

SERMON IX.*

Gal. v. 25.

If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.

IN asserting the office of the Holy Ghost, or that work which it hath undertaken, in reference to the spirits of men ; we have already spoken of one great act of that office ; that is, the regenerating, and begetting anew of souls into God's kingdom ; spirit of spirit. We have now two other acts before us in these words ; that is, its maintaining the life, and causing all the right motion of regenerate souls. The former of these are contained in the supposition ; "If we live in the Spirit : " the latter is intimated in the inferred precept ; "Let us walk in the Spirit." Both are alike imputed to the Spirit of God here, and it is represented as the very element of life, and the spring of all holy motion to renewed souls ; which fills the whole region, as it were, with *vitality*, in which they converse, and draw their continual breath. The case is in this respect, much like in the new creation, as in the old, and in the sphere of grace, as in that of nature. It is said concerning the natural world, that it doth, as it were, subsist in God ; and it is spoken of the new creation here ; and both in one

* Preached February 13th. 1677. at Cordwainer's Hall.

form of expression: In him we live, and move, and have our being, Acts 17. 28. And here we read of living in the Spirit; and walking or moving in the Spirit. There is only this difference in the form of expression: that whereas we have three distinct phrases used to set forth the dependance of the natural creation upon God;—living and moving and having being in him;—there are only the two former used here in reference to the new creation, living and moving; living in the Spirit, and walking in the Spirit. The reason of the difference is obvious, that we have in reference to the former, that super-added expression, “and have our being;” because in this natural, material, sensible world, there are many things which *are*, that do not *live*: but with the new creation it is not so; here, to *live* and to *be*, are one and the same thing; and it is entirely and wholly a being of life. A collection of all vital principles compose and make it up what it is; and there is nothing in the new creation concerning which it can be said, it *is*, but lives not: for it is all life throughout. And as philosophy has been wont to teach, even modern philosophy itself, that creation and conservation are not diverse acts, but the latter only the former continued; and that God doth by the continual communication of the same influence, by which he created and made this world, keep it in the state wherein it is, that it doth relapse back into its old nothing; that there would not need a positive act of God to destroy the world, if he would turn all things to nothing again, but only to suspend and withhold the influence by which every thing comes to be what it is; so it is in the new creation or in the new creature, too. The very suspension of that influence by which it began to be, or to live (which is all one) must certainly infer the failure and extinction of the whole.

Think therefore what it would be if all vital influence were suspended and withheld on a sudden from this material and sensible world in which we converse. You might hereupon frame the apprehension within yourselves of the face of the earth all in a sudden bestrewed with the dead carcasses of men and beasts, the beauty and pleasant verdure of it all vanished and gone, and nothing left in time but a great clod of dirt! This great temple of the Deity which he inhabits by a vital presence, that diffuses life up and down every where, all turned into a ruinous heap. If I say, there were a suspension of vital influence, supposing an influence continued by which this material world should still be. Why, so it must be, proportionably in reference unto the new creature too. There is the *substratum* to be considered, which is a part of the natural creation, the soul or the man himself; but, that vital influ-

ence being suspended by which the new creature was made to be what it was, there is nothing left but a dead man, a dead soul ! The temple of the Holy Ghost (as we must suppose it to have been, beautified and adorned with the divine image on every side, in every part) laid waste and desolate ! Nothing now but darkness and confusion, and misery and death, there where God dwelt ! So the case would be, if we could suppose such a thing as the suspension of that influence, by which the life of the new creature first began to spring up.

And there is not only a parity in the cases, but in some respects, a sameness. For we must know that all divine influence is in one respect, that is, *ex parte principii*, one and the same, and only differs, or is diversified *ex parte termini*, according as it doth terminate. We cannot conceive the divine influences to be distinguished in their Fountain, that is, in the divine Being itself the Almighty Spirit, whence all proceeds and flows out. That Almighty Spirit, if you consider the operations of it, produces divers, but by an influence that is radically and in the Fountain one and the same. As in reference to those diversities of its operations that were performed to the church ; as divers as they were, they were all wrought by one and the same Spirit. The spirit of prophecy was not one spirit, and of healing another, and of tongues another, but one and the same Spirit did thus diversify its operations, according as the products were divers which were caused by it, and which it was afterwards to continue in that being which it gave. To suppose a difference or diversity of influence in the Fountain itself, the divine Being, were to suppose God to differ from himself, and to put somewhat in God that were not God ; a thing most repugnant to the simplicity of the divine Being. But the divine influences may be diversified terminatively, according to the subjects in which it is received. Nature is various in this, and that, and the other creature (speaking of the *natura naturata* ; as for distinction's sake, it is wont to be called) and the influences are diversified according to those diverse natures in which they terminate ; and according to the different purposes which the exigency of those natures doth require should be served and complied with. And so that influence, which originally and in the Fountain is one and the same, according as it goes forth to beget and continue a variety of productions of this, or that, or another kind, is an influence that gives and that preserves being to things concerning which it can only be said, they *are* ; it is a *vital* influence to things that *live* ; it is a *motive* influence to things that *move* ; it is an *intellectual* influence to things that are capable of *understanding* ; it is a *holy* influence unto what is *holy*, to what

it hath made holy, and is to continue and keep so ; it is *light*, as it terminates in light ; and *love*, as it terminates in love ; and *power*, as it terminates in power ; and holy gracious *action* as it doth terminate in such actions.

But it is the principle of such actions, the subordinate principle, here signified by the name of life, or included in living, that we are now to speak of ; and we shall speak of the action which proceeds from that life, and shew how that hath rise also from the Spirit, when we come to the latter part of the text. From the former part the truth that we have to observe you may take thus—The blessed Spirit of God doth continue and maintain that life ; whereof it hath been the Author, in every renewed soul. —We shall in speaking to this,—Very briefly open the words to you, that we may clear the ground which the truth recommended to you hath in the text, and—Shall next give you some account of the thing which is asserted therein.

I. As to the former, you must take notice,

1. That the *if* in the beginning of the text is not an *if* of dubitation, but of argumentation—"If ye live in the Spirit."—The apostle does not say so as doubting, nor was his design to signify that he had a doubt whether they did so, yea, or no ; but supposing or taking that for granted, it is only a form used by him (as it is common in arguing hypothetically) thereupon to reason with them from such a supposed principle. The *if* therefore signifies as much as whereas, or since : since or inasmuch as ye live in the Spirit, therefore walk in the Spirit. As in Col. 3. 1. If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above : If ye be, that is, "Since ye are ; it is the appearance which as professing christians ye make, the aspect which ye visibly hold forth to men, namely, that of persons united with Christ, and made alive by him ; since ye are risen with Christ, therefore set your affections on things above ; act and do accordingly." So we are to take it here, and it affords us a clear ground for a positive assertion, those who are christians indeed do live in the Spirit.

2. We must note, that to live cannot reasonably be understood as intending the first reception of the principle of life, but the continuation of that principle. This form of expression, namely, by the present tense, is commonly used to hold forth to us the continuedness of any thing ; when we do not say such a thing was, or such a thing will be ; but such a thing is, it notes, I say, the continuedness of the thing spoken of ; inasmuch as the present time is that which doth connect and continue the two parts of time, namely, the past and the future. And the continued state of this life is after the same manner expressed by the apostle in the—chapter of this epistle

to the Galatians verse 20. The life which I live in the flesh is by the faith of the Son of God, he means not, that he only first began to live that life by an influence received from the Son of God, but that he lived from day to day that life which he did live, that spiritual, divine life, by faith in the Son of God, who had loved him and given himself for him.

Nor again must we understand this living to signify the series of actions only proper to that life : for they are afterwards signified by the name of walking in the other part of the text. It is true indeed, that living in a very common notion of it, does denote the continued series of the actions of one's life, whether good, or bad, both in Scripture and in ordinary language : If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die, (Rom. 8. 13.) that is, if ye continue to act, or walk, or converse after the flesh, according as that corrupt principle doth incline and dictate, ye shall die. The grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that—we should live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world ; that is, act and walk and converse so. Titus 2. 11, 12. And in common speech we use to say such a man lives a good or a bad life, intending by living, the course of his actions whether good or bad. But this cannot be the meaning of living here for the reason before mentioned ; and should we so understand it, there would neither be argument, nor indeed congruity in the apostle's way of expressing himself ; for it would amount to no more than this : If ye continue to live in the Spirit, continue to live in the Spirit ; or if ye continue to walk in the Spirit, continue to walk in the Spirit. Wherefore it is necessary that we conceive a middle sense between these two, namely, the first reception of the principle of life, and the continued series of the actions of that life ; and that middle sense is, (as hath been already intimated) the continuation of the vital principle itself. If ye live, that is, if ye have the principle of a new and divine life continued and maintained in you, walk in the Spirit as those principles would direct and guide you to do. Again

3. We must note that by Spirit, or the Spirit, is manifestly meant the blessed eternal Spirit of God, the Holy Ghost. It cannot be meant of our natural spirit as is most evident : nor can it be meant of the new creature itself, which is in the Scripture called spirits ; (as we have had occasion lately to take notice again and again) for of the same Spirit which is here spoken of you have an enumeration of the fruits in the verses immediately foregoing : The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, meekness, temperance, &c. These we are sure, are not the fruits of our own natural spirit ; neither can they be said to be

the fruits of the new creature, for they are the new creature itself, those very principles whereof the new creature is composed and doth consist. It is therefore manifest that by the Spirit we must understand the divine eternal Spirit, the blessed Spirit of God itself.

And for that form of expression "in the Spirit," that particle, commonly denotes a causative influence, and signifies as much as *by*; as though he had said, If ye live by the Spirit. Many instances might be given, and have upon some other occasion been given, to shew that the particle *in*, doth sometimes signify *by*, and denotes the influence of an efficient cause. But then it must be noted too, that it denotes the part of an efficient cause, or, a causal influence with a great deal more emphasis than if another form of expression had been used. "If ye live in the Spirit:" Why it imports the continual vital immediate presence of the Spirit for this purpose, to maintain this life. "If ye live in the Spirit:" as if the soul had its very *situs*, its situation in a region of life which the Spirit did create and make unto it. As sometimes the continual present power, and dominion and influence of wickedness, or some wicked principle, is expressed the same way, by being in the flesh. When we were in the flesh, under the power and regnancy of any corrupt, fleshly principle, the motions of sin which were by the law did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death. Rom. 7. 5. And, Thou art in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity, as it is said to Simon Magus. Acts 8. 23. And, The world lies in wickedness: so as to be continually receiving in and imbibing wickedness, as it were on every hand. 1 John 5. 19. In like manner the soul is represented as imbibing life and vital influence on every part; agreeably unto which notion, some (and those I may reckon the best of) philosophers have been wont to say, that it is a great deal more proper to speak of the body of a man as being in his soul, than of the soul, as in the body; that the body is in the soul, as being continually clothed with vital influence on every part, and which it diffuses throughout, the soul being as an element of life unto the body all the while they do converse, life extending even unto all the extremities, unto the most extreme part of the body that you can suppose. So is the soul spoken of here in reference to the Spirit of God; though that very intimate union is frequently held forth to us in Scripture by a kind of reciprocal and mutual in-being of one in the other, and the other in that. "He that dwells in love, dwells in God, and God in him;" they do, as it were, inhabit one another. So it is with the Spirit of God and the soul that spiritually lives by it; it is in the Spirit, and the Spirit is in it. It is not so in

the Spirit, as if there were any thing of itself, more intimate to it than the Spirit is ; but the Spirit doth as it were clothe it with life, fill it with life, and is all in all of life to it.

So much therefore is now clear to you, that the truth which we have observed hath a very adequate ground in the text. "If ye live in the Spirit," since ye do so. It is a thing to be concluded, that the life of those who are christians indeed, who have ever come to be spiritually alive, is to be maintained and continued by a constant influence of the blessed Spirit.

II. Now that we may open the truth of the thing that is asserted and contained in these words, it will be requisite to speak distinctly,—concerning the life that is to be maintained, and—concerning the influence that maintains it.

1. Concerning the life to be maintained. Of that I have need to say the less because we have had occasion to speak largely of it heretofore. What it will be needful to say, you may take in these few propositions.

(1.) We are not to understand it of natural life, no, not even of the soul itself ; but we are to understand it of life in a moral sense, or if you will in a spiritual and divine ; I intend one thing by the expressions. It is called indeed the divine life, or the life of God in plain terms, Eph. 4. 18. Being alienated from the life of God, having no share, no participation in the divine life, in God's life.

(2.) As life in the natural sense is a principle of action ; so life in the moral sense is a principle of *right* action, or by which one is enabled to act aright. The soul of a man is naturally a living, vital, active being, it is naturally so, that is, it belongs to its very essence to be capable of acting. But to be disposed to act aright, though that was in some respect natural to it too, yet it was not inseparable, as sad experience has taught us all. Though the spirit of a man be a living, and consequently an active being, made such by God in the first constitution of it, it is not to be supposed that he turned such a being as this loose into the world, when he made it, to act at random and according as any natural inclination might carry it, or external objects move it, this way or that ; but it being not only a living, an active substance, but intellectual also, and thereby capable of government by a law, that is, of understanding its Maker's will and pleasure, and directing the course of its actions agreeably thereto, God hath thereupon thought fit to prescribe it a law, or set it rules to act and walk by. Now the mere power to act is life natural, but the disposition or ability to act aright is a supervening life, by which the soul is as it were contempered and framed agreeably to the

law by which it is to act, or the divine government under which it is placed.

(3.) The prime and fundamental law which enters the constitution of the divine government over reasonable creatures is, that they love the Author of their beings, his own blessed self, above all things ; and consequently as that love doth dictate most directly, that they be devoted and subject unto him as the supreme authority, and that they delight and take complacency, and seek rest and blessedness in him as the supreme good ; both which are included in that one root or principle of love. I am to love him, and love him above all, and then I do of course willingly and with cheerfulness devote myself to him, being acted by the power of that love so to do, and seek blessedness in him as the most suitable, the most agreeable good to my soul.

This is but the very sum and substance of the first commandment, which we are to look upon as fundamental to all the rest : for it were a vain thing to prescribe any farther laws as a God to those who will not take him for a God to them.

This was therefore the natural method to begin the law, the frame of laws and constitution of government, over reasonable creatures with this grand precept, "Thou shalt have no other God but me." That is, "I will be to thee the prime object of thy love, which love shall make thee devote thyself to me, and then make thee delight and take complacency in me as the supreme, both authority and goodness." Wherefore,

(4.) This life which we are now to consider as to be maintained, must principally and chiefly consist in the love of God ; that is, a propension of soul towards him above and beyond all things else. It is a conformity unto that grand precept, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength ;" a direction or bent of spirit towards God. So long, or so far a person is said to live spiritually, as the main bent of his heart is toward God. If he fall from God, or in what degree soever he doth so fall, so far he dies ; there is a gradual death according to all the gradual declensions of the heart from God. God is the great term of this life, as we have had occasion to inculcate formerly. When it is intended to be spoken of, it is not spoken of as an absolute thing, but is distinctly spoken of as a life that relates and refers to God. Alive to God, (Rom. vi. 11.) and it follows, ver. 13, Yield yourselves unto God as those that are alive from the dead, yield yourselves living souls unto God. And the apostle speaking of that life, which he says he did live by faith in the Son of God ; (Gal. ii.) speaks of it as a life terminating upon God, "I through the law am dead unto the law

that I might live unto God, ver. 19, in the next verse to which you read, "The life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God," it is a life that comes to me from and through Christ, and points my soul directly upon God, so as that I live to him.

(5.) This life doth also comprehend all other gracious principles beside that great radical one of love to God, which suit the spirit of a man to all the other parts of the divine law, or all the other laws besides. Whatsoever gracious habit or disposition doth attempt and reconcile my spirit to this or that part of the divine will revealed in his law, that I must understand to be a principle included within the compass of this life to be maintained. For we find the expression used to signify the impress of the whole frame of holiness upon the soul; it is but a diverse expression of the work of the new creature, which we find expressed again and again in Scripture by putting the law in men's hearts. To put the law into the heart, why, that is to form the new creature there, and so continue that impression upon the heart and maintain it there, or to continue the life of the new creature in the soul. Whence therefore that law so impressed and made habitual in the spirit of a man is called the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, Rom. 8. 2. And hence also those fruits of the Spirit which we find mentioned in this chapter and immediately before the text, are to be conceived as so many vital principles all belonging to the constitution of the new creature, and all of them serving to conform the spirit of a man unto the divine law. After the mention of all those several principles which are called the fruits of the Spirit, it is said, "If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit," that is, if we have all these fruits which are so many living principles put by the Spirit of God into us, if we have them, and they are continued and kept alive in us; then let us walk in the Spirit; act and do according to these principles.

(6.) We must farther note, that not only the continued being of all those vital principles which are called the fruits of the Spirit, but also the gradual improvements of their life, vigour, liveliness do all belong unto this life considered according to the more perfect state of it. For there is no degree of this or that thing, but hath the nature of the thing in it, and doth belong to the nature of the thing. And therefore I say, that by life here we must understand not barely the being of these principles continued in the soul, but supposing that the soul hath been improved and grown unto some strength and vigour, whatsoever maintenance it is to expect of that good state unto which it is arrived, that is under the name of life, here attri-

buted to the Spirit, as it is its proper work to hold the soul in life ; according as we use to say, speaking concerning the natural life, *non vivere, sed valere vita est*, merely not to be dead, is hardly worth the name of living ; but to be in health, to be strong, and lively and vigorous. We must conceive it to be within the compass of the Spirit's work, and therefore we put it within the compass of the object to keep up souls in a lively and vigorous state, and not only having put vital influences into them, merely to preserve them from being extinct. When we find that severe animadversion, Rev. 3. 1. Thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead, it appears by what follows that he doth not mean by death there, simple death, as if there was nothing of life left, but a gradual deadness, a very languishing state ; for it follows, " Strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die," (ver. 2.) implying that to live so languid a life was hardly worth the name of living ; they were rather to be called dead, than living, while the case was only so with them. Therefore though it be true, that such a languishing is that which doth befall many a christian who hath the *root* of life in him, yet if it be better with any, and if they be continued in a better state, it is to be attributed to the Spirit of God ; they " live in the Spirit." If they live more prosperously, if their souls flourish, and are in a good condition, and are kept on therein, it is all owing to this Spirit ; but it is owing to men's ownelves if they be in languishings and decays, that they conform not themselves to the rules and methods of the Holy Ghost in which they are to expect, and according to which they may look for its supplies, whereof we shall have occasion hereafter to speak.

(7.) This life must be understood to include too, not only the principles of grace, and the vigour and liveliness of those principles ; but also the consolations, the pleasures, the grateful relishes of divine and spiritual things which are proper to the new creature also. For it is usual to distinguish both of the life of grace, and the life of comfort, as comprehended under the same name of life in the general. We many times find the expression used to hold forth to us any consolation that a good soul hath given into it upon whatsoever spiritual account. We live, says the apostle, if ye stand fast in the Lord, 1 Thes. 3. 8. It is as a new life to us, a revival upon a distinct and superadded account, unto whatsoever doth more naturally and necessarily concern the very being of our life. And therefore according to what measures and degrees such pleasures, and consolations, and joys are afforded unto good souls ; we must understand them all attributed unto the Spirit

of God, under the expression of our living in the Spirit, or living by it.

(8.) As the tendency of this life is towards God as the term of it, so the root of it is from God, as the great Author and Fountain of it. It must be understood to be the life of God, or the divine life, upon both these accounts, not only as it is a life that terminates upon him, but as it is a life that rises and springs from him, even in the very first rise of it: for none can tend towards God but by him, by a power and inclination that is received from him, by which he draws and acts the soul towards himself. As was noted before, that very life by which the apostle says he did live to God, he says he received it by faith from the Son of God, who had loved him, and given himself for him. And therefore,

(9.) This life doth necessarily suppose union with God, with Christ and with the Spirit of God. He that is joined to the Lord is one spirit, 1 Cor. 6. 17. Whosoever it is that is joined to the Lord, is caught into a union of spirit with him, and that Spirit is the continual source of life to him. It is not only vain and unintelligible, but most monstrously blasphemous to imagine such a thing concerning this union as if it were an essential union with God, or a personal union with any of the persons in the Godhead: the former would make any one God; the latter would make us more one with that person, than the persons are with one another; for we cannot say that the person of the Father is the person of the Son, or that the person of the Son is the person of the Holy Ghost, the union is in essence, not in person. And therefore to talk as some have done of being personally united to Christ, or with the Spirit of Christ, imports as if they were more one with Christ, than Christ is one with the Father, or than the Father is one with the Spirit; for personal union is that, the result whereof is one person; and so the two natures of Christ are united. But a real union there is of those, who live this divine life, with him who is the great origin and principal of it; for it were a most unreasonable and unintelligible thing, that a man should live by a principle of life that is disunited from him. There must always be a union between the thing which lives, and that which it lives by. I cannot live by a vital principle that is remote from me, or wherewith I am not, in one sense or another, united. And it were very absurd to think that such words should be put into the Bible to signify nothing, or carry no sense with them, "He that is joined to the Lord, is one Spirit." Nor can that union, though it doth not signify so much as an essential, or a personal union (both which as I have said to you, are absurd and blasphemous) carry

so little as a mere presence of God, for he is equally present to all, more intimate to every creature than it is to itself; but it doth over and beside carry this, that there is a divine presence specified by such ends, for which it is vouchsafed upon such peculiar terms, upon which such a presence is not vouchsafed to others; that is, he is present to them with whom he is thus united, as a spring and principle of life to them; he is present for this very purpose, to form them for himself, to incline, and to continue their souls inclined towards himself, and so more and more gradually, to dispose and fit them to glorify him, to be the instruments of his glory and to be glorified with him, or to be the subjects of his glory; this is the special end for which he is present, and which doth distinguish his presence. For we cannot (as was said before) suppose that *ex parte Dei*, on God's part, one part of himself can be more present than another, for that were to make God to differ from himself; but, with reference to the effects and ends, which such an influential presence doth work, there is a difference; he is present so, as to do such a work in those, to whom he is thus present, as he will not, as he doth not do in others; so as to be the continual spring of such motions, and, such workings and tendencies, as others, where he will not so exert his influence, are strangers to. And then he is present with them too upon terms suitable to those ends; that is, as having bound himself to them to be their God, and so to be all that to them which it belongs to him to be, as he undertakes to be the God of any. He is their God, engaged to be with them by his continual vital presence through time, and in all eternity. Such a union, that is, an intimate presence for such purposes, and upon such terms, is supposed in this life, and therefore must be supposed to be maintained and continued all the while this life is continued; that is, the soul is held with God and kept close to him by bonds of union, kept firm and tight between him and them.

Thus you have some account of the first of these heads which we proposed to open to you, namely, the life to be maintained. It would become us to make some present reflection upon what hath been said at this time; and that is, since we have heard so much said concerning such a life as this, (and more heretofore) "certainly there is such a life." The thought offers itself, that such a life is not merely talked on, or is not a mere empty notion, but there must certainly be such a real thing. This distinct sort of life, though besides what other kinds of life are more obvious to the common notice of the world, is indeed a hidden life, a secret life, your life is hid with Christ in God, Col. 3. 3. But the hiddenness of the

thing doth suppose it to be, for that which is not, cannot be hid; so far is it from carrying a supposition or an inference that it is not. We ought therefore to possess our souls of this apprehension (think men of this matter what they will) there is really a certain sort of life which doth distinguish a holy man from a mere man, as truly, as there is a natural life which doth distinguish a mere man from a carcass, from the deserted trunk and body of a man. And when we consider so, how can we forbear to lay our hands upon our hearts, and ask ourselves the question; "Do I live this life, yea, or no? Do I feel myself to live? Do I feel an inclination and bent of heart towards God: some principles of life, springing up from that divine root, which carries my soul towards that blessed object: that I am acted from God to God in my ordinary course?" We cannot have a greater question or of more concernment in all this world, to deal with our souls about, and therefore let it be seriously thought of.

SERMON X.*

WE are upon the first act of the Holy Spirit in reference to souls born of it, held forth to us in this scripture, namely, in the supposition, from whence we have observed—That the blessed Spirit of God doth by its own influence maintain the life, whereof it hath been the Author unto regenerate souls.

And here we propounded to speak, —of the life to be maintained, and—of the influence which maintains it. Of the former we have spoken already and are now to go on

2. To the latter. Concerning which we shall—shew what kind of influence it is ; and—how it is ascertained unto regenerate souls. Or, give you some account of the nature and of the certainty of it.

(1) Of the former you may have some account by considering such properties of it as those that follow, namely,

[1.] It is a most free and arbitrary influence. It is a most gracious influence you know, in the very notion whereof the purest liberty is implied, wherein it has first to do with souls, as is subjoined to the Scripture before discoursed of in John 3 8. It is represented as “the wind that bloweth where it listeth.” In operations of this kind the Spirit delights to discover and magnify a kind of sovereignty and royalty. It is a very awful word which hath reference, as we find, unto that consideration, Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, in Phil-

Preached February 26th. 1677. at Cordwainer's Hall.

2. 12. The consideration is immediately added, that "God worketh in us to will and to do of his own good pleasure." And I conceive there are two things hinted to us in that expression, namely, that whatsoever he doth of this kind, he doth with delight, taking a complacency in it, and enjoying, as it were, his own act; "he exercises loving-kindness in the earth," and in no kind or manner of operation so as in this, because herein he doth delight. And it also intimates, that what he doth herein, he doth upon no obligation; he doth at the rate of most absolute liberty, so as that he might do, or might not do. *Liberrimum est quod potuit non fuisse, that is free which might not have been.* "He works of good pleasure," having no other tie upon him than what he takes on and lays upon himself; and therefore "work out your salvation," saith the apostle, "with fear and trembling." He works now, you do not know whether he will by and by, if you neglect him now. Therefore is the blessed Spirit mentioned with that distinguishing title of the free Spirit, Uphold me with thy free Spirit, Psal. 51. 12. It is not only efficiently so, as the great Author of liberty unto those souls upon whom it works effectually, and with saving operations, as is the sense of what we find said in 2 Cor. 3. 17. Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty, liberty communicated by it unto those, who by the Spirit of the Lord, as it after follows, beholding as in a glass his glory, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory. Whilst it refines them, it enlarges them, defecates them, makes them capable of ascending, and renders them some way adequate to a large, universal, all comprehensive good; it is not, I say, only so a free Spirit, but it is in itself free, a Spirit that so works as was not to be expected, and that cannot be prescribed unto. Who hath directed the Spirit of the Lord, or, being his counsellor, hath taught him? Isa. 40. 13.

