

so doth an angry countenance a backbiting tongue.' They that receive tales and delight to hear other men's faults, encourage others in their sin, and are accessory to or partakers of the guilt. It brings an evil habit and custom in our own souls. In short, let us keep up a humble sense of our own faults, and looking at home, it will not only divert us from slandering of others, but make us compassionate towards them, and breed comfort in our own souls.

SERMON XI.

This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.—GAL. V. 16.

IN these words observe—(1.) A duty enforced; (2.) The consequent and fruit of it.

1. The duty is *to walk in the Spirit*, which is the sum of all Christian piety.

2. The motive is taken from the consequent and fruit of it: *and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.* Let us fix the sense.

1. For the duty, 'to walk in the Spirit.' Walking implieth the tenor and course of our actions, in all which we should follow the direction and inclination of the Spirit. But what is meant by the Spirit? That it may be known, both the contrary principles must be explained together.

[1.] *Flesh* is sometimes taken for the body: as Eph. v. 29, 'For no man yet ever hated his own flesh;' it is brought as a reason why husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies, ver. 28, and *spirit* is taken for the soul, Eccles. xii. 7. But this is not the sense here, for every man hath soul and body, not the regenerate only; and a man is not only to look after the welfare of the soul, but his body also, it being the instrument which it useth in its operations.

[2.] The *spirit* is sometimes put for reason, and the *flesh* for sensual appetite: as Eph. iv. 23, 'And be renewed in the spirit of your mind;' and 1 John ii. 16, 'The lusts of the flesh.' But this will not take in the whole sense of this place, for other faculties are corrupted besides the sensual appetite, and other faculties must be renewed as well as the understanding.

[3.] There is another acceptation of *flesh* and *spirit*; that is, that spirit signifieth the uncreated Spirit, who is the author of grace; as John iii. 5, 'Except a man be born again of water and the Spirit.' Where *spirit* is put for the Holy Ghost, who immediately worketh grace in us, called therefore 'the Spirit of sanctification,' as that saving grace which is the effect of his work is called 'the sanctification of the Spirit.' And the opposite principle, *flesh*, signifieth the corrupt nature of man, as John iii. 6, 'That which is born of the flesh is flesh;' corrupt, sinful, inclined to earthly things. Now though this would bear a good sense to interpret flesh and spirit of the Holy Ghost, and concupiscence

or natural corruption (for no question he concurrcth to the mortifying of the old man, till sin be wholly expelled, Rom. viii. 23, and still doth quicken and excite the new man to action, Gal. iv. 25), yet here the apostle speaks of two inherent principles.

[4.] Therefore by *flesh* and *spirit* is meant the old man and the new, and so by spirit is meant the renewed part, or the new man of grace in the heart: John iii. 6, 'That which is born of the Spirit is spirit;' that is, there is a work of saving grace wrought in our hearts by the Spirit of God, which new nature hath its motions and inclinations which must be obeyed and followed by us. And by *flesh*, is meant inbred corruption, or the old man, which is 'corrupt, with his deceivable lusts,' Eph. iv. 22. Now, then, you see what it is to walk after the Spirit, to direct and order our actions according to the inclinations of the new nature.

2. For the consequent fruit of it: 'and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.'

Here two things must be explained:—

[1.] The lust of the flesh.

[2.] Fulfil.

[1.] For 'the lust of the flesh.' By it is meant the inordinate motions of corrupt nature. The flesh doth not consider what is right and good, but what is pleasing to the senses, and craveth their satisfaction with much importunity and earnestness, to the wrong of God and our own souls; especially in youth, when the senses are in vigour, and lust and appetite in their strength and fury. And generally, all carnal men are governed by the lusts of the flesh, called by the apostle, 'The wills of the flesh and the mind,' Eph. ii. 3. By which the heart is drawn from God to things earthly and carnal. Well, then, by the lusts of the flesh are meant the motions of inbred corruptions.

