

SERMON UPON 1 TIMOTHY VI. 9.

But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition.—1 TIM. vi. 9.

IN these words we may observe—

1. The parties described, ‘They that will be rich.’

2. Their danger; represented in two things—(1.) That they lie open to temptation; (2.) Fall into a snare.

Some think it an *hendiadys*, *εις πειρασμὸν καὶ παγίδα*, for *εις παγίδα πειρασμοῦ*, the snare of temptation. But the considerations are distinct, the one being a degree of the other. ‘Temptation’ showeth how the devil taketh them captive; ‘snare,’ how he keepeth or holdeth them captive. So he that fixeth this as his purpose doth lay himself open to the devil, yea, give up himself captive to him. Men are first tempted, drawn to delight in or admire these things; secondly, snared, cannot get out of the entanglings of the world.

Now in the text, the general nature of this snare is represented. It is lusts, sinful and unlawful affections and dispositions of heart. (1.) The number or quantity of them, ‘Many lusts.’ (2.) The quality, kind and sort of them, ‘Foolish and hurtful lusts.’ (3.) The result and issue of them, ‘Which drown men in destruction and perdition.’ In the main of which, Paul doth not speak of what doth often fall out, but what doth constantly and necessarily fall out.

Doct. That a will to be rich is the occasion of much mischief to those that cherish it and allow it in their own souls.

The point will be best opened by laying forth the circumstances of the text.

I. What it is to have a will to be rich. When we make it our scope and our work, our *ἔργον*. Mark, it is not he that is rich, but he that will be rich. Riches in themselves are God’s gift, not the cause of the evils mentioned; but our love and lust to them, though a man be otherwise poor, according to that of Peter, ‘Corruption that is in the world through lust,’ 2 Peter i. 4. Here it is, ‘They that will be rich,’ that fix it as their scope, that make it their business. For the bent of the will is bewrayed by two things—intention and industrious prosecution.

1. Those that fix it as their scope, are wholly intent upon getting wealth, that give up their hearts to find out and follow after ways of worldly increase. This is to set wealth in the place of God: for

that is interpretatively a man's god which is the last end of his actions, and upon which his care, and thoughts, and endeavours do run most; whether it be belly, world, credit, friends, or whatever else: Phil. iii. 18, 'For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are enemies of the cross of Christ; whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things.' And then we can never act regularly. Christ and religion will be taken up upon worldly ends and advantages. All stoopeth to the chief end, religion, and conscience, and all, when we fix this as our intention and the designed scope of our lives. It is elsewhere expressed: Prov. xxviii. 20, 'He that maketh haste to be rich cannot be innocent.' A man that fixeth this as his end will not care what means he useth, leap over hedge and ditch, and cannot be content to travel the long road of providence to come to his journey's end. There are many such, that will be rich, whether God will or no, say what he will, and almost do what he can to hinder them; when their ways are shut up, not only by a commandment, but the hedge of God's providence: though disappointed in their projects, yet they will through; if they can take faith and a good conscience along with them, they will; but if not, they will be rich without them.

2. Those that make it their *ἔργον*, their work and business in the world: Prov. xxiii. 4, 'Labour not to be rich; cease from thine own wisdom.' Make themselves servants of mammon: Mat. vi. 24, 'We cannot serve God and mammon.' Both masters have work enough, and their commands are contrary. When two consent to employ one man in the same business and service, though two men, they are but one master; but to execute the wills of men that are different in their designs, and have a several and full interest in our labours and actions, this is as impossible as to move two contrary ways at once. This is the case here. Mammon and Christ have full work for us, and their designs are contrary. Our main work of right is to please God and serve God, but our work by choice is to serve mammon. All our labour and travail is to be rich, which cannot be without the prejudice and wrong of religion, which should have the pre-eminence; Mat. vi. 33, 'First seek the kingdom of God, and the righteousness thereof, and these things shall be added.' Religion cannot have all, because of our bodily necessities; but it must have the chiefest. But now, when the strength of our endeavours runneth out another way, our hearts are taken off from God and his service; and so Hagar croweth it over Sarah. That is a happy family where Sarah rules and Hagar serves; But alas! usually it is otherwise. The lean kine devour the fat, and religion goeth to the wall; the world engrosseth men's time, and heads, and hearts, that they are wholly taken off from better things, and the edge of their affections is abated; their time and heart diverted: Prov. xxiii. 4, 'Labour not to be rich.' Some translate it, Weary not thyself to be rich; as they that trouble their minds with it with too great eagerness, they have no time nor heart for communion with God, and the great necessities of their souls; no time for God, no heart for God, and so the most necessary work is jostled out of doors, viz., the one thing necessary. They should first seek the kingdom of God, and they do

not seek it at all; at least not with that zeal and liveliness as they should.