[2.] It is a very various influence, in the degrees of its communication and operation. It may well be so, as being most free. It is not communicated alike unto all who have been born of this Spirit, nor to all those, nor to any of them, alike at all times. Some have more light and joy, more strength and vigour than others have; and the same persons have themselves their more lucid and turbid intervals, and in their time there is often a very quick succession of night and day; there is sorrow in the night, and a calm in the morning, and quick interchanges of such darkness and light, as in 30. Psalm. 5. Which variations do proceed partly, from sovereignty, as hath been said; but partly also from paternal justice. From sovereignty we may suppose, in great part, this Spirit comes and goes, even as it will, as to its more observable communications,

to discover its liberty: but oftentimes it varies the course of its dispensation, and the state of the soul with whom it hath to do, in a way of paternal justice. For as we know that there is such a thing as economical justice as well as political, among us, so there is a justice too which the holy God doth exercise in his own family, and among the children which have been begotten and born of him, as well as towards those who are under his government upon a more common account: and it is very meet and reasonable it should be so. It were a most incongruous thing, if he should be equally indulgent unto the careless and vain, and wanton, and extravagant, and the negligent of him and their own duty; as to the serious, and watchful, and diligent, and those who are most studious to please him, and most in love with his presence. He doth in his displeasure many times withdraw and hide himself, for the rebuke of negligences and undutiful deportments towards him; and he doth upon the account of the same justice shew, or manifest himself (as our Saviour's expression is in John 14. 21.) for the encouragement and reward of those that do more closely and faithfully adhere to him, and make it more their business and study to please and imitate him. The Spirit is often grieved, and in a degree quenched by the carelessness, and neglects and resistances even of its own offspring, or of those who have been born of it; and then the discipline of the family doth require that they should be put to rebuke; and so its influence comes to be an often varying thing.

[3.] Yet it is so far a continual influence as is necessary for the maintaining of the root of this life, that that may not totally wither; and therefore at the lowest ebb of those who are the offspring of this Spirit, there is still a sustaining influence upon them. As it was very low with the psalmist in the 73. psalm, when he was just ready to throw up all: Verily I have cleansed my heart in vain, verse 13. He thought it was to no purpose to be any longer religious; he was become in the temper of his spirit so unlike a saint, that he judged himself, upon reflection, to be a great deal more like a beast. And yet he says in the 23rd. verse, that he had been ever with God, "Nevertheless I am continually with thee." Even all that while there was a presence of God continued, and he was even then held by his right hand. So are the souls of his held in life, which holdeth our soul in life, Psalm 66. 9. Though that might have another, yet it is probable enough to have a spiritual meaning, and there are passages in the context that may incline us to apprehend so.

[4.] It is a still, silent, a secret, and often an unobserved influence; such as by which no great noise is made, and many

times doth escape the notice of them who are the subjects of it. Their life is a secret kind of life, "hid with Christ in God," and by such a kind of influence it is maintained. God is near many times, when it is not known. He was in the very place (and we cannot think that Jacob meant it, by his essential presence, for that he very well knew, but by his gracious presence) and he says that he knew it not. As though he had said, "I little thought of God's being so nigh." Gen. 28. 16. And we may at least, allude to those words, in Hos. 11. 3. I taught Ephraim to go, taking them by their arms; but they knew not that I healed them. He deals so with those who are born of him, as even to teach them to go, and they know not that it is he that carries them all along. The operation of the Spirit doth very much imitate that of nature, it is in a very still and silent way that the sap is drained in by the root, and ascends up the trunk of the tree, and diffuses itself to every branch, so that we may see that it lives, but we do not see how. The case is with souls that are brought to live in the Spirit, as with very infirm and languishing persons, who have been consumed, and even next to death in a putrid and corrupt air; being removed into such as is pure and wholesome they revive, but in a very insensible way: so is this life preserved by a vital, spiritual influence, which is as pure air to them, a gentle, indulgent, benign and cherishing air; they live by it, and never a whit the worse, because it is not so turbulent as to make a noise.

[5.] As still and silent as it is, it is yet a very powerful and efficacious influence. The case requires that it should be so; for it is a great thing to maintain such a life upon such terms. A thing that is so purely divine, if it were not maintained by a strong hand, it were hardly to be thought how it should subsist in such a region as this, so every way unsuitable to it; it is a life continually assaulted, often struck at; a life employed in continual conflicts and crowned with many a glorious victory, and that implies a mighty power to be employed to preserve life and maintain it. When I am weak, then am I strong. 2. Cor. 12. 10. Sure he must be weak in one respect, and strong in another: weak, he must mean spiritually too: weak, if you consider the principle in itself, absolutely; strong, if you consider it in reference to the continual aids and supplies that are given in. And it is plain that the exercises of this life require, that strength and might should be employed to maintain it through them. Very difficult and hard things they are, which those who live this life are exposed to the suffering of, and merely because they live this life, and hold it forth that they are, in this sense alive: as no body goes about to wound

a dead man, there is no need of that. Therefore is that rapturous prayer of the apostle in Col. 1. 11, 12. that they might be strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and long-suffering with joyfulness; giving thanks to the Father, who had made them meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light. Made them meet, by making them sons, and to inherit as sons, or to receive the inheritance of the saints in light. They were born light, and of light, Ye were darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord, Ephes. 5. 8. Why, that being supposed, it required, as the apostle's prayer implies, an exertion of mighty, glorious power, to maintain this life unto that pitch and degree, that they might have a greater disposition to give thanks for what God had done upon them, to make them meet and capable subjects of such an inheritance, than to complain of a little suffering. "Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power," with such a kind of might as bears the very impress and image upon it of God's own glorious power itself; a might that has a glory upon it, and accords to its original: as you may suppose the effect, in such causations as this, to be very like to the cause, and to the productive influence. The new creature, as soon as it is born, is born to conflict, toil and travel; born for fight, and born for victory. Such were the heroes, the sons of God. One so highly born, we must suppose born for great things; not only to enjoy, but to perform; and there must be a power proportionable hereunto to go with this heaven-born creature. I have written unto you, young men, says the apostle, because ye are strong, and have overcome the wicked one, 1 John 2. 14. Whilst they were yet but young, they had so great a conquest to glory in. "Ye have overcome the wicked one," *ye*, calling them by the name of little ones, a lower rank being designed by that expression: he yet tells them, that they had overcome, because greater was he that was in them, than he that was in the world, chap. 4. 4. And in chap. 5. 4. he says, that whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world. The predication is so universal, that we can conceive no state of a person born of God, be he never so newly born, but he is, even in that instant, made superior over this world, hath got the better of it, made his escape from the corruptions of it, which would hinder him through lust, and hath it in a degree under his feet: and therefore it must be a powerful influence, by which his life is maintained. Who are kept by the mighty power of God through faith unto salvation. 1 Pet. 1. 5.

[6.] It is a connatural influence, or suitable to the nature of man both as reasonable and renewed. As reasonable, it doth

it no violence, I drew them with the cords of a man, and with the bands of love. Hos. 11. 4. And it is accommodated unto all the principles of the new nature. It is an influence of faith to faith, of love to love, of meekness to meekness, and of humility to humility, as was intimated formerly.

[7.] It is a co-operative, or assisting influence. Such as doth engage us in the endeavour of preserving our own life, and then assists or co-operates with us therein. As the matter is in reference to the reflex acting of the soul, so it is, in proportion, in reference unto the direct. As when he would know what is wrought and done, or what impressions are made within, the Spirit beareth witness with our spirit, in that reflex way of operation. Rom. 8. 16. So it, proportionably, doth in the direct way of operation to, it works with our spirits, and makes use of their own agency, in order to the maintaining of their own life. And therefore as you have heard in that now-mentioned scripture, that we are kept by the mighty power of God through faith unto salvation, so we are told too in 1 John 5. 18. that he that is begotten of God, keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not; he keeps himself from those deadly, mortal touches which would endanger his precious life; that is, he is his own underkeeper. We are every one to be a brother's keeper, much more to ourselves; but still in a subordinate sense, subservient to, and dependent upon that supreme one. Indeed it were a kind of a monstrous thing in the creation, that there should be so noble a life planted there, but destitute of the self-preserving faculty or disposition; whereas every life, how mean soever, even that of a worm, a gnat or a fly, hath an aptitude in it, or a disposition accompanying it, to preserve itself.

[8.] It is a regular and an ordinate influence. I put these together, because they have an affinity, though they may import somewhat diverse notions. The Spirit works according to rule, or agreeably unto the word, in what it does for the maintaining of this life. My Spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth shall not depart, Isa. 59. 21. The word and the Spirit go together among all this race. The Spirit breathes in the word for the maintaining of this life. And so it is the influence of ordinate, not of absolute power, which works so as that there is no proportion between what it works, and what it works by; it works by apt and suitable means, and applies and directs our spirits unto such objects as are apt to be nutritive, or carry in them a suitable aliment for the maintenance of this life. Why, our natural life is maintained by a divine influence too; we could not otherwise draw breath, or subsist a moment. But how is it maintained?

Not by miracle. Not in such a way as doth supersede all useful means for that purpose: but it is maintained by God's preserving and directing the natural faculties that belong to us, unto such objects as are suitable for the maintaining of natural life, and may be aptly nutritive thereof. He doth not maintain this life of ours without eating, or drinking, or breathing; by an influence exclusive of all such means, nor without apt and suitable means too: for it is not maintained by feeding upon iron, or stones, or by drinking of poison, or by breathing in contagious airs, but by what is agreeable to itself, and apt to afford a suitable aliment to it. So it is in the spiritual life also; it is not maintained by an influence that doth exclude apt and proper means, but by this influence the mind and spirit is directed to intend and converse with such objects, out of which it can draw nourishment, and which are suitable unto this purpose. God doth not maintain this life in such a way, and upon such terms, as that, though men mind nothing in the world else, but what the men of this world do, they shall live well notwithstanding. It is not strange if they who feed upon husks, who converse with nothing but shadows, and pant only after the dust of the earth, are very languishing souls. Things altogether insipid, that have no sap, or juice or savour in them, formalities of religion, doubtful opinions, disputes about minute and inconsiderable things, airy notions that are apt to drop, or distil nothing upon the spirit of a man, are not the things that this life is likely to be maintained by.

And this influence is such as doth work by likely and apt means, as it enableth the soul to savour those things which are called the *τα πνευματος* *the things of the spirit*, as you have it in Rom. 8. 5. They that are after the flesh, do mind (or savour) only the things of the flesh, but they that are after the Spirit, the things of the Spirit; and so they live by good, and suitable and savoury food, being made capable of savouring that food. As new-born babes desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby; *αδολον γαλα*, *that pure undecentful milk*, as the word there imports. 1 Pet. 2. 2. The way therefore in which the Spirit doth maintain and improve this life, and afford vigour to it, is by leading the soul often into heaven, and making it to converse in the invisible regions; and to forget this world, and that it hath any relation to it, when it converses with God in spirit, and is made to look (for it draws down its nutriment even by the eye) by faith into the things that are unseen and hoped for; whereof that faith is the very substance and evidence too.

[9.] This influence is gradually perfective of the whole soul. Such as tends to improve it; such as by which it is still grow-

ing up to the measure of the stature of a perfect man in Christ Jesus, Eph. 4. 13. We infer upon all that hath been said, that there is such a life as this. A very obvious inference, but it is very sad that it should be needful to make it. For alas ! how hardly and slowly does it enter into the minds of most, that there is such a thing, notwithstanding all those many and great things which the word of God is full of concerning it ! It is very strange that we should have such accounts in Scripture of the way of begetting it, of the nature and tendency of it, how it is maintained, what the operations of it are, what the enjoyments, what the pains which it doth at any time suffer, what its improvements, and what it shall end in at last, namely, eternal life ; and that still it should be disbelieved by them, who will not profess to believe the Bible a legend, that there is such a life. They must too certainly disbelieve that there is any eternal life ; for nothing can be plainer, than that the life, which shall never end, must sometime begin. But against so clear evidence there is nothing to be opposed, but ignorance and inexperience ; “ We know no such matter, and therefore we will not believe it, say about it what can be said.” But what strange folly is this ! What rashness ! Such as any prudent man in another instance would censure and damn for the most vain, foolish and preposterous rashness. If any man shall say, that he will not believe that there is in another, such or such an excellency, superior to what is in himself, because he does not experience the same thing in himself, he would be thought fitter to be hooted at, than confuted. We do not reckon brutes capable judges of the perfections and improveableness of the nature of men ; nor do we think one man a competent judge of what is in the spirit of another. What man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of a man that is in him ? so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God, 1 Cor. 2. 11. Such as have been exercised about such matters can tell you much of the pleasure of philosophical knowledge ; and divers can tell you of the strange things that are performable by mechanical, and chymical powers and operations. Who would not think that countryman very ridiculous, who because he knows nothing at all of these matters, will therefore deny that there are any men in the world, that are of more excellent skill and judgment than himself, about things of such a nature ? He does not know what belongs to chymistry, and therefore he will not believe there is any chymist. He knows not what belongs to astronomy, and therefore he does not think there is any such skill as astronomical skill. This is a piece of folly which confutes itself, when men have no more to say, why they will not admit

that there is a divine life, a life come from heaven, than that they feel in their own spirits no workings of any such life. They may know indeed how the case is with themselves ; that there is no such thing as life springing in them, that carries their hearts to God, and makes them still seek nearer and nearer union with him, thirst after his presence, and long to be near him ; that carries them up often into heaven, and fills them with heavenly joy and solace in the foretaste of that blessed expected state ; they may know, I say, that there is no such thing in their own hearts. But what ! will you therefore judge there is no such thing in all the world ? As if your knowledge were the measure of all reality, and there could be nothing within all the compass of being, but what must be within the compass of your understanding and experience. This is the greatest folly that can be thought of. We do not use so foolishly to conclude, when we hear of the pleasures and delicacies of such, and such a country spoken of, in which we have never been, that there is no such thing, because we have not seen it with our own eyes ; or, there are no such fruits, because we have not relished them with our taste. It will be therefore of very great importance to us to fix the belief of this in our own souls, that there is such a life ; when the Spirit of the living God hath so much to do about it, and is continually attending it as his charge. Doth it employ itself about nothing ? But the time doth not allow to proceed.

SERMON XI.*

WE are speaking of the influence by which the divine life is maintained; and have already shewn what kind of influence it is. We are now,

(2.) To shew how it is ascertained unto regenerate souls, or, give you some account of the certainty of it.

[1.] It is ascertained by the relation they hereupon come to stand in to God. They are his children, his begotten ones. You know it is naturally every one's care to provide for those who have been born of them, unto whom they have been (though but the secondary) authors of life and being. And the apostle argues even in this very case from this reason, Rom. 8. 13, 14. If ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God: as though he had said, "Do you think that he will not care that his own sons shall live?" And the argument is yet more strong and enforcing, if you consider how this relation terminates, namely, more peculiarly and remarkably upon our very spirits; for so you find he is called the Father of spirits in contradistinction unto the fathers of our flesh, Heb. 12. 9. Therefore the relation leads to a more special care and concern about the life of our spirits, and most especially about that life of them, which is most imme-

* Preached February 27th. 1677. at Cordwainer's Hall.

d'ately from him, and most resembles his own : not that natural life, which we have in common with the rest of men, but that life which is the more peculiar product of his own blessed Spirit, even as it is the Spirit of grace and of holiness. It is in that sense (as we have formerly shewn you at large) that we are said to be born spirit of spirit. It is only a production, or generation *secundum quid*, and in this peculiar respect, the thing produced being his own holy, living image, or a nature superadded to the human nature conforming unto his own in moral respects, and having been, in this so peculiar a kind, a Parent and an Author of life, it is not at all to be doubted, but the relation will draw with it the greatest care about that life which he hath given.

[2.] Add hereunto the paternal love which accompanies the relation. There is many times the relation of a father unaccompanied with the love of a father (though it is very unnatural where it is so) but here it is not so to be understood. It were horrid and blasphemous to think such a thought. Do we suppose him, who is the very Fountain of that natural affection which still descends and flows down, through all the successive generations of the world, in an ordinary stated course, from father to son, to be destitute of it himself; that there is a penury and want, or a failure in the very Fountain? Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him, Psalm 103. 13. He is the very Fountain and Spring of all that kindness, and pity, and compassion and love, that did ever reside in the hearts of any parents towards their own children, he put and placed it there; therefore we are to conceive it in him, as in its highest original, and its proper and native seat, and therefore fully and most invariably there. And our Saviour's argumentation to this very purpose, how much doth it carry of convictive evidence with it? If ye being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give his Spirit unto them that ask him? Luke 11. 13. And it is an instinct put into all that are of this divine progeny to be still looking up with craving eyes for this Spirit. It is the very sum of the desire of the new creature, it doth, as it were comprehensively enwrap all its desires; it is its very natural sense, "Lord, thy Spirit!" Though it is many times a silent and inexplicit prayer, yet it is as it were, the voice of that new nature, "more of thy Spirit." The exigency of the case speaks, the very langours and faintings of holy souls carry craving in them, though they have not so formed desires, that they can reflect upon them and take notice of them: even as the parched ground doth secretly supplicate to the heavens for

relief and supplies. Such we know the Psalmist's metaphor is once and again. And do we think that the Father of mercies (as he is called, as well as the Father of our spirits) will not hear the cries, and regard the necessities, even the crying necessities of his own (otherwise languishing and dying) offspring? He that feeds the ravens, will he starve souls? The very sea monsters draw forth their breasts, and do we think that there is less pity and compassion with God? The instinct is natural even in inferior nature, and stronger according as the order of being is more noble in which it is to be found. It is true, there may be among human creatures, some more than monsters, so prodigiously unnatural as not to regard the fruit of their own bodies. Lam. 4. 3. But suppose such a case; if a woman can forget her sucking child, and not have compassion on the fruit of her womb,—yet will not I forget; saith the Lord Isa. xlix. 15. I can never forget you: I have graven you upon the palms of my hands, as there it is explained. As if the design were to let us know, that he did make it a concern to himself never to forget, that he would always have a remembrancing token before his eyes, to make supply to the necessity of souls, as their case should require.

[3.] Some thought may possibly occur with some; that though it be true that a fatherly love doth commonly follow the relation, yet, where it hath been in much strength and vigour, possibly something or other may avert it, something may be done by a child to alienate the father's love; we have therefore a yet farther assurance from the divine wisdom and all-comprehending knowledge. From which it must be understood, that when he formed the design of raising up to himself, such a seed from among the lapsed children of men, he had the compass of it lying in view, and all things were present to his eye that should any way come to influence this design, or have any aspect upon it one way or another, whether to hinder or promote it: and yet it is manifest that he had such a design, and hath laid and fixed it, having all things in his view, even whatsoever might make most against it. Commonly if the minds and inclinations of persons do alter so, as that they come to disaffect, where heretofore they have borne a very peculiar love and kindness, it is upon some surprize that the alienation begins, something falling out unto them which was altogether unexpected: they did not think that such a one would have served them so and so, or have dealt so with them. But unto all-comprehending knowledge nothing is new. The blessed God had the entire prospect of his whole design, nor can we therefore suppose any thing that should alienate his paternal love, after he hath begun to exercise and express it, which he

had not obvious unto his notice before. He loves with an everlasting love, from everlasting, to everlasting: Having loved he loves to the end. John 13. 1. And whereas it may be also said, that though we should suppose a continuing love with a father towards his own children, yet he may be reduced to those straits that he cannot do for them as he would; the matter therefore is farther ascertained,

[4.] From his all-sufficient fulness. There is still the same undecaying plenitude of Spirit with him, that can never abate or grow less. It is a spring or fountain unexhausted and inexhaustible, that can never be drained or drawn dry. And therefore do we think, that those who have received this life from him shall not continue to live, when there is such love, and kindness, and compassion in conjunction with so rich and undecaying fulness? Methinks to any reasonable understanding this should make the matter very sure. Again,

[5.] We are farther ascertained by his express promise. And it is very considerable unto this purpose, how noted and eminent in the Scripture, especially in the New Testament (though we have divers instances too in the Old) the promise is of the Spirit. Indeed the matter is so represented to us, that we have reason to account, that as before Christ's coming, the coming of Christ was the great promise, and the hope of Israel; so after the coming of Christ in the flesh, the gift of the Spirit was the great promise, the promise of the gospel, Christ being (as then he was) actually come. It is therefore to be observed in Acts 2. 38, 39. that the apostle in that sermon calling upon his hearers (who were principally Jews, at least by religion) to repent, he tells them for their encouragement that they should "receive the gift of the Holy Ghost: For the promise is unto you and to your children." Observe the connexion; the giving of the Holy Ghost is spoken of by him as the promise, which did virtually comprehend in it the sum of the gospel: and virtually it did so, for if that were once made good, all would be sure to be made good. And our Saviour speaks of this as what would be a greater good, a good that would more than compensate his own longer abode and presence in the flesh among his disciples: It is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away the Comforter will not come unto you, but if I depart, I will send him unto you, John 16. 7. Certainly it could not be expedient to part with a greater good for a less; no, nor could it be said to be an expediency to part with an equal good for an equal: if then it were expedient that He should go, that the Spirit might come, that must be reckoned a good superior to his mere bodily presence and abode. And so the apostle plainly intimates in 2.

Cor. 5 17. compared with what goes immediately before, Though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more. He speaks of the matter with complacency, and with a kind of jubilation ; as though he had said, I do not desire to know him after the flesh any more, that is, in comparison of what he after speaks of, namely, that inward, vital, spiritual union with him, by which the whole frame of the new creation comes to spring up in the soul. "If any man be in Christ he is a new creature ; old things are passed away, behold, all things are become new." And it is promised in John 14. 16. that this Spirit shall be given to abide with them for ever, in most exact correspondence unto the end and purpose for which he was to be given, (ver. 19.) to be the continual maintainer of their life. That must be a very constant thing to us which we are continually to live by, for if there were an intercision of life for a moment it would not be recovered. From the privation of a habit there were no return. He says therefore, "he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever ;" so fully to answer the exigence of the case, that you shall be no moment destitute of his vital influence.

[6.] We are farther assured from the consideration of the divine faithfulness, without the consideration whereof the promise would signify little. For there are many promises made, and not kept ; but "he is faithful that hath promised." The promise of an unfaithful person gives very little assurance ; but we are to add to the consideration of the express promise of God, that it is most simply repugnant to the perfection of his nature to be capable of deceiving us. In hope of eternal life which God that cannot lie hath promised, Tit. 1. 2. And that eternal life is nothing else but this life, whereof the Spirit hath been the Author, continued and improved unto that blessed, eternal state, till it reach to that plenitude and fullness of life at length. A well of water springing up into everlasting life, John 4. 14. And God, that we might be assured that he will keep his word, hath added hereunto the ratification of his own solemn oath, that by two immutable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, there might be strong consolation to the heirs of promise, Heb. 6. 17, 18. And as I have said, this is the great promise, which is the very sum of the rest.

[7.] This continual vital influence is ascertained unto the regenerate by their union with Christ, considered in conjunction with—his being constituted and appointed a Mediator between God and them.—As he is Mediator, he comes to have all that should serve the necessities of their souls lodged in his

hand, and particularly to be the great treasury of spirit and life to them, and for them. All fulness, even by the Father's pleasure, dwells in him. But it may be said what is it to them, that Christ is full, that he is rich, that he lives, and that there is a fountain and treasury of life, and spirit in him? What! is it nothing to them? Why, consider that they are united to him, one with him. He that is joined to the Lord is one spirit, 1 Cor. 6. 17. And that the inwardness of this union might be with more life represented to us, it is said in Ephes. 5. 30. We are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. And do we think, that when such rich plenitude of spirit and influence is in that head, he will not diffuse it, and make it flow to those who are his members? that he will have any members to be cut off from him as totally dead?

[8.] This matter is ascertained from the consideration of the work inchoate or already begun. A great argument this, that the issue and good event of such a thing will certainly be brought to pass, even with wise, and prudent, and considering men. For there is no such man that doth begin a business which he will not carry through, if he be able. And therefore with the blessed God the argument is most strong. He hath been the Author of this life, by his Spirit, unto the souls that he hath renewed; and therefore surely he will continue, and carry it on, and bring it to the mature and perfect state at last unto which he hath designed it. See how the apostle argues in Phil. 1. 6. Being confident, (says he,) of this very thing, that he who hath begun a good work will perform (or finish) it until the day of Jesus Christ. He is not of that light and uncertain temper, as, having begun such an undertaking as this, about which he hath expressed so much concern, and wherein it did appear his heart was so much engaged, to throw it off. Indeed the lubricity of a man's spirit makes him very susceptible of such a thing as this, to begin a design, and then be sick of it, grow weary, neglect it, and throw away all thoughts and concern about it, and divert to somewhat else; but it is most repugnant to the natural, essential perfection of the blessed God to be capable of such a change. He will not forsake his people (as Samuel speaks to the mourning Israelites in 1 Sam. 12. 22.) because it hath pleased him to make them his people. Though he sometimes seems, for the awakening of us out of our security, and the engaging of us unto that care and diligence, which the case requires, to represent himself, as if he were contesting with himself about this matter, whether he should continue the relation, and the care that belongs to it, yea, or no; yet we see how he answers himself in Jer. 3. 19. How shall I put thee among the child-

ren, &c? I said "Thou shalt (yet) call me, My Father; and shalt not turn away from me." He resolves that he would with the relation, continue in them an instinct always to look towards him as their Father. "Thou shalt look to me as thy Father, and shalt not turn away from me, and so will I preserve all things entire between thee and me."

These considerations taken together are sufficient to ascertain to a regenerate soul that may be solicitous about the state of its own case, that the influence shall be continued, which is necessary for the continued maintenance of that life whereof the Spirit of God hath been the Author.

The *use* that we shall make of this at present shall only be in some few practical inferences, reserving the farther use till after we have considered and opened the other doctrine from the latter part of the verse.

We have already (so far preventing ourselves) inferred,

1. That there is such a life as that which we are wont to call the life spiritual, distinct from, and to be superadded to the natural life of men. I insisted upon this before, and therefore do but mention it now.

2. We may farther infer, that this life is of a most excellent and noble kind. Of this we are taught to make a judgment by the way of its being maintained. What is it maintained upon? They that live this life, live in the Spirit: certainly this is a very high way of living, and speaks the life that is to be maintained so, and only maintainable so, to be a life of a most excellent and noble kind. The excellency of any life is to be measured and judged by the objects which are suitable to it, and nutritive of it, or, out of which it has its sustenance and support. They that do live this life, as they do so, can breathe no other but this pure and sacred breath. They "live in the Spirit." They live no where but in a region of vitality, filled with vital influence even by the eternal Spirit: this is to live at a very high rate. Think therefore how excellent a life that is which the blessed God doth distinguish his own children by, from other men.

3. Since this life is here spoken of as in this way to be continued—we learn, that it must certainly at some time or other begin. And therefore methinks this should be a rousing and awakening thought unto those who, when they hear of the ways and methods of maintaining and improving the spiritual life, have yet cause to suspect or doubt, whether as yet they have the very beginnings of it. Methinks it should be a chilling thought unto such a heart, "How much do I hear (may such a one say) of mighty things, things of very great and vast importance, which are all impertinencies to me, they signify

nothing, nor have any suitableness in them to my case! How great things do fall beside me!" So it must be with every one that hath not yet begun to live this life. What! not yet begun? Do we find so many things so industriously inserted into the Scripture, to instruct and direct us concerning the ways of exercising, maintaining and improving this life, and I not yet feel the very beginnings of it! O how much behind are men unto the whole order of christians, of those that are so indeed and in truth, and may deservedly admit the name! "Some are gone so far, and I am yet to begin my course!"