2. *Ye shall not fulfil*; that is, accomplish and bring into complete act, especially with deliberation and consent. Mark, he doth not say that the lusting of corrupt nature shall be totally suppressed, but it shall not be fulfilled. The best of God's children feel the motions of the flesh, but they do not cherish and obey them. The lusts of the flesh may be said to be fulfilled two ways—(1.) When the outward act is accomplished, or 'when lust hath conceived and brought forth actual sin,' James i. 15. Which may sometimes come to pass in the children of God, when they walk not in the Spirit, or obey not the motions and directions of the renewed part. This again may be done two ways, either upon surprise or deliberation. By way of surprise, Gal. vi. 1, *εὖν καὶ προληφθῆ*; upon deliberation, when men plot, and make provision to fulfil their lusts, contrary to the apostle's advice: Rom. xiii. 14, 'Make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.' Thus it was with David in his great sin; and this doth mightily aggravate the offence, and provoke the Lord against us. (2.) When for a continuance we obey the flesh, usually accomplish its motions without let and restraint, and with love, pleasure, and full consent of will; this is proper to the unregenerate. The flesh doth reign over them as its slaves; this is spoken of, Rom. vi. 12, 'Let not sin reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof.' Let it not have a power over you as slaves. Well, then, the meaning is, you will not abuse

your Christian liberty as an occasion to the flesh, or give up yourselves to do that, or seek that which the flesh lusteth after.

Doct. The more Christians set themselves to obey the new nature, the more is the power of inbred corruption mortified and kept under.

To understand this point, let me lay down these propositions:—

I. That there is a diversity of principles in a Christian—flesh and spirit.

1. There is a good principle, called *spirit*, because the Spirit is the author of it: Ezek. xxxvi. 26, ‘A new heart and a new spirit will I put into you.’ It is called also ‘the divine nature,’ 2 Peter i. 4, because it is made up of those gracious qualities wherein we resemble God; ‘The seed remaining,’ 1 John iii. 9, because it is not a transient operation, but a permanent habit, disposing and inclining the soul to God and heaven; ‘The new man,’ Eph. iv. 24, because we have it not by nature, but by grace, we are new formed to the image of God. Now the use of this principle may be known partly by the manner how it is wrought in us, and partly by the uses and ends for which it serveth.

[1.] For the manner how it is wrought in us by the Spirit, that is set forth Heb. viii. 10, ‘I will put my laws in their mind, and write them in their hearts.’ The directive and imperial power of the soul is sanctified and seasoned by grace, the mind enlightened, the heart inclined. The mind is enlightened by the knowledge of God’s will, and the heart inclined that we may delight to do his will; it is suited thereunto. Therefore, the new creature doth both serve to direct us, and so performeth the office of a guide and leader to the godly in all their actions, so far in religion as God’s glory is concerned, and also to move and excite us to that which is good. For ‘the spirit is willing, though the flesh is weak,’ Mat. xxvi. 41.

[2.] By its uses and ends. None of God’s gifts are given in vain. The new nature is the choicest talent that the sons of men are intrusted withal. Therefore, it hath its use and end, which is to fit us for God and heaven.

(1.) It disposeth the soul to a sincere obedience to God, as an inherent principle: Eph. vi. 24, ‘It is created after God in righteousness and true holiness,’ as suiting us to these things. So the Spirit is promised to enable us to walk in God’s ways: Ezek. xxxvi. 27, ‘And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments and do them.’ It helps us to avoid sin: 1 John iii. 9, ‘Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin, for his seed remaineth in him, and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.’ They that give back¹ cannot yield to those sins with which others are surprised and captivated.

(2.) It prepares us for heaven; thither is the tendency of the new nature, 2 Peter i. 4; 1 John v. 4, ‘Whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world:’ it moveth us to mind, love, and seek after heavenly things. This grace came from heaven, and there it is perfected.

2. There is another principle of corrupted nature remaining in us, which is sometimes called ‘flesh,’ as before; sometimes ‘the old man,’ Eph. iv. 22; ‘Sin that dwelleth in us,’ Rom. vii. 17; ‘The body of

¹ Apparently a misprint.—Ed.

sin,' Rom. vi. 6; 'The law of the members warring against the law of the mind,' Rom. vii. 23.

