as Adam was; but that which should convey the nature of man, the very substance of his nature unto man, should be generation, the same that should convey the substance of the nature of beasts to beasts; though I do not say as the soul of these last is propagated,—we shall open that a little afterwards,—but I say that which should make them men is the common law of generation; and man, if he will have his nature from man, he must be subjected to the common law of generation, which all the rest of the creatures are. Now what is the common law to all the creatures? Saith God, in Gen. i. 11, let everything bring forth in its kind. So you shall find it all along. He saith it of the very herbs, of the beasts; they were all to bring forth of their kind. Now if that man must have, and shall have by God's ordination, the very substance of his nature, the kind of it, as all other creatures have, then he must be subjected herein to the common law of nature, and like must beget like; it necessarily follows. Now, mark it, the law of nature hath its course, whether things prove good or evil. It holds in the common, it doth so in our actions. The Lord's common providence was with man when he wrought holily; the same common providence is with man now he works sinfully. He alters not the course of nature. So here, this being the law of nature, look what assistance there went for the propagation of man according to the image of God at first—in a common way, according to the law of nature—concurreth in propagating man's own image. I do not say that God is alike the author of one as of the other, but the common law of nature holdeth as well in the one as in the other. I shall clear these things more, I hope, hereafter. Nay, my brethren, the law that man should beget his like was so strong a law of nature, whether man's nature should prove good or prove evil, that God himself, unless by grace, could not help it. I speak according as God binds himself to the course of providence, for God works not by prerogative. 'Let everything bring forth in its kind,' was the common law given, and the course of nature must hold, as well when man is sinful as when he is good. Help it God may by grace; but if you will go according to the law

of nature, by the same law a beast propagateth his kind, by the same law doth man propagate his like. Therefore by nature, and by the law of nature and generation, which this is founded upon, a man must be inherently sinful if he come from parents inherently sinful; a sinful man must beget a sinful man.