

SERMONS UPON PROVERBS X. 20.

SERMON I.

The tongue of the just is as choice silver ; the heart of the wicked is little worth.—PROV. X. 20.

THERE are three operations of man—his thoughts, speeches, and actions. By these we are discovered, and these we should make conscience of. Two of them are represented in this scripture—words and thoughts; and we cannot make conscience of the one unless we make conscience of the other; for the tongue will follow the constitution of the heart: ‘The tongue of the just is as choice silver; the heart of the wicked is little worth.’ In the words observe—

1. The things opposed, ‘The tongue of the just,’ and ‘The heart of the wicked.’

2. The price and value of each, ‘Choice silver,’ and ‘Little worth.’

1. For the first, we must inquire why tongue and heart are opposed? Because ‘out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh,’ Mat. xii. 34. So that if we would prevent the evils of speech, we must cleanse the heart. The tap runneth according to the liquor wherewith the vessel is filled; if the heart be little worth, the speech will be vain and frothy.

2. The value and worth. The one is as choice refined silver, the other is little worth. This metaphor showeth that an unsanctified heart is a drossy heart. There is a *μέμωσις* in the expression; it doth a great deal of hurt.

I begin with the first part, ‘The tongue of the just;’ that is, the words and speeches which he uttereth with his tongue. And more particularly, it is opposed to a flattering tongue: ver. 18, ‘He that hideth hatred with lying lips;’ a detracting tongue, to him ‘that uttereth a slander;’ to a prattling tongue: ver. 19, ‘In the multitude of words there wanteth not sin.’ But now ‘the tongue of the just’ is when a just man speaketh like a just man. Then the predicate; it is as ‘choice silver,’ both for internal purity and external profit and use: Prov. viii. 19, ‘My fruit is better than gold, yea, than fine gold, and my revenue than choice silver.’ It is refined, and worthy to be attended unto and embraced; and in this sense it is true, *verba valent sicut nummus*. Its acceptableness, value, and profit are intimated in this similitude.

Doct. That a good man, speaking or behaving himself as a good man, will and should confer and discourse with others to edification.

I shall prove it—

I. From the quality of the person here described. It is a just man. By that term is meant—

1. A renewed man; for naturally our lips are polluted: Isa. vi. 5, 'Woe is me, for I am undone, because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips.' Sin in the tongue is most frequent, and that not without difficulty avoided. It proceedeth from the corruption of the heart, and discovereth the pollution which lieth hid there, and by venting increaseth it. The orator said of somebody, *Nullum unquam verbum, quod revocare vellet, eum emisisse*—that he never uttered a word that he desired to retract. But surely he meant it of the art of speaking, not of the grace of speaking; at best it was but a false flattery. The corruption of men by nature is otherwise described by the apostle: Rom. iii. 13, 'Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues have they used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips.' This is man's true character as he is in his natural estate; and whatever gifts of eloquence and plausible speech they are endowed with, yet this doth but hide corruption, not cure and mortify it. The pure lip is the fruit of God's converting grace: Zeph. iii. 9, 'For then will I turn to the people a pure language, that they may call upon the name of the Lord, to serve him with one consent.' And as the powerful change which grace worketh in us is shown in other things, so in the tongue also.

2. A man furnished with knowledge of the things which concern his duty; for every renewed man is an enlightened man; for it is said, Prov. xv. 2, 'The tongue of the wise useth knowledge aright, but the mouth of fools poureth out foolishness.' Unless a man understand his duty, how shall he speak of it? So Prov. xvii. 7, 'Excellent speech becometh not a fool;' in the Hebrew it is, 'The lip of excellency.' Ignorant men can no more discourse of religion than blind men can of colours.

3. This renewed man is a mortified man; for otherwise he will only stickle for opinions, and be one of the disputers of this world, but will not warm men's hearts, and excite them to practice. That must be first upon the heart which will afterwards be upon the tongue; and unless the heart be cleansed, the tongue will not be cleansed. If the heart be upon the world, the tongue will most commonly be upon the world: 1 John iv. 5, 'They are of the world, therefore they speak of the world, and the world heareth them.' If the heart be proud, the tongue will be employed in boasting of ourselves, and in contempt of others: Luke xviii. 9–11, 'And he spake this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others: Two men went up into the temple to pray, the one a pharisee, and the other a publican. The pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican.' If the heart be unclean, the speech will not be very savoury; but rotten communication will as easily proceed from us as a putrefied breath doth from rotten lungs; or else it is but a force, when the voice is Jacob's and the hands are Esau's; when you talk chastely and the heart swarmeth with noisome lusts; or when you talk piously and godly when the heart is vain and

sinful, and we despise religion in our souls; or when the words are patient when the heart swelleth against providence. First you must cast salt into the spring; the corruption of the heart must be overcome before the corruption of speech can be prevented. The use of the tongue is to express the mind.