By this principle they are inclined to that which is evil. This principle also may be known:—

[1.] By the manner how it was derived to us.

[2.] By its tendency and operations.

[1.] The manner how it was derived to us, from Adam in his apostasy, and as fallen from his chief good and last end, John iii. 6. When man fell from God, he fell to himself. The temptation was, 'Ye shall be as gods,' Gen. iii. 5. He would set up self as a god. And what was that self which man sought to idolise, but himself rather considered as a body than as a soul? And, therefore, when God sought to reduce man, where lay the difficulty? That text will inform you, Gen. vi. 3, 'My Spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he is also flesh;' that is, sunk or lost in flesh, altogether wedded to the interests of the bodily life.

[2.] By its tendency and influence it prompts us to do those things which are most acceptable to sense, or agreeable to our worldly and carnal ends. The flesh operateth several ways, according to men's callings, occasions, or constitutions, Isa. liii. 6; 1 John ii. 16. As every soil beareth such weeds as are most suitable to the nature and quality of the ground, so some are enslaved by this, some by that particular sin, yet all of them alike opposite to God. Differences there are as to the choice of their way wherein they please the flesh, some in a more gross, some in a more cleanly manner, yet they all walk in the lust of the flesh, following inbred corruption as their guide, or obey it either in a way of worldliness, ambition, or sensuality. Some ways are more blameless before the world, because they less deserve¹ a worldly interest; some are so prodigiously wicked that they cause a horror even in mankind though degenerated. Now, after conversion some of our former sins cripple us, and we halt of the old maim still; and it is not enough to stop one gap while corruption runneth out at many more, but we must make conscience of not 'fulfilling the lusts of the flesh' in any kind. Well, now, I have showed you the two principles which are in a Christian, that we may have a sense of our imbecility, and that we are but regenerated in part.

II. I will prove to you that there is a liberty in a Christian of walking according to each principle, either the Spirit or the flesh.

1. That the Christian hath liberty of walking according to the Spirit is out of question, 'for where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty,' 2 Cor. iii. 17. Surely the Spirit of Christ can free us, and doth free us, from the bondage of corruption: Rom. viii. 2, 'The law of the Spirit of life in Christ hath freed me from the law of sin and death,' otherwise there would be no distinction between nature and grace. If we should be still shackled and manacled by our lusts, and be as unable to pursue our last end as we were before, if there were no inclination to God and heavenly things, what have they gotten by grace? and therefore, though we are still weak, yet we have the gift of the Spirit to free us from sin. The force and efficacy of the new nature appeareth in three things—*scire, velle, posse*; in knowing our duty, and willing, and purposing, and doing our duty, suitable

¹ Qu. 'dis-serve'?—Ed.

to the three faculties of man—his understanding, will, and vital power. So the spirit received from Christ, 2 Tim. i. 7, is ‘a spirit of power, love, and a sound mind.’

[1.] For *scire*. The new nature partly consists in the internal light of the mind, by which we understand the things of God revealed in the scriptures concerning our duties and privileges, and so ‘the unction’ is said to ‘teach us all things,’ 1 John ii. 20; that is, all things which belong to our necessary duty and happiness. God’s children in necessary things have a good understanding, or, as it is said, Isa. xi. 3, they are ‘quick of understanding in the fear of the Lord.’ By this it doth warn us of our danger, mind us of our duty upon all occasions.

[2.] For *velle*, to be willing. The force of the new creature lieth in the love of God, for we are never converted to God till he hath our hearts, till we love him with all our soul, with all our might and strength, and hate what is contrary to him: Ps. xcvii. 10, ‘Ye that love the Lord, hate evil.’ Now, surely they that love God and hate evil are at liberty more than others to serve and please God and avoid sin. Hate sin once, and it hath little power over you.

[3.] For *posse*, or the active power. The wonder is rather how he can sin deliberately, voluntarily, than how he cannot sin, 1 John iii. 9; and for doing good, *πάντα ἰσχύω*, Phil. iv. 13, ‘I can do all things.’ Eph. ii. 10, A spiritual man is ‘prepared for every good work.’