II. The danger is represented.

1. That they fall into temptation. The devil hath them upon the hip, and is ready to give them a fall. Though a man's intentions should be never so innocent at first, yet they lie obvious to a temptation. Now we pray daily against temptation, therefore we should not come into the mouth of it. Certainly he that will ride into the enemy's camp and quarters cannot long be safe. When the mind is set upon the getting of wealth, and enchanted with the savour of worldly greatness, he runneth into the devil's quarters, and doth but bespeak a temptation, for he is prepared and ready for every carnal suggestion. Many had no thought at first to be so bad as afterward they prove, but they give the devil an advantage. Judas loved the bag, John xii. 6, and then Satan entered into him, and then he betrayed his master.

2. And a snare. The devil hath them where he would have them; he observeth which way the tree leaneth, and so presseth it downward. While they are only liable to temptation, the devil is out of sight; but when they are caught in the snare, then he appeareth in his own colours. Many think no harm at first; but their hearts are set upon the world, then tempted, and afterwards snared, and so deeply entangled, that they know not how to get out again. As in uncleanness, many have no impure thoughts at first, but they delight to be with women; whilst they play about the temptation, they are taken captive by Satan, and after drawn into filthiness. So many would have a little more of the world, that they may serve God without distraction, and if they had but such a proportion, they would care for no more; but if their desires be granted, then they find themselves entangled, and their hearts deceived; and still they must have more and more, and so settle in a worldly love and a worldly course. As a river, the greater it groweth by receiving in little brooks, the wider and deeper it weareth the channel; so outward things, the more they increase, the more they enlarge our desires according to their own proportion. This is an usual experiment of the deceitfulness of riches; men would be a little higher in the world, a little better accommodated; but when they have that, they must have a little more, and then a little more; and so seize on all things within their grasp and reach, joining 'field to field, and house to house,' Isa. v. 8. Then they are past the devil's temptation, and are gotten into the devil's snare.

III. The danger is represented by the nature of the snare; 'many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in perdition and destruction.'

1. The number, many lusts. There is none cometh unkindly to a worldly heart: Titus iii. 3, 'Serving divers lusts and pleasures.' *Quot habet Dominos, qui unum habere non vult?*—He that forsaketh the Lord, and is given up to his own lusts, hath many masters to please; sometimes riot, sometimes pride, sometimes contempt of God, or oppression of the poor. It is the opinion of some that there are several devils, that have as it were their several wards and quarters; as the heathens had several gods, which were indeed devils: Bacchus, the god of riot or good-fellowship; Venus, a patroness of love and wantonness; Mars,

of revengeful angry spirits ; Mammon, of wealth. The devils have, as it were, several quarters, some to humour the proud, or entice the wanton, or draw men to drunkenness, as agents in taverns and tipping-houses, others lay liegers about the revengeful. In the same heart sins take the throne by turns. No lust cometh unwelcome to a carnal heart, as the posture of their interests and temptations lieth. Yea, one lust giveth way to another, as some weeds and vermin destroy others, and devils go out by compact. But many evils are incident to the worldly ; their heart is a rank soil, capable of any seed but that which is good, which is soon choked there.

2. Their quality.

[1.] Foolish lusts. Every carnal man is a fool.

(1.) He is so in the judgment of God: Ps. xlix. 13, 'This their way is folly.' And he will be so in the judgment of his own heart when he is serious. In two cases a man is serious: when convinced by the Spirit: 1 Cor. iii. 18, 'Let him become a fool that he may be wise.' The first thing the Spirit of God doth is to show us our folly in forsaking the fountain of living waters. A child of God, that recovereth out of a temptation, is sensible of his folly: Ps. lxxiii. 22, 'So foolish was I, and ignorant;' Titus iii. 3, 'We ourselves also were sometimes foolish, ἀνόητοι. When he cometh to die: 'Thou fool, this night shall thy soul be required of thee,' Luke xii. 20. Then he finds himself a fool, because everything is provided for but that which should be most provided for, his precious soul: Jer. xvii. 11, 'At his end shall be a fool.' Death bloweth away our vain conceits and fancies, for then our carnal projects leave us in the dirt. How will you value the world when it is parting from you and you parting from it? When no hope of life, O vain deceitful world! then you cry out, παντ' ἐγενόμην, καὶ οὐδὲν ὠφέλιμο. What is all this to me, that am presently to leave all things, and to appear before God? Job xxvii. 8, 'What is the hope of the hypocrite, though he hath gained, when God taketh away his soul?' Man in innocency was a wise creature, but then he hearkened to the devil, and so became a fool.