4. We hence see how great a perfection is lacking unto un-renewed souls. How great a perfection properly appertaining unto the spirit and nature of a man, and which ought to be found in it and with it. Why, there is a whole state of life yet lacking to them. A dismal thing to think of! It might fill a man with astonishment to think that he should be so far short of what a man ought to be, because he is not yet so much as alive towards God. You have at large heard what that life is by which we are said to live spiritually, and that it is not to be understood in a natural but in a moral sense. For admit that the spirit of a man is of itself naturally and essentially a self acting thing, yet it were not to be imagined that God would make such a creature, and turn it loose into this world to act at random: life therefore in this moral sense is a principle of acting regularly and duly towards God. And though there be the natural powers and faculties that belong unto the soul of a man, as it is such a creature in such a place and order of the creation, yet while they are destitute of that rectitude by which they are inclined to God, or apt to act and move towards him by rule and according to prescription, such a soul may as truly and fitly be said to be dead, or those powers and faculties of it to have a death in them, as the hand of a man's body, supposing it to retain its natural shape and figure, but to be altogether useless unto the ends and purposes for which such an organ was made: if it be raised up, it falls down a dead weight; he cannot move it this way, or that: you will say, this is a dead thing; yet it hath its shape still.

It is strange to see how far some have gone in the apprehensions of this matter by merely natural light. You know we spake of this life comprehending, with the principles of grace, the consolations, and pleasures, and joys which are apt to result and spring from thence. Alone to have such a life, is not enough to denominate a person to be a living person, but to be well; to be healthful and vigorous and strong. I remember Socrates I find to speak thus (as Zenophon reports of him) among his dying discourses concerning life in this moral sense,

“Do you ask (says he) what it is to live? I will tell you what it is. To live truly is to endeavour to excel in goodness; and to live comfortably, or joyfully is to feel one’s self to do so, or to feel one’s self growing better and better.” He calls those, persons that lived pleasantly, who felt themselves improving in respect of the good temper of their spirits. And I remember Philo-Judæus (though he had opportunity for much more light than the other) giving the notion of a man, as that which he would have commonly to obtain, says, that “no one ought to be reckoned a partaker of the rational nature, that has not in him hope towards God.” So he speaks of religion; and says plainly, that “he who hath this hope in him, he only is to be called a man, and that the other is to be looked upon as no man.” That was his notion. We may so far comport with it as to say, that there is certainly a great perfection, belonging to the nature of man, wanting to them that are yet not come to live this life. And it is amazing to think that such a perfection is wanting by privation, in the proper sense, and not by negation only. As how dismal a thing were it, should we suppose all the rational powers and faculties to be on a sudden cut off from the nature of a man, so that he is become a mere brute, he cannot think a thought, every thing of reason and discourse is become alien to him! And if we should suppose next the faculties of the sensitive nature to be cut off, and he, who was before a rational man, had the power of reason and speech, and could move to and fro and converse as a man, turned into a tree; life he has, but no better life than that: and if you would suppose that life gone too, and he at last turned into a stone; these were most dismal degenerations. It is no disparagement at all to what was originally a brute, to be a brute, or to a tree, to be a tree, or to a stone, to be a stone; for it has all the perfection that belongeth to such a creature, or to the order whereof it is in the creation of God. But when this life is lacking to the soul of man, there is a perfection lacking which did originally belong unto this order of creatures. For what! Do you think that ever God made man to disaffect himself? that he ever made a reasonable creature that should not be capable of loving its own original, and the supreme good? And whereas we find now that men do universally make themselves the centre of their own loves, do we think that ever God made man to do so? Why, it is a dreadful transformation then, that is come upon the nature of man, and a most amazing degeneracy. It would startle us, if we would but admit serious thoughts of it, that there should be an entire state of life so generally lacking among men. And especially, if any of us upon reflection, laying our hands upon

our hearts, do feel no movings of such a life, no beatings of a pulse God-ward and heaven-ward that may bespeak and be an indication of it. To think that I have such a thing lacking in me, that doth belong originally unto the nature of man; not so light and trivial a thing that, if I had it, it would add some kind of perfection to me which might conveniently enough be spared; but a whole orb and order is lacking to me which belong to such a creature as I. Certainly it should put such a person mightily out of conceit with himself, and make him think, "What a monster am I in the creation of God! I am no way suited to the order of creatures in which my Creator hath set me; for that was an order of intelligent creatures all formed to the loving, adoring, and praising, and serving the great Author of their beings, with open eyes beholding and adoring his excellencies and glory; and I have no disposition thereto."

5. We may farther infer how great a misery is consequent, where persons have not begun to live this life; there is a great perfection lacking in this life itself, but it infers a farther consequent misery, that is, a being cut off from all conversing with God, a kind of exile out of that region, which is within the management of the Spirit, the region in which it rules, and which it replenishes with life, and with vital influence: for being dead towards God they can have no converse with him. If a person be dead, you know what is usual, "Bury my dead out of my sight." They are not fit to come into God's sight or to have to do with him. Would we like it well to converse among the dead; or endure to have carcasses lying with us in our houses, and in our beds, and to be found at our tables? Why, the case speaks itself; they who are destitute of this life, are quite cut off from God, and from all his converse; they are as it were exiles from the world and region of spirit and spirituality. O the strength and vigour, the joys and pleasures, the purity and peace of that blessed region! But these are excluded by their want of this life. The Spirit can only statedly converse with those that are alive. It steps out of its region (the case were otherwise sad with us) to make men alive, and to draw them within the circle, as it were, that they may be within the reach of its continual ordinary converse. But they are in no way of converse with the Spirit, as yet, that have not the principles of this life as yet planted in them. So that they are to look upon themselves as cut off from God, and as those with whom his Spirit hath no converse in a stated way. What it may do, what it will do in a way of sovereign grace is more than they know; but it is their great concern to implore it, that it would come and move upon them,

and attemper them to the region of life. They are otherwise cut off as from the land of the living, and have no place nor fellowship there.

6. Let us see the wonderful grace of this blessed Spirit. Well may it be called the Spirit of grace, Who hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace, Heb. 10. 29. We should frame our apprehensions accordingly of this blessed Spirit, as the light of such a scripture would dictate, and account it the Spirit of all love, and goodness, and benignity, and sweetness that admits such souls to have a livelihood in it. "If ye live in the Spirit;" O strange goodness this! Such impure creatures so lost in darkness and death, now brought within those blessed confines! That the Spirit of the living God should have taken them into such association with itself! As though he had said, "Come, you shall live with me: here is safe living, comfortable living." The communion which God holds with such souls is called the communion of the Holy Ghost in 2 Cor. 13. 14. That it should come and lead souls out of death and darkness into the divine presence, and say to them, "Dwell here, in the secret of the Almighty, and under the shadow of his wing. His feathers shall cover you, and his continual influence cherish you and maintain your life: here you shall spend your days!" This is a wonderful vouchsafement. How should we magnify to ourselves the grace of the Spirit upon this account! And yet farther,

7. We see the great hazard of withdrawing ourselves from under the tutelage and influence of this Spirit. It is done by neglect, done by self-confidence, done by remitting our dependance, done by resistance, by our disobedience, our little obsequiousness to the Spirit: and you see the hazard of it. Step out of this region of life, and there is nothing but impure and desolate darkness. We languish and die, if we retire, or recede and step without these sacred boundaries. To be confined and kept within them how great a vouchsafement is it! And, that it is undertaken that it shall be so! But though it shall be so, we are not to expect that this should be done without our care. We shewed you, in speaking of that influence, that it is an assisting and co-operative influence, among many other particulars.

Lastly, We may infer, that is a most weighty and important charge that lies upon every renewed soul. For think, how precious and excellent a life is to be maintained in them; that spiritual, divine life, a thing which both requires and justifies their utmost care: requires it; for what would a person think of it, if he should be intrusted with the care of the life of a prince, the child of a great monarch? If any of us had

such a charge committed to us, "I charge you with the life of this child, and to use your best care and endeavour for the nourishing of its life, and for the cultivating of it, and fitting it to the best purposes whereof it may be capable." How would this engage one's utmost diligence, that it is a very important life that is committed to my care. We have every one of us the care incumbent upon us of the life of a divine thing produced and brought forth in us, and which we are to apply the name first to, when we call ourselves the sons or children of God. There the name falls first; it is that divine thing that is his son, and we are only his sons or children upon the account of that. To have a divine life to maintain and cherish in my soul, as I may have a subordinate agency, under the Spirit in order thereto, how should it engage my utmost solicitude and care, that nothing be done offensive to this life, that every thing be done that may tend to preserve and improve it!

And as it requires our care, so it finally justifies it. A great many are apt to think, yea, and do often speak, reproachfully concerning those who do any thing to discover and hold forth the power and efficacy of such an inbeing life in them. To what purpose do these persons take so much more care than other men about their souls, and about their spiritual state as they are wont to call it? Why, they have a life more than you to be solicitous about; a life that you know nothing of; a noble, a divine life which it is incumbent upon them to care for. They wonder that this race of men do not run with them into the same excess of riot, when they never consider, these are things that would be noxious to my life. It may be you find nothing in you, unto which such things would be an offence: they would hurt my very life. This hath the holy soul to say to justify all that care and concern which he hath about the maintaining and preserving his spiritual life. And would not he be thought to talk every unreasonably that should say; why should such, and such men, who are observed to be much addicted to study, and retirement, and contemplation, why should they inure themselves to more thoughts than the beasts do? They, who apply themselves to a course of praying, meditation, &c. why should they do so more than the beasts, who, say they, do but eat and drink, and what is given them that they gather, and no more ado? The answer would be obvious from such persons: "I have a thing called reason in me, which I am to cultivate, and improve, and make my best of, which beasts have not." And is not that a sufficient answer; "I have a life more in me, than other men have, which I am to tend, and take all possible care of; a life capable of great

improvements, a life of great hopes, a life put into me upon high accounts, and for the greatest and most noble designs." And therefore if any of us be tempted by the licentious persons of the age to run their course, and do as they do, pray let us learn to distinguish our cases. The matter is not with us as it is with them. We have somewhat else in us ; a divine thing, which hath a sacred life belonging to it, implanted in our natures ; which hath given us hope, and which is in us the earnest and pledge of a blessed eternity ; an immortal state of life : And what ! Shall we be prodigal of this ? Is this a thing to be exposed, and ventured, and thrown away, merely to comply with the humour of a sensual wretch, who knows nothing of the matter, and is a stranger to all such affairs ?

SERMON XII.*

YOU have heard of a twofold work of the Holy Spirit upon such souls as it hath regenerated, or put a principle of spiritual life into, namely,—the maintaining of that life, which is mentioned in the former part of this verse, “If we live in the Spirit;” and—the causing, and conducting, and governing the motions which are agreeable to that life, in the latter part, “let us also walk in the Spirit.”—We have spoken of the former of these, and are now to proceed unto the latter, that is, to treat of that part or hand which the Holy Spirit hath, about the motions and actions of renewed souls; and these must be considered in a reference unto that life unto which they are con-natural, as you see they are mentioned in that reference in the text, “If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.” Therefore the latter truth which we have to note to you from this Scripture you may take thus;—That it belongs to their state, who live in the Spirit, to walk also in the Spirit.—In speaking to which we shall,

I. Shew, what it is to walk in the Spirit.

II. How it belongs unto the state of such persons so to walk.

I. What walking in the Spirit imports. This we may understand by inquiring severally into, and then joining together

* Preached March 6th. 1677. at Cordwainer's Hall.

these two notions ; that is,—what walking doth import ; and then,—what it imports to do any thing in the Spirit.—These being explained and put together will give us the full and true import of walking in the Spirit.

1. Walking in the general, you know, is an expression that signifies action or motion ; and sometimes it is taken in a natural sense, and then you know what it signifies : sometimes it is taken in a moral sense, a sense borrowed from the natural, because of some analogy and agreement between the one and the other ; and then it plainly signifies the course of a man's conversation. So it must necessarily be understood to signify here, according to the transumed or borrowed sense. And nothing is more ordinary in Scripture than to express the course of a man's conversation, whether it be good, or whether it be bad, by the phrase of walking ; as you cannot but have taken notice, such of you as have been conversant with the Scriptures, how often it is said concerning the kings of Israel and Judah, that they walked so and so ; such, and such a one in the way of his fathers, and the like : where the series of his actions, morally considered, is most expressly intended to be signified.

But that we may speak more distinctly unto the notion of walking, because it will give much light unto the matter which we have before us ; as, in general, walking doth signify action or motion, so it also carries with it some specification of that action or motion, and so doth import action or motion of some special kind. For, though all walking is motion, yet all motion is not walking : and therefore it is an expression that serves to be some way restrictive of the general notion of action or motion. And that we may speak more clearly hereunto, we must take notice of something that walking doth *expressly denote*, or that is more formally included in the notion of it ; and somewhat that it doth *connote* or import by a kind of *col-lateral* signification thereof.

(1.) There are some things which walking doth more directly and formally denote. As

[1.] It denotes a self-motion. A motion which proceeds from an internal principle in the thing that moves : though not originally ; for that cannot be supposed concerning it in a creature, but subordinately only. If one rolls a stone to and fro upon the ground, it would be very improper to say, that stone walks. It signifies motion from an internal principle a kind of self-motion.

[2.] It doth most properly signify a voluntary motion. There may be motion from an internal principle which is not voluntary, as there are many things that have a principle of

motion in themselves, which have not the power of will ; which belongs only unto intellectual agents ; unto free creatures. Now if a man be dragged this way or that, he is not said to walk, though he make use of his own motive power too.

[3.] It imports an orderly motion. For he is not said to walk who only wildly skips and fetches freaks this way and that. And that signification is especially carried that is used for walking here, *στοιχεω* ; a word from whence that word *σιζ*, comes, which signifies military order, the orderly motion of any army in rank and file : so the word is noted to signify. Yea, and from the same word comes a word that signifies the order which is observed in verse, when the composition is most exact and accurate, of so many feet, or making up such or such a form of metre ; *δισυχω*. A metrical kind of order is signified by this word ; so as that one's motions are measured by a strict kind of rule all along.

[4.] It imports a pleasurable motion. For you know we are wont to walk for our recreation. If persons go a journey, or the like, that is toilsome, we express that more usually by another word, travelling : but if a person be gone forth to exercise himself in order to his recreation and health, then we usually say, he is gone a walking.

[5.] It is a continued motion. For he that fetches a skip and jump now and then, this way and that, is not said to walk ; but walking is a course of motion continued for such a time.

[6.] It is a progressive motion. There may be continued motion which is not progressive. One may continue moving to and fro, in the same place, for a long time together : but walking is a going forward. These things (as is obvious unto a common understanding) are carried in the notion of walking most expressly, and so it may be said to denote these things more formally. But

(2.) There are also some things which it doth connote. And they are especially these two, namely :—an *end*, and—a *way*.

[1.] It connotes an end ; for walking is a tendency some whither, or unto some term. And

[2.] It connotes a way ; for a man cannot walk, but it must be in some way or other, whether it be better, or worse.

These things are considerable concerning the notion of walking. And as walking doth import a specification of motion, or, is a more special kind of motion ; so the addition of “ in the Spirit ” plainly imports a specification of walking, so as to denote a more special sort and kind of walking.

2. We shall consider, more at large, what it is to do any thing

in the Spirit, before we come to sum up all in joining these notions together. To do any thing in the Spirit, is to do it in the light, and in the power of the Spirit.

(1.) In the light of the Spirit. For whenever it comes to deal with the spirits of men, it is in that way, by creating a light to them, which is directive of their motions. Let us walk in the light of the Lord, Isai. 2. 5. that is walking in the Spirit. To do any thing in the Spirit, is to do it in the light, not blindly and darkly as those that know not what they do.

(2.) In the power of the Spirit. I will go in the strength of the Lord God, I will make mention of thy righteousness, even of thine only, Psalm 71. 16.

These things thus laid before you will make it plain to us what is carried "in walking in the Spirit."

3. We are to put together the notions of walking, and doing any thing in the Spirit. And an account of the result and sum of what has been said may be given you in these several particulars.

(1.) To walk in the Spirit is to intend and tend towards an end which is suitable to the Spirit. It is most proper to begin there; and that is, in short, walking in the Spirit imports a continual tendency towards God, as the great end and mark at which one aims. And this is an end agreeable to the Spirit; and this, and no other, as the last and ultimate end. The soul that is acted by the Spirit of God is acted towards God. Do but observe how these things are connected in that passage Psalm 63. 8. My soul followeth hard after thee. How comes it to do so? Thy right hand holds me up. And what is that right hand? Why, it can signify nothing else but the power of God, that is his Spirit, which we are taught to look upon as the great active principle of all the motions and operations of the creatures, whereof it can be said to be directly determinative. Then we may conclude that a person is acted by the Spirit, or walks in the Spirit, when he aims at God through his whole course. While men are under the power and rule of another, that is, a fleshly and corrupt principle, it is all for self that their designs lie, and the course of their actions run; they are confined wholly (as hath been said upon an occasion) within a circle of acting from self to self: but when once the Spirit of God comes to have the government and the motions of the soul, as all those motions do immediately spring from God, so they tend to him, and centre in him. The soul designs him, and none but him in its whole course. And therefore, it being the great work of the Redeemer to reduce and bring back souls to God, what part or

hand the Spirit of God hath in this matter, is in pursuance of the Redeemer's design. Therefore we are said to "have access, or come to God through him by the Spirit," this is the common course stated for all men; for Jew and Gentile both, for with such reference it is said, Through him we both have an access by one Spirit unto the Father, (Ephes. 2. 18.) implying that none would ever come at God, aim at God, or tend towards him, but as, by the motive power, and in the directive light of the blessed Spirit, they are acted and carried towards him through Christ.

(2.) Walking in the Spirit implies a constant adherence unto Christ by dependance and subjection. Which it must needs do upon the account that all walking, as I have said, connotes a way, and Christ is expressly represented to us as the way leading unto God. I am the way, no man cometh unto the Father, but by me. John 14. 6. And hence, as we have this phrase of "walking in the Spirit," so we have that too of walking in Christ, Col. 2. 6. And the apostle Peter directs such a course of walking as might put them to shame who should falsely accuse their good conversation in Christ. 1. Pet. 3. 16. And certainly it is one great part of the work of the Holy Ghost upon the spirits of men so to attemper and frame them unto the way of access to God, or the way wherein God can be come at, that it may become even spiritually natural unto the soul to walk in that way. While they walk in Christ, they walk in the Spirit. It is the business of the Spirit to engage the soul in this way of tending and moving towards God, and to keep it on therein.

(3.) It imports walking in the divine light, whereof the Spirit is the continual Author unto renewed souls, And I do not now mean only that external light which it affords by the Scripture revelation, but an inward vital light which it sets up and continues in the soul itself, having caused "a day-spring, a day-star to arise there, and made a day within." The Spirit creates unto the soul a region of light, wherein it converses, while, it is said to converse in the Spirit. They unto whom it hath not created such a light, are said "to walk in darkness;" and whatsoever there is of external light shining round about them, their darkness comprehends it not, as in John 1. 5. But where this blessed Spirit is it makes those that were darkness to be light in the Lord. "Ye were sometime darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord;" well, and what then; Walk as children of the light, Ephes. 5. 8. It is true, that light doth here, as well as elsewhere, signify holiness, but not without reference unto intellectual light; only it imports that intellectual light to be a practical, refining, trans-

forming, vital light, so as that the same thing is capable of a twofold denomination, of light and of life too; as St. John speaking of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Sun of righteousness, speaks of him as under the notion of life, and saith, that life was the light of men, John, 1. 4. It is therefore a region of living light which the Spirit doth create unto souls, in which they converse and walk: then are they said to walk in the Spirit, by that work and office of the Holy Ghost, which our Saviour calls "its leading persons into all truth." He promises in those consolatory, valedictory discourses of his to his disciples, (in 14. 15. and 16. chapters of John's gospel) again and again the Spirit, and for this purpose, "to lead them into truth;" that, you know, is the part of directive light. But then it is one thing to direct only by telling, so and so you must do; and another thing by way of instinct, or by an inward prompting; by which too a person does not go in that case blindfold, but with an inclination, with spontaneity, and seeing his way all the way he goes. He walks in the light; and such a light as is directive and active to him at once.

(4.) It imports acting by a divine power all along through our whole course. The Spirit, where it is, is the Spirit of power, of love, and of a sound mind, 2 Tim. 1. 7. They are said to be in the Spirit, who are under the power and dominion of it, as John says of himself, that he was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, in Rev. 1. 10. Under the influence of its almighty power, its captivating dominion. According as when persons are said to be in the flesh (an expression frequently used in Scripture) it notes their being under the power and dominion of a fleshly principle. So to walk in the Spirit, is to act on all along under the power and governing influence of the Spirit. I will strengthen them in the Lord, and they shall walk up and down in his name, Zech. 10. 12. That one attribute, belonging to the divine nature, namely, the power of God, is more especially pointed at there.

There is a strict connexion between this and the last mentioned thing, that light and this power; that light being a vital, a living light. Though we may have distinct notions of them, yet they are in themselves connected and most inseparable. Come ye, let us walk in the light of the Lord, Isa, 2. 5. Even in the form of expression, though light is the thing which is directly spoken of, there is implied and involved therewith a certain active power, the being moved to go, and walk in that light, which, as such, was to guide them in their way. See what is referred to in ver. 3. He will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths. This signifies that their spirits were acted by a certain power which did incline

them unto this thing ; and not that they were merely enlightened. And whereas in this very chapter, the expression, “led by the Spirit,” is made use of in ver. 18. “If ye be led by the Spirit, ye are not under the law ;” as also in Rom. 8. 14. As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God ; the word which is rendered *led* is *αγοραζαι*, and signifies acted or moved by a certain power. As many as are acted by the Spirit of God ; and they that are acted by the Spirit of God are not under the law, they are not cursed and condemned by it.

(5.) It imports acting from spiritual habitual principles that are fixed and settled in the soul ; and therefore includes in it the exercise of all the several graces of the Spirit. For you must know that when we say, walking in the Spirit implies walking in the divine light, and by the divine power ; it is not to be understood as if there were nothing else but a temporary, present ray of light, and efforts of power from the Spirit ; and so that there comes to be any thing habitually fixed in the soul itself. But though it is very true indeed that habitual light &c. in the soul from the Spirit must be maintained and continued by the Spirit, it is nevertheless to be looked upon as an habitual principle which is in the soul itself. And the case is here but as it is in nature ; for there can be no sort of life in all the creation, whereof God is not the Author ; nor any action done, but the power of doing it is received from him ; though there are many actions which he doth not make creatures do ; yet there is no action in which he does not enable, or not give them sufficient power. But yet, notwithstanding this, we know that the natures of creatures are distinct from one another ; and to say, that the divine power must do all, is to take away the distinction of natures wholly, and then a stone might reason as well as a man, and a tree might walk to and fro as well as a sensitive living creature ; but God’s way of dealing with creatures in the natural creation, ordinarily, is to act them according to, and co-work with that peculiar nature which he hath put into this, and that, and the other creature. So it is here ; there is a divine nature, consisting of many gracious, holy, vital principles which God puts into the soul when he renews it ; and which are so many several parts of the new creature, and with these several principles, or with this divine nature he concurs or co-works ; though the exigency of the case is such, there being a corrupt nature joined therewith in the same subject, that here he must continually over-power unto every action that is done : and it is not enough to give, or maintain the principle, but he must work the very act itself, because of a reluctant principle, which would otherwise stran-

gle the act, and never let it be brought forth at all. But then we must not suppose that the power by which the work is done, is a thing only at this time given, and that there is no principle in the soul itself which it acts from; for there is a principle implanted and fixed in the soul, and though that requires to be acted, it is the way and method of the Spirit to act in and by that principle, or put that principle upon action. So that walking in the Spirit is walking in the exercise of the implanted principles of grace, and not without them, or not having any such work wrought or done in us; as if a person should be habitually inclined one way, and yet act another; believe, without a principle of faith; or love God, without a principle of love; or fear, without a principle of fear, by having these actions erected in him by the Spirit, without the habits from whence they are to proceed, and to which they are connatural. This is not to be supposed. And therefore whenever any walk in the actual exercise of grace, they walk in the Spirit. And it is very observable to this purpose that you have several fruits of the Spirit, or gracious principles enumerated immediately before the text, ver. 22, 23. You are there told what the fruits of the Spirit are; or what the principles are which this Spirit is the productive cause of, and then it is afterwards subjoined, "If we live in the Spirit," or have all these principles, "let us also walk in the Spirit," that is, in acting and exercising these principles. Hence therefore we read of walking by faith, (2 Cor. 5. 7.) and walking in the fear of the Lord, (Acts 9. 31.) and walking with God, (Mic. 6. 8.) and of walking in love. Eph. 5. 2. To walk in the exercise of these several graces of the Spirit, is walking in the Spirit.

(6.) It implies walking in the way of the Lord with freedom of choice, and from a spontaneous inclination; from both the notion of walking, which is voluntary, and the addition in the Spirit, which is the great Author of all liberty wheresoever it is; Where the Spirit of the Lord is there is liberty, 2 Cor. 3. 17. A person is not the less, but the more free by being impelled and moved by the Spirit; for it is the Spirit that makes him free and enlarges him: I will walk at liberty, says the Psalmist, for I keep thy precepts, psalm. 119. 46. And I will run the ways of thy commandments when thou shalt enlarge my heart, ver. 32.

(7.) It implies a continued reference to a rule. To walk in the Spirit is not to walk extravagantly, as those that know no measures or limits in their walking, and are as the wild ass used to the wilderness. Jer. 2. 24. It is opposed to walking after lust, or the inclinations of corrupt nature which you know is the only principle of all extravagancy. This I say, says the

apostle in the 16th verse of this chapter, "Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh." The apostolical authority and majesty, which is imported in that solemn preface, is of very great remark and note. This I say, this I determine, this is one of the sacred *effata* and dictates which I pronounce to you in the name of the great God and Redeemer, whose office and authority I bear; "This I say, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh." That Spirit will be a principle of holy order and regularity to you in all your walking: So the great promise of it implies in Ezek. 36. 27. I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes. You shall then be willing to walk in a prescribed way, the way that I line and rule out unto you all along.

(8.) It implies a complacent course of walking on in religion. Walking in the Spirit is walking cheerfully; it belongs to it, it is comprehended within the compass of it. Whenever any have the Spirit, this lies within their walk; it is part of that spiritual walk to be conversant, amidst consolations and joys and pleasures, and it is part of the signification of that expression, "Come let us walk in the light of the Lord." Light doth many times signify (besides knowledge, and holiness) joy, delight, pleasure. Walking is a motion for recreation, as you have heard; spiritual walking is a motion, if it be entirely in itself, amidst spiritual joys and comforts. The churches walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied, in the before-mentioned 9. Acts 31. That sure was walking in the Spirit. It is suitable to the way in which christians are to walk, which is throughout, in every part of it, a way of pleasantness, and a path of peace, Prov. 3. 17. It is the Spirit that causes holy ones to walk in this way, and then sure it works in them a disposition suitable to the way. And if the way is pleasant, and the heart is suitably disposed thereunto, it cannot but be pleasant walking, so far as that disposition is in that pleasant way.