4. This renewed man must be biased with a love to God and Christ and heaven before he can edify others with serious counsel, exhortation, or reproof. This referreth to vivification. To restrain the tongue from evil is not enough, but we must do good. Now, how wretchedly and coldly do they speak of God, Christ, and heaven whose hearts are not set on God, Christ, and heaven! How can they make others sensible of that which they believe not themselves? To heart-warming discourse, faith is necessary: 2 Cor. iv. 13, 'We having the same spirit of faith, according as it is written, I believed, and therefore I spoke; we also believe, and therefore speak.' Love is necessary; they that speak from love, their affection will leave a tincture upon their discourse, for they have some experience of the things they speak of: 2 Cor. i. 4, 'Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God.' How sweetly do all their speeches relish of the spirit from whence they do proceed! They speak feelingly of God, and Christ, and the life to come; whereas otherwise a report of a report is a cold thing, and beareth no value, hath no efficacy on the hearts of those that hear it. Well, then, from the whole you may observe, that there is a difference, an observable difference, between the discourse of the people of God and others; their lips drop as the honeycomb, because they are renewed, that is, enlightened as to their minds, converted and mortified as to their hearts, and vivified. Men usually discourse as their hearts are; a man of a frothy spirit will bring forth nothing but froth and folly; as their hearts are filled with such things, so are their mouths; but a gracious man will utter gracious things, and that with savour. Take one place more: Ps. xxxvii. 30, 31, 'The mouth of the righteous speaketh wisdom, and his tongue talketh of judgment: the law of his God is in his heart; none of his steps shall slide.' As men's hearts are busied and affected, so will discourses flow from them. He that maketh it his business to suit his actions to the word of God will also suit his words thereunto; for grace discovereth itself uniformly in thoughts, words, and actions.

II. I prove it from the attribute, or commendation here given to his discourse; it is 'as choice silver.'

1. For internal purity, choice silver is that which is refined from all dross. There is a great deal of evil bewrayed by the tongue. It is hard to enumerate all the kinds. The apostle imputeth to it 'a world of iniquity,' James iii. 6; but these are the most usual—

[1.] Lying, which destroyeth all commerce with man, for truth is the ground of commerce; and is most contrary to the new nature: Col. iii. 9, 'Lie not one to another, seeing ye have put off the old man with his deeds.' It is not only contrary to the natural order which God hath appointed between the mind and the tongue, but that simplicity and true holiness which is the fruit of regeneration. Therefore God saith, Isa. lxiii. 8, 'Surely they are my people, children that will not lie.'

God presumeth that his people will not deal falsely, and deceive and circumvent others by any untruth, as a thing very unseemly and inconsistent with grace.

[2.] Railing, under which I comprehend all censorious and calumnious discourse of other men ; when we cannot meet together, but instead of edifying ourselves, we must be speaking of others, blemishing their graces, carping at their weaknesses, aggravating their failings, divulging their secret miscarriages, without any just reason from the glory of God and the profit of others. This the scripture brandeth as a very bad sign, as an ill temper of spirit : James i. 26, ' If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridled not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain.' Censuring is a pleasing sin, very suitable to corrupt nature, which destroyeth both the love of God and our neighbour ; but it is a very bad sign. It is made to be the hypocrites' sin, who, being acquainted with the guile of their own hearts, are apt to suspect others, and disgrace their best actions, and upon the ruin of other men's credit would raise their own reputation. And as they show an ill spirit in ourselves, so do they hurt to others, and they are contrary to that justice and charity which we owe to them : Prov. xxvi. 22, ' The words of a tale-bearer are as wounds, and they go down into the innermost parts of the belly.' They wound men's reputation insensibly, and strike them with a blow that smarteth not, but destroyeth their service ; and by these privy defamations and whisperings men's hearts are alienated from many choice useful servants of Christ.

[3.] There is ribaldry : Eph. iv. 29, ' Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth.' Christians are accountable for their words as well as their actions, and scurrilous, obscene discourse ill becometh them that are, or should be, of a clean heart. So Col. iii. 8, ' But now you also put off all these, anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouths.' Such evil communications show a corrupt heart from whence they do proceed ; and they convey the taint to others ; for ' evil communication corrupts good manners ;' the heart of man being as tinder or powder, easily catching at every spark that sets the flesh on fire.

[4.] Proud and arrogant speaking, when all our discourse is a self-boasting. Pride in the heart loveth to vent itself, sometimes by the eyes (we read of haughty eyes and a proud look), but usually by the tongue ; all their discourses are to set off themselves, and to usher in something of themselves ; or if religion be talked of, it is to commend their own knowledge, their own notions, their own zeal for Christ : 1 Sam. ii. 3, ' Talk no more so exceeding proudly ; let not arrogance come out of your mouth ;' Acts v. 36, ' Boasting himself to be somebody.' A proud ostentation of our own worth and excellency is a sort of dross, from which an holy tongue must be purged and refined.

[5.] Cursing and swearing. I join them both together, because usually they proceed from the same root. Cursing is a wishing some evil upon ourselves, and swearing is a solemn appeal to God ; and usually profane and bold spirits, that make little conscience of truth, are very apt to both, to wish direful imprecations upon themselves,

and to take God's name in vain upon all occasions. Now the name of God should not be worn threadbare, but used upon just and great occasions. Surely those that have true grace will not make light of God, but use his name, or anything by which he is brought to our remembrance, with great reverence. To make a byword of his dreadful name is to contemn and slight him to his face. If his people must take heed how they use it in prayer and praise, must not you take heed how you use it in ordinary speech? You propagate your sin, for you bring his name into contempt with others. You pray, 'Hallowed be thy name;' and will you profane it in common talk?

[6.] Another evil is scorning and deriding at the power of godliness, and that strictness which is necessary to save our souls. When you see others make conscience of sin, you make a mock of it: Prov. xiv. 9, 'Fools make a mock at sin.' When others live self-denyingly and mortifiedly, you deride and speak evil of them: 1 Peter iv. 4, 'Wherein they think it strange that you run not with them into the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you.' And will God take it well that his best subjects should be mocked for their fidelity in serving him? Hatred of the power of godliness is so natural to us, that we cannot sufficiently be cautious against making godly and holy men contemptible.