The assistant power which accompanieth the new creature in all his actions doth certainly give him a great advantage of liberty to know, will, and do things pleasing unto God. As he doth first convert us unto God, and quicken us when we are dead in trespasses and sins, so after conversion, when the principles of a new life are put into us, he still helpeth us: and as all creatures depend upon God *in esse conservari et operari*, Acts xvii. 2, so doth the new creature depend on the Spirit; he leadeth and guideth all the children of God to their everlasting estate, Rom. viii. 14. He assists the will and the vital power, Phil. ii. 13; otherwise, we may complain with Paul, Rom. vii. 18, ‘For to will is present with me, but how to perform that which is good, I find not.’ There may be a will or an inclination, but it can be brought into no effect. He cleareth the mind, which otherwise would be blinded by temptations, excites the will, which otherwise would be blunted with oppositions, assists the vital power, which else would be obstructed and impeded from producing its effects.

2. That a Christian hath a liberty or power of walking according to the flesh. The opposite principle, though it be broken so far that it is not in habitual predominancy, yet doth too often prevail over us; otherwise it were impossible to sin, or to be unjust, unmerciful, unmindful of God and heavenly things, unchaste, intemperate, or licentious in our actions; and all the admonitions and exhortations of the word, to keep the regenerate from yielding to the enticements of the flesh, would be in vain, if they could not possibly yield to them. In heaven, indeed, there need no dissuasions from sin, because the glorified saints are above all possibility of sinning; there is no devil to tempt, nor world to entice, nor flesh to incline them to be seduced by those temptations: but earth is not heaven. Here

mortified lusts may awaken, and recover strength by a temptation. But more distinctly these arguments show it :—

[1.] That though the inclination be to God and heaven, which is the fruit of saving grace, yet the acts of it are voluntary. Grace is a real, active, working thing, but it doth not work necessarily, as fire burneth; it must be excited and stirred up, both by the Spirit of God, who 'worketh in us, both to will and to do,' Phil. ii. 13, and by ourselves. We must *ἀναζωοπυρεῖν*, 2 Tim. i. 6. We must still be blowing up this holy fire, as the priest did the fire of the altar to keep it burning; and its motions must be hearkened to, cherished, and complied withal, if we would keep the carnal part under, and prevent it from breaking out into shameful acts. But as we grow remiss or careless in our duty, sin acquireth and prevaileth over us.

[2.] The flesh which remaineth in us is importunate to be pleased; and though it be not superior in the soul, yet it hath a great deal of strength, that still we need, even to the very last, to keep watching and striving, and must resolve to be deaf to its entreaties and solicitations: 1 Peter i. 14, 'Not fashioning yourselves to the former lusts of your ignorance,' or accommodating yourselves to please the flesh; that is, they must not cast their conversations into a carnal mould, nor suffer their choice and actions to be directed and governed by the influence of the flesh, or give up themselves to the satisfaction of their sinful desires. In short, former lusts are but in part subdued, our old love to them may be soon kindled, and the bias of corruption gather strength again, and the gates of the senses are always open to let in such objects as take part with the flesh and stir it up. Therefore we must not imagine that there is no need of diligence, or striving and watching. Holy Paul saw a need of 'beating down his body; lest, after he had preached to others, he himself should be a castaway,' 1 Cor. ix. 27. After so many years' service in the cause of Christ, this great champion was not secure of the adversary he carried about with him. There is need of caution to the last, that we do not revert into our old slavery. The contrary principle in us still retaineth some life and vigour, though much abated; there is not such a con-naturality and agreement between the heart and sin as there was before; but yet sin still dwelleth and worketh in us, and we are often foiled by it.

3. That since there is a liberty, we must be careful to live according to the operation and influence of the better principle; for it lieth upon us as our duty, though we have the power from above. There is a double argument implied in the text: the one is, *a beneficio*; the other, *a periculo*—the profit, the danger.