(9.) It is a continuing in the course and practice of religion. For walking is a continued motion: and therefore they that are said to walk in the Spirit, do not begin in the Spirit, and then think to be made perfect by the flesh (as the expression is in Gal. 3. 3.) but they continue in a course of spiritual motion.

(10.) Lastly, It imports a progress in spirituality. As was said before, there may be a continued motion that is not progressive; but walking in the Spirit imports a progressive motion in a course of spirituality. When persons make still nearer and nearer approaches unto their end, the term of their course; draw nearer and nearer to God, and as they draw

nearer to him, find a gradual influence of divine light and life and power, more discernable impressions of the divine image, grow more and more into a suitableness to him ; are more acquainted with him, are brought unto higher delectation, and to take more complacency in him : this is walking in the Spirit ; when a man's path, as it is said concerning the righteous man, is as the shining light, that shines more and more, brighter and brighter, unto the perfect day, Prov. 4. 18. As you know the nearer approach we make unto the light of a glorious lucid object, the more light we have, still all along as we go, our way grows more and more lightsome. And strength grows and increases too with the light, The righteous shall hold on his way, and he that hath clean hands shall be stronger and stronger, Job. 17. 9. There is an increase with the increase of God. They do not walk in the Spirit therefore who keep moving, but move in a circle, or in a round of empty sapless duties, keep up the formalities of religion, and no more ; but they walk in the Spirit who make a progress, who go forward, who draw nearer and nearer unto God, and become more suitable and like him, and fit for his eternal converse, and for all the present service whereto he calls them.

SERMON XIII.*

IT is the latter part of the verse that we are upon, from which, considered in that reference which it carries to the former, we have observed.—That it belongs to the state of them, who are made alive by the Spirit of God, to walk in the Spirit.—We have proposed in speaking to this, to shew you,—what walking in the Spirit imports, and—how it belongs unto the state of living christians thus to walk.—The former we have already spoken to, and now go on to the other, namely

II. To evince to you, that it belongs to the state of those, that live in the Spirit, thus to walk in it. Now we are to shew you, that it belongs to the state of such, as a *privilege*; and therein, the part of the Holy Ghost to cause and conduct all the holy motions of renewed souls: and also, that it belongs to their state, as a *duty*, and therein we are to shew you our part. The motion of this or that thing, if it can be said to be its own motion as this is said to be ours (for we must “walk in the Spirit”) signifies a part to be done by it; and we therefore have a part to do, in compliance with, and in subordination to the Spirit of God, in this thing. There cannot be walking in the Spirit, but there must be a concurrence of its part, and ours; its, according to its supremacy, and ours, according to our subordination. Under this second

* Preached March 13th, 1677. at Cordwainer’s Hall.

head therefore the demonstration will lie, how it belongs, or that it doth belong, to the state of renewed souls to walk in the Spirit; they may, and they ought. They may, so it speaks their privilege, and the readiness of the Spirit still to co-operate, according to what part is assigned it; they ought, so it speaks their duty; they ought so to walk, that is, so to demean and carry themselves, as that they may, according to the prescribed and appointed methods, make sure to themselves the help, and concurrent influence and co-operation of the Spirit through their course. Both these are plainly enough signified to us by the very words of the text itself; one, as implied, plainly enough implied, and the other more plainly expressed. And it will be necessary to speak unto them severally and distinctly.

1. Walking in the Spirit belongs unto the state of such as are spiritually alive, as a *privilege* proper thereunto. The injunction, "Walk in the Spirit," plainly supposes that the Spirit is communicable for this purpose, that walking in the Spirit is no impossible thing, that it is a thing which by a stated gracious vouchsafement appertains to the state of them to whom this charge is given. It is a known and unquestionable rule in such cases, that precepts and promises do imply one another: and such precept carries in it a virtual promise, any such promise carries in it a virtual precept. The precept supposes the promise, and the promise infers the precept, that is, an obligation to the thing in reference whereto such and such help is promised to be afforded. If it should be enjoined us to walk in the light of the sun, it is supposed that the sun doth ordinarily shine. There is a connection therefore manifestly implied here between the action that is enjoined us, and the supposed communication of the Spirit in order thereto; or its constant communicableness, or aptitude and readiness to communicate itself, according as walking in it doth require. For how harshly would it sound, to enjoin any one to make use of that wherewith he hath nothing at all to do; to use an incommunicable thing, a thing to which I have no pretence, to which I can lay no kind of claim! As if one should enjoin a child to do such or such a thing by the strength of a giant. It is implied that there are certain rules and methods, according whereunto, in a stated way, the Spirit is ready to communicate and give forth itself, in reference unto all those actions and motions, proper to the state of the renewed soul, which are comprehended, as you have heard, under the expression of walking.

The Spirit's part being that therefore which we have to consider and speak to in the *first* place, as pre-supposed;

there are two things that I shall do in reference to that. I shall shew you,—what communication of the Spirit is necessary unto our walking in it, and—the communicativeness of the Spirit, or its aptitude to communicate itself, unto this purpose, and according unto such necessity.

(1.) What communication of the Spirit is necessary unto this, that we may be said to walk in it. We have hinted to you already what communication is necessary, in telling you what walking in the Spirit implies. A communication both of light and power is necessary. Consider we both these. A communication of such light and such power, as are quite of another orb, and belong to another sphere than that of nature; a light that is more than natural, and a power that is more than natural: such light and power are necessary to our walking in the Spirit. We shall speak distinctly unto the one and the other of these.

[1.] Walking in the Spirit doth necessarily suppose a communication of spiritual light, or light from the Spirit, as the privilege of truly living christians, proper to their state, which the exigency of their case doth require and call for. This is of the very *primordia* (as I may speak) of the new creation, that great work of God upon the spirits of men, by which he doth new mould them both for obedience and blessedness. This light keeps within the sphere and verge of his own people, the people that he doth form for himself: O house of Jacob let us walk in the light of the Lord. Isa. 2. 5. It plainly means that directive light which is to guide the course of our walking, as you will see, if you look back unto the 3d verse of that chapter, “Many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob, and he will teach us his ways, and we will walk in his paths.” That we may do so, it is necessary that he teacheth us his ways, and enlighten our ways, and, as it were, afford us a continual light through the whole course and tract of that way wherein we are to walk. This light is not merely an adventitious, uncertain thing, but a stated, settled thing. It is necessary that it be so in order to our walking in the Spirit. When God began this work of the new creation, the provision was, “Let there be light,” that was the care that was taken in the old creation, to which the apostle doth manifestly allude in 2 Cor. 4. 6. God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. He, that at first made light shine out of darkness, in raising up and forming this old world, when he comes to raise the new creation out of the ruins of the old, in the spirits of men,

doth the same thing, and followeth the same method. He makes light to shine into those dark and desolate souls, that before were lost in darkness and death, that they may know which way to turn themselves, and to choose their way, what is to be done, and what is not to be done. We are not to think that this light, this more than natural light, is a thing separate from a vital and motive power and influence, but most inwardly and necessarily conjunct and connected therewith: as the light of the sun in reference to the sensible world is a vigorous light, a light which hath an influence accompanying it. And think we with ourselves, what a miserable desolation must presently ensue, not only darkness, but death too, if God should put out the sun, and that great luminary of heaven should become all on a sudden totally extinct! What a universal languor would there be upon universal nature, even all on a sudden! Such is the light unto the new world, the new creation of which I am speaking. That spiritual light, as was formerly intimated, is vital light, "light of life." Life is said to be light in that heretofore mentioned, John 1. 4. And when, in Eph. 5. 14. the words are directed unto souls that are asleep and buried, as it were, in death, "Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead," it is superadded what they were to expect from Christ; and one would think it should rather have been said, Christ shall give thee life; but it is said, "Christ shall give thee light," implying that to be a vital light, a light that carries life in it; and which, when he comes efficaciously and powerfully to awaken souls, and by his word make them arise, he must then infuse light and life together in one. Light is spoken of as the very composition of the new creature, as if it were a being all of light, "Ye were darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord," and this in reference to their walking as children of the light. Eph. 5. 8. They are made up of light, being born spirit of Spirit, as we had occasion formerly to note. The great and glorious God himself is called the God of light, they are called the children of light. That is their parentage. Light descended of light, begotten of light. "God is light, and in him is no darkness at all." All converse with him is walking in the light as he is in the light, 1 John 1. 7.—It is true, that light signifies holiness, it necessarily connotes it; but then this only, as was heretofore intimated, doth import and signify, that that light, which goes into the composition of the new creature, is efficacious, refining, transforming light, such as makes the soul some way throughout suitable unto the motions of truth, which are now placed in the speculative understanding. Whereas the case is much otherwise with unchanged, unrenewed souls.

There is a discordancy, a disagreement between their habitual frame and temper, and the notions of truth which are in their minds. But when the notions of truth, and the frame and disposition of the heart come to be similar unto one another, then is the soul said to be, as it were, a being of light, it is all light. "Ye were darkness," so men are in their natural and degenerate state, all darkness, the very light that is in them is darkness, but when this change comes to be made, then are they "light in the Lord." Now that which is so natural, and is even in the very constitution of the new creature, must needs be a continual thing; and so must be continually maintained, and is maintained by a continual influence, or irradiation of light from the blessed Spirit upon the soul that it hath begot.

I might be here yet more particular, as it is not unnecessary to be, and shew you both in reference to what objects, and in reference to what acts, such light is needful for our walking in the Spirit.

First. In reference to what objects such light is necessary. What things are there to be discovered and made known to them that are capable of walking in the Spirit, in reference whereto such a light as this is necessary? Many objects we might speak of, if we would particularize, but we shall gather up things (because we intend to speak very briefly) under as general heads as we can.

It is necessary, first, that we have light in reference to the *end* towards which we are to act or move in this course. Spiritual walking, as you have heard, connotes an end; it is necessary that there be a spiritual light in reference to that end, unto which the course of this spiritual walking is, and ought to be directed. That end, you know, is no other than the blessed God himself, and him considered, as in Christ; for he is not otherwise accessible; and we are never to think a thought of moving or tending towards him, otherwise than in Christ, and through him. This light is necessary to reveal both the Father and the Son to us. "Shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us." We need to have him shewn. The disciples acknowledged so much in John 14. 8. It is only in this light that we can see light. Ps. 36. 9. How strangely confused and blundering notions of God have they, who are destitute of this supervening additional light! Whatsoever objects they have, they are dim and without efficacy, and God is known as if he were not known. He hath given us an understanding that we may know him that is true, and we are in him. 1 John 5. 20. And we are in him: the knowledge of God in Christ is that which unites, or draws the soul into union; and that is the understanding given; that is the additional, supervening

light. Whosoever sinneth, saith that same apostle, hath not seen God. 1 John 3. 6. ὁ κακοποιῶν, he that is *an evil doer*; (we cannot render it more strictly according to the letter than so) he hath not seen God; that is, he that is in an unregenerate state, he that yet lives a life of sin, he hath not seen God; no beam of true divine light hath ever yet shined in that wretched soul. As our Saviour tells the Jews in John 5. 37. Ye have neither heard his voice at any time, nor seen his shape. Ye have not seen, ye have never found a right notion of God to any purpose. All that while persons are in a very ill condition for walking towards him, for moving and tending God-ward. A soul cannot move blindfold towards its end, but in the light, and with open eyes. And if men are alienated from the life of God, it is through the blindness of their hearts. Ephes. 4. 18. Persons therefore, who are brought to have a participation in the divine life, have a participation of the divine light at the same time to guide all the course of their motions and operations God-ward, and that continually supplied by his "Spirit of revelation." How strangely at a loss are persons to conceive of the excellencies and beauties of our Lord Jesus Christ, in whom, and through whom we are to tend to God, till this light shine in upon them! The apostle prays in behalf of the Ephesians, that "God would give them the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him," that is, our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom he had spoken before, Ephes. 1. 17. As if he should have said, "You can never come to know him, to own and acknowledge him, (the word there used doth signify acknowledgment) to know him to purpose, unless the Spirit of wisdom and revelation be given you for that end." Others look upon him as one without form, without comeliness even when they see him, as the expression is to that purpose in Isa. 53. 2. Even while men see him, they see no beautiful object; no inviting, no captivating excellencies are beheld in him, nothing for which he is reckoned desirable from a practical judgment. The Spirit of wisdom and revelation therefore is necessary to this. And when we consider God our end, towards whom through Christ we are now to be moving, the principal consideration of him as our end, is in that state wherein we are finally to acquiesce and rest in him, that is, the future state of glory and blessedness. And how altogether unapprehensive of the attractive power of that end are those souls that are yet destitute of this life! Therefore, in that mentioned Ephes. 1. 18. the apostle prays for the Spirit of wisdom and revelation to be given to the Ephesians, that the eyes of their understanding being enlightened, they might know the hope of their calling, and what is

the riches of the glory of the inheritance that God hath in his saints, or, among his saints, as it may be read; the glories of that state wherein the saints in common have a share. Our course is to be directed heaven-ward, walking in the Spirit; we are to walk towards heaven, that ought to be the tendency of our course all along: but how are they capable of walking heaven-ward, who are destitute of the inviting, alluring representations of it? And how impossible is it, that they should otherwise be had, than by this divine light? Things which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, and which it enters not into the heart of man to conceive of, God has prepared for them that love him; and, as it follows, he hath revealed them to us by his Spirit, that Spirit which teaches the deep things of God. 1 Cor. 2. 9. 10. And if you carry on the discourse to the 12th verse, there you find, We have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God, that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. We come by this Spirit to have some right knowledge of the things that are freely given, which without this light we could never have known.

This light is necessary, secondly, to shew us our *way* from step to step. The spirituality of that duty which is required of us we can never understand aright without this Spirit. To know what it is to meet with God, what it is to obey out of love, what it is to be in a continual, profound subjection of Spirit unto the authority and law of an invisible God, we shall never understand these things, we shall never know them without this light. A regenerate man has the law of God, and an unregenerate man may have it too; but we find that in reference to that clearer light which the regenerate person is capable of, and is possessed of more or less, he hath need to have his eyes open to see what there is in that law: Open thou mine eyes that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law. Psalm 119. 18. There are wonders inclosed in the law of God, which an unregenerate man doth not dream of, which escape his ken, or come not within his notice. A regenerate person, one who is made spiritually alive, is brought in this respect, as into a new world; all things look with another face and aspect to him. He is said to be translated out of darkness into marvellous light, *φως θαυμαστόν* *amazing light*, 1. Pet. 2. 9. When he once comes into that light, "Where am I!" saith he. "What a glorious light am I got into!" Look to the way in which he is to walk, and there is a lustre and glory upon it, which was never apprehended before; as, according to another attribute of the same way, it is said to be pleasant. The ways of wisdom are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace, Prov. 3. 17. A carnal mind never apprehends any

pleasure in these ways, and so apprehends no glory, no amiableness in them.

This light is necessary, thirdly, in reference to the proper *motives* of this walking. There are such things. Indeed they lie very much in the objects themselves, but we may frame, concerning some, a diverse consideration of motives; and besides those that are in the objects; that is, respect the spiritual and divine objects, they are desirable for themselves, and accordingly, the object is a motive; but there are accessory and supervening motives; as it is a very great motive to betake ourselves unto this region of spirituality, of spiritual light, and life and motion, to cast an eye upon this our world, and behold the vanity, the nothingness of it, and all things that do belong unto this *compages* or frame. There needs this spiritual, divine light to behold that. A carnal man can never make a right judgment, to the purpose, of the vanity of the creature, of the emptiness and nothingness of all things under the sun. But to one that lives in the divine light, that walks and is conversant there, what a fleeting, despicable shadow is all this world, this frame of sensible things, that is vanishing under his eye! He sees how the fashion of it is passing away; and by how much the more he is weaned hereby, and disengaged from it, so much the more is he at liberty for this spiritual walk which we speak of. By how much the more he gets out of the entangling snares of death that are below, so much the more is his way above, as the way of the wise is; so much the more is he conversant in that path, that unknown way, which the "vulture's eye hath not seen, and which the lion's foot hath not trod;" that way of wisdom, or holiness, or life, so much spoken of in Job 28.

This light is necessary, fourthly, in order to the knowledge of *ourselves*. We can never walk in the Spirit if we have not some competent discerning of ourselves; and we can never know the weaknesses, the wants, the wiliness and deceit of our own spirits without the divine light. To be conversant therein is necessary to all such purposes, and in reference to our making a discovery of whatsoever is needful to be discovered concerning the state, and posture, and temper, and ordinary ways and methods of our souls.

Secondly, The acts in reference whereto such light is necessary are these:

It is necessary, first, in reference to the act of *apprehension*. We cannot so much as apprehend clearly and with distinction the things which are needful for us to apprehend, without this light of the Spirit of wisdom and revelation given for these purposes.

In reference unto the acts of *consideration* it is necessary, secondly, that we have this light to converse and walk in. Otherwise we can have no steady discerning of any thing. For consideration is nothing else but knowledge continued, or the often repeated acts of apprehension, varied this way and that, according to the various representations of the object about which I am now employing my mind. In reference to such an act of vision as this, that is, steady, intent vision, there needs steady light. I cannot have a steady view of a thing by a flashy and evanid light, Walking therefore in the Spirit doth require a continued light of the Spirit to be afforded me, because I have constant need to go with my eyes in my head all along, and to consider and ponder my way from step to step, from point to point, but without such a steady light, as may, as it were, determine my eye to such and such objects needful to be considered : alas ! how incapable is it of looking with a steady intuition, that is, of thinking composedly of any thing which it most concerns me to think of. Can we command our own thoughts ? Consult we our experience ; we can no more do it, than “gather up the winds in our fists.” But the Spirit in this way of operation, holds them steady by a commanding light, which keeps them, as it were under its own government, “Look hither,” and so doth determine and fix the eye to that which I am called now to consider. Whence you have that experience pronounced and spoken out, We look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen ; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal, 2 Cor. 4. 18. The word which is here rendered *look* signifies *to take aim at*, σκοπεῖν τὴν ἡμῶν. That is a very steady intuition which a man hath of the mark which he is aiming at, or the end which he designs ; he must always have it in his eye. And, by this looking, saith the apostle, “we find that notwithstanding, all the decays of the outward man the inward is renewed day by day,” life and vigour and spirit continually entering in at our eyes from that glorious aim which we have before us. This will need a very steady determination of mind unto such objects by a commanding light and glory that they carry with them, so as that the soul feels not a disposition in itself to direct or look off.

This light is necessary, thirdly, in order to the act of *dijudication*, that is, distinguishing or discerning between things and things, what is of great value and account, and to be chosen, and what is worthless, and to be neglected ; what is to be done, and what is not to be done. There is a continual need through the whole course of our spiritual walk for the using of such a discrete judgment between things and things, and in reference

hereto, there needs a continual emanation of the Holy Ghost : for otherwise, we put good for evil, and evil for good ; light for darkness, and darkness for light ; bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter. That sense which should be exercised to distinguish between good and evil, is from the blessed Spirit, residing in our eye, putting continually fresh vigour in it, that we may be able by quickness of sight to discern or see, here is somewhat to be closed with, here is somewhat to be refused ; this will be good, that will be noxious. The apostle doth on this account pray (and that is a plain intimation to us, that it is the office and work of the Spirit of God to do the thing that he there speaks of ; he prays) on the behalf of the Philippians, in chap. 1. 9, 10. that their love might abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment. So we read it ; but the word rendered *judgment* is capable of being rendered *sense* (πᾶσι αἰσθήσει, *in all sense*) “ I pray that you may have your spiritual senses in exercise ; that you may have a judicious distinguishing sense” For what ? Why, “ that ye may approve things that are excellent ;” so it follows, or as the words there may be read, to distinguish the things that differ. You are otherwise likely to be imposed upon, if the Spirit take not that particular care of you, by the deceitful appearances of things.

In order, fourthly, to the act of *determination*, or coming to a determinative judgment, as we do upon comparing things, and noting the difference between one and another. We need the Spirit’s help here, to shine with that vigorous and powerful light into the mind, as to bring our judgments to a right determination, for the rule and government of our practice, which are apt to be long hovering and in suspense, if they do not hastily determine amiss. You have the apostle expressing his own determining judgment, in a particular, but very important case in Rom. 8. 18. “ I reckon,” saith he ; the word which he makes use of, is a word from whence we borrow the name of *logic*, λογίζομαι, I do compute, or I am, by reason, come at last unto this definitive and positive judgment, “ that the sufferings of this present time, are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.” That there should be such a positive, determinative judgment as that which should have the power to be influential upon his course, and directive of it, do you think he was not beholden to the illumination of the Holy Ghost ? He doth not speak like a doubtful, uncertain man, or one that did not know what to choose, or how to steer his course. “ For my part, saith he, I thus judge ; I am at a point, having viewed the case round, inspected it narrowly and thoroughly, and considered all about it that is to be considered, and I say, that

these two things, the sufferings of time, and the glories of eternity are not to be named in the same day, there is no compare between them." In order to such a determination of the mind as this, it is plain this light must necessarily come in; and there can be nothing of greater moment to the whole course of our walking in the Spirit than such a determinative judgment.

You see therefore that a communication of *light* from the Spirit is necessary to our walking in the Spirit. A communication of power is necessary to the same purpose too; but of that in the next discourse.

SERMON XIV.*

I Am now to shew you,

[2.] That a communication of spiritual *power* is also necessary that we may be capable of walking in the Spirit. It is said that they who shall walk in such a course as this is "without weariness," must in order thereto "renew their strength," and this strength is to be from a divine communication, because it is that which we are to wait upon the Lord for, Isa. xl. 31. We hear of a strength in the inner man given and sought for, which implies it capable of being given, for this purpose. The Psalmist speaks his experience of its being given in psalm 138. 3. In the day when I cried, thou answeredst me, and strengthenedst me with strength in my soul. And the apostle prays that it might be given unto the Ephesians, (chap. 3. 16.) that he would grant you according to the riches of his glory to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith, &c. You will never be able to act that faith wherewith to keep up any converse with Christ, or by which he can have any commodious reception in your souls, so as to dwell there, if you are not strengthened according to the riches of his glory with might by his Spirit in the inner man, in order thereunto.

That we may speak a little more distinctly to this, it will

Preached March 20th. 1677. at Cordwainer's Hall.

be requisite to shew you,—what kind of influence, or communication of power will *not* be sufficient in this case: and then,—what is, over and beside that, necessary, as what *will* suffice for this purpose.

First, What will *not* suffice. It is requisite that you have a right, and as clear an account as is possible of this.

For first, It will not be sufficient to have only that *common power* afforded to us, which doth suffice for common, natural action: whether by that power we understand the faculties belonging to the reasonable nature, or whether you do also comprehend therewith the promptitude and aptitude of those faculties for common actions. This will not suffice for spiritual actions, so that we may be said to walk in the Spirit. Which may easily be made to appear from such considerations as these. Namely,

If only such a communication of power were sufficient, then no more influence is afforded unto *regenerate* persons than to the *rest* of men. For they have a power which doth enable them to the common actions which belongs to them as men, as reasonable creatures; which doth enable them, not which doth constrain them; or make them do many actions which yet they do. And again,

Then there were as much power and influence afforded and given forth, in order to *sinful* and forbidden actions, as in order to *good* and holy, and commanded ones, which it were very unreasonable and horrid to think, as we shall have occasion to shew you by and by. In reference to the latter, such an influence goes forth, as by which God doth procure that they shall be done, or makes them to be; but sure we will not dare to say concerning forbidden actions, that he makes them to be done, though he gives such a power as by which they may, and can be done; otherwise indeed it were impossible they should be done, namely, if power were not derived from him. Further,

Otherwise it might *be possible* that no *good action* should ever be done; and consequently that no person should be saved, or finally happy. Of so great concernment it is carefully to distinguish between that common power, by which such and such actions *may* be done, and that power by which, such and such actions *must*, and *shall* be done, or shall be procured to be done. And again,

Otherwise it were not only possible that no spiritual and holy actions might be done, but *impossible* that any should. For it is not only impossible that any action should be done without power, but it is impossible also that any action should be done without a power proportionable to the kind and nature of

that action. And since merely natural power is altogether unproportionable unto the kind of holy and spiritual actions, it would be equally absurd to say that such actions could be done by so improper a power, as to say, that an action can be done by no power at all. If you assign an unproportionable power to any action, it is a perfect equivalence to no power; for it is no power as to this purpose. As a power to walk is no power proportionable unto the offices and functions of a reasonable soul, so that common power by which such and such natural actions may be done, is no way proportionable unto spiritual actions, which it is undertaken shall be done, which must be done, in order to their blessedness in the other world, and their glorifying God in this, who are designed at length, even of the Spirit, to receive life everlasting, Gal. 6. 8.

And in the last place, If common natural power were all that is requisite in this case, then no *exercise of grace*, or no actual grace could be said to be *the gift of God*, and consequently, it must be denied to be grace: for what is grace but a divine gift? Common natural power in reference unto these actions whereunto it is adequate, never infers that those actions are to be referred to God as given by him. And it may very easily be made to appear to you, that the supposition of a power only for spiritual actions, (that is, the natural faculty) though you suppose never so much promptitude for common action, which is to be made use of even in these, could not leave us ground whereupon to call such and such exercises of grace divine gifts. For it would be very absurd to give the name of the thing done, or to be done, to the power that must be used in the doing of it. If we might suppose that at all tolerable, then we must suppose that, because all men have natural faculties which must be made use of in believing, and have a promptitude for many other actions, which are some way congenerous, or of like kind, all men are believers. If it can be enough to say that God is the giver of faith, because he gives the natural faculties which are to be made use of in believing, then we must say that he hath given faith to all the world, and consequently since all believers shall be saved, we must say too, that all the world shall be saved. Yea, if there were not an aversion unto this same work of faith, for instance, which is to be otherwise overcome, it were yet altogether improper so to speak, namely, that the power of believing is believing, that is, the natural power to be used for a purpose, which the spiritual power doth suppose. For you might every whit as well say, that the power of building a house, is a house; and the power, which is to be used in fighting, is a battle; the absurdity of which

phrases, or forms of speech is obvious to every one at the first view.

And if this were sufficient to say, that such and such acts or exercises are the gifts of God, because that natural power, which is presupposed in order thereto, and must be used therein, is given by him, then we might as well call the fruits of the flesh the gifts of God, as the fruits of the Spirit. For (as hath been intimated before) that power by which any sinful or fleshly act can be done, must be supposed to have had a divine original, or else no such act could have been done, God being the fountain of all power whatsoever. And all acts *ad extra*, all operations that are any where put forth towards the creature are common to the persons of the Trinity, and are indeed expressly attributed to the Spirit of God. By his Spirit he hath garnished the heavens, (Job 26. 13.) and reneweth the face of the earth, Psalm. 104. 30. Upon this supposition therefore the very distinction would be taken away between the fruits of the flesh and the fruits of the Spirit, which we see the text hath an express reference to; and those who do the most vile of those fleshly acts might all that while be said to walk in the Spirit as those who do the best actions imaginable. That natural power therefore which is sufficient for actions in common is not sufficient there.