[7.] Idle discourse and foolish garrulity, which tendeth not to the glory of God or the good of our neighbour, and serveth for no good use. For these we must be judged: Mat. xii. 36, 'I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give an account thereof at the day of judgment.' Light words may weigh heavy in God's balance, and these argue a vain frame of heart. Now a temperate use of honest mirth, or the use of wit, is not these idle words, but when men give up themselves to such a frothy vanity that they cannot be serious, but reflect upon the personal imperfections of others, or use impious jests, or abuse scripture to express the conceptions of a vain wanton mind. There must be a guard upon our speech, that in the general it tendeth to the profit of others. This is a taste of that profane discourse which is forbidden to christians, and any of this, if allowed, argueth a rotten and unrenewed heart, and is unsavoury to godly ears, and contagious and infectious to ordinary hearers: 1 Cor. xv. 33, 'Evil communications corrupt good manners;' and doth make the heart more vain, while the corruption that is in it doth strengthen itself by getting vent; for when the fire that is kindled in our bosoms flieth abroad in these sparks of discourse, our reverence of God is loosened and weakened, and we lie more open to Satan.

2. For external profit. The commerce of the world is driven on by money, that is profitable for worldly uses; so is the discourse of a good man as choice silver, very profitable to others: Eph. iv. 29, 'Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers.' Surely for many reasons should we thus employ our tongues. So it is said, Prov. xv. 7, 'The lips of the wise disperse knowledge, but the heart of the foolish doth not so.' Men usually discourse as their hearts are. A man of a frothy spirit will bring forth nothing but vain and frothy discourse, but a gracious man will utter holy and gracious

things. Now we should be more careful to use our tongues to edifying, for these reasons—

[1.] Our tongue is our glory : Ps. lvii. 8, 'Awake, my glory ; awake, my psaltery and harp ;' Ps. xvi. 9, 'My heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth.' Compare it with Acts ii. 26, 'Therefore did my heart rejoice ; and my tongue was glad.' So Ps. xxx. 12, 'To the end that my glory may sing praise to thee, and not be silent ;' that is, my tongue. But why is our tongue our glory ? Because thereby we express the conceptions of our minds. It was not given us to taste meats and drinks ; for that use the tongues of the brute beasts serve them. Speech is the excellency of man above the beasts ; but christianity giveth us an higher reason, because thereby we may express the conceptions of our minds to the glory of God and good of others : James iii. 9, 'Therewith bless we God, even the Father.' That is our glory, that we can not only think of God, but speak of God, his word and works.

[2.] Because holy conference and edifying discourse is one means of spiritual growth and mutual improvement : Prov. xvi. 21, 'The wise in heart shall be called prudent, and the sweetness of his lips increaseth learning.' The more he venteth what he knoweth, the wiser himself groweth, and learneth by teaching others ; for thereby it is more impressed upon his own heart, as the loaves are multiplied by being divided, as venting sin and folly increaseth sin and folly. But as to others : Luke xxii. 32, 'When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren ;' either by cautioning them, that they fall not in like manner, or helping them to recover out of the mire of sin. And the apostle saith, 2 Cor. i. 4, 'Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in trouble with the comforts wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God.' As in the celestial bodies, whatever light the moon and stars receive from the sun, they bestow it on these inferior bodies ; they have their light from the sun, and they reflect it again on the creatures below ; or as, in the body of man, the heart and liver receive and drive the blood and spirits to all the other parts ; so what we receive from God, as good stewards we should dispense it again, and so propagate the knowledge of God in the world, which is better than gold and fine silver.

[3.] It is a great comfort and quickening to confer together of holy things : Rom. i. 12, 'That I may be comforted together with you, by the mutual faith both of you and me.' It is a far sweeter thing to talk of the word of God and spiritual and heavenly things, than to employ our tongues in vain and foolish mirth, or discoursing about mere worldly matters. Should anything be more delightful to a christian than God, and Christ, and heaven, and the promises of the world to come, and the way thither ? And therefore surely we should take all meet occasions to confer of these things. Certainly our relish and appetite is mightily depraved, to judge ourselves as in a prison when we are in good company who remember God ; and when they invite you to remember him with them, will you frown upon the motion because it is some check and interruption to carnal vanity ? Had you rather hear the ravens croak or the nightingale sing ? the grunting of a swine or the melody of an instrument ? Such a difference there is between vain and worldly talk and heavenly discourse.

[4.] The well-ordering of our words is a great point of christianity, and argueth a good degree of grace. He that bridled his tongue is a perfect man : James iii. 2, 'If any man offend not in words, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body.' And Solomon saith, Prov. xviii. 21, 'That death and life are in the power of the tongue.' Upon the good or ill use of it a man's safety doth depend ; not only temporal safety, but eternal. And a greater than Solomon tells us, Mat. xii. 37, 'By thy words shalt thou be justified, and by thy words shalt thou be condemned.' Therefore it concerneth us to look to our discourses as well as our actions. Solomon often describeth the righteous by his good tongue : Prov. x. 31, 'The mouth of the just bringeth forth wisdom ;' Prov. xii. 8, 'The tongue of the wise is health.'

The first use is to inform us—

1. What an happiness it is to converse with just and renewed men : 'Their tongue is as choice silver.' You are enriched by converse with them with such treasures as, if you were well in your wits, you would prefer above fine gold and choice silver ; and so showeth what teachers you should live under, and what families you should put yourselves into, if you be at your own disposal, and what company you should choose. You should go into the mines, those places where the vein of choice silver is to be had.