(2.) He is so by plain demonstration in respect of his choice. A wise merchant selleth all for the pearl of price, Mat. xiii., But these part with heaven for trifles, prefer an apple or a rattle before a jewel. Certainly they that prefer a particular good before a general, a temporal before an eternal, that which is superfluous before that which is necessary, they are fools; but so do all worldly and carnal men, therefore their lusts are foolish lusts; they that are careless in matters of greatest danger, and make no provision for that world wherein we live longest; they that dig for iron with mattocks of gold, that forfeit their souls for the world, that disquiet themselves for a vain show, Ps. xxxix. 6, that neglect the substance to hunt after the shadow, that toil themselves for they know not who. All these are points of folly.

[2.] Hurtful lusts. The hurt they do for the present concerneth either the peaceable or gracious frame and estate of our souls.

(1.) Hurtful, as they destroy our peace: 'They pierce through themselves with many sorrows,' ver. 10, and so macerate and waste their strength. Who liveth the noble and comfortable life, above all changes, but the heavenly-minded and mortified man? But others,

to what biting cares are they exposed! How do they rack their spirits, vex their brains, and weary their minds, and waste the body! Ps. cxxvii. 2, 'It is vain for you to rise up early, to sit up late, to eat the bread of sorrow;' and so but entangle themselves in a life of misery and labours; who fret at their own disappointments, are eaten up with envy at the advancement of others, afflicted overmuch with losses and wrongs. There is no end of all their labours. Some have died of it, others been distracted and put out of their wits; so that you are never like to see good days as long as you cherish the love of the world, but will still lie under self-tormenting care and trouble of mind, by which a man grateth on his own flesh.

(2.) Hurtful as to grace. The spirit is debased by a carnal aim, and made a slave to all sort of sins: 'The love of money is the root of all evil,' ver. 10. Nothing breedeth baseness of mind so much as the love of money. Those that make their belly their god are men of an abject spirit; such a person can never act with resolution. Yet of the two the covetous is the more vile, and serveth the baser god: Phil. iii. 19, 'Whose end is destruction; whose god is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame; who mind earthly things.' For the life and belly, for which food is necessary, are better than food; and yet food for the belly is the best part of riches, and that which alone Adam in innocency stood in need of; so that, serving so base a god, they cannot but be of a base low spirit, and so can do nothing worthy in their generation. To provide for the body above the soul is but to overvalue the appendages of a worldly life.

3. The result and final tendency of these lusts: 'Which drown men in destruction and perdition.' By destruction is meant death temporal; by perdition, death eternal: ruin in this world, and hereafter eternal damnation; drown men as with a millstone about their necks.

[1.] Destruction or ruin in this world. How many lose their lives to have wherewith to live, and live poor that they may die rich; others, by aspiring projects, lose all their designed advantages, and come to utter ruin. The love of the world brought Judas first to the halter, and then to his own place.

[2.] Perdition or eternal damnation: Mat. xvi. 26, 'What is a man profited if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul?' The soul is lost, not in a natural sense, so as to be no more heard of, but lost in a legal sense. A wicked man said, He that will not venture his body is never valiant; he that will not venture his soul, never rich. But it is a sad venture to give the soul for a little temporal pelf, which we must leave we know not to whom.

Use 1. It informeth us of a twofold deceitfulness of heart that men are conscious unto. The first is this, many think they will follow the world as hard as they can for a while, and then dream of a devout retirement. Thus foolishly do men presume, first upon life, and then upon grace, both which are in God's hands; whereas they shorten their days by their inordinate cares, and entangle their hearts; so that they are over head and ears in the world, drowned in noisome and hurtful lusts, that they cannot easily get out again. Alas! the world is a very deceitful thing; if once we are taken in the love of it, more and more it will get in with us, and steal away our hearts, ere we can think of it.