Nor secondly, is the *addition of gracious habits* sufficient to our walking in the Spirit, or our doing spiritual actions. There must be an influence beyond that by which such habits are given and infused. For,

Those habits themselves could not subsist without a *continual influence*: especially, it being considered, they that are in the souls of sinful, corrupt, degenerate men even at the best. They are in soils which are not natural to them. They are foreign plants, and do so much the more need a continual preservative influence. As heat which is introduced into water, because it is not natural unto that water, therefore needs to be continually cherished by a fire maintained and kept under it; and if the influence of the external agent, the fire without, were not continued to maintain the heat within, it would soon vanish, and the coldness, which is natural to the water, would recover itself. Which argues that that quality which is foreign, and from without, needs a continual influence from without to maintain it. But that is not all, for

Beside the influence which is necessary to maintain such habits, there is an influence necessary *to act them* in a renewed soul; otherwise they would not be acted. For these habits are in conjunction with contrary habits which would impede the other from going forth into act: which we do not need to

reason with you much about, because we find the matter so expressly asserted in Scripture, even this very Gal. 5. 17. Ye cannot do the things that ye would. And why? because the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and these two, saith the apostle, are contrary the one to the other. And here it seems more reasonable to understand by Spirit, the new nature, the new creature, which you have heard is called Spirit, in John 3. 6. And for that very reason is the injunction given in the 16 verse of this chapter, to walk in the Spirit. "Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, &c." He speaks to those whom he supposes to be furnished with the habits of grace, and yet they could not act for all that, unless they did walk in the Spirit; and therefore walking in the Spirit must import more on the Spirit's part, than only its furnishing the soul, with gracious habits added to natural powers. And for my part, I dare not venture to say, what many do, that the apostle speaks of himself, in Rom. 7. as in a state wherein he was destitute of grace, when he so expressly says, that how to perform that which is good he did not find. Sure he was not without the habits of grace when he said this, yet though he had the habits of grace, there were times in which he could not find to do the things that were good. Such habits therefore do need farther influence than what doth infuse and maintain them, by which they may be capable of being brought forth into act. And therefore

Secondly, We shall next lay down what *is necessary* and will be sufficient in this case that spiritual actions may be done, and so that we may be truly said to walk in the Spirit. And such an influence is necessary, and would be sufficient for this purpose as will be so efficacious as to direct and determine and over-rule the heart into the doing of this and that particular action, so that it may not only be said, as concerning common actions, such an action may be done by such a natural power put forth, but this action shall be done. In short, such an influence, as by which a person is not only enabled to do such an action, but is made to do it; or by which the action is procured to be done: so that the very production of the action is referable unto the divine influence in this case, as that whereunto it doth actually enable and determine the doer. And that so much is necessary unto every spiritual and holy action we shall prove to you from several scripture-considerations.

We remark first, holy souls are wont to *disclaim* any sufficient ability to do a good action. They say that it is not in them: that if a good action be done, it is not they that have done it by any power that was either natural to them, or super-added diverse and distinct from that, but by the issue and

communication of a power from God when it was done. See how they speak unto this purpose. Look into 2. Cor. 3. 5. Thinking a good thought is as little a good action as any one you can suppose or think of, but for that, saith he, "we are not sufficient of ourselves." That great apostle had not yet got a sufficiency into his own hand, by all his light and knowledge, and by all his habitual grace, for so much as the thinking a good thought; Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God. You find his state again in that before-mentioned Rom. vii. 5. 21. When I would do good, evil is present with me; so ver. 18. how to perform that which is good I find not. There was a natural power, and there were habits of grace, but yet there was wanting that present, actual, over-powering determination to the doing of this good action which we have told you is farther necessary.

It is evident secondly, the blessed God himself, who knows us better than we do ourselves, doth expressly deny us to have that ability, an ability to act otherwise than as it is supplied and given still from time to time. Without me ye can do nothing, saith our Lord to his disciples in John 15. 5. He means it apparently of spiritual actions; for the expression is expository of that of bearing fruit, by which they should appear to be his disciples, and such fruits as for which sap and influence was to be derived from him the vine. As though he had said, "There cannot be a good action done without me."

And thirdly, the people of God, as they disclaim it in reference to themselves, so they *ascribe* it to God. When they have done any good action, they own it to have been from him; as David in his own and the people of Israel's behalf in 1. Chron. 29. What a solemn and joyful thanksgiving to God is there upon this account, that he enabled them to offer willingly! That willingness of obligation is acknowledged unto God. Yea, they ascribe it to God that even such an action may be done; By thee will we make mention of thy name, (Isa. 26. 13.) implying that they could not so much as make serious mention of God, without God.

And fourthly, as they ascribe it to God, so God *claims* it to himself. He had denied it concerning them, and they deny it of themselves; they ascribe it to God, and God assumes it to himself. He claims it as a thing appropriate and belonging to him to be the author of any good action that is done by any of his. How plain is that passage in Phil. 2. 13. It is God who worketh in you both to will and to do, of his good pleasure. Not the inclination only is from him, as it is the purpose of the habit to incline to this or that thing, but even the

action itself; he works it. And so the apostle speaks concerning christians in common in Phil. 1. 29. that it is given to them to believe; not only the principle, but the act of faith is said to be the gift of God; for to believe is the act of faith. It is given not only to believe but to suffer, that is, the act of faith and the act of patience, the exercise of both the one and the other are given things. And it is very remarkable to this purpose that God doth therefore promise that he would be the Author unto his people of their good works which they shall do by his Spirit. You see it is the tenour of his covenant in Ezek. 36. 27. I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments and do them. Sure this is a peculiar thing and different from what can be said of many other sorts of action, but concerning this sort of action he causes the very doing of the thing. Nothing can be more plain.

We may farther argue it, fifthly, from the *reference* which holy and good actions have unto that same rank and order of things unto which spiritual habits and principles do belong. Take you such a sphere of good things, include good habits within that compass, and you must include good actions within it too; and then, if one be from God, the other must be from him, for every such good and perfect gift is from above, James 1. 17. Now will I say, if an act of grace, or a holy spiritual action be a good action, then it is from God, as that which he causes, or which he may be said to give; it is a gift of his grace: and we cannot say that the habit is a spiritual good thing, and that the act is not, when as the habit is in order to the act, and were otherwise useless. And if habitual grace be a good thing, we may upon that account say, that actual grace, or the exercise of grace, is better, because it is that to which the other is subordinate, and to which it serves, and therefore may with the greatest certainty and clearness be concluded to be a divine gift.

We may farther argue, sixthly, from the *analogy* which there is between the *direct* and the *reflex* actions of a christian. For consider the reflex actions, by which he looks in upon himself, and takes notice of such and such things wrought and done in him, and concludes his relation to God, as a child; how are these reflex acts wrought? By the Spirit of God, "bearing witness with our spirits;" and you must suppose it to be the superior in this work, as it belongs to it to be. It must then be proportionably so in reference to the direct acts of a christian too. That is, If I cannot know without the Spirit's testimony witnessing with my spirit, that I am a child of God; then I cannot do the direct actions which are proper to

a child, without that Spirit overruling and acting my spirit in that case. I cannot believe, I cannot love &c.

We may yet again argue, seventhly, from the many *apostolical prayers*, which we find scattered up and down in the epistles, by which actual grace, or grace in exercise is implored for the christians unto whom they were written. Certainly such prayers were not impertinent or improper. Do but look into some of those passages briefly. In 2 Thes. 3. 5. the apostle prays that God would direct their hearts into the love of himself, and into the patient waiting for Christ. These were acts of grace, loving himself, and expecting the appearance of his Son; why, the Lord, saith he, direct your hearts thereinto, or determine them unto this very thing. It would be very strange to suppose that a man's heart should need such direction or determination unto another sort of actions; that is, that I should as much need that God should determine it to hate him, unto which my heart is so propense and inclined of itself: but as to such spiritual actions as these, you see the exigency of the case is such, as to make such a prayer as this very proper, "Lord, direct their hearts into the love of thee, direct their hearts into the expectation of thy Son." It is plain then that the very acts were referred unto the divine productive power, or determinative influence, not the bare inclination. And the apostle prays also for the Colossians, in Col. 1. 9, 10. that they might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing; that expression walk (by which you have heard in the opening of that term in the text, acting, or exercising of grace is to be understood) he explains, as we did, by working; "being fruitful in every good work—strengthened with all might," &c. The like also you find in the epistle to the Hebrews chap. 13. ver. 20, 22. The apostle there supplicates the God of peace who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus Christ, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, that he would make them perfect in every good work to do his will. Here is still the action, the exercise of grace, in reference unto which it is matter of prayer to God, that God would make them do so and so, or efficaciously determine their spirits unto such actions.

We may argue from hence, lastly, that the Scripture makes certain discernable characters to be as it were impressed on such and such actions, namely, those that are spiritual and holy, as by which it might be known that God was the Author of them. To give you an instance in that one expression in John 3. 20, 21. The form of expression may lie thus, in reference to what had been before spoken concerning the light, that light in which every one must be understood to walk, that

walks holily, or in the Spirit, as you have before heard : he who so walks, in such light, comes to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest that they are wrought in God. A true light will make it manifest that such and such works are wrought in God. It is therefore necessarily supposed that there are some discriminative characters between works and works, and that those which God makes men do are distinguishable by the divine light, from those which he never doth so entitle himself to ; that holy and spiritual actions, in short, may be said to have been wrought in God.

And it highly concerns us to consider, whether indeed the course and tenour of our actions is capable of having this said concerning it. Looking over the course of my conversation, can I say, "My works have been wrought in God ; bring them to the light, and it will appear that they are wrought in God ?" Even those works wherein we have immediately to do with him, the works and duties of religion themselves ; O! can we say, that they are works wrought in God ? "I have been so carried out in prayer, as that I could find this prayer was wrought in God ; and so carried out in meditation, and conferring with my own heart, in self-thoughts, that bring these into the light, and I can discern that they were wrought in God ; the impress of the divine hand and power is visible upon them ?" Alas ! how plainly convictive would the light which we have among us be concerning most of our works, that they are not wrought in God, that they are done at a very great distance from God, and that we have had little commerce with God in them ! That little walking in the Spirit that appears even among those who profess religion at this day, is a great testimony against us, that God hath little to do by his Spirit with the government of our lives ; that is, we do not put ourselves under it, and resign ourselves to it. (As when we come to speak of our own part in this matter we shall have occasion to shew ; though there we are acted too.) The vanity and the deadness of our spirits, the formality, the licentiousness and the extravagancies of our spirits, alas ! they too plainly shew that we do not walk in the Spirit, and that our works are not wrought in God. There is not a religion living amongst us, which is God-wrought, whereunto we can entitle him as the Author of it.

It was therefore necessary to insist, as we have done, in letting you understand what dependance we must have upon an immediate influence, as to every good work, which leaves not our spirits undetermined or at loose, but, they being averse to every thing of that kind, overpowers them thereinto. It was necessary, I say, that the truth in this matter should be

held forth to us, because I am very much persuaded, that this is the great worm at the root of religion this day. Faith in the eternal Spirit is not acted to draw forth that life and influence which would make our religion a living, active thing, and hold it forth lovely and beautiful in the eyes of the world. Therefore it is that we are such languishing creatures as to the business of religion, and as to all spiritual actions, because it is not enough understood that all these works must be wrought in us and for us. For if that were understood, we should not be so self-confident as we are, when we go to duties, and concerning the government of our conversations, to cover ourselves with a covering that is not of God's Spirit, and make up to ourselves a texture of religion which it never wrought for us, never put on us : nor should we be so inobservant of the motions and breathings of that Spirit, make so little of them, call for them so seldom, and complain so little when there is a cessation, a retraction of that influence from us in any measure. Certainly our judgments have need to be rectified about this matter, and actual thoughts to be revived in our hearts, that we cannot move a step in our spiritual way and walk without the help of this Spirit ; that it must do all in us and for us, Whilst this is not understood and considered, we wander, and live apart from God, and Christ, and his Spirit, as if we could choose our own way, and do all, that is needful for us to do, of ourselves ; and so we betray ourselves into ruin and death, when we should be soaring aloft in that way which is the way of the wise. For we are not to think (as we shall have occasion to shew) that because this Spirit governeth our way by a strong, that therefore it doth it by a violent hand. No ! but in a certain method which it hath prescribed and wherein it must act with our concurrence : otherwise we could not be said to walk in the Spirit, but should be merely passive, stupid blocks, and no more. We should no more walk than a stone walks, when it is moved to roll by a violent hand.

SERMON XV.*

X

WE are shewing how it belongs to the state of regenerate persons to walk in the Spirit, and have hitherto considered it as a privilege agreeable to their state. They *may* do so. We have proposed to shew the extent of this privilege, or what communications of the Spirit must be understood to lie within the compass of it; and the attainableness of it, or how ready the Spirit is to give forth these communications according as the case shall require. As to the former of these, we have shewn that the privilege consists in these two things, namely, A communication of spiritual light, and a communication of spiritual power. Both these have been spoken to, and we may refer unto either, or unto both of them, not only such a communication as is necessary for the operations of grace, but even the comforting and consolatory communications also, which are sometimes spoken of under the name of light, "light in the Lord;" and sometimes under the name of strength and power, as when the joy of the Lord, is said to be "the strength of his people."

But we pass over unto the next head, namely,

(2.) To shew the attainableness of the Spirit; or how apt the blessed Spirit of God is to communicate and give forth such influence, as the case doth require, that they who live in the Spirit, may be capable of walking in the Spirit. And here it

* Preached March 27th, 1678. at Cordwainer's Hall.

is necessary,—to clear to you the sense, and then,—to evince the truth, of what we do now assert, namely, that unto all those to whom the Spirit hath been the Author of a new, divine life, it is ready to communicate and give forth all needful influence, in order to their suitable walking. In reference to the former of these we shall give you some explicatory propositions, and in reference to the latter some demonstrative considerations.

[1.] For the clearing of the sense of what is asserted, take these few propositions,

First, When we say that the Spirit is ready to communicate itself for such purposes, or for that general purpose which has been expressed, of our walking in the Spirit, the meaning is, that it is ready to do so in a stated and constant course, and not that it doth so only sometimes, very rarely, and now and then. For it were not to be imagined that this should lie as a stated, constant precept upon all christians, “walk in the Spirit,” if the supposed ground thereof were intercepted, and to be but rarely found actually in being. Walking is a continued thing, (as we formerly intimated) and imports the constant and settled course of a christian’s life or practice; and therefore there were no sufficient ground upon which such an obligation as this could be inferred upon the christian, if the influence of the Spirit in order thereto were exhibited but very rarely.

Secondly, We must understand that therefore there are certain rules according whereto the blessed Spirit (though as we find it is called in Scripture, a free Spirit) is come under obligation that it will be present, by a vital, active influence, as the great Author and Director of that course of holy motion unto which renewed ones are more immediately engaged. We must suppose that there is a connexion between their observance of such and such rules, and the Spirit’s communicating and giving forth its influence according to those rules. This for explication I now lay down only in the general; what those rules are we shall have occasion distinctly to tell you, when we come to the second general head, namely, to treat of our part in this matter, or how walking in the Spirit belongs to the state of souls spiritually alive as a duty.

Thirdly, When we speak of the Spirit’s being so obliged, you must understand it in reference to a regenerate subject. For within these bounds our text doth confine us: “If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.” Living in the Spirit is supposed. We cannot suppose that it should have annexed and tied its communications unto the actions, or the endeavour of any other sort of persons that lie without this

compass. To such as are got into the sphere of life, are within this verge, and have actual union with the Mediator, who is the spring and treasury of all spiritual life, and in whom all the promises, all the ties and obligations that the blessed God hath brought himself under any way, are yea, and amen; to such, I say, we must understand that this influence is in this stated way to be communicated, and may be expected. It is very true that others have no cause to despair, but these have cause and ground to believe. They have no cause to despair, because this Spirit is, as hath been said, a free Spirit, and, as "the wind bloweth where it listeth," none can tell but it may, one time or another, cast a favourable breath even on them. But these have reason to be confident, for the communications, of which we speak, are part of his portion, and a privilege belonging unto their state. We only add in the

Fourth place, that whereas we told you, that the communications of the Holy Ghost, due unto this purpose, do comprehend both the influences of grace and of comfort, we must understand this obligation to be more in reference to the former, than to the latter, to what concerns the being of gracious operations than the well-being. It is true, there is somewhat of comfort involved in the very nature of a gracious act, according as it is wont to be said concerning natural acts, that they all are pleasant, or carry a kind of pleasantness with them; so those acts which are connatural to the new-creature, have a pleasure in them, which we cannot separate even from those acts of that kind which seem to import most of vigour and severity; as the very acts of repentance and self-denial, if they be in their own kind, vital acts, proceeding from the Spirit of grace, and from the new nature put into the soul. One might appeal to the experience of christians, whether they do not find pleasure in melting before the Lord, pleasure in abandoning and quitting all that is dear to them, when they can fully do it, for his sake, and upon his account. Such consolation therefore as is intrinsical to any gracious act must be distinguished from that consolation which follows afterward upon reflection, or our taking a review of such and such gracious characters, discriminative tokens, discernable upon ourselves, and by which we can judge of our case. For the other pleasure is without intervening judgment, the acts are pleasant in themselves, even before we come to reflect, or take notice, or consider any thing concerning our states, whereof they are, or any thing else discernable in ourselves may be understood to be, characteristical. In reference to the consequential consolations we must understand the Spirit to have reserved to itself a liberty; it is more arbitrary in communications of that kind, and

doth upon mere sovereignty many times retract and withhold that kind of light for ends best known to itself. But in reference to those operations which are essential to the divine life, we must suppose that it hath a fixed and stated course, in which its influence shall be communicated in order to it. Our next business therefore is,

[2.] To add several considerations by which the truth of the thing assented may be manifested. And the

First consideration that occurs, is what hath been suggested to you already, in clearing the ground of the observation which we took up, namely, That we find it enjoined and laid as a command upon those who live in the Spirit, that they walk in the Spirit. For, as you were heretofore told; it would be very strangely unreasonable to enjoin one to walk in the sun-shine at midnight. And we find that this precept of walking in the Spirit is not dropped, as it were, as a casual thing, but even in this very chapter it is urged and pressed, and with a great deal of solemnity. As you see in the 16th ver. This I say then, walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh. It is introduced here with a solemn preface, This I say; as though he had said, "I understand myself in what I say, I do not speak rashly and at random." And with how great apostolical authority is the precept ushered in! This I say, Walk in the Spirit. We cannot suppose that so solemn a charge should have been laid, if this had not been a certain thing, that the Spirit shall be communicated, its influences shall issue and go forth, as far as is necessary for this purpose, unto the persons that are concerned. We find particular precepts given again and again unto the same purpose; as to instance in that spiritual action, or operation of prayer, we read of praying in the Holy Ghost; (Jude 20.) and praying always in the Spirit, and of worshipping God in the Spirit, as a stated thing, Eph. 6. 18. Phil. 3. 3. It is manifest that the apostle speaks of what was so, and not of what was very rare and occasional. So the charge, Walk in the Spirit, comprehends in it all duty, duty that is to run through our whole course, and intimates plainly that there is a communication of the Spirit always ready to go forth. The thing which is hinted in that other precept, which doth but in terms and expression differ from this, Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God that worketh in you both to will and to do, of his good pleasure, Phil. 2. 12, 13. That word *κατεργαζεσθαι*, imports, "labour it out even till it be finished; till you come to the very end of your faith, the salvation of your souls." This too is an injunction, which exceeds its ground, if we do not suppose that the following words are to

be understood in a proportionable sense, "God worketh in you to will and to do," that is, he is always ready to do so unto the finishing of your salvation.

Secondly. We may consider to this purpose that christians are severely blamed when holy and spiritual actions are not done in the proper time and season of them; which would not be charged upon them, if the Spirit were only arbitrarily suspended and withheld so far as was necessary to any such spiritual action. The inactivity, the sloth, the omissiveness of the necessary duty in the season of it, the sluggish performance, the decays and languors that are upon the spirits of christians are charged upon themselves, and, no doubt, most justly, and most righteously so. See but that one instance in Rev. 2. 4, 5. Nevertheless, I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of its place, except thou repent. Why, if the case were not as we now suppose it, it would only be the unhappiness of a soul to be left destitute of vigour and vital active power, not a crime. But we find it charged with great severity as a crime, that there are declinings from the first love, and that the things are not done, which have been done heretofore. Do we think that God would ever have left the matter so as that the case should admit of this reply? "It is true, the things which have been done heretofore, are not done now, but it is none of my fault, for there was no influence to be had, which was most necessary for the doing of them. My first love is lost, I do not love with that fervour, and life and strength as heretofore; but it is no fault of mine, the Spirit did arbitrarily retire, without my iniquity or transgression, upon which this languor is come upon me." We must understand more of consistency in the precepts, and criminations, and communications of the wise and holy God, than to imagine there was place or room left for such explications.

Thirdly. That the Spirit is apt to communicate itself unto renewed souls for such purposes, we may farther argue from hence, that it always can do it without any prejudice to itself. There is an all-sufficient fulness and plenitude of Spirit; it is a perpetual spring which this influence is to go forth from. And therefore whilst these communications can be afforded without any kind of prejudice, it is not to be supposed (the case being as it is, between it and its own offspring, regenerate souls) but that they will, but that they are, always ready to be given forth: and we are sure that its fulness admits of no abatement by all its communications. The sun hath lost no-

thing of its warmth and influence by spending it upon the world for almost six thousand years together : much less can infinite fulness suffer diminution. I argue,

Fourthly, from hence, that divine influence doth go forth unto all creatures, and is exhibited unto all natures, according as is needful for their proper and connatural actions, and therefore certainly it will not be withheld from the new creature, and the new nature, so far as is necessary for the actions which are suitable to that. For this would be as strange a supposition, as if one would imagine a prince to be mighty liberal in all his provisions for his servants, but apt to starve his own children, the issue of his body : this is a most unsupposable thing. It is by an influence originally divine, that every creature is enabled to act whatsoever it acts ; enabled, not made to act in many cases, but enabled. It is by a divine influence that every plant and tree brings forth after its kind, that the sun shines, that the fire burns, that all actions are done, and all motions set on foot that are any where to be found through the world. He gives to all breath and being : and all things live, and move, and have their being in him. He feeds the ravens, he feeds the sparrows, he takes care of the lilies, and do we think he will starve and famish the souls which he hath made to live spiritually, so as that they cannot be able to act, or have power to move or stir this way or that, in any holy or spiritual action ? This is a thing never to be supposed.

Fifthly. The communicativeness of the Spirit upon this account is hence to be argued, that it is always before-hand with us in its communications. It communicates more than we improve. A very great argument this, that it is not unapt to communicate. Indeed the case is most observably so in the natural world, as I may speak ; that is, that active power and principle that works to and fro throughout, doth in proportion much exceed the passive and receptive capacity. Nothing is more evident. The light and influence of the sun would suffice many thousand such earths ; this earth is too narrow and too limited a thing to receive and improve all the light and influence of the sun. And then as to what falls upon this earth itself, how much is there of seminal virtue that is lost, as it were, from year to year ? As much as might suffice, for ought we know, for ten such earths as this, supposing that all seminal virtue should come to be actually prolific of what is like it in kind. The case is most manifestly so, as to spiritual influences and communications ; we are not straitened there, the straitness and narrowness is in the subject, in ourselves, and that blessed

Spirit always goes beyond us. It is a convictive appeal that the prophet makes in Mic. 2. 7. O thou that art named the house of Jacob, is the Spirit of the Lord straitened? are these his doings? do not my words do good to him that walketh uprightly? It argues that there is some defect, some indisposition, or incapacity in the subject, if things do not take, if souls do not prosper. Do not my words do good to him that walketh uprightly? What! Is the Spirit of the Lord straitened? So the apostle also bespeaks the Corinthians in 2 Cor. 6. 12. Ye are not straitened in us, but ye are straitened in your own bowels. In what respect doth he mean that they were not straitened in them? He means plain enough, that what of the influence and communication of the Holy Ghost had come forth upon them, to dispose and frame them for that great work of treating and dealing with souls, it was not fully answered by those whom they did treat and deal with: "Ye are not straitened in us." He gives a very great demonstration of it, in what he speaks with such largeness and liberty of spirit, in all that goes before. He speaks like a man triumphing in that large and abundant sense, which he had of those full and flowing communications of the Holy Ghost, which had come in upon him, by which he was enabled to "do all things, to bear all things, to endure all things," to pass through whatsoever difficulties, to be "in stripes, imprisonments, watchings, fastings, with all pureness, long-suffering, kindness, by the Holy Ghost, by love unfeigned, by the word of truth, by the power of God," and so on. "O ye Corinthians," saith he, "our mouth is open unto you, our heart is enlarged. Ye are not straitened in us, but in your own bowels." This argues the matter we are speaking of, even a *fortiori*. The ministers of the gospel at that time were not fountains, they were but cisterns; and if they were not straitened in the very cistern, much less in the fountain. "Even in that communication which is come so near you, that cistern from whence you are to receive, there ye are not straitened. Ye are not straitened in us, but ye are straitened in your own bowels."

Sixthly. We find it frequently insisted upon as matter of prayer, that communications suitable to the actions of a christian, and the divine life might be given forth; but it would be most unreasonable to suppose that we should be taught to pray for an incommunicable thing. This consideration we formerly made use of to prove that such communications are necessary, and it equally serves the present purpose, to prove that they are possible. For as we are not taught to pray but for such things as are of great concernment to us, so we have very little reason to think that we should ever be taught to pray for

such things as are not grantable, or cannot be had. But we find the apostle making it matter of prayer in Eph. 3. 16. That God would grant them according to the riches of his glory to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; that so Christ might dwell in their hearts by faith, &c. intimating that Christ could have no commerce with their spirits, but by their active faith in him. They must entertain him, and converse with him, believing in him, and drawing influence from him that way; but this could never be done unless they were strengthened with all might by the Spirit in the inner man to this purpose: and therefore this is a thing for which the apostle thought it fit to "bow his knees unto the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." And so, as we noted upon that other occasion, in praying for the Colossians that they "might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing," he prays for an influence by which they might be enabled so to walk, which is the same thing as that they might walk in the Spirit. For it can be no other than that influence by which they were so to walk, "being fruitful in every good work," as you have it there expressed also: an influence suited to the actions and operations of the new creature, or of those who are made spiritually alive.

Seventhly. We may farther argue hence, that if we do not suppose the Spirit thus communicative, according as the case requires, then were the whole workmanship of the new creature in vain. For the very end of its creation is the doing of holy and spiritual actions, but they could never be done without such an influence as by which the principles of the new creature may be reduced into act. We are his workmanship created in Christ Jesus unto good works. Eph. 2. 10. Now it were a most unreasonable thing, and infinitely unworthy the divine wisdom, that he should create such a creature for such a purpose, and not supply it with influence that can make it serve that purpose. Then might it be said as well in reference to the new creation, as it was said to the lapsed, apostate part of the old, Are all men made in vain? Indeed they made themselves so, unsuitable to the purpose for which they were made. But that there should be an essay to renovate things, a new creation, and such a sort of creature as should now certainly attain the end for which it was made, this is a thing never to be supposed. What was each principle in the new creature made for, but for actions suitable to that principle? Why is faith put into the soul, but that the soul might be enabled to believe? Why love, but that it might act love? Why patience, but that it might exercise patience? But after that these principles are all actually implanted in the soul, without

an influence they cannot be brought forth into act, as hath been formerly shewn ; there must be therefore a communication of the Spirit, it must be still ready to communicate in order to these actings, otherwise the whole frame of the new creature were to no purpose.