2. That it is not enough to avoid evil communication, but our speech must be ordered by grace, to the benefit of others. Besides vain babbling, there are two defects : some are dumb and tongue-tied in holy things ; they can speak liberally of any subject that occurreth, but are dumb in spiritual matters, which concern edification. Men show so little grace in their conferences because they have so little grace in their hearts. Many carry it as if they were ashamed to speak of God, or had nothing to say of him or for him. You are not bound always to speak of religious things, but sometimes you are bound. Now when do you interpose a word for God in a serious and affectionate manner ? Others jangle about disputable opinions, and all their talk is controversy, as if the plain and uncontroverted points were not worth the owning ; yet in these the life and power of godliness consisteth ; this is like leaving bread, and gnawing upon a stone. In nature necessary things are obvious ; so in the universe of religion, to inculcate on each other the vital truths and the most necessary duties. Controversies have their place, but the ordinary discourse of christians should be about the most necessary things.

3. To show us what need there is that we should be just, holy, and righteous. If we would profit others by our discourses, two things are necessary—that we should be enlightened and mortified.

[1.] That we should be enlightened by the Spirit of grace. If we would teach others the way of God, it is necessary that we ourselves should be taught of God. It cometh warmer and fresher from us when we speak not by hearsay only, but experience. As heart answereth to heart, so the renewed heart in him that heareth to the renewed heart in him that speaketh, and we show others what God by his illuminating grace hath first showed us. Then it savoureth of the spirit that worketh in both ; he that is all on fire himself will more easily enkindle others. Alas ! good things pass through

many like water through an empty trunk, without feeling; they may speak very good things, but they do but personate and act a part. When God hath bound up our wounds, we do more feelingly speak to others. Certainly we are apt to speak oftenest of those things which we do most affect. When we have a true discerning of the excellency of holy things, our speeches about them will be more frequent, lively, and savoury.

[2.] That we be mortified and dead to carnal things; for we cannot conceal our affections, whether they are bent to the things of the flesh or to the things of the Spirit. Till the heart be cleansed and we mortify our sinful inclinations, from whence thoughts and words proceed, they always obey the ruling power. A good man will be known by his discourse; so will the carnal. The froward will speak froward things, and the sensual of what is grateful to the flesh, and the worldly of what is suitable to their worldly designs; and knowledge doth not guide us here so much as inclination; for speech is but the overflow of the heart.

The second use is of exhortation, to press us to employ our tongues to the use of edifying.

1. Let us be much exercised in reading and meditating on the word of God, and get a good stock of sound scriptural knowledge: Mat. xii. 35, 'A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things.' Every man entertaineth his guests with such provision as he hath. He that taketh money out of his pocket, if it be stored with gold, or silver, or brass farthings, as his stock is so will the draught appear. The word of God is that which enableth us to edify ourselves and others with holy conference; the more store, the more we have to bring forth upon all occasions: Col. iii. 16, 'Let the word of God dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another.' A plentiful measure of gospel knowledge enableth us to instruct others and direct others. There all wisdom is made plain, things revealed which cannot be found elsewhere; that which by long search we get in the writings of heathens, is there made ready to our hands, and brought down to the meanest capacity. If the heart be well furnished, the tongue will not be barren and empty.

2. Having your furniture, get those graces which may quicken you to employ it, as zeal for the glory of God and love to souls. Fire turns all about it into fire. Mules and all creatures of a mongrel race do not procreate: 1 John i. 2, 3, 'For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and show unto you that eternal life which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us. That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.' And David's Maschil, Ps. xxxii., title is, 'A psalm giving instruction.' True good is diffusive of itself. When Philip was called, he inviteth Nathaniel to come to Christ, John i 45; and Andrew, Simon, ver. 41. True zeal showeth itself by a zeal to promote the kingdom of Christ and the good of souls; and the new nature seeketh to multiply the kinds; and they who are really brought to Christ will be careful to invite others.

3. We have need to pray to God that he will touch our tongues with

a coal from the altar ; that is, by his Spirit purify our speech : Isa. vi. 6, 7, ' Then flew one of the seraphims unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar. And he laid it upon my mouth, and said Lo ! this hath touched thy lips and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin is purged.' That we may show forth nothing of pride, and passion, and carnal affection, but speak upon all occasions with a pure zeal for him. And again, that he would open our lips: Ps. li. 15, ' O Lord, open thou my lips, and my mouth shall show forth thy praise ; ' that he would cast out the dumb devil. The habit of grace, without continual influence to act it effectually, will not do its work ; the habit is a gift, and the bringing forth of the habit to exercise is another gift.

4. Watchfulness and heed is necessary, otherwise corruption will break out. There is a quick intercourse between the heart and the tongue. Pride will show itself in a vain ostentation of parts ; passion in some heat of words ; worldliness and sensuality will bewray themselves, and divert us from holy conference to that which is carnal and worldly ; discontent in some unseemly expressions of God's dealings with us ; indiscretion and folly in a multitude of impertinent talk : Ps. cxli. 3, ' Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth ; keep the door of my lips.' The tongue must be watched as well as the heart ; all watching will be to little purpose unless God bridle and curb our tongues, that nothing break out to his dishonour ; but this constant guard is necessary.

SERMON II.

The tongue of the just is as choice silver ; the heart of the wicked is little worth.—PROV. X. 20.

I COME to the second branch, ' But the heart of the wicked is little worth.'

Doct. That an unsanctified heart is a drossy heart, of no value and use as to heavenly things.