[1.] *A beneficio*, from the benefit accruing to us: we shall not 'fulfil the lusts of the flesh.' If they yield to the motions and inclinations of the regenerate part, they cannot do the evil which the carnal part would have them; the grace they have will hold them in as a bridle, and turn their minds another way. Surely sin is no such lovely thing that we should be enamoured of it; yea, it is such an hateful thing, that we should shun and avoid it by all means possible. Now, when you have an help at hand, not only near you, but within you, such as the new nature, which riseth up in rebukes and dislikes against sin, you should take this advantage, otherwise you offer violence not only

to the law of God, but that new nature which he hath put into you. There are three reasons which may be urged here:—

(1.) The better principle, the more it is obeyed, the more it is strengthened; for ‘the way of the Lord is strength to the upright,’ Prov. x. 29. The habits of grace increase by exercise: and the more godly and heavenly we are, the more we shall be so; and the more constantly we act grace, the more easily and readily we act it, and with greater pleasure and delight. This is a sure rule, that God rewardeth grace with grace: one duty is an help to another, and the sweetness and pleasure groweth upon us every day. It is at first yoking that the bullock is most unruly; and beginners are burthened with the toil of obedience more than grown Christians. Christ’s yoke groweth more easy every day by the bearing; for the opposition is more broken, and the experience of the sweetness and goodness of this way is more increased, Prov. iv. 18, 19.

(2.) The power of inbred corruption is subdued, and the lusts of the flesh weakened; for, as the better principle groweth, the other loseth strength. Mortification and vivification mutually help one another: the more we are dead unto sin, the more we are alive unto righteousness: so, on the other side, the more we live unto righteousness, the more we are dead to sin; for the carnal life is swallowed up of the spiritual. And therefore to grown Christians temptations either make none or no considerable impression; they are alive to God, and therefore dead unto the flesh and dead unto the world. It cannot be imagined that the flesh should bear sway where there is a strong opposite principle to check it; and when we suffer it not to be idle and unfruitful, it will obtain its effect. Sin cannot be our trade, custom, and delight. No; it is complained of as our heaviest burden, Rom. vii. 24, resisted as the greatest evil, and most opposite, not only to our duty, but to our very nature and temper.

(3.) This walking in the Spirit giveth us an evidence of our interest in the grace of justification: Gal. v. 18, ‘And if ye be led by the Spirit, ye are not under the law.’ Not to be under the teaching of the law as a rule of obedience, is impossible for a creature. To challenge such an exemption in point of right, is to make ourselves gods. To usurp it in point of fact, is to make ourselves devils. It must be meant, therefore, either of the irritating or condemning power of the law. If of the former, as the law by the rigid exacting of obedience doth increase sin rather than subdue it, and maketh corrupt nature spurn and rebel against it, so it is the same with the former motives; but that is a more limited sense. ‘Not under the law,’ may be expounded to be not under the condemning power of it; and so to be under the law is opposed to be under grace: Rom. viii. 1, ‘There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus.’ There is a great privilege; but what is the qualification? ‘Who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit;’ that is, obey the new nature.

[2.] *A periculo*, the danger of not obeying the new nature, or walking after the Spirit.

(1.) They lose their advantage, and receive one of God’s gifts in vain. To receive objective grace in vain aggravateth our guilt, John iii. 19; but to receive subjective grace in vain doth more provoke God.

Objective grace is that which is discovered in the gospel; subjective grace is that which is found in the heart of a believer, the internal grace of the Holy Spirit renewing the heart. Now, to sin away this advantage after we are made partakers of it doth increase our guilt; surely, therefore, 'if we live in the Spirit, we should walk in the Spirit,' Gal. v. 25. We should improve God's best gifts, or else the work of his Spirit is lost. He loseth nothing but corn, wine, and oil bestowed upon others, but he hath bestowed the sanctification of the Spirit upon you; shall he lose the glory of that also?

(2.) The new nature is exceedingly weakened and suffers loss, if it be not cherished and obeyed. The church of Sardis is warned to prevent the dying of gracious habits. David speaketh as if the work were to begin anew, and his restoring were a second conversion: Ps. li. 10, 'Create in me a clean heart, O Lord, and renew a right spirit within me.' The principle of grace being not adhered to, loseth much of vigour and power.