Eighthly. We find that christians are called upon, and pressed to increase and abound more and more in good works ; (as in 1 Cor. 15. 58. Be stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord. And in 1 Thes. 4. 1. We exhort you by the Lord Jesus, that as ye have received of us how ye ought to walk and to please God, so ye would abound more and more) which plainly implies that there is still a proportionable influence thereto, if it were attended to and improved.

Ninthly. Influence for such purpose hath been owned and acknowledged to have been received in a way of prayer, and therefore we are always to look upon it as communicable. In the day when I cried thou answeredst me, and strengthenedst me with strength in my soul, Ps. 138. 3. There is a recorded experience. It is but ask, and have. "I have asked, and I have had upon my asking ; influence did come in. He strengthened me with strength in my soul."

Tenthly, and lastly. It is matter of express promise and of faith, and therefore it must be a certain thing that such communication is to be had. Of promise, our Saviour speaks of it most plainly in Luke 11. 13. If ye—being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children : how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him ? He will give his Spirit to them that ask him, as readily as you do bread to your children, and you have great reason to suppose, much more readily. And in reference to holy and spiritual actions (for these are a christian's fruit) our Saviour tells his disciples that, Let them but abide in him (which is a parallel expression to walking in the Spirit, for it is his Spirit in which they are to walk) and they shall bring forth much fruit. John 15. 5. He hath assured us that it shall be so. And it is matter of faith as it is promised ; for we are plainly told, that we are to receive the promise of the Spirit through faith, in Gal. 3. 14. It therefore must be a certain thing before. For faith doth not make its object be, but the object must be pre-existent. That which I am to believe as true, must be true before I believe it ; I do not make it true by believing. That is, I am not to pitch my faith upon an object, which is hitherto false ; and then think to make a falsehood truth by my believing, but that which I am to believe as true, must, as hath

been said, first be true before I believe it, and the truth of the thing is the reason why I am obliged to believe it. If therefore I am to receive the promise of the Spirit, or the promised Spirit, by faith, it must certainly be true before, that it is receivable, that it is to be had, that it, and its influences can be afforded, and are ready to be communicated.

And the case being so, why do we wistly look upon one another with meagre and languishing souls, into which leanness enters, which are wasting, and consuming and pining away under their own distempers? There is an infinite fulness of Spirit, from whence we may have what is suitable to all our need: "that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God." The apostle brings in that prayer of his when he had been desiring that they might be strengthened with might by the Spirit in the inner man, in the before-mentioned Eph. 3. That such communications are to be had as are needful to our walking in the Spirit, it was necessary thus to insist upon it, that we might understand and know to what it is to be imputed, and where all the blame and fault ought to lie, if there be languishings upon us, if we do not walk in the Spirit, if our knees are too feeble, and we cannot walk, if we are become in a spiritual sense cripples, unapt, unable for spiritual motion and action. And therefore it concerns us to bethink ourselves seriously whether there be not the tokens upon us of a spiritual decay, languor, ineptitude for the actions and functions of the spiritual and Christian life. Are there not? Can we say, that God is with us as he hath been wont to be with his people heretofore? If he be with us, why is it thus? According to that expostulation in Judges 6. 13. When, in another sense, that people were in a miserable, decaying state, is it not in a spiritual sense so with us? Do we not fade as a leaf? Are there not grey hairs here and there upon us? If the Lord be with us as formerly by the communications and influences of his Spirit, why are our hearts so low? Why is it that so little grace stirs? Why is there so little faith, so little love to him, and so little appearance and discovery of a heavenly mind? Why do the fruits of the Spirit flourish no more? It concerns us to bethink ourselves. Can we say God is with us as he hath been with his people? or as it may possibly be remembered he hath been with us? With us in our closets? With us in our families? With us at our tables? Is he with us at his own table? Is he with us in our ordinary affairs and converse? Is he with us in our solemn assemblies, as he hath sometime been among us here? Is this Spirit with us, as a Spirit of faith, a Spirit of love, and of power, and of a sound mind. Is it with us as a Spirit of humiliation in such a time

as this, to abase and humble us, and lay us low in the dust before the Lord? Is it with us, as a Spirit of grace and supplication, to enable us to strive and wrestle with heaven, to implore earnestly, and cry aloud for mercy in such a time as this? Is it with us, as a sin-mortifying Spirit, a world-crucifying Spirit; as the Spirit of meekness, and patience, and self-denial, and humility; and as the Spirit of the fear of the Lord, as a holy and a heavenly Spirit? If it be not, if our own hearts must say it is not, it is fit we should know what to say next, that is, that it lies upon us that it is not. It is not because this Spirit is not full, or is less apt to give forth its influences than formerly, but because we do not our part; we do not mind walking in the Spirit as that which doth belong to us, and to our state as our duty. Which is the next thing we have to speak to.

SERMON XVI.*

WE now go on

2. To shew, that it belongs to the state of regenerate persons, to walk in the Spirit, as a *duty*. The former, namely, that it belongs to them as a *privilege*, is implied in the precept, as you have heard; this latter is expressed in it, as you plainly see, Walk in the Spirit. It is a thing enjoined upon christians, or those who are supposed to live in the Spirit, that they walk in it. This therefore doth imply, that somewhat is incumbent upon us as matter of duty, with which a participation of the Spirit, in order to our walking in it, is connected. And it will be here requisite—to say somewhat concerning this connexion, and—to give you an account of those things where-with such participation of the Spirit is connected.

(1.) It is requisite to premise somewhat concerning this connexion. That there is such a connexion is plain to you already, from what hath been said: the precept doth manifestly suppose it. What kind of connexion it is, I shall very briefly shew you, only in these two particulars, namely—that it is a gratuitous, and—that it is yet a sure connexion.

[1.] It is a gratuitous connexion. Not a natural one, as though it could not possibly have been but that, if such and such things should be by way of grace procured, or done for

* Preached April 3d. 1678. at Cordwainer's Hall.

any of the children of men, still a farther, and a farther communication of the Spirit must needs ensue. And we know there are many things that are so connected in their own natures that it would imply a contradiction, that one should be, and the other not. But such connexion there is not in the present case. For if we should reflect upon any of the things wherewith we may suppose such a communication of the Spirit to be most connected, it would be apparent that the connexion is most gratuitous, we can reflect upon nothing wherewith it is more eminently connected than with faith, as we shall have occasion to shew presently. But no man can suppose the connexion to be natural between an act of faith exerted and put forth in and by my soul, and a participation consequent there-upon of an influence from the eternal and almighty Spirit of God. For how is it concerned in me, if it did not concern itself? Or what claim, or challenge could there have been, if it had not brought itself under an obligation, of such a divine influence. As well might a worm that crawls upon the earth, command the motions of the sun, or occasion it so and so to communicate its influence and its light. When we say it is a gratuitous connexion, it imports these two things :

First. That it is a connexion made with absolute, sovereign liberty : that such a connexion might have been, or might not have been antecedently to its being settled and made.

Secondly, It imports not only liberty, but complacency in the vouchsafement : that whatsoever is done in such a way is done with delight, that he that doth it, takes pleasure in the doing of it. Indeed both these are manifestly imported in that expression in Phil. 2. 13. It is God that worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure. Of his good pleasure, that is, so as that he might have forbore so to work, if it had pleased him ; and while he doth so work in us, it doth most highly please him so to work, or to vouchsafe that co-operative influence. He doth it with delight ; as it were, enjoining his own act, and gratifying himself in the benignity of his own nature, from whence it doth proceed that he works with such creatures as these.

In both these ways we must understand it to be gratuitous, that there is any such connexion between any thing of our duty, and such a participation of the Spirit. It is gratuitous the former way antecedently to any such connexion made and settled, as hath been shewn. It is gratuitous in the latter sense continuedly all along, while this connexion doth hold, as it will perpetually hold. For though it be true indeed, that after this connexion is once made and settled, he, who had made and settled it, hath brought himself under an obligation, so as

that he will not rescind it, as we shall presently shew you, and therefore it is not now continued upon such terms, as that it may, or may not be; yet it is gratuitous still in the latter sense, that is, as being continued with complacency, he never repenting that he hath made such a connexion, but remaining in the same mind still, and always; that we doing so and so, or there being such dispositions and frames of spirit inwrought in us, they shall be earnest and pledges to us of still farther communications of his Spirit, according to the tenour of his own law and rule, *habenti dabitur*, "to him that hath shall be given." So it is a gratuitous connexion.

[2.] It is a sure connexion. Most stable and firm, such as whereof we need not fear an alteration. This may seem not so well to agree with the former; if it be so free and gratuitous, then some may think that it should not be so sure. But the apostle hath taught us to argue otherwise in this case, and to understand the matter quite after another tenour, in that passage of his, in Rom. 4. 16. Therefore it is of faith, that it might be of grace, to the end that the promise might be sure to all the seed. That is, the evangelical promise in general, whereof this, of the communication of the Spirit is one great part, yea, itself sometimes goes, in the language of the New Testament under the name of—the promise. Ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost for the promise is to you and your children, in Acts. 2. 38, 39. It is therefore free, that it might be sure. This, I confess, according to the manner of men, would not be thought good logic. Things in reference whereto men act freely, or are left to their liberty, one would think were very unsure. But it is not so with the blessed God in this case. We are so much the more ascertained by how much the more the root and foundation of this connexion is in grace. For we must consider how grace hath laid out its own method, and made way for the pursuing and bringing about its own great design. Consider it in reference to this very case, the communication of the Spirit; it was obtained by a Mediator; it was so designed and determined, that no influence of the Spirit should go forth in order to saving purposes unto the lost and apostate children of men, but in and through a Mediator. Therefore it is told us again and again in Scripture that it is he that sends it, or if the Father be said to send it, that he would send it in his name. Both these forms of expression you have in the 14th and 15th chapters of John's gospel, and to the same purpose, somewhat in the 16th. And he was made a curse for us, for this purpose, that the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles, that they might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith, in Gal. 3. 14.

And hereupon, upon the susception and undertaking of the Mediator, a covenant is established and settled on sure promises, a system of sure promises comprized and formed up together, in which, as was said before, this is the main thing, that the Spirit should be given forth. Now the whole undertaking of the Mediator must otherwise fail and come to nothing, and all these promises, which are yea, and amen in him, 2 Cor. 1. 20. So that hence it cannot but be that, though, as you have heard, this is a connexion most arbitrarily made, yet it is a most sure and certain connexion notwithstanding; inasmuch as the Spirit, wheresoever it is given forth, is given forth through a Mediator and upon the promise. And so we must understand the tenour of this connexion, as that upon such duty the participation of the Spirit will still ensue, in farther and farther degrees; and where there is no such thing as is incumbent upon us in a way of duty, there we cannot promise it to ourselves in any certain stated course, though according to its absolute liberty, it can go forth and let out its influence when, and where it pleases.

(2.) We are now to consider the things themselves that are charged upon us as matter of duty, wherewith the participation of the Spirit is connected. And they are such as these:

[1.] A sense of our indigent state in this respect: that we stand in the greatest need of this blessed Spirit and its vital influences, for all the purposes of the Christian life: that we can do nothing, nothing as we should, not turn a hand, or move a foot without it. It was most reasonable, that the gradual communications of this Spirit should be in connexion with such a disposition and temper of soul in us. For do we think it were honourable that the Spirit should be under an obligation there to be and work, where there is no apprehension at all of any work done, but what might as well be done by a common hand; and that it should do the work, and we have the honour of it, that there should be a disposition in us to arrogate it to ourselves, if there be any holy, gracious operation in us, which hath a tendency to our future happy being. Nothing is more apparent than that there was a high congruity in it, that the Spirit should still go forth in its gradual communications and exertions of its influence, so as that there be a sense still preserved in the subject to be gradually wrought upon, that without it we can do nothing. We may easily see how the matter stands in this respect, if we do but consider where there have been most manifest languishings and decays, feebleness and weakness, as to all the actions and operations of the spiritual life. As to instance in the church of Laodicea, it is plain they were got into a posture very unsuitable unto

walking in the Spirit, and see what their sense was of themselves, and of their own state all this while : Thou sayest I am rich and increased with goods, and have need of nothing, and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked. Rev. 3. 17. If they are blind and maimed creatures, whom this Spirit is to have the conduct of, it doth justly insist upon this, that they reflect, and understand themselves to be blind and maimed, that they cannot go without being led, without being supported and borne up in their way all along. And while there is little of this sense among us of our great need of the continual influence of the blessed Spirit in order to the conducting the whole course of our walking, it is not much to be wondered at, if this Spirit do suspend and restrain its influences, and be at a very great distance from us. And I am afraid there is very little of this sense among us at this day, that it is too generally thought, that we can do well enough without the Spirit. There is not that notion and apprehension, yet there seems to be that practical judgment, "we do not need the Spirit;" and when we are left destitute of it in a great measure, we do not feel a need of it, and there is little complaint that the Spirit is retired, and not given forth as some have found it in former days. Grey Lairs are here and there upon us, yet we know it not (to apply those words to this purpose, which might mean another thing in) Hos. 7. 9. It is with a great many christians as it is said to have been with Samson in Judges 16. 20. He wist not that the Lord was departed from him. God was gone, and his great strength was gone, and he knew it not, but thought to have found it with him as at other times. When we walk on from day to day in a course of ordinary duty, and it may be get nothing by it, no life, no strength, no influence of the Spirit, how little sense is there all this while of its absence from us ! How few, that regret the matter ! One would think there should be strange palpitations and throbbings of heart among us, to think how little there is of the Spirit of the living God breathing in his own ordinances, and through the most sacred, weighty and important truths that we hear from time to time. Methinks our hearts should misgive us, and we should be often recounting with ourselves, What will this come to ? A religion not animated by the Spirit, in which there is no life, no influence, what will it come to ?

[2.] A deep apprehension, or an inward, cordial owning of the arbitrariness of the Spirit and its communications, and of our own great unworthiness thereof. This is another thing wherewith we are to account the stated communications of the

Spirit are connected, That is, that there be not only a sense of our want and indigency, but of our very great unworthiness that ever that pure and Holy Spirit should touch with our souls, or have to do with us. This way is its virtue engaged and drawn forth. How was the virtue of Christ drawn forth in order to the doing of cures which he wrought by the Spirit of God? It is a remarkable instance to our present purpose which we have in Mat. 8. 8. "Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldest come under my roof;" then goes forth his influence, and does the thing that was desired to be done. To have only this notion in our minds, alas! that signifies little, but to have an intimate, habitual sense inwrought in our hearts, and maintained there, "how most utterly unworthy we, especially, and indeed all men are, that ever there should have been a descent of the blessed Spirit of the living God; that ever it should have let down any thing of its light and influence into this dismal and impure world." Were we more worthy that the Spirit of God should work among us, than among pagans? Where there is an admiring sense of the arbitrariness of grace in this case, and our own great unworthiness, there the Spirit is most apt to issue forth in vital influence according to the necessities of our state. This is true humility and poverty of Spirit, to which that kingdom belongs, which, in the very *primordia* of it, is made up of righteousness and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost, Mat. 5. 3. compared with Rom. 14. 17. It is to the humble soul that still more grace is given, but he resisteth the proud, (James 4. 6.) those who are so insolent as to think no divine gift too good for them. But to the humble soul that lies in the dust self-abased, and always in an apt posture to admire grace, if it may but have any, the least, breath of that influence from the blessed Spirit of God; it may be expected still freely to be given forth. The high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity—and dwelleth in the high and holy place looks to that man, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at his word, Isa. lxvi. 2. and lvii. 15. And if you look back to the 14th ver. of that chapter, you find the expressions more apposite to our present purpose, Cast ye up, cast ye up, prepare the way, take up the stumbling block out of the way of my people? "I would have my people have a fine, easy, pleasant, comfortable walk," (such as is their walk, who walk in the Spirit) and then it is immediately added, "Thus saith the high and lofty One, that inhabiteth, eternity, whose name is holy, I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones;" so as that they shall be always in a posture for walking

in that way thus cast up, prepared, and made level for them.

[3.] A high valuation of spiritual influence. When we put the greatest price upon spiritual good things, then we are in a disposition to receive them from this blessed Spirit. We find that they who have had most of it, upon whom it hath been continually coming in afresh, have been full of the expressions of their high value of spiritual communications. And even where such things as are considerable, under the notion of means have been so highly valued, it appears rationally to be collected, that the end of those means was more highly valued, and by the expressions, by which hath been signified the value of the means, the value of the end hath been more signified; as when we find so high an esteem expressed of the law of the word of God, by the people of God in Scripture records. Why, how do you understand it, when it is said, The law of thy mouth is better to me than thousands of gold and silver, in Ps. 119. 72. (and other passages of like import you have in that psalm, and elsewhere) what? would we understand it otherwise than of the animated word, or law? Was it a dead letter, considered as such, without any reference to the Spirit and its influence working through it and by it, upon which all that price was put? What would that have signified to have had a spiritless law, a law, without any such Spirit going with it as should make it a law of life? The law of the Spirit of life you find it called, that is, according to the impression that it hath upon the heart and soul, in Rom. 8. 2. It was, as such; that the law of God was so highly prized by his people, as it was the medium through which the Spirit was conveyed and given in from time to time. And we may measure our expectations of the Spirit to be communicated and given to us, very much by this thing. What is our estimation of such vouchsafements? If we were indeed to speak the sense of our souls, we might soon find what our value is of external and earthly good things. We know what value we should have for a plentiful estate, and for a peaceful, easy life, so as to have our flesh in all things accommodated, and our sense gratified. Do we find that there is a proportionable estimate of spiritual good things, and that is, that, according as their value is superior, we proportionably esteem them? Is it the sense of our souls, "Lord, whatever thou dost with me, let me have much of thy Spirit. Though I be poor, though I be miserable, though I be pinched with straits and wants all my days, though I be exposed to wanderings, let me have thy Spirit; take away any thing from me, withhold any thing rather than thy Spirit." And hereupon

[4.] Earnest desire of spiritual influence. With that the

participation, the farther participation of it is most surely connected. Vehement longings, where there is some of it, are an earnest of still more. When the heart is panting after God, the living God, as the hunted hart after the water brooks, it is a good pledge, a pre-assuring token, that there shall be still more and more. How express are those words of our Saviour, Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled, Mat. 5. 6. To hunger and thirst after righteousness, is to hunger and thirst after spiritual influence; which implies, that without that, all the fruits of righteousness languish, or could never have been. It is indeed a wonderful thing seriously to contemplate, that there should be a connexion between such desires, and such participations thereupon; that ever the great God should have vouchsafed and condescended thus, as to make it become a stated thing, that they who do desire, shall partake, even of that sacred, heavenly influence. We do not find it to be so, as to meaner things, and of a lower nature. We find not any such connexion between the desire of riches, and riches; between the desire of honour, and honour. There is no scripture that saith, If you desire to be rich, you shall be rich; if you desire to be honourable and great in this world, you shall be great and honourable; and if you desire to live a peaceful, quiet life, you shall live such a life in this world. But we find it said, "Desire, and hunger and thirst after righteousness, and you shall be filled." There is no such connexion of an appetite to natural food, and food; a hungry beggar cannot be sure, that because he is hungry, therefore he shall be satisfied, that his hunger will entitle him to a meal's meat: but here you find the case is so; and how admirable is the grace that hath made it so! Desire spiritual influence, and you shall have it; spiritual communications, and your receivings shall be according to your hearts. For bring a sincere desire directed to God, and terminated upon him, and our Saviour hath assured us, that if we ask, we shall receive; if we seek, we shall find; if we knock, it shall be opened to us, and even in this very kind: look into the context of that scripture, Luke 11. 12, 13. All comes at last to this result, How much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him? It is elsewhere said, good things, and here it is said, the Holy Spirit. According as grace hath laid out to itself its own methods, desire is a drawing thing; it draws in vital influence from the blessed Spirit, even as we attract and draw in breath, in the ordinary course of our breathing. And it must ordinarily be said, that they only are destitute of spiritual influence, who desire it not; and when that may be said, sure there is enough

to be said to justify the retraction or suspension of any such influence.

[5.] Dependence upon it, is another thing wherewith a participation of the Spirit is most surely connected. I live, yet not I, but Christ lives in me; and the life that I live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me, Gal. 2. 20. They that wait on the Lord shall renew their strength, and mount up with wings, as eagles, Isa. xl. 31. How did the poor cripple (that we read of in Acts 3.) derive influence by which he was enabled to walk? Why, he looked upon Peter and John, expecting to receive something from them. He drew even with his eye, a craving eye, an expecting eye. "Sure there is something to be gotten of these men." They bade him look upon them, he looked accordingly. And we are bidden to look too: "Look unto me—all the ends of the earth." Isa. 45. 22. We are directed to look upward, to look with an expecting eye: influence will come. As the eyes of all other creatures are put up unto God, and he is not wanting unto the work of his hands, so the new creature is prompted to do so much more, to look up intelligently, and with design: "With design I do it, that I may receive: and he who feeds ravens, and takes care of sparrows, will not famish souls, that look up with an expecting and begging eye, as those that not only know their own need, but believe his bounty." And indeed if there be not this in it, it is most highly to affront him, and then no wonder, if the stream of his bounty be turned another way, and never reach us.

There are other particulars, which I should have spoken to, but I find the time prevents me. The design of all this will much drive this way, (which, I shall so far prevent myself, as to take notice of to you now) to let us see, that if we find not the Spirit communicated to us, so far as is necessary to our walking in the Spirit, it is through our own default, we owe it to ourselves. Pray, do but consider; Is it not our fault, if we are insensible of any need of the Spirit? Or, of our unworthiness of it? Is it not a fault, if we value not the immediate communications of the blessed God from his own Holy Spirit? Is it no fault, to prefer dirt and vanity before the influences of that Spirit, the maintenance of present spiritual life, and the pledge and earnest of an eternal state of life? Is it no fault, if we desire not that there should be a commerce between us and that Spirit? if we think it not a thing worthy to be desired, worthy to be sought after? If we could have the privilege of daily communication with an angel; if we might have him to talk and converse with, to guide and instruct us from day to day in all our ways and affairs, and to comfort

and relieve us in all our troubles and sorrows, would we account meanly of this? or, think it a thing fit to be made light of? But what comparison is there between the commerce of an angel, and such a commerce with the blessed Spirit of God? A being taken into that communion, which is called the communion of the Holy Ghost, in 2 Cor. 13. 14. Is it not our fault, if we want the influences of the Spirit, and it hath no intercourse with us, merely through our neglect, and because we care not for it? Is it no fault, if we will not trust him who hath promised, and whose word is more stable than the foundations of heaven and earth? He hath promised, and we will not believe him! Conscience, if it do its part, will fasten the charge of guilt upon ourselves; that if there be a retraction or suspension of spiritual communications from us, it is through our own fault: we walk solitarily; we do not walk in the Spirit, but we walk alone, and as outcasts from God, as those whom he hath nothing to do with, and who have nothing to do with him, but all through our own default. It is meet that we should admit the conviction of conscience concerning this thing, that we may not indulge ourselves, in so manifest, and so dangerous a delinquency.

SERMON XVII.*

WE go on to mention some more of the particular duties, wherewith such a communication of the Spirit stands connected, as is requisite to our walking in the Spirit ; beside the five already spoken to.

[6.] That we obey its dictates ; resign and yield ourselves to its governing power. This is plainly enough signified in the expressions of being “led by the Spirit,” and “walking after the Spirit,” which we have divers times in Rom. 8. and elsewhere. “There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus, that walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.” This imports a ductile, sequacious, guidable frame and temper, an aptness to yield and comply with all the suggestions of that blessed Spirit. Yield yourselves to God, as those that are alive from the dead, Rom. 6. 13. How manifestly distinguishable is the case, between going about to raise a living person that is fallen, and to raise a dead carcass ! A living person yields himself to our helping hand : “So, yield yourselves to God, as those that are alive :”—The word that is there used, is the same with that which we have in Rom. 12. 1. Present yourselves to God a living sacrifice : and it signifies to offer one’s self readily for this or that, to be in a ready posture to do what we are prompted to and put upon. And this walking after the Spirit is frequently inculcated in that forementioned chapter, Rom. 8. 1, 4, 13. And then you have the expres-

* Preached April 17th, 1678. at Cordwainer’s Hall,

sion of being led by the Spirit, following the other, ver. 14. And again in this chapter where the text lies, Gal. 5. 18. If ye be led by the Spirit. This word signifies to be acted by it: which doth also suppose a compliance on our part, and that we concur; that we be in a prepared posture to act as we shall be from time to time acted. To rebel against the Spirit, vexatiously to contend, to oppose ourselves unto its dictates, we may easily understand cannot be the way to entitle ourselves to its communications. It is promised to be—a guide to lead into all truth,—all that truth which is after godliness: we must understand it chiefly of such truth, as doth concern Christian practice: but if we fall out and quarrel with our guide, and will not obey; what can we expect, but that it should in just displeasure retire, and leave us to walk alone, or to wander as our own inclination shall lead us?

[7.] That we strictly observe and closely adhere unto our rule. This is requisite in order to our having these needful communications of the Spirit: for it dictates according to that external rule: we ought therefore to have our eye upon that, which all along lines the way in which we are to walk. We shall very unreasonably and vainly expect to have the Spirit still constantly following us in all our extravagancies and excursions: if it arbitrarily do so, as the Spirit many times doth; yet we have not reason to expect it should do so in a stated course. The way of the Lord is strength to the upright, Prov. 10. 29. In their very way they meet with their strength: holding on their course in that way, they find themselves still to go from strength to strength, (ps. 84. 7.) to grow stronger and stronger, Job 17. 9. When our way is pleasing to God, then we may expect that by his Spirit he should converse with us in our way; that is, if his way like us. Two cannot walk together, except they be agreed; and especially if they be not agreed upon their way. Now we find, that the way wherein we are to walk so as to please God, is prescribed and directed all along by his word. Ye have received of us, saith the apostle, how ye ought to walk and to please God, 1 Thes. 4. 1. He hath directed the way by express precept; in which if we walk and so please him, he will converse with us by his Spirit; then we shall have his continual assisting, directing presence. The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord; and he delighteth in his way. Then though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down; for the Lord upholdeth him with his hand. Ps. 37. 23, 24. Enoch gained a testimony of God, that he so walked as to please God. Heb. 11. 5. To be sure he had him for the guide and companion of his way. It is not much that we are under the same lot, that our Lord Christ

was contented to be under. John 8. 29. He that sent me, is with me; the Father hath not left me alone; for I do always those things that please him. And he doth require it of us, that as he did keep his Father's commandments, and abide in his love; so we should keep his commandments, and abide in his love, (John 15. 10.) and so have his spiritual presence, or his Spirit to be present with us, by which he saith he would be present with his, when as to his outward man he must be removed and gone out of this state. That passage in ps. 101. 2. is very observable: the Psalmist resolves upon this, that he would behave himself wisely in a perfect way, and that he would walk with a perfect heart; would take care of his way that it was a strait and perfect path in which he should walk: and doing this, you find him in such a posture expecting, "O when wilt thou come unto me?" Walking, as we told you before, connoted a way; and this must be a way suitable to the Spirit, if we reckon upon walking in the Spirit. To walk in the way of our own hearts, and think that the Spirit should be with us there, is certainly a very foolish expectation.