1. Let me explain this aphorism.
2. Confirm it by reason.
3. Apply it.

1. To open it—(1.) What is meant by the 'wicked' man? (2.) What by his 'heart'? (3.) In what sense it is 'little worth'?

1. What is meant by the wicked man? *Ans.* One that is not regenerate or renewed by the Holy Spirit. They are of several sorts ; some are more gross in the outbreakings of sin, others please the flesh in a more plausible and cleanly manner ; the one are usually called wicked and profane persons, but others are comprised also : Ps. xiv. 3, ' They are all gone aside ; they are altogether become filthy ; there is none that doeth good, no not one.' They are all in the state of nature, and their corrupt hearts are vile and loathsome in God's sight.

[1.] Some have great natural abilities and gifts; as Achitophel: 2 Sam. xvi. 23, 'And the counsel of Achitophel, which he counselled in those days, was as if a man had inquired at the oracle of God;' yet his heart was nothing worth as to God's acceptance and his own salvation, as the issue declared.

[2.] Some have plausible shows of piety and external worship; yet while the heart is unrenewed, that will not help the matter: Mat. xxiii. 27, 28, our Lord compareth them to 'whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness; even so ye also appear outwardly righteous to men, but within are full of hypocrisy and iniquity.'

[3.] Not only the gross dissemblers, but those that are brought so far as to a partial obedience; yet this availeth not if the heart be not cleansed and renewed; as it is said of Amaziah, 2 Chron. xxv. 2, 'He did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, but not with a perfect heart.' It was right in the matter, and he did many things right, but his heart was nothing worth.

[4.] Though men act like themselves, and have no 'condemning, disallowing thoughts' within themselves, as conscious to any partiality and defect in their obedience, yet God still looketh to the heart, to see whether it be drossy or pure gold: Prov. xvi. 2, 'All the ways of a man are clean in his own eyes, but God weigheth the spirits.' He puts the heart into the balance of the sanctuary. Men blinded with self-love are partial in their own cause, and, when the action is fair, overlook an unsanctified heart; but the Lord considereth it exactly, *quo animo*, with what spirit everything is done.

2. What is meant by the heart? Not that fleshy part which is in the midst of the breast, but the soul with all its faculties, understanding, will, and affections; and this considered not as to its natural capacities and properties, but as corrupted by sin. Now great is the pravity and deep is the corruption of man's heart by nature, and that not only as to the disorder and disobedience of the inferior faculties, but as to the leading part of the soul—(1.) In order to God; (2.) As to inferior things.

[1.] In order to God. (1.) In the understanding, there is not only ignorance, but indisposedness to know the truth, set forth by the notions of darkness and blindness: Eph. v. 8, 'Ye were sometimes darkness;' 2 Peter i. 9, 'He that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off.' He hath no spiritual discerning. This is worse than bodily blindness, because men are not sensible of it: Rev. iii. 18, 'And knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked;' and because they seek not fit guides to lead them: Acts xiii. 11, 'And now, behold, the hand of the Lord is upon thee, and thou shalt be blind, not seeing the sun for many days: and immediately there fell on him a mist and darkness, and he went about seeking some to lead him by the hand.' But these cannot endure them. (2.) Vanity, and slightness, and folly: Mat. xxii. 5, 'They made light of it;' Heb. ii. 3, 'How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?' Jer. iv. 14, 'O Jerusalem, wash thy heart from wickedness, that thou mayest be clean: how long shall vain

thoughts lodge within thee?' 1 Cor. iii. 20, 'The Lord knoweth the thoughts of the wise, that they are vain;' Prov. xxii. 15, 'Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child. (3.) Stupidity: Deut. xxix. 3, 4, 'The great temptations which thine eyes have seen, the signs, and those great miracles; yet the Lord hath not given you an heart to perceive, and eyes to see, and ears to hear unto this day.' (4.) Obstinacy: Ezek. xi. 19, 'I will take away the stony heart out of their flesh.' There is wilfulness and hardness of heart. (5.) Enmity, both to the law, Rom. viii. 7, 'Because the carnal mind is enmity against God, for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be,' and also to the gospel: 2 Cor. x. 4, 'Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.'

[2.] As to inferior things. When the heart is turned off from God, it goeth after vain things: 1 Sam. xii. 21, 'And turn ye not aside, for then should ye go after vain things, which cannot profit nor deliver, for they are vain.' And so the heart groweth 'earthly, sensual, and devilish,' James iii. 15, wholly carried out to pleasures, profits, and honours. Now consider—

(1.) What is within such an heart: Gen. vi. 5, 'God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.' This is the mint that is always at work; there is no respite by day nor by night. Sin worketh in the heart all day, and playeth in the fancy all night; there is no truce in this warfare.

(2.) What cometh out of the heart: Mark vii. 21, 22, 'For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, theft, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: all these things come from within, and defile the man.' This is the heart which is here considered.