(3.) When these motions are not obeyed, and this power is not exercised, God is provoked to withdraw the quickening grace. Though the spirit here spoken of is the new nature, yet the Holy Ghost is the superintendent of it, and doth move, guide, direct, and quicken by it. The new nature inclineth, but he giveth strength to its motions. Now the Spirit withdraweth when this work is slighted, and we wilfully run into sin: Ps. li. 11, 'Take not thy Holy Spirit from me.'

(4.) There is another mischief; his sanctifying work is not only obstructed, but his certifying and sealing work is obscured, and so our day is turned into night: Eph. iv. 30, 'Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed to the day of redemption.'

Use 1. It showeth what necessity there is that we should look after conversion to God, or a work of grace wrought in us by the Holy Spirit, for the apostle supposeth they had the Spirit. There is no walking without living, for otherwise our motions are but the motions of puppets, not proceeding from internal life, but acted from springs and engines; no subduing the flesh without setting up an opposite principle. Therefore, we must give up ourselves to the Holy Spirit, first to be sanctified, then governed by him; first renewed, then guided, ordered, and directed by him in all our actions, and the flesh dieth away insensibly.

2. Being renewed by the Holy Ghost, that is, having our minds enlightened and hearts inclined, we must obey this inclination; for life is not given us that we may have it, but that we may act by it, and do things suitable to that life which we have. Grace is not a sluggish, idle quality, but is always working and warring on the opposite principle.

3. Though at first we are pestered and encountered with the lusts of the flesh, which divert us from God and heavenly things, yet we should not be discouraged by every difficulty; for difficulties do but inflame a resolved spirit, as stirring doth the fire. And, besides, though we do not wholly subdue the lusts of the flesh, yet we shall not accomplish them and live in subjection to them, but by degrees get power against them.

4. The carnal life is not of one sort. Some wallow in sensual

pleasures, others have head and heart altogether taken up with the world and worldly things. Now if God hath put a new bias upon our wills and affections, we must show it forth by a heavenly conversation; for they that mind earthly things are carnal, and the great inclination of the new nature is to carry us unto God and the things of another world, 2 Cor. v. 5.

5. They are much to blame that complain of sin, and will not take the course to get rid of it by obeying the instincts of the Holy Ghost, or the motions of the new nature. The Lord's spirit is a 'free spirit,' Ps. li. 12, and his 'truth maketh us free,' John viii. 32. And we are interested in this liberty when born of the Spirit. Let us be true to our duty and we shall bless God for our liberty, rather than complain of our bondage. It is laziness and cowardice not to improve grace, which was given us for this use.

6. How much we are concerned in all conflicts, especially in those which allow deliberation, to take part with the Spirit, and obey his motions rather than to fulfil the lusts of the flesh: otherwise, by consent and upon deliberation, you are unfaithful to Christ and your own souls. Your business is not to gratify the flesh, but to crucify it, to overrule sense and appetite, and cherish the life of grace, Gal. v. 24. And surely when conscience hath help to deliberate, it is a greater evil to resist it, than when hurried by our own passions.

7. It is of great use and profit to us to observe which principle decayeth, the flesh or the Spirit; for thereby we judge of our condition, both in order to mortification and comfort.

The increase of the flesh may be known:—

(1.) By your backwardness to God. Grace is clogged when you cannot serve him with sweetness and delight, Rom. vii. 18.

(2.) When the heart groweth careless of heaven, and your life and love is more taken up about things present than to come, Phil. iii. 18, 19. The contrary is found when grace is in vigour, 2 Cor. iv. 18; Col. iii. 1, 2.

Secondly, The prevalency and increase of the Spirit is known:—

(1.) By a humble contentedness and indifferency to plenty, pleasures, and honours: Phil. iv. 12, 'I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound; everywhere and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and suffer need;' Heb. xiii. 5, 'Let your conversation be without covetousness, and be ye content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.'

(2.) When your delight in God, heaven, and holiness is still kept up: Rom. viii. 5, 'For they that are after the flesh, do mind the things of the flesh: but they that are after the Spirit, the things of the Spirit.'

(3.) When the heart is kept in a preparation for the duties of your heavenly calling.