[8.] That we design all the strength and vigour, that we shall receive from the Spirit, in order to our walking unto the divine honour and glory and service, as the end of it. Walking doth connote an end, as well as a way. And to walk in the Spirit must suppose, that there be an end suitable to the Spirit: and what is most immediately from God, ought to be most directly and entirely designed for him. And I doubt not but there is a very common fault among christians as to this thing; they desire spiritual communications for themselves, because it is a very delightful and pleasurable thing to be carried as upon eagles' wings, to have so sensible help in all one's walking: therefore they desire such helps and influences as a privilege; and sometimes lament the retraction and withdrawment of it merely as an infelicity, without charging themselves with sin in the case: and it is in the mean time forgotten, that what God gives upon this account is for himself, and we ought to have the same design with him. The apostle speaks of his way of living, Gal. 2. 20. I live, saith he, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me. Immediately before you have the end of that life, as here you have the spring and source of it: I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God, ver. 19. Christ feeds and maintains that life, and supplies all the motive and active power belonging to it, which shall be devoted to himself, and terminate wholly upon himself. We are to look upon all these communications

as trusts, which are to be employed according to the pleasure and for the service of him that doth intrust us. Who will commit to your trust, says Christ, the true riches, if ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon? Luke 16. 11. The things of this life are comprehended under the "mammon of unrighteousness:" to these are opposed "the true riches," which must mean spiritual good things; such riches as those spoken of in Eph. 3. 16. where the apostle is praying for the Ephesians, that God would grant them according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might, by the Spirit in the inner man. Who will trust you with such riches? It implies, that such riches, wherever they are given, are given but as a trust, and therefore are to be employed for him that intrusts us with them. They are talents, that must be improved for him: for that passage doth refer unto the parable concerning the talents, as you may see in the beginning of Luke 16. There is a great hold, as I may say, that the soul hath upon the Spirit and his communications by such an ingenuity as this is; as we many times by ingenuities engage and oblige one another. When this shall be the posture of the soul and its sense towards God; "I only desire such strength and such assistances from thee, to use them for thee, for thy own work:" when we are ready to put such a dedication, such an inscription upon every act that we design to do by such a received power, "To thee, O Lord; Holiness to the Lord; I only desire thy influences, that I may do thy work, and be to the best purpose serviceable to thy name and interest in my sphere and station:" with such a disposition as this we may expect the communication of the Spirit to be most certainly connected.

Thus you see proved, how it doth belong unto the state of living christians, as a duty proper thereto, to walk in the Spirit; or what there is of duty, with which the communications of the Spirit towards our walking in it are connected.

Now by way of *use*, we have several things to infer from all this.

I. Inference. Then if we do not walk in the Spirit, it must needs be our own fault, that we embrace not the privilege that is offered, and do not the duties required. It is fit we should own it as our own fault, and charge it where it ought to lie.

But it may perhaps here be objected; That all these things that have been mentioned, as so many parts of duty in order to our obtaining the needful communications of the Spirit, are themselves the Spirit's operations: and how can they then

be prerequisites unto our obtaining such communications of the Spirit? To this we say,

1. That they are requisite unto farther communications, such as we shall still have farther use for and need of in the continued course of our walking. And it is most highly congruous unto the royalty of the divine bounty, to reward what is done by his own vouchsafement. It is his own rule and measure, that to them which have it shall be given, Luke 8. 18. They that have, shall have more. He gives more grace upon humility. James 4. 6. He giveth more grace; wherefore he saith, he resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble. Had he given no grace to such before; how became they humble? His grace made them so: but then he gives still more grace.

2. These are so the operations of the Spirit, as that they are our acts too. It is not the Spirit that believes and obeys, but it helps us to do so; as we shall have farther occasion to speak hereafter.

3. In such actings of renewed souls, as are in themselves holy and gracious, there are certain previous actings, that lead to them and which may and usually do end in them. As there is nothing more obvious unto the ordinary experience of christians, than that they many times begin a duty, as to pray or read, to hear or meditate, with very indisposed acts; but the Spirit comes in amidst their work: oftentimes they have no such discernible assistance at first, when they begin to act. Therefore there is somewhat previous unto that which is strictly to be considered as a holy and spiritual act.

4. There is also a preventing influence or grace of the Spirit, unto which it is safe to attribute even those precious tendencies to such acts, to holy and gracious acts. But then we must also know, that this is not always efficacious, so as to end in holy and gracious actions: because the Spirit doth, sometimes from sovereignty, but more ordinarily from paternal justice, retire and withdraw itself, when those first overtures are not complied with. As is manifest from its being intimated to retire and withdraw upon being grieved, being resisted, being vexed; as we must suppose it to be, when it is not duly complied with in the applications it makes to the spirits even of renewed persons themselves; for they, such as "live in the Spirit," are the subject of our present discourse.

And in speaking to you of these previous tendencies unto good and holy actions, (which, it is fit we should attribute unto the Spirit of God, when we find any thing of them; though it doth not work in that over-powering way, as where it puts forth its efficacious influence in order to some holy and spiritual act

to be done;) I shall speak by way of inquiry and demand; that I may the more engage conscience, and set it on work to judge in the case between God and us; whether, if we be destitute of such assistances of the Spirit, as the exigency of our case calls for, it is not to be imputed to our manifest neglect of somewhat that we might have done? Not, that we might have done of ourselves neither; for we cannot of ourselves so much as move a finger, or stir a foot; but that by a preventing influence, in which the Spirit was beforehand with us, we could have done? Whether, if we had tried, we should not have found we might have done such and such things, that would have been in a fair tendency unto those operations or actions that are in themselves strictly and formally holy and gracious? Let us therefore commune a little with our own consciences, upon such heads as these.

(1.) Have we not omitted to reflect and take notice of the way of our own walking, so as to bring the matter to a disquisition? Can I be said in my ordinary course to walk in the Spirit? You know, reflection is a thing common to a christian with another man. It is the privilege of the reasonable spirit of man, that it can reflect upon itself: it is a rational sun, that can invert its beams, and turn them inwards. The bodily eye cannot do so, it cannot see itself: but our mind can see itself, and turn in its beams to look in upon itself. If we did apply ourselves to do so, might we not discern whether our way be transacted so, as that they can say, "This is walking in the Spirit, this looks like the Spirit?" We might surely discern, whether our works can be said to be wrought in God; an expression we have formerly taken notice of. But do not we neglect even to do this? to survey our own way, and to consider with our own selves, "Is my course like walking in the Spirit?" It will be of no small service to put the question to ourselves often, Is it so, yea or no? am I to approve and like my way, or to disapprove it?

(2.) Might we not be often comparing our walking with that of others? As is usual with them that walk together, to measure with one another. They that are behind, take notice of such and such that are far before them, and thereupon mend their pace, and make after with more expedition. There is no one that mends his course of walking, but it is upon an apprehension of something that needs to be mended: and therefore that reflection is needful, that was spoken of before; either the pace was not quick enough, or not regular enough, or not continued enough. Besides that such faults in our walking are to be discerned by comparing with the rule, referring to the perfect law of liberty; so much might be discovered and

discerned, by comparing our walk with the more spiritual sort of christians. Sure we might do that, if we would. Might we not sometimes set such and such persons in our own thoughts before us, and think with ourselves, What a spiritual life does such a man live! How strict and even is his conversation! How manifest is it, that such a man walks with God, and lives much in heaven! Might we not do so, and accordingly mend our course in walking? For God hath set up such eminent christians to be examples and patterns to others; and we are directed "so to walk, as we have such more eminent saints for our example; to be followers of them, as they are of Christ." We ought to do so. When we compare ourselves only with ourselves, we are likely to get no instruction by it, and to be never the wiser for that. "Those that compare themselves with themselves, doing so only, are not wise;" they never learn any thing. But comparing ourselves with others, then we may receive profit and instruction; and they may be in the very view of their walking, a seasonable reproof of the carelessness and remissness and extravagancy of ours. And what would it be to consider with ourselves sometimes, what even and happy lives do such and such live in comparison of mine! I am weak, and they are strong; I am dull and dead and languid, and they are quick and lively! - This would be somewhat in an apt tendency towards such works and actions, as wherein our spiritual walk doth more directly consist.

(3.) Do we not neglect to consider of the sadness of our case? If we are deserted of the Spirit; we might discern, that it is not so with us as it is with others. Might we not hereupon sit down and think, "How sad a thing it is to be forsaken of that blessed Spirit, or even not to have it discernibly present, to have that Spirit, that doth so freely and graciously converse with some, refuse to converse with me; and so to be out gone by other christians, and left languishing alone!" I might think, that this is not a state to be content and well satisfied in.

(4.) Do we not neglect to—contemplate the fulness and plenitude of the blessed Spirit?—that when we find that we are poor and indigent, there are supplies to be had? Do we not neglect to take actual knowledge of this? This is a tendency to that faith in the Spirit, which is to be acted in order to our drawing forth its communications: for sure I must have the object of my faith in view, before I can perform an act of faith towards it; I cannot act faith upon that, which I do not think of. And by how much the more I do consider the plenitude and liberality and graciousness of this blessed Spirit, so much the more I see in the object to invite and draw forth

an act of faith; and I am to expect the Spirit to concur in this way in order to a kind of vital contract that I come to have with it, by which I actually partake of and draw forth influence from it. I must look to him, in whom my help is. They looked unto him, and were lightened. Ps. 34. 5. A general expression of the gracious influence of God by his Spirit; they looked to him, and quick and lively vital influence was given in.

(5.) Do we not neglect the business of self-excitation? Surely we are not to make nothing of this matter of stirring up ourselves: as there is no walking, but there are some essays previous thereto; some efforts, before a man can be said actually to have walked; a *conatus* or applying of himself thereto. Unto such a *conatus* is the expression accommodate, of girding up our loins in order to our spiritual walk. 1 Pet. 1. 13. Gird up the loins of your minds, be sober, and hope to the end, &c. If men design a walk, they do *accingere se*, they put themselves into a ready posture for it. So we might be doing in order to our receiving the Spirit's farther influence: though as was said, we do not do this of ourselves, as we can do nothing without help; yet we should find that this is a help always afforded us, and wherein God is still beforehand with us, and which, if his helping hand were accepted in these things, might lead us farther unto those wherein our walking in the Spirit doth more formally consist. And the many passages, that we meet with in Scripture of this thing, certainly cannot be without their signification, are not set for ciphers in the Bible. As, when the apostle bids Timothy to stir up the gift that was in him, 2 Tim. 1. 6. *ανταρπνευσεν*, that emphatical word. And we are not to think, that what he saith hath reference only to an extraordinary gift conferred upon him; as the very next words that follow shew, ver. 7. For God hath not given us the Spirit of fear, but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind: that is, the Spirit in such operations wherein he is common to christians; though very likely there was a fuller measure of that, which did attend that ordinance of the imposition of hands, whereof the former verse speaks; according as a greater measure was required unto the greater work of an evangelist, above that of an ordinary christian, even a greater measure of special grace, or sanctifying influence. This the apostle would have Timothy to *blow up into a coal*, as the word signifies, to make the fire to live again. You also find it complained of as an accusation in Isa. lxiv. 7. that no man stirred up himself to take hold of the Lord. There is such a striving with ourselves in order to such and such spiritual works and

actions to be done. The word in the last mentioned place is very emphatical, it signifies to *awake*, and is put unto that mood which in the Hebrew language signifies action upon one's self; there is no one that goes about to awake, to rouse himself, in order to the taking hold of God. Somewhat might be done, and is to be done to this purpose. Awake, my glory, says the Psalmist, ps. 57. 8. It is most probable, that by his glory he means his soul: "Awake, O my soul, do not lie drowsing always, thou hast great work to do." That expression, in Col. 3. 16. which we read, admonishing one another, is *εαυτην*, and most properly signifies *admonishing ourselves*. "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly,—admonishing your own selves, speaking to your own selves, in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. He does not say, "We have nothing to do, nothing that lies upon us." Can we never commune with ourselves, and labour to awaken ourselves? We might expostulate with ourselves, as the Psalmist in psalm xlii. 5. Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? As in reference to want of comfort, so in reference to indisposition to duty we have much more cause to chide ourselves; "Why dost thou lie dead and asleep, when thou hast so great work to do? Arise, and walk in the light of the Lord." We might charge ourselves, urge our own souls with the obligation of the divine law which we are under; as the psalmist does here, "Hope thou in God for I shall yet praise him." We might encourage ourselves, as David in that great distress at Ziklag is said to have encouraged himself in the Lord his God. 1 Sam. 30. 6. And we might resolve with ourselves upon this or that thing to be done. I will love thee, O Lord my strength, Ps. 18. 1. There was a resolution of going upon such an exercise of love and praise, before he actually engaged in the work itself: now I will go and apply myself to a love-commerce with God, to enlarge and expatiate in his love and praises. We might say, "We will now apply ourselves to the business, before such and such a work be actually done." Are we not ommissive and neglectful in such things?

(6.) Might we not be more frequent, or more diligent, serious and attentive, in our waiting upon the solemn ordinances of God? Many of us might come oftener, or come sooner, or more compose ourselves to attention when we come unto those means, through which the Spirit of God is wont to work, and by which it conveys its influence.

(7.) Might we not be much oftener in our closets, and retire more frequently? Here lies the too little observed cause of the languishing of religion among us at this day; persons

let the business of this world so shuffle out their religion, that they cannot have any time to go and be apart with God; and they are left so much alone, because they are so little alone: as was the saying of a heathen, "I am never less alone, than when I am alone." Many a time might we have a good meeting with God in a corner, if we should allow ourselves to be a little there.

(8.) Might we not be more conversant at such chosen times with the word of God, than we are? It is through that, this Spirit breathes. Thy word hath quickened me Ps. 119. 50. With thy precepts thou hast quickened me, ver. 93. Through that word which was of his own inspiring, *ἡ ἀρχὴ θεοπνευστος*, *the Spirit chooses still to breathe*. And is it not sad to think, that among many professors, the Bible should lie by as an unprofitable neglected history about the house, as part of the lumber which we know not how to make use of? The word is the Spirit's sword; and the corruptions of our hearts, that are the great hindrances of our walking, need hewing many times; but we put not ourselves under the stroke of the sword by which this should be done. And truly, if any of us should live to see the time or know the place, where it might be a crime to have a Bible in our houses; we should then have cause to reflect, that we have made so little use of it when we had it.

(9.) Might we not be more in prayer upon this subject, that is, for the Spirit? Might we not insist more upon it, and plead more earnestly for spiritual communications? We are told, that "God will give his Spirit unto them that ask him;" unto his children, as readily as we will give bread to ours, rather than a stone. And will not we believe it? Or if we do, is it a thing so little worth our looking after, to have our souls inhabited and animated by that blessed Spirit, to have it reside and rule in us? Is this so little to be regarded by us? I believe there will a time come with many professors, that are now very much asleep, when they shall value a communication of the Spirit more than any one enjoyment whatsoever, however they are now absorbed and drunk up of the spirit of this world. If God rend and take away all from us, and we have nothing else left, nothing to trust to, but what we have from above; then those things from above will be things of value. And what would we desire more, than to be so plainly told as we are, that we shall have for seeking? Your heart shall live, that do seek God. Ps. 69. 32. Would you have plainer words? They shall praise the Lord, that seek him; your heart (their heart) shall live for ever, Ps. 22. 26.

(10.) Might we not more abstain from the things that we

know tend to grieve the Spirit? Many such things there are. It cannot but occur to our own knowledge and thoughts, if at any time they be serious, that such and such things (our own hearts will tell us what they are,) must needs be a grief to the Spirit of God; and if I allow myself to tread such and such paths, the Spirit and I shall grow strangers unto one another. The indulging of sensual desires, allowing a liberty unto enormous and exorbitant passions, letting out our spirits to the minding of earthly things without check and restraint, falling into jangles and contentions with others, cherishing our own enmity and discontents toward such and such persons, or upon such and such occasions. How do we think, that that pure and holy and blessed Spirit will inhabit so impure and licentious and unpeaceable breasts as ours are? The letting out our thoughts and affections to vanity, so as only to be in a disposition to mind trifles and converse with them, cannot but produce a great strangeness. Do not you know, that there is many a serious man who would forsake your company, if he saw that you were in no disposition to mind any thing that was serious; and that to talk of nothing but toys and trifles was pleasing and grateful to you? Serious men would leave you upon this, and think you unsuitable company for them.

SERMON XVIII.*

Inference. In the great business of the Christian life, it is not the Spirit that doth all, but there is a part incumbent upon us. This is manifest, when it is said to belong to us, if we are christians indeed, to "walk in the Spirit." Then the business of the Christian life is not to be done by the Spirit alone, but we have a part to do therein. And it is not unnecessary to insist a little upon this. I do not reckon this necessary, merely for the confutation of their error, who think otherwise; for I cannot think there are any among us that are of a contrary opinion; though some such there have been, and probably, enough are in the world, who have thought it to be a great piece of perfection to be aspired unto by christians, to be merely passive in the business of religion; and that by how much the more perfect they are, so much the more passive, and do so much the less in religion: but I suspect not any here to be of that mind. It is upon a more practical account, that this is fit to be insisted on: for though we have no such formed apprehensions, yet it is too plain that most carry the matter as if they had nothing to do. And therefore I shall urge some considerations to evince what I suppose to be already our common belief, that there is a part incumbent upon us;

* Preached April 17th. 1678. at Cordwainer's Hall.

to enliven a little that belief in our souls, and that we may be stirred up to walk and act more agreeably to it.

1. The very notion of walking in the text, doth most strongly exclaim against the supposition of our having nothing to do. You have been formerly told, that if a man should roll a stone, or drag a log, neither of them would be said to walk. Walking is a voluntary, spontaneous motion, from an internal, and some way or other self-directing principle; when we design the motion and choose the way wherein we are to walk, being enabled to choose aright. And by how much the more the Spirit puts forth its influence in order to our walking, so much the more are we at liberty; with so much the more spontaneity and activity and vigour do we go on in that course unto which it prompts. Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty, 2 Cor. 3. 17. And I will run the way of thy commandments, when thou shalt enlarge my heart, Ps. 119. 32.

2. It is to be argued by an induction of such particulars, as we have formerly instanced in, that we have a part incumbent upon us. Concerning which of them would we say, that they are not our part? That which begins our course, repentance towards God, is not that our work? That, by which we derive strength and vigour for that course of holy motion, that faith which is continually to supply us from the fountain with influence, is not this incumbent upon us? Is it not our part to resign and yield ourselves, and to obey the influences and dictates of the blessed Spirit of God? Can we then yet say or think, that we have nothing to do, or carry as if we had not?

But it may be said, that these are the works of the Holy Ghost, to repent, to believe, to resign, to obey, and the like.

It is very true indeed. But what hinders, that even in reference to one and the same work the Spirit should have its part, and we our part? As when a musician plays upon an instrument, hath not the musician and the instrument each of them a contribution towards the melody? The strings do not sound without being touched, nor is that sound made by touching any thing but those strings. We cannot say in that case, that the musician and the instrument have each of them so their part, as that one note is from the musician and another note from the instrument; but both the musician and the instrument contribute to every note. And so it is plainly here, as to all the holy and spiritual motions and actings of a renewed soul; our spirits and the blessed Spirit of God have a kind of co-operation in reference to every particular act; which plainly shews that we have our part all along, and much more an active part than that similitude we used can serve to represent.

3. Were it not so, that we have such a part incumbent upon

us, all the precepts that contain in them the duty which is charged upon us, (that is, which we ought to call duty, because they are precepts in which it is contained,) would be mere nullities ; and so that duty would be no duty. It would indeed evacuate and nullify the whole law of God, and all the precepts that are in his book of one kind or another. For if we have no part belonging to us, then his precepts oblige us to nothing ; and that which obliges to nothing, is no obligation : and so it were an apprehension in the tendency of it, directly subversive of the whole frame of the divine government : all his laws over us would carry no signification with them at all. Especially what sense could we make of such laws as these, that do in general express the whole of a christian's course ? This, for instance, in the text, "Walk in the Spirit ?" Which you have with so much solemnity introduced in another verse of this same chapter ; "This I say, Walk in the Spirit ; and ye shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh," ver. 16. This I say ; here would be great solemnity used for no purpose, the precept would carry no signification of a precept at all. And so of other such like scriptures. Be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might, Eph. 6. 10. Be strong ; What doth that say to us ? what doth it mean ? Can we tell how to make ourselves strong, and by the Lord's strength ? It plainly shews, that regenerate ones have somewhat to do, upon the doing whereof they may expect the communications of the Spirit. So, Eph. 4. 18. Be ye filled with the Spirit. What a strange thing were it to give us such a precept as that, that we should be filled with the Spirit, if we had nothing to do in order thereto ! It doth indeed manifestly imply the Spirit's communicativeness, its aptness to communicate itself in all suitable and needful influences : and if we should not understand it so, the words would carry but such a sound, such a faint sound with them, as those that are supposed to be spoken by some charitable man, that should say to one in necessity, naked, and destitute of daily food, "Be thou warm, be thou filled ;" but yet gives nothing needful for the body, James 2. 15, 16. And what ! Shall we dare to imagine, that the Spirit of God, that Spirit of love and grace, should indite such words as these, "Be ye filled with the Spirit," and yet be altogether unapt to give that which should be needful to the soul ? It doth plainly hold forth therefore the communicativeness of the Holy Ghost. But then it doth hold forth also a part incumbent upon us, somewhat to be done by us, whereupon we are to expect such a communication, and in a stated course ; and not to expect it otherwise, or upon other terms ; whatever

it may arbitrarily and from a sovereignty and royalty of grace do, as it many times doth.

4. Otherwise all the holy and gracious principles, all the graces of the Spirit, were put into the soul in vain ; they were needless and useless things. For pray, what use can we conceive them to be of, but only to dispose the soul for holy and gracious actings ? And then sure it must have something to do. The frame and shape of every thing doth discover, even to a man's eye, what it was made for : the very shape of this or that utensil shews its use, and what purposes it will serve for. So the whole frame of the new creature, all the several principles that are ingredient into the constitution of it, plainly shew what they are for. And the Spirit of God doth expressly tell us, Eph. 2. 10. We are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which he hath before ordained that we should walk in them. "We are his workmanship:" this is a piece of work wrought and done upon the soul, on purpose to fit him for the doing of good works : it is a very strange thing if yet it should have nothing to do. We might as well suppose, that the apt shape and frame of this or that instrument did contribute nothing to the use ; a musician might as well play upon a log as upon a lute. Why should there be that curious workmanship, as there is wrought in every renewed soul, if all those principles are to lie dead, and there is no work to be done by such a soul ? What is the grace of repentance for, but that the soul might turn to God ? What is self-denial for, but to take it off from self ? Mortification towards this world, but to loose and unhinge the soul from that, that so it may be in a posture disengaged and free for the course of holy spiritual motion ? What is love for, but that it may move vigorously and delightfully ? Fear, but that it may move regularly ? Humility, but that it may move equally ? Patience, but that it may move steadily, and so as not to be diverted by the evils that it meets with in the way ? Take every particular grace severally, or take the entire frame of all together, and the very frame shews us what the new creature was for, that it was not to do nothing, and therefore sure that there is somewhat to be done.

5. Were it not so, this great absurdity would follow, that not only the Spirit of God was to be the agent, (which indeed is itself absurd enough) but that that alone is to be denominated the agent of every work that is to be done. Not only might it be truly said, that the Spirit of God repents and believes ; but that it alone doth so : and consequently that there was no believer in all the world, no penitent, no obedient person ; but only that these names ought to be given to the Spirit of God.

6. The matter is hence plain, that the Scripture doth manifestly say, that such and such things are done by the people of God. It is owned concerning them, that they "do believe, they have believed, they have received the word," and the like; they have "turned to the Lord from dumb idols," they have had "their labour of love," their approved works. I know thy works, I know by way of approbation that thou hast done so and so. And it being plain, that they are said to be the doers of such and such actions; either they do them as duty, as things incumbent upon them to do, or not: if as duty, we have what we seek: if not, then all such persons doing such works must be said to have done more than their duty: but certainly our own hearts will tell us, if we consider, that do what we can we always fall abundantly short.

These things make it plain enough, that there is a part incumbent upon us to do, and that it is not the business of the Spirit of God to do all, in the matter of the Christian life. It was necessary to insist upon this; because, if we do not admit the principle into our hearts, however it may hover in our mind and notional judgment, we can never admit into our hearts any conviction of our neglects of God, nor any impression of the many exhortations and incentives that we have unto greater diligence in the business of our Christian walk. We shall but faintly charge ourselves, and easily put off all with saying, the Spirit of God did not act; and think ourselves very innocent and harmless all the while, though we only trifle and loiter in the great business of Christianity all our days. If we own the principle, that we ought to be doing and walking, as we profess ourselves to be living christians; why do we carry the matter, as if we believed it not? why do we stand still, as if we had nothing to do, as if we could not find our hands? Alas! how little is there among us of that which ought to go under the name of Christian walking! How little can we find in ourselves, upon a serious review of the things done by us from day to day, concerning which we can say, "These were a real part of the Christian walk, and which ought to be referred thither!" Surely, while we so slothfully sit still and do nothing, it is very needful we should be put in mind and have it urged upon us, that we have *not nothing* to do; that we cannot sit still, as having no business, but only as those that mind it not.

III. Inference. We may farther infer hence, not only our obligation to a part incumbent upon us, but also our impotency to walk as we should alone. If it belongs to us as living christians, both as our privilege and duty, to walk in the Spirit; both do argue, that we cannot walk alone as we ought, that we cannot walk acceptably and so as to please God, by ourselves.

Such a charge as this laid upon us, "to walk in the Spirit," carries a plain signification, how incompetent we are for managing the course of our Christian walk without the Spirit. They that walk by the power of another, being acted and supported and borne up; though their walking imports that they do somewhat; yet plainly shew, by their walking so sustained, their impotency to steer that course of themselves. And it is needful, that the conviction of this too, do sink a great deal deeper with us than commonly it doth; that we can do nothing alone of the proper business that appertains to the Christian life; not so much as move a step, or draw a breath, or think a thought; not so much as think any thing, as of ourselves, 2 Cor. 3. 5.