3. In what sense it is little worth—(1.) As to acceptation with God; (2.) As to the benefitting and profiting of others.

[1.] As to acceptation with God. That will appear by the expressions God useth about the contrary, that is, the renewed heart. It is that he longeth for: Deut. v. 29, 'Oh, that there were such an heart in them that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments always!' He delighteth in it, as the other is an abomination to him: Prov. xi. 20, 'They that are of a froward heart are an abomination to the Lord; but such as are upright in their way are his delight.' He commendeth and approveth it: Rom. ii. 29, 'But he is a Jew that is one inwardly, and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter, whose praise is not of men, but of God;' 1 Peter iii. 4, 'Whose adorning let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.' When the inner man is adorned with grace, then we are in very high esteem with the Lord. This is a beauty which always keeps fresh, and which God is pleased to esteem and reward. Yea, in such an heart God dwelleth: Eph. iii. 17, 'That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith.' It is his chamber of

presence, or strong citadel, from whence he commandeth the other faculties and members: Isa. lvii. 15, 'For 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.' There God taketh up his lodgings; as in the highest heavens, so in the lowest heart. Once more, this heart is so pleasing to him, that he pardoneth many failings where the heart is upright: 2 Chron. xv. 17, 'But the high places were not taken away out of Israel; nevertheless the heart of Asa was perfect all his days.' It is a comfort when dying: 2 Kings xx. 3, 'Remember now, O Lord, I beseech thee, how I have walked before thee in truth, and with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good in thy sight.' And they are finally blessed: Ps. cxix. 2, 'Blessed are they that keep his testimonies, and that seek him with their whole heart.' Well, then, this is the heart which God accounteth of, and by this you may soon understand that the other is little worth.

[2.] As to the benefiting and profiting of others. Certainly an heart of so little esteem with God doth little promote his interest with the world. This is that which is asserted in the text; where observe with me these six things—

(1.) That the heart of the wicked is spoken of in the softest terms. Elsewhere it is said to be 'deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked,' Jer. xvii. 9; set upon mischief: Ps. xxviii. 3, 'Mischief is in their hearts;' but here it is 'little worth.' And this teacheth us that it is not enough not to do harm by our speech, but our discourse should have savour and worth in it, such as may benefit others. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down. Some men propagate the taint of the common corruption by their converses; but if we avoid that, do we seek to stop the pollution of mankind by wholesome and sound speech?

(2.) That it is not enough to speak much, but is there any real worth in our discourse? otherwise it is but the overflowing of a drossy unsanctified heart.

(3.) Here are compared a good man's words and a wicked man's thoughts. Good men's words are of great price, but wicked men's thoughts are of no value; the one's tongue is better than the other's heart; the mischief lieth near their hearts.

(4.) That we must make conscience not only of our words, but thoughts. Men are cautious in their speeches and how they discover themselves; but they think thoughts are free. No; heart-sins are sins as well as the sins of the tongue and life: Prov. xxiv. 9, 'The thought of foolishness is sin;' they are contrary to the law of God. Therefore David saith, Ps. cxix. 113, 'I hate vain thoughts.' Usually we take more liberty in our thoughts than in our words and actions. Men will not rob, steal, murder, or assault the chastity of a neighbour's wife; but let their hearts run riot in coveting, and that is theft in the heart; or lusting, and that is adultery in the heart: Mat. v. 28, 'Whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her, hath committed adultery with her already in his heart;' or malice and revenge, and that is killing in the heart.

(5.) That till we make conscience of our thoughts, we cannot well

order our words with gravity and profit; for the heart hath an influence upon the tongue: Ps. xxxvii. 30, 31, 'The mouth of the righteous speaketh wisdom, and his tongue talketh of judgment; the law of his God is in his heart.' And those that are either contriving sin or musing upon vanity will bewray themselves in their speeches.

(6.) That familiar converse with those whose hearts are nothing worth will little tend to our profit, but rather to our hurt; for to this end is it spoken by the Holy Ghost, to direct us in the choice of our company. They that have the spirit of grace are most likely in their discourses to minister grace to the hearers, and should be most acceptable to those that have the same spirit, and can savour spiritual things. If we are as in a prison when we are in good company who use gracious talk, it is none of the best signs. Our souls are grown out of relish with spiritual and heavenly things if such kind of discourse doth not please us. Surely this is the company that is most likely to be most fruitful and profitable to us: Prov. xx. 15, 'The lips of knowledge are a precious jewel.' But in vain and idle company what can you meet with but vanity and that which is little worth? a trifle, not a jewel, impertinency, levity, folly, immodesty, worldliness. Pride is all that you can gather from others, and we have too much of this ourselves already. Depraved nature needeth no helps to deprave it more, but all the means of cure that can be used: Prov. x. 21, 'The lips of the righteous feed many, but fools die for want of knowledge.' Surely then it will be our wisdom to be intimate with those that discourse of holy things, where you may have something of value; but nothing but idle talk is to be expected from them whose hearts are nothing worth.

II. The reasons.

1. Because they are not furnished with those graces which do serve *in munimentum, ornamentum, or emolumentum*, which may serve to defend their own souls, or be delightful in the eyes of God, or make them profitable to others; and those are faith, hope, and love. They never felt the quickening virtue of faith, nor were wrought by it to the true love of God and an holy and heavenly mind. Those that were never acquainted with the virtue of faith, and the power of divine love, and the quickening efficacy of an heavenly hope, certainly they have base, dead, poor, and unworthy spirits, and can do no eminent thing for God in the world, nor for the salvation of their own souls. I prove it from the use of these graces. They are in *munimentum* for defence: 1 Thes. v. 8, 'But let us who are of the day be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet the hope of salvation;' Rom. xiii. 12, 'Let us put on the armour of light,' Grace is our sure defence against the taint of the sensual, ignorant, and brutish world. These have a spirit that carrieth them to God and divine and heavenly things, and so are clarified and purified from the dregs of sense. Faith purifieth: Acts xv. 9, 'Purifying their hearts by faith.' Love purifieth: 1 Peter i. 22, 'Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth, through the Spirit, unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another;' and hope purifieth: 1 John iii. 3, 'He that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.' Again, these graces serve *in ornamentum*, for ornament, to make us amiable in the sight of God and men; and therefore holiness is called 'an orna-