2. The next deceit of the heart, akin to the former, is this, that if men had such a proportion of estate, they should be content with their portion, and serve God cheerfully. Alas! when you have it, the lust will grow with the possession. Covetousness is a fire that increaseth the more wood you put thereon: Eccles. v. 10, 'He that loveth silver will never be satisfied with silver, nor he that loveth abundance with increase.' And therefore we should rather seek to bring our minds to our estates, than our estates to our minds. Be content now with such things as ye have, or else ye will not be content hereafter. *Non augendæ res, sed minuendæ cupiditates*—We should not seek so much to increase our estates, as to abate our desires. We go the wrong way when we think more estate would do it, if grace doth not do it. As in some diseases, *non opus habent impletione, sed purgatione*; a man is still hungry though he has eaten enough, and still thirsty though drunk enough. As in the bulimy and dropsy, purging is better than impletion; in an ordinary fever we are not to quench the burning thirst by filling the patient's belly full of drink, but to better the heat by purging and opening a vein; so it is not wealth, but grace; the way is not to increase our substance, but moderate our desires. As long as love terminateth on outward things, we shall never be satisfied, but still exercised with foolish and hurtful lusts. Contentment cometh not from the things, but the mind; a little grace would show us that we had enough already to be better satisfied.

Use 2. This point will give us satisfaction as to that question, whether we may pray for and desire riches, or anything beyond food and raiment? I answer—

1. By distinction. Outward things are either necessary, or sufficient, or superfluous. The first degree of riches is to have what is necessary; the next to have what is enough; the next above that, what is more than enough.

[1.] Necessary. Necessity is either natural, civil, or religious.

(1.) Natural; that which will barely suffice nature, and support life, though meanly, hardly. These necessities are easily supplied. Though our fare be hard and our raiment coarse, yet we may make a hard shift to preserve life. This certainly we may desire and labour after; for every man must maintain himself as an instrument of providence, and to see that he be not chargeable to others; and if, in a fair way of providence, we can get no more, we must be content: ver. 8, 'Having food and raiment, let us be therewith content.' Though we be but a degree above beggary and extreme want, it is more than God owes us, and it is enough to sustain life whilst we lay a foundation for eternity.

(2.) Civil. Two things are here to be considered—(1.) Our estate and calling. An honourable calling requireth a fuller supply of temporal blessings than a private and inferior; a king than a subject; a nobleman than one of an inferior rank. Though *quoad necessitates naturæ* they are equal, yet *quoad decentiam status* they are unequal: Prov. xxx. 8, 'Give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with food convenient for me.' (2.) Our charge. A master of a family requireth more than a single person; he hath more to provide for, viz., wife and

children : 1 Tim. v. 8, 'If any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel ;' 2 Cor. xii. 14, 'Behold, the third time I am ready to come to you, and I will not be burdensome to you, for I seek not yours, but you : for the children ought not to lay up for the parents, but the parents for the children ;' Prov. xiii. 22, 'A good man leaveth an inheritance to his children's children.' Jacob : Gen. xxx. 30, 'When shall I provide for mine own house also ?' Solomon complaineth : Eccles. iv. 8, 'There is one alone, and there is not a second ; yea, he hath neither child nor brother, yet is there no end of all his labour, neither is his eye satisfied with riches, neither saith he, For whom do I labour, and bereave my soul of food ? This is also vanity, yea, it is a sore travail.'

(3.) Moral. For life, not lust ; to cure infirmities, not to cause them ; to sustain nature, not to pamper it. Many pretend they seek a conveniency, to be without want ; but it is to fare deliciously every day, to flaunt in pride, to be built up a story higher in the world. This is not conveniency, but covetousness. Nature is content with a little, Christ fed a multitude with barley loaves and a few fishes, and gave thanks, John vi. 11, with 23. We may provide for our necessities, present, future. That is reputed necessary which in some short time may have some present use. And therefore, though a man should be content, though after the use of means God giveth him only from hand to mouth, yet he may seek a competency for their relief that survive after he is dead ; he may ask it of God with submission to his will. The sluggard is sent, Prov. vi. 6, to the ant, that gathereth her meat in summer, and food in the harvest ; and Prov. xiii. 22, 'A good man leaveth an inheritance to his children's children.' A supply of all visible necessities we may ask of God, though without carking and distrust. Hitherto we have spoken but of bare necessity, either for supply of nature, or maintaining that good state wherein God hath set us ; that which is necessary to support nature, or our vocation and charge, and nothing to spare.