This also is a thing, that is easily assented to, as soon as we hear it: but there is a very great difference to be made, between assenting to such a thing as an opinion, that we think carries with it a very plausible pretence for our own sloth, and having ourselves possessed with a deep and serious sense of it, as a thing plainly spoke out to us by the word of God, and whereof we find an inward experience in our own souls. We are very carefully to distinguish between these two. It is a very common pretence among people, that they can do nothing, no good thing without God, they are impotent to every thing that may have any tendency to their own salvation or to his glory; most profess to believe this, as soon as they hear the words spoken: but it is too apparent by the course that most hold, that this is only an opinion taken up, as supposed to carry a very favourable aspect upon their own sloth; and not that really they are of this faith. It is but a mere assumed opinion with them; not a part of their faith, nor a piece of their experience concerning themselves, that "without God they can do nothing."

It is plain enough, that persons may hold things as an opinion, that have no influence at all to govern their practice, notwithstanding that they are things in their own nature never so practical, or that ever so much concern practice. And it is of some necessity to us to consider, how impotent and ineffectual a thing mere opinion is to govern a man's practice. And to make way for this; that you may see that men hold this doctrine of their own impotency unto any spiritual good but as an opinion, without ever understanding the grounds of it, or without ever considering of what use it should be, or what course they are to take agreeable to such an apprehension; we shall shew a little the insufficiency of mere opinion to regulate practice. Plain it is, that many things that are in their own nature most practical, men have opinions about, which never influence their practice at all. It is a common thing for men

in the whole course of their lives to run counter to an opinion which they hold; as I might instance in sundry of the greatest things, that one can think of. Men are of this opinion, that God is the supreme and rightful Governor of the world; and yet have his laws and authority all their days in contempt. They are of this opinion, that God is omniscient, knows their hearts, and beholds all their ways; and yet never care to approve themselves to his eye in the temper of their spirits or the course of their walking. They are of opinion, that all men as sinners are naturally liable to the wrath and justice of God; and yet never go about to flee from the wrath to come. They are of opinion, that there is a judgment to come, and a state of retribution after this life for what hath been done in it; and yet never make it their concern to be sure, that they are not miserable hereafter, cast in judgment, doomed to perdition, but adjudged to live. Men in their whole course, even all their days, run directly contrary to their own opinion, in the greatest and most important things, that can be imagined; and that shews that it is a mere opinion: for a real, thorough belief of so great and important things, would certainly make other kind of work in their hearts and lives.

And because it is so plain in the general, that men may run all their time against their opinion, and guide their practice quite contrary to their opinion about practical things; it concerns us here to be a little more strict in our inquiry, whether it be not so in this particular case; that is, that men do hold the doctrine of their impotence for spiritual good but as an opinion, which they the more readily comply with, because they think it looks with a very favourable aspect upon that slothful, lazy course, which it is most agreeable to them to hold, and which they are very loth to alter. In this case, it doth them never the more good for being a true opinion; but the mischief to them is, that they hold it but as an opinion and no otherwise: which will appear, if you consider four things. If they held such a truth otherwise than as an opinion, if they believed it with a real faith and experienced the truth of it; it must, in conjunction with the things that I am to mention, make strange impressions upon their spirits, and alterations in their course, beyond what it is found to do. For,

1. Together with this apprehension, that they are impotent, and cannot of themselves walk as they should so as to please God, they also know or might easily know, that they do not walk so, as to have reason to think, that God is pleased with their walking. They may find upon a very easy reflection, that they do not walk in the Spirit: one would think it impossible for many of the looser sort of the professors of Christianity

to resist the evidence of so plain a thing, if they ask themselves the question ; “ Can I say, my course and walking is like walking in the Spirit, such as that I dare entitle the Spirit to it as its author ? ” What ! Is the Spirit the author of your minding earthly things so intently ? of seeking yourselves ? of casting away the thoughts of God and eternity and the other world ? And is not this thy walk ? ” Must not many say so ? Let that then be considered by them that say, they cannot walk so as to please God without the Spirit ; must they not also be forced to say, that they do not walk in the Spirit ? And then add to that,

2. The consideration whither these things tend. While they acknowledge, that to walk so as God may be pleased, without the Spirit, is not possible ; that their present course is not a walking in the Spirit ; and along with these, that it is absolutely necessary for them to walk in such a course, as that God may be pleased with their walking ; certainly it would put a reasonable, considering soul into a distress, if he would but lay these things together : “ I cannot walk as I should without the Spirit, and I find I do not walk according to the Spirit, yet it is necessary for me that I should do so. ” What should be the end of this ? Must it not needs be to put the spirit of a man, if he will reasonably consider it, into the greatest agonies imaginable ? None pretend to hold this doctrine of their own impotency, but the same persons will say that they hold too, that it is necessary for them to please God in their walking. Now while no suitable impression is made, no lively concern excited, answerable to the exigency of such a case ; is it not plain, that all this is but mere opinion, a hovering opinion and no more ? especially if we should add hereto the considering,

3. That the Spirit is not tied to their time : and that no doubt they will grant also. If now they have not the Spirit to influence their walking and enable them in the course of it, they cannot promise themselves that they shall have it the next hour or the next day or the next year.

4. They know withal, that they are not masters of their own time ; and they do not know but that their time may be over and expired, before that blessed Spirit, so often neglected and slighted and resisted, shall ever breathe or do any effectual work upon their souls.

These are things all of them as obvious as that other, that they are of themselves impotent. But take all these things together, and if there were more than mere opinion in the matter, certainly it could not but put such a soul into the greatest distress imaginable. “ What shall I do ? what shall I think of my case ? which way shall I turn myself ? The way wherein I

walk I am sure cannot please God ; I cannot walk better without his Spirit ; that Spirit doth not breathe or move in me in order to my better walking ; I cannot command that Spirit ; my time may shortly be over ; I may be dead and gone out of this world for ought I know, before that Spirit ever come to have any acquaintance with my spirit, any commerce with it, and then what will become of me ?”

All this I urge to this purpose, that it may be taken notice of and reflected upon, how little it signifies for men to have such an opinion of their own impotency, while it is an opinion and no more, while it makes no impression and has no suitable effect. If it were firmly believed, it would certainly infer this, that a soul that finds it can of itself do nothing, would be put upon loud and importunate cries to him, who can help us to do all, and who must do all, that is, do the part appertaining to him in all and in every thing that is to be done by us in order to our eternal well-being. But to lie still with the apprehension that I can do nothing, when (as the case doth signify) if I can do nothing I must perish, supposing that nothing be done by a higher and a stronger hand ; and to be unconcerned whether that hand ever touch my heart, ever come near me, yea or no : this is a dreadful and a monstrous thing, and might make men amazed at themselves ; that they can profess to believe a doctrine that carries with it a face of so much terror to their own souls, and never be startled at it ; be well pleased that it casts a favourable aspect upon their sloth, while it carries a most frowning one upon their safety : unless it had that tendency with it, (which in most it hath not,) to bring men upon their knees, and to set them on crying and importuning for that grace and Spirit, without which it is true we can do nothing, and without which therefore nothing but perishing is to be looked for.

SERMON XIX.*

THERE are yet some farther inferences remaining from the subject we have been upon.

IV. Inference. Since it belongs to the state of persons living in the Spirit to walk in the Spirit; then we have great reason to admire the grace of the Spirit, that renders this a possible thing to us, to walk under its constant governing influence. But this I shall not insist upon, because there is no part or work and office of the Holy Ghost in reference to the spirits of men, on which we have insisted already, but hath given us some occasion to reflect upon its wonderful vouchsafement, that it would have so much to do with such as we are. But as this occasion is renewed to us of considering it, we should renew our observation and admiration of its strange condescension in this thing. For would any of us deign to be obliged to have from day to day the guiding and conducting of all the motions of a worm? And we do not need to be told, how much less considerable we are in reference to the great God and the blessed Spirit, than any the most despicable worm is to us.

V. Inference. Since it belongs unto the state of persons that own themselves christians or to live in the Spirit, (for to own Christianity, and to pretend to a life in the Spirit, is all one; those that profess themselves christians, do not profess

* Preached May 1, 1678.

themselves dead christians, but living ones ;) since it belongs, I say, to such to walk in the Spirit; then we may too plainly collect, that there are very many going under that name, that walk so, as doth not belong to the state unto which they pretend. A plain and sad collection! as the apostle speaks, Phil. 3. 18. Many walk, as I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, as enemies of the cross of Christ: as those who are driving on a continual hostility against Christianity, and the design for which Christ was crucified. I doubt there is not less cause now for such a complaint, but only less sense. It is very observable, how great a stress is laid upon the visible decorum of a christian's walk, up and down in Scripture; how they are required to be noted that walk disorderly; how earnestly christians are exhorted and besought to walk becomingly and laudably, so that loveliness and amiableness, might appear in their walk. I (Paul) the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you, that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, Eph. 4. 1. And he saith to the Thessalonians, 1 Epis. 2. 12. Ye know, how we have exhorted and comforted, (or, encouraged) and warned every one of you, even as a father doth his children; that ye would walk worthy of God, who hath called you unto his kingdom and glory. And in the epistle to the Colossians, he prays on the behalf of them, as we find him elsewhere praying for others, (chap. 1. 10.) that they might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing; so as to make a fair representation of him to the world, that he might be thought well of among men for the sake of them that bear his name and own a relation to him. And so to walk, that is, such worthy and becoming walking, and walking in the Spirit, do manifestly imply one another. Whatsoever is worthy, honourable, graceful in the conversation of christians can never be wanting, if their conversation be under the constant government and regulating influence of this Spirit. And if the conversation of any be otherwise governed in the general course and tenour of it, it is plain that it is under the government of some other principle. Do but see, as to this, the proportionable opposition between two passages, namely, this of the text, If ye live in the Spirit, walk also in the Spirit, and that in Col. 3. 7. In which ye also walked sometime, when ye lived in them: referring to what was mentioned before and after, fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry, (ver. 5.) and to anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communications, &c. ver. 8. &c. The course of any one's motion is so conform and agreeable to the principle that lives and rules with him. If we live in the Spirit, we walk in

the Spirit ; as it is most befitting we should : but if we live in the flesh, that is, under the government and dominion of fleshly principles, accordingly we shall walk ; our walking will easily shew, what principle is *regnant* and in dominion.

It would therefore be worth our while here, to point out some particular things, that are too observable in the walkings of many, and import a most direct repugnancy and contrariety unto walking in the Spirit ; which are a manifest disclaiming of it, as none of the governing principle of those who so walk.

1. A visible conformity to this world speaks a contrariety to walking in the Spirit, and a repugnancy to all its influences and dictates. Plain it is, that the Scripture frequently speaks of a spirit and a spirit, that differently and oppositely influence the walking of men. We are told of the spirit of the world, and of the Spirit that is of God, 1 Cor. 2. 12. And as here we read of walking in the Spirit, the blessed Spirit of God ; so we read of another course of walking, according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that worketh in the children of disobedience ; among whom we all had our conversation in times past, in the lusts of the flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh, and of the mind, Eph. 2. 2, 3. As the holy, blessed Spirit of God, wherever that rules, doth conform and frame the course and tenour of any one's conversations, in whom it so rules, unto the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, that course of walking that is directed and prescribed there : so the spirit and genius of the world doth conform men unto this world, and make them shape their course agreeable to it ; as that expression with the emphasis signifies, Rom. 12. 2. *οὐ συγχηματιζεσθε*, Be not conformed, (be not configured) unto this world, so as that your visible shape, frame and mould, that appear obvious to every eye, should represent this world and hold an agreement with that ; but Be ye transformed by the renewing of your minds, that we may prove (or, give proof) what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God ; as those that are framed according to that, delivered up into the mould by which that will is revealed, to wit, that of the gospel-revelation ; as in Rom. 6. 17 Now when the course of any men's walking is such as that of the men of the world in common, what doth it discover, but that these men are acted by the spirit of this world, are ingulphed and swallowed up of that spirit ? one spirit animates both the world and them, and makes them one piece with this world. And if we should give characters of the worldly spirit, you would easily see what the walking and conversation of many doth bespeak to be the governing principle of their lives, or the spirit that influenceth their conversations. Plain it is, that the spi-

rit of this world is an atheistical spirit, a sensual and earthly spirit, a vain and proud, a malicious and contentious spirit. Concerning what is obvious in the walking of persons, agreeable unto such characters as these, give me leave a little to particularize.

(1.) A conversation or course of walking transacted in the continual neglect of God, is certainly a conversation governed not by the Spirit of God, but by the spirit of this world. Conceive of that Spirit, under what notion you will; they that walk under the governing influence of the Spirit of God, walk as before God: Walk before me, and be thou perfect, or upright, Gen. 17. 1. Walk as in God's sight, as under his eye; as that injunction again and again repeated to Abraham doth import. They walk in the fear of the Lord. Acts 9. 31. They, whose hearts must tell them upon reflection, "I do not use to walk in the fear of the Lord from day to day, my life is led as 'without God in the world,' as if I were my own, as if my ways were all in my own disposal, as if it were the sense of my heart, Who is Lord over me? I am under my own inspection, as if no account was to be taken of my walk;" it will be too plain for such to collect, that they walk not by the Spirit, or after the Spirit, or in the Spirit. For what! Do we think, that that blessed Spirit can be the author to us of our forgetting God and leading ungodly lives? Doth that cast his fear out of our hearts, which is peculiarly called the Spirit of the fear of the Lord? Isa. 11. 2. Doth that Spirit drive us away from God, or make us unapprehensive of his presence, or make us strangers to him or as persons unrelated?

(2.) A continued over-eager pursuit of the things of this world, speaks a conversation governed by the spirit of the world, and not by the Spirit of God. I shall not speak here of grosser sensualities, when it is the business of men's lives to satisfy the viler lusts of the flesh; about which the case is so plain, that they cannot have the face to pretend, that the Spirit of God should be the author of such things in their conversation. And the antithesis is plain, where we have the same precept before, at the 16th verse of this chapter: "Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh." So, fulfil the lusts of the flesh, and it is certain you do not walk in the Spirit; for the case is as broad as long. But there is what is more refined, what custom and common practice hath made less scandalous. It is hardly thought scandalous to be an earthly-minded man; one, all whose design and the whole business of whose life is, to lay up and amass together a great deal of the treasures of this earth. And it is a latent evil in very great part; for one man may be very busy in the affairs

of this world, and another the like, and yet we cannot tell where the hearts of one and the other are. There may be many good thoughts, many holy affections and actings of grace, intermingled with worldly affairs and business. But notwithstanding that, there is much (as I say,) of the air of a man's spirit to be seen in the constant course and tenour of his walking; a certain mien and deportment, that speaks the complexion of his soul. They that are after the flesh, savour the things of the flesh, and carry a scent with them that shews their spirits. We say, that such or such a course of walking, such a word, or such an action is *par homini, just like the man*, speaks the spirit of the man. When the apostle comes to distinguish between walking and walking, conversation and conversation; we see how the minding of earthly things, and having a conversation in heaven, are made the distinctive characters of men, Phil. 3. 19, 20. Our business now is to put persons severally upon reflection into their hearts and upon their own walking. It is no matter what we appear, or are thought of by one another: but it greatly concerns us to be informed ourselves, what principle or spirit it is that governs our walking, or hath the management of our conversation. And it is no such difficult, at least no impossible thing, upon a faithful scrutiny and frequent observation, to understand, what are the great designs that we are driving in this world, and in what channel the main stream of our actions and endeavours run; what are the thoughts of our hearts, what their secret dispositions and propensions. When worldly objects, and worldly thoughts and affections are most tasteful to us, and most habitual and customary, what shall we say concerning this case? When it is so through the whole course of our walking, who must govern this walk? Will we dare to entitle the Spirit of God unto the conduct and government of such a conversation as that? When my walking from day to day is nothing else but a continual tending towards this earth, a motion downward; is it the Spirit of God that so thrusts me down and depresses my spirit? Is it that, that makes me grovel in the dust, and lead the life of a worm, when I might lead that of an angel, when I might have my way above, as the way of the wise is?

(3.) A contentious course of life speaks the Spirit of God to be none of the governor of our walk, but another spirit most surely. When men love wrangles and contentions, cannot endure to live out of the fire, is the Spirit of God the author of that impure fire? It is very much to be observed, what the apostle hath reference to more immediately and directly in this very context, wherein the text lies. He first gives this precept of walking in the Spirit: "This I say

then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh," ver. 16. See what the foregoing verses are, ver. 14 15. All the law is fulfilled in one word, by love, (as he had said, ver. 13. By love serve one another.) For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another." Upon which follows the 16th verse. The lusts of the flesh, which he hath more direct and immediate reference to there, are therefore those opposed to love, such as wrath and anger, envy and malice; which he speaks of, both afterwards in this chapter, and in other of his epistles. When he comes to enumerate the fruits of the flesh, how great a part do things of this nature bear in that enumeration! The works of the flesh are manifest. And after he had named some things more grossly sensual, (as adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness,) and inserted idolatry and witchcraft; then comes hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings. And when he had been speaking in Col. 3. 5. of the earthly members, that must be mortified, and for which the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience; in the which, says he, to those Colossians, Ye also walked sometime, when ye lived in them: then he adds, But now put ye off all these: and as he had named before fornication, uncleanness, &c. so now he goes on with the enumeration, mentioning farther anger, wrath, malice, &c. And indeed, if we will not admit the apprehension deep into our souls, that it is the great business of the Spirit of God equally and alike to enliven and animate both parts of the law of God, to turn both tables into a living law, transcribing them out upon the hearts and spirits of men; we shall never understand the great work that is to be done upon our souls by the Spirit. We are to consider it as the Spirit of all love and goodness and benignity and meekness; and then we may easily apprehend what the fruits of this Spirit will be: The fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth, Eph. 5. 9. It is the reproach of our age, and (which is worse than that,) of the Christian name, that there are so many that conjoin eminent pretences unto religion and spirituality with a froward, peevish, perverse, envious, spiteful, malicious spirit, as if it were possible for these things to consist. It is not strange indeed, that a worse spirit should assume and put on some appearances of a better; but you may be sure, that that better Spirit will never disguise itself by the appearances of the worse. This is the spirit of the world, a spirit that fills the world with nothing but violence and mischief, that shakes and agitates the world with perpetual commo-

tions; as it will be with it, till it dissolve and be burst asunder at last by the malignity of its own wickedness, and the wrath of God in a just conjunction therewith, coming upon the wicked. That spirit, and a just *nemesis*, that falls by way of punishment upon it, hath made the world so miserable a region, the very region of all miseries. So that any one may see, that the spirit of the world hath a great hold upon one, if things of this import are frequently observable in the course of his conversation.

(4.) A vain walk is a discovery, that a man's conversation is acted and influenced by the spirit of this world, which is a vain spirit. Such persons, who can never find a time wherein to be serious, who shew this to be a thing that their hearts abhor from, whom you will find always vain, though you should meet them never so often in a day; as if a serious thought fled from their spirits as none of its element, and could not tell how to dwell with them; the very countenance and shew of whose conversation discovers a continual vanity of spirit. What! will such persons dare to entitle the Spirit of God to this? Hath the Spirit of God the government of that man's walking, in which there is no face of seriousness, so that any one that sees hath reason enough to conjecture, that seriousness was never akin to his spirit or had any place in it? This is matter of very necessary self-reflection. We ought to commune with ourselves very strictly and closely about this thing. Do we think, that we are under the guidance of the Spirit of God, and yet from day to day are unacquainted with what it means to have serious thoughts and serious frames and dispositions of heart about us?

Thus far conformity to the world speaks an unsuitableness and contrariety to walking in the Spirit. There are some other things, that are thought to be out of that verge, and are really beside the more common and general course of this walk; which I shall mention under distinct heads from this, because I would speak of them as they are thought of. And therefore I add,

2. Opinionativeness in the business of religion. Many would little suspect this to be from the spirit of this world. And indeed it is not the very common course of this world to be much concerned about such matters. But no matter from what spirit it is, their own or a worse; it is not from the Spirit of God; that doth not influence their course. But take aright what I mean by the term, opinionativeness: I mean such as in their ordinary course from day to day either are wholly taken up about speculative matters that either really belong or that they affix to religion; or who only converse about

most practical matters speculatively, as if they were matters of mere opinion, and not to be turned or employed to practice at all. A course of walking so managed as this is, certainly is not governed by the Spirit of God; that is the author of no such persuasion to men. Men are apt to think, that they are very safe from sin and blame in this case, because they are things of religion that they are much concerned and taken up about. But what things? and how are they employed about them? Either they converse about the mere skirts and borders of religion, and keep as remote as they can from the heart and vitals of it, from having any commerce with such things: or, if the case be not so, then they presume (and it is a dreadful presumption,) to touch those most sacred things with sacrilegious hands; to alienate the great and deep things of God, that appertain to his kingdom and glory, from their proper and genuine purposes; that, whereas they should be the food of souls, and the maintenance of the spiritual life, they employ them only to feed curiosity, and so to satisfy a more refined lust. This is the very truth of the case; and so a great many, that are persons of more leisure and vacancy from worldly affairs, spend most of their time. It is doleful to think, that the design, for which such important things are revealed to men, should be so little understood, and so little complied with and answered; and that so great things should be perverted unto so mean and ill services. And it is sad to think of the injury, that such men do to their own souls; they go with famished souls from day to day, while they have most proper and suitable nutriment for them just at hand, but they will not touch, so as to taste or feed upon these things. Starving in the midst of plenty is their case: or, as if a sick man should have by him, in the midst of his languishing sickness, some vial of very choice and precious spirits, that in all likelihood would be relieving to him, and save him from death, but he keeps it by him, and will discourse to you very curiously and philosophically concerning the nature and virtues of this thing, yet never uses it, nor apprehends that he is concerned to use it, or that his case requires it; and so dies away with a medicine at hand all the while, that might have saved his life.

3. Formality in the business of religion. There are those, who think it cannot serve their turn to speculate all their days, and, therefore would practise somewhat. But what do they practise? They run in a common road of duties, in which their own hearts upon reflection must confess, that they never had the Spirit of God breathing, and never concerned themselves to have it so. Theirs is a religious course, and a course of practical religion; but transacted at the utmost distance from

the Spirit of God, so that it and their spirits have no communion from day to day in the whole. They keep up a course of prayer in their families, and it may be in secret, go to public assemblies, attend upon the ordinances of worship; but never find any impression upon their spirits, any warmth or vigour there, or a concern to look after any such thing. They think it well, that such a duty is over, and so that they have walked in a religious course, though strangers to God and his Spirit all their time.

4. The neglect of the very form itself. This is too known a thing among some persons; and that too under the very pretence of spirituality. They are too spiritual to be bound to any forms of worship, or any stated course of duties; and that they may be more spiritual, they cast prayer out of their families, and refuse, yea even disdain to live worshipping lives, as too mean for them. All these things speak a manifest repugnancy to walking in the Spirit. Sure it is not the governor of any such courses of walking as these are.

I shall shut up all with some brief reflections upon both parts of the text together.

Since it doth belong to the Spirit of God by office, as we have asserted, to maintain the life, and govern the walk and motions of christians; we should bethink ourselves, of how indispensable necessity the communications of the Spirit for these purposes are unto us, and how miserable a thing it is to be destitute of them. We may easily apprehend how necessary that influence is, without which we can neither live nor move; and how miserable to be without it. For represent we to ourselves the case of a poor languishing, decrepit creature, that is deprived of motive power; suppose him barely to live, to have only life enough to feel himself in a dying condition: now is not the case so with many christians, with some of those perhaps that have the root of the matter in them? They have but life enough to feel that they are consuming, and in a state wherein the things that remain are even ready to die! That they do not die, is by divine vouchsafement, and none of their care. What a sad case is this! And is it not yet worse with some? They have not life enough to take any notice or make inquiry, whether they live or no: as persons that have some life left, yet may be incapable of considering whether they are alive or dead. Many christians are so far from having that motive power, that is to be exercised in the managing of their own walk, and that would be so if it were not through their own default; that they are so altogether destitute also of any presence and vital influence of the Spirit, as never to consider the

case, "Am I alive or dead?" certainly this is a miserable case. And I may add,

Where there is manifestly such a destitution, there are some things very intolerable, which yet are too obvious and frequent with many such. As,

1. It is intolerable in the case, to lay aside the apprehension of the distinction between natural and spiritual life, natural motion and spiritual. You may judge, whether the mention of this be not a most apparently needful thing. Are there not a great many, that spend away their days without so much as ever considering, that there is such a thing as spiritual life and motion, or a region all replenished with spiritual vitality, a distinct sphere from that of nature wherein alone the rest of men do converse? They never think of such a distinction between world and world; an orb of spiritual life, and that mean and lower orb, wherein only a low kind of animality fills up all.

2. It is an intolerable thing in this case, to be unapprehensive of what others find of the power and vigour of that other Spirit moving in them, even the Spirit of God. There are some, that through grace (though that is not to be vaunted of, and whereof it becomes none to make a boast:) feel the stirrings of another principle in them different from the spirit of this world: they feel themselves to live, and to be acted in their walk by a spring of life that is from above. Those that are without the experience of such a thing, will not believe there is any such thing; as if their knowledge were to measure all realities; as though they were persons commensurate in their understandings and experience with the whole nature of things. This is just for all the world, as if a languid person, that hath been long confined to his chamber and bed, should come to fancy, that his chamber and bed were all the world, and that there was nothing done among mankind but what he saw transacted in his own chamber: or, if we should imagine a thinking power to be in the grave, and fancying a grave to be the universe.

3. It is intolerable, to be unconcerned about our own part and share in the world and region of spiritual life and motion, of which we have been speaking. If there were a line to be drawn through the world to sever in it the living from the dead, and a public notification were made of this all the world over; would we not then be very much concerned, on which side of the line we placed ourselves, that it might be where we could live? But how strange is it, that in this case many are altogether unconcerned, whether they are of the living or the dead side! Lastly,

4. It is a most intolerable thing, to make no applications to this Spirit, after we know its distance. We know it is the Author of life, and the Governor of all holy motions unto all the children of God; and yet never apply to it, never put up a sigh or a cry! How intolerable is this! Do we know of any other way to live? Do we think, that there can be such a thing as everlasting life, a life which shall never end, and which shall also never begin? Sure if there be such a life, it must sometime begin: and where will we place the beginning of it, but in the communication of that spiritual, vital influence, which once given is a spring of living waters, springing up unto life eternal?

Let us so therefore represent the matter to ourselves; the high dignity, the immense fulness, the royal magnificent bounty and benignity of this blessed Spirit; that we may neither neglect it, nor distrust it. Represent the tendency of all its communications, and consider them as the earnest and pledges of everlasting life, the blossomings of glory; that which must be our preparation for, and our assurance of, the eternal state of life. And then desire such communications above all things. Let this be the sense of our souls, (sure there is reason enough, that it should be so;) "Lord, let me rather live in poverty, live in pain and sickness, live in disgrace all my days, than live without thy Spirit! Let not that Spirit be a stranger to me, but inhabit and dwell in me, act and move me; and be my condition what it will in all external respects, I am unsolicitous, I will never capitulate, never dispute the matter." Till that Spirit come to be valued by us, and all its communications, even above all things else that men are wont to count dear to them, we have reason to apprehend, that it and we are like to continue still strangers; and if we be strangers to the divine Spirit, we must be acquainted with misery both in this and another state.