ment of great price,' and the righteous are called 'the excellent ones of the earth,' Ps. xvi. 3, whereas the wicked are called 'vile persons,' Ps. xv. 4; and Prov. xii. 26, 'The righteous is more excellent than his neighbour.' He hath an heart which others have not, and a spirit to which they are strangers. And it is said of Daniel, that he had 'an excellent spirit found in him,' Dan. vi. 3. Certainly there is not such a noble spirit in the world as that of a true christian. Again, they are *in emolumentum et utilitatem*, for profit. These things are given us to profit others: 2 Peter i. 8, 'If these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall not be barren, nor unfruitful in the knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord.' Now fruitfulness is for the honour of Christ and the good of others: 'They shall make you.' A man can have no rest or peace in his soul till he be useful and fruitful; and they cannot satisfy themselves with doing a little good, but still they must do more, for these graces do mightily enlarge the heart of a man, that they are not satisfied unless they take all occasions of promoting the glory of God and the good of souls. Faith, working by love and hope, constraineth them.

2. They are biassed with carnal affections and inclinations, which fill their minds with vanity, or are seasoned with the wisdom of the flesh, so that all they speak and do hath a tang of it; therefore their spirits are slight, drossy, sensual. Take in all the operations of the soul, they study to please the flesh, they value all things by the interests of the flesh. But because thoughts are principally intended here as the fountain of our speeches, I shall only instance in them; and—

[1.] I take for granted that the wisdom of the flesh is that which inclineth and disposeth us to savour and relish the pleasures, honours, and profits of the world. These are the three baits: 1 John ii. 16, 'All that is in the world is the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life;' and the wisdom of the flesh suiteth with them: James iii. 15, 'This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish.'

[2.] The operations of our minds are either—(1.) *Λογισμοί*, discourses and reasonings; (2.) *Θυμήσεις*, musings and imaginations; or (3.) *Νοήματα*, contrivances and devices; and the hearts of carnal and unsanctified men are wholly taken up about these things.

(1.) *Λογισμοί*. All the debates and discourses of their minds are of no value, and tend to no serious and profitable use. Certainly men's affections have an influence upon their opinions, and their opinions have an influence upon their thoughts; therefore those who make the flesh their principal rule and end, they have in their hearts many corrupt principles and opinions about the things of God, and against the being of God: Ps. xiv. 1, 'The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God;' that it is folly to deny present advantages for a future and unseen happiness: 1 Cor. ii. 14, 'The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him;' that there is no profit in serving of God: Job xxi. 15, 'What is the Almighty that we should serve him? or what profit shall we have if we pray to him?' that the ways of God are grievous and unequal: Ezek. xviii. 25, 'Yet ye say, The way of the Lord is not equal;' that they shall do well

enough : Deut. xxix. 19, ' And it come to pass, when he hears the words of this curse, that he bless himself in his heart, saying, I shall have peace, though I walk in the imagination of mine heart to add drunkenness to thirst.' Now their minds being tainted with these conceits, their reasonings within themselves suit with them ; and though the thoughts of God sometimes rush into their minds whether they will or no, yet they are soon smothered there, and these are the thoughts where-with they secretly please themselves, and whereby their lives and actions are influenced and governed. They look upon God's glorious titles as nothing else but fine words, his providence as a thing they cannot reasonably deny ; but they resolve to stand on their own legs, and think they may serve their turn without him. They think others that pray not are as prosperous as those that do ; and filling their minds with these thoughts, certainly their hearts are nothing worth.

(2.) *Θυμήσεις*, for their musings ; they are admiring their own excellency, and blessing and applauding themselves in their sensual felicities which they enjoy in the world : Dan. iv. 30, ' And the king spake and said, Is not this great Babylon, which I have built for the house of the kingdom, by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty ? ' So Ps. cxliv. 12, ' Happy is that people that is in such a case.' The covetous and ambitious find a favour in their thoughts of present wealth, riches, vainglory, applause ; the filthy and unclean in the thoughts of their brutish pleasures. A sure rule it is, the heart will be upon the treasure : Mat. vi. 21, ' For where your treasure is, there will your hearts be also.' The glutton on pleasant meat and sports. Nay, the ordinances of God cannot divert them : Ezek. xxxiii. 31, ' And they come unto thee as the people cometh, and they sit before thee as my people, and they hear thy words, but they will not do them ; for with their mouth they show much love, but their heart goeth after their covetousness.'

(3.) *Νοήματα*. Their contrivances and counsels are to accomplish their worldly ends : Rom. xiii. 14, ' Make no provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.' Not how to glorify God or save their souls, but how to enrich, promote, and advance themselves, and gratify their brutish lusts. Now when the hearts of men are taken up about such low and base things, they are nothing worth. To conclude, if men's thoughts were but written upon their foreheads, how ashamed would they be to have such an infinite variety of blasphemous reasonings, filthy, malicious, covetous thoughts exposed to open view ! Surely then you would be ashamed to see with what filth and vanity you feed the pleasure of your minds, with what dross and rubbish you stuff your hearts. They are seen to God : Ps. cxxxix. 2, ' Thou knowest my down-sitting, and mine up-rising ; thou understandest my thought afar off.' And they will be publicly seen at the day of judgment : 1 Cor. iv. 5, ' God will make manifest the counsels of the heart.'

Use 1. Let this humble us, for this was the temper of our hearts ; they were the devil's nest, where his eggs are cherished, and we ourselves set abroad to hatch sin. Instead of being full of holy thoughts and motions and inclinations towards God, they are stuffed with vanity and sin. Sometimes pride employeth our thoughts, and sometimes covetousness, and sometimes revenge, and sometimes uncleanness.