[2.] Sufficient. And that we are said to have when we have some reasonable plenty ; not only slender provisions, wherewith to hold life and soul together, but may be helpful to others, and are in a capacity to give rather than to receive. This sufficiency may be asked of God, though it be more than bare necessity. For it is a condition more happy than that of want : Acts xx. 35, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.' And maketh a man more diffusively useful in his generation, both for the advancing of public good and the relief of private necessities : Eph. iv. 28, 'Let him that stole steal no more, but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth.' We are often pressed to works of mercy ; and though it bindeth the poor only in affection and disposition of mind, yet the acting of this grace is very comfortable ; and therefore this sufficiency and convenient plenty may be asked, so it be with moderation ; and this sufficiency be judged, not by the affection of the covetous, but the moderate and sober rate of christian desires, and rather referred to God than determined by ourselves. As Agur desires God to carve out his allowance, not prescrib-

ing a measure to him, but that which he knoweth to be meet and necessary for us ; cast yourselves upon God's allowance. And if it be asked with submission ; for it is a temporal promise : Deut. xxviii. 11, 'The Lord shall make thee plenteous in goods, in the fruit of thy body, and in the fruit of thy cattle, and in the fruit of thy ground, in the land which the Lord sware unto thy fathers to give thee.' The will to be rich that is here condemned is an obstinate and unsubmitive will.

[3.] Abundance is more than is fit for his place and calling, or than he can and will employ for good uses ; or without which the life of a man, or his good estate and service in the world, may be well preserved. The desire of worldly greatness cometh from lust, or eager affection to worldly things. Men would shine alone : Isa. v. 8, 'Woe unto them that join house to house, and lay field to field, till there be no place, that they may be placed alone in the midst of the earth.' And argueth diffidence in the providence of God. They would have wherewith to subsist without him. And is contrary to the laws of christian moderation. The king was not to multiply horses, and gold, and silver, Deut. xvii. 16, 17 ; whereas our desire of estate must proceed not from a love of riches, or to make us and ours great, but a conscience of our duty to God, that we may be useful and serviceable ; and must be kept within bounds, and ever must we maintain our confidence in him.

2. I answer in these propositions—

[1.] We can lawfully desire no more than we can pray for ; for it is a certain rule that those desires and workings of spirit are unlawful, which we dare not express to God in prayer. If we must be modest in our prayers, we should be as modest in our desires and aims. Would we say, Food and raiment is not enough ; we must have a fuller estate ; so much coming in by the year ; such portions for our children ; they must be maintained at such a rate, &c. ? Durst we fill our censers with such dross and dung as this is ? Why then do we cherish such thoughts and desires in our hearts ? Prayer is but an empty compliment unless it express our desires.

[2.] The prayers of God's children are always modest, and suited to their trust and great hopes. So it was with Agur : Prov. xxx. 7, 8, 'Two things have I required of thee ; deny me them not before I die. Remove far from me vanity and lies ; give me neither poverty nor riches ; feed me with food convenient for me.' And Jacob : Gen. xxviii. 20, 'Jacob vowed a vow, saying, If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on,' &c. Carnal wretches prescribe God a task which he never meaneth to perform : Ps. lxxviii. 18, 'They tempted God in their hearts by asking meat for their lust.'

[3.] The reality of this modesty in prayer concerning outward supplies is evidenced by the frame of our hearts and the course of our actions.

(1.) The frame of our hearts is seen both in the want and in the enjoyment of our outward things.

(1st.) In the want of them. If we be content with God's allowance, who hath determined to every man the course of his service, and the

bounds of his habitation, Acts xvii. 26; how much of the world every one shall enjoy, what land, what estate; you are content with what you have, Heb. xiii. 5. If our portion be more strait than others, it is what God hath allotted to us. If we be kept poor and low, we shall have enough for that service and honour that God expecteth from us, and to carry us through that little time that we have to spend in the world. It is not abundance that we need, but a contented heart. Be contented with a little, if God giveth no more. Diseased persons need more attendance than the healthy. It is our disease multiplieth our necessities.

(2d.) In the enjoyment of outward things. If they come by God's providence, the heart must be guarded; it must not be set upon them: Ps. lxii. 10, 'If riches increase, set not your heart upon them.' We may delight in them as they are our portion, as tokens from God, and fruits of his bounty: Deut. xxvi. 11, 'Thou shalt rejoice in every good thing which the Lord thy God giveth thee.' But they must not possess and take up our hearts so as to cause us to forget God, and to make us raven after more; and the lust riseth with the increase, and so the heart is the more entangled.

(2.) The course of our actions in getting and using.

(1st.) In getting. When we are not immoderate in labouring after them; when men toil and labour to load themselves with thick clay, Hab. ii. 6. They promise themselves much contentment and happiness; but it doth but draw off the heart from God, and burden and pollute the sinner: Ps. cxxvii. 2, 'It is vain for you to rise up early, to sit up late, to eat the bread of sorrow;' Hab. ii. 13, 'Behold, is it not of the Lord of hosts, that the people shall labour in the very fire, and the people shall weary themselves for very vanity?'

(2d.) In using. Riches in themselves considered are neither good nor evil; all is as they are used. We are to use them as instruments of piety and charity, and for the furtherance of our great account; so that it is not wealth so much that we beg, as a blessing upon our labours, that we may have wherewith to serve God. We must so use and possess what we have as that the use and possession may tend to God's glory and the good of our souls. As—

(1st.) The maintenance of our own good estate and condition: Eccles. v. 18, 'It is good and comely for one to eat and to drink, and to enjoy the good of all his labour that he taketh under the sun all the days of his life which God giveth him, for it is his portion.' It is God's allowance, that we should live comfortably upon what he hath sent us; yea, not only his allowance, but his gift: ver. 19, 'Every man also, to whom God hath given riches and wealth, and hath given him power to eat thereof, and to take his portion, and to rejoice in his labour, this is the gift of God.'

(2d.) The good of others that depend upon us; as our family and kindred, 1 Tim. v. 8, 'That they may not be burdensome to the church.'

(3d.) The relief of the poor: Eph. iv. 28, 'Let him that stole steal no more; but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth.' We shall be no losers by that: Prov. xi. 24, 'There is that scattereth

and yet increaseth ;' John vi. 13, 'Therefore they gathered them together, and filled twelve baskets with the fragments of the five barley loaves, which remained over and above unto them that had eaten.'

(4th.) The maintenance of true religion and the church of God : Prov. iii. 9, 'Honour the Lord with thy substance, and with the first-fruits of thy increase.'

(5th.) Good of the commonwealth : Rom. xiii. 7, 'Render therefore to all their dues, tribute to whom tribute is due, custom to whom custom, fear to whom fear, honour to whom honour ;' and Mat. xxii. 21, 'Render to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and unto God the things which are God's.'

Thus is a man tried, when he hath an estate, how he useth it. A leaky vessel is not discerned when it is empty ; but when it is full, then it discovereth itself. So when we are kept low, there is not such a trial of our spirits as when we abound in all things, how we will use and improve this trial, what we discover then, grace or corruption. Want is a trial, and so is fulness ; and therefore we should look to ourselves. If self be ravenous, and devour all that portion which God should have, and the poor should have, and friends should have, we do not use it aright, not to the ends for which God hath given it.

Use 3. To press us to mortify this inordinate inclination. If once men affect and love riches, it becometh the root of all evil. It is not the having, but the affecting of great things, that is sinful. What God casteth upon us, walking within the compass of our duty, we are with thankfulness to embrace, and to improve to his glory. Yet this inordinate desire is very natural to us, born and bred with us ; and because riches do all in the world, it is increased upon us. Therefore we need the more to look to our hearts and consider—

1. The comfort of our lives lieth not in abundance : Luke xii. 15, 'Take heed, and beware of covetousness ; for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.' They are extrinsical to our being and happiness. When you have the world at will, you can get no more than bodily food and bodily clothing ; the poorest may attain to that. It is no great matter whether our dung and excrement be of finer matter or coarser, nor what a gay show we make in our apparel, whether fewer or more dishes at our table. Too much oil puts out the lamp. When men have troubled themselves and the world to make themselves great, what a sorry happiness have they ! Ps. xvii. 14, 'From men which are thy hand, O Lord, from men of the world, which have their portion in this life, and whose belly thou fillest with thy hid treasure ; they are full of children, and leave the rest of their substance to their babes ;' Hab. i. 16, 'They sacrifice unto their net, and burn incense unto their drag, because by them their portion is fat, and their meat plenteous.' A little good cheer and a merry life is all they have. They that want it live as well as they, and have more contentment ; they are no nearer to true comfort, nor the further from the grave.