Our hearts are averse from God, and pronely inclined to the world and the false inferior happiness. Such an heart it was, where all good is, like fire in wet wood, easily quenched; and all bad, like a spark in gunpowder, soon kindled. Our hearts by nature are styes of all filthiness, foolishness, perverse, deceitful, vain, earthly, proud, self-loving. We were neither allured by promises, nor frightened by threatenings, nor reclaimed by the powerful reasons of kindness and love. We were unthankful for mercies, obstinate under corrections, forgetting what is past, neglecting what is present, slighting what is to come. What is this heart worth? good for nothing, unless God change it. You must bemoan it to God as Ephraim: Jer. xxxi. 18, 'I have surely heard Ephraim bemoaning himself thus, Thou hast chastised me, and I was chastised, as a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke; turn thou me, and I shall be turned.' Alas! of ourselves we cannot subdue and tame this obstinacy. By art man can melt the hardest metals, and yet cannot soften his own heart. No creature so stubborn and wild but 'they are tamed, or have been tamed of mankind,' James iii. 17. But yet it passeth our skill to subdue ourselves to God.

2. Be sure that you get another heart; for though it be not in our power to make to ourselves a new heart, yet it is our duty to get it; and, as creatures in misery, we must use all means we can, whatever be the event. We can abstain from gross sins, such as adultery, fornication, wantonness, drunkenness, gluttony, and the like; we can go to the ordinances as well as to the resorts of vain companions; we can read the holy scriptures as well as worldly histories; we can be convinced of our impotency and misery out of the word of God. We need not increase our bondage and impotency by indulging carnal affections, and so put more impediments in God's way by prosecuting our worldly and fleshly lusts. If you will cherish your vainglory, ambition, sensuality, covetousness, rather than resist it, and feed the distemper, no wonder that our chains are the more fastened upon us. We may seek help of God, who hath promised to give us a new heart and a new spirit: Ezek. xxxvi. 26, 'A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and will give you an heart of flesh.' Therefore this is that we should seek after. Would you have God to force grace upon you, and give you a benefit which you have no mind to ask or receive? do but attend upon the work with earnestness; see how the heart of the carnal is made spiritual, of earthly is made heavenly, of sinful is made holy, of obstinate and disobedient is made tractable and teachable, of vain is made solid and serious. Besides, God often sendeth in holy motions and inspirations, reprovng our sloth and negligence, and exciting us to get a better heart. When he draweth, will you run? Cant. i. 4, 'Draw me; we will run after thee.' When he knocketh, will you open to him? Rev. iii. 20, 'Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to him, and sup with him, and he with me.' When he bloweth, will you put forth the sails? John iii. 8, 'The wind bloweth where it listeth.' When the waters are stirred, will you put in for cure? What shall I say more? Though you have not grace, you have reason and conscience to consider of the vanity of all these things,

which pervert your hearts, and make them so bad as they are. And how miserable a thing it is to have a drossy, unsanctified heart, even though your life should be never so blameless? Now the Spirit of God calleth upon us to show ourselves men: Isa. xlvi. 8, 'Remember this, and show yourselves men; bring it again to mind, O ye transgressors.' And if you will never sit alone, and commune with yourselves about these weighty matters, your condemnation is just motives to quicken us, how much it concerneth you to get your hearts sanctified.

[1.] Because of the two great competitors, God and Satan, how earnest they are for the heart. It is God's choice: Prov. xxiii. 26, 'My son, give me thy heart.' This is that which God craveth, and every good man should say, Lord, I give it unto thee. It pleaseth God to hide our hearts from one another's knowledge; but he seeth them, whether they be kept in a right frame, yea or no. Men are incompetent judges of the heart, therefore they look to the outward appearance; but God's eye is upon the heart: 1 Sam. xvi. 7, 'Man looketh unto the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart;' Ps. xli. 6, 'Behold thou desirest truth in the inward parts, and in the hidden part thou shalt make me to know wisdom.' If we have a wise and understanding heart, a choice and excellent spirit. On the other side, it is that which Satan striveth for most; the greatest contest between God and Satan is, who shall have the heart of man? as Acts v. 3, 'Why hath Satan filled thy heart to lie to the Holy Ghost?' So Luke xxii. 3, 'Then entered Satan into Judas.' Then he gets into the man when he gets into the heart: John xiii. 2, 'The devil having now put into the heart of Judas to betray him.' This is the castle the enemy would surprise; he maintaineth his interest there by vain and sinful thoughts.

[2.] The importance of the heart as to our speeches and actions. It is *fons actionum ad extra*, the fountain of all our outward actions. We bring everything out of the heart: Mat. xii. 35, 'A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth good things, and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things.' The tongue, eyes, hands, and feet are but instruments to execute the motions of the heart. The prophet cast salt into the spring to cure the brackishness of the water, 2 Kings xxii. 21. And it is *terminus actionum ad intra*, the principle of our internal actions: Rom. vi. 17, 'Ye have obeyed from the heart the form of doctrine which was delivered you.'

Means.

1. Earnest prayer to God: Ps. li. 10, 'Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.' God beginneth to us, that we may imitate him: Deut. v. 29, 'O that there were such an heart in them that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments always;' Ps. lxxxvi. 11, 'Unite my heart to fear thy name.' The heart naturally is scattered to vain objects.

2. Treasuring up the counsels of the word: Ps. cxix. 11, 'Thy word have I hid in my heart, that I might not sin against thee;' Prov. vi. 20-