2. There is danger in abundance. The moon is never eclipsed but when it is at full. An estate may be too great, as a shoe too big, or armour too great, as Saul's armour for David, 1 Sam. xvii. 39. It is harder for a rich man to go to heaven : Mat. xix. 24, 'It is easier for

a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.' A moderate estate is freest from temptations. Abundance of all things, without any want, disposeth to a forgetfulness of God; as perpetual want, without any taste of God's goodness, on the other side, disposeth the soul to atheism, which are the two extremes, whereof the one starveth religion, the other choketh it. The middle sort of men carry away heaven and graces, while others disregard God. Both poverty and riches, in the extremities, have their temptations; the middle estate is freest from danger, both of sin and misery. Fertile ground is apt to breed weeds. Oh! that men would often think of the worthlessness and insufficiency of worldly things! I shall not be more safe, nor happy, nor acceptable to God, nor more comfortable in myself. It is grace does all in poverty and riches; and so all men are upon the same level: James i. 9, 10, 'Let the brother of low degree rejoice in that he is exalted; but the rich in that he is made low.'

3. Greater estates lie open to greater cares and troubles: Eccles. v. 11, 'When goods increase they are increased that eat them; and what good is there to the owners thereof, saving the beholding of them with their eyes?' True they have more attendance; but then more provision is required for them. The charge of family and retinue will increase likewise; there are more bellies to be filled, more backs to be clothed; in that which is real, others have their comforts as well as he.

4. Greater estates must give greater accounts. We are God's stewards, and we must give an account of our stewardship, Luke xvi. 2. You do but seek a greater trust, and you cannot discharge that you have already: Luke xii. 48, 'Unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required; and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more.' We must give an account for more time, more opportunities to do good; the more mercy, the more plenty; there is a greater reckoning to make.

5. When we come to die, it is not the possession, but the use will comfort us. We can carry nothing with us into the other world, but the comfort of a good conscience: Eccles. v. 15, 'As he came forth of his mother's womb, naked shall he return to go as he came, and shall take nothing of his labour, which he may carry away in his hand.' Riches cannot go with us into the other world. A godly man can carry his happiness with him, which another leaveth behind him. A worldly, wealthy man hath made his will, and left all his estate; to such a son such an inheritance, to such a daughter such a portion, to such a friend such a legacy: what hath the poor man left for himself? If he hath not grace, what hath he left to carry with him but the anguish and misery of a guilty conscience, and the expectation of worse to come? O poor miserable creature! when all things take their leave, what a sorry comfort will that be that he hath once possessed! but if he hath used it well, their works follow them: Luke xvi. 9, 'Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness, that when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations.'

Well, then, use diversion.

[1.] Let your desires be set on other blessings. I must and will have grace. Pitch your desires on the great blessings of the covenant. I

must and will have grace and heaven. *Valde protestatus sum*, saith Luther, *me nolle sic a Deo satiari*: Ps. cvi. 45, 'Remember me, O Lord, with the favour that thou bearest unto thy people; O visit me with thy salvation, that I may see the good of thy chosen, that I may rejoice in the gladness of thy nation, that I may glory with thine inheritance.' Give me the favour of thy people. There is no danger, nor no snare in that. I will not be put off with other things: 'Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely,' Rev. xxii. 17. All our business with you is to bring you to this resolute bent of heart as to your spiritual and eternal enjoyments. These are the blessings of his people. Christ gave his Spirit to the faithful apostles, and his purse to Judas. As Jacob would take no nay, he must have the blessing; so a christian, Lord, I must have Christ, and I must have faith. This is holy impudence: Luke xi. 8, *διὰ τὴν ἀναίδειαν*, 'Though he will not rise, and give him, because he is his friend; yet because of his importunity, he will rise and give him as many as he needeth.'

[2.] Choose other business. One that maketh it his business to go to heaven, and to serve and please God, will not so easily be surprised by the love of the world; he will measure himself by thriving in grace, not in estate: Ps. cxix. 14, 'I have rejoiced in the way of thy testimonies, as much as in all riches.' Every man is as his business is: John vi. 27, 'Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life;' 1 Tim. iv. 7, 'Exercise thyself unto godliness.' The main business of your life is for earth or heaven, to please God or to get the world; which way is your labour and care carried out? You should be most careful to get God's love, and work out your salvation.

Use 4. To observe and examine whether this disposition be in us, yea or no. This will be known—(1.) By the frequency of your thoughts; (2.) By the vehemency of your desires; (3.) By the drift and course of your lives.

1. By the working of the thoughts and debates of the heart. If the heart be still exercised with covetous projects, if you have your wits set a-work how to get in more, this shows you would be rich. Thoughts are the genuine issue and birth of the soul, and do discover the temper of it. When their minds do run only upon earthly things: Phil. iii. 19, 'Whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things.' Such a project and course of gain, James iv. 13, and that with a savour and sweetness. Still catering and contriving, not how to grow good and gracious, but great and high in the world. The worldling in the gospel is brought in musing: Luke xii. 17, 18, 'And he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits? And he said, This will I do, I will pull down my barns, and build greater, and there will I bestow all my fruits and goods.' I will do thus and thus, *καὶ διελογίζετο*, *verbum mire appositum*, saith Beza. For a worldly man is always framing dialogues within himself, and asking and answering his soul; and his heart is so encumbered with these thoughts that he cannot get it off in holy duties: Ezek. xxxiii. 31, 'They come unto thee as the people cometh, and they sit before thee as thy people, and they hear thy words, but they will

not do them ; for with their mouth they will show much love, but their heart goeth after their covetousness.' Other sins distract us in duty, but none so often as this, by vain musings upon worldly advantages ; this always runneth in the mind night and day when alone.

2. By the vehemency of your desires. Unnatural predatorious heats argue a distemper. We may lawfully desire earthly things ; we carry about earthly bodies, that stand in need of earthly sustentation. We have an earthly house to support, 2 Cor. v. 1, and are subject to the common necessities of an earthly life ; and therefore surely God, that hath given us these earthly bodies, doth allow us to seek earthly things in a moderate way. But now when these desires are so vehement, that they grow to a perturbation and impatency of check, they argue this immodest will to be rich. Rachel might lawfully have desired children ; but when it cometh to, 'Give me children, or I die,' then the desire is depraved and inordinate. So when we are disquieted by our desires, and are full of murmurings if we want, and of envious repining at those that have worldly things, and they always solicit us to more, and one degree of estate draweth us on to more, it is an evil disease, and it must be looked to in time, or else it will be baneful to the soul. Then you are gainthirsty, as the expression is, Ps. x., when there is such an eager pursuit after it, and you are so greedy upon worldly things. Desires are but vigorous motions of the will, and do discover the bent and purpose of it. They are the pulses of the soul. As physicians judge by appetite, so may you by desires ; when the soul is carried out by such an unsatisfied thirst, and like the horse-leech's daughter, crieth, 'Give, give,' Prov. xxx. God's people, as an argument of their sincerity, plead their desires, and the longings of their souls after God : 'Our desires are to the remembrance of thy name.' Now your desires run another way, and still they increase upon you with your enjoyments.

3. By the uniformity and constancy of your endeavours. A serious choice and bent of will is always accompanied with invincible resolutions ; they will use all means, and break through all difficulties ; wit, and time, and strength is all engaged upon this design, that you may compass an estate. That argueth the fixed bent of their heart : Luke xvi. 8, 'The children of this world are wiser in their generation than the children of light.' By wisdom in their generation is meant a dexterous prosecution of their ends and purposes. Now, when men are dull, and slow, and backward in holy things, but their whole souls run out upon temporal profits, it is the sphere of their activity, and the business that their hearts are set upon ; here men turn and wind, and try every course, and so it is constantly with them. A good man is unwearied and diligent in the pursuit of heavenly things : Phil. iii. 11, 'If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead.' He goeth from this ordinance to that, and is ever waiting upon God, and is sagacious to spy out advantages of spiritual increase ; this is the sphere of his activity ; he is conferring, praying, reading, hearing, meditating. But now a worldly man is always exercised in covetous practices : 2 Peter ii. 14, 'Having eyes full of adultery, and that cannot cease from sin, beguiling unstable souls : an heart they have exercised with covetous practices.' What a stir and a bustle do they make to increase their estates ! They have the spirit of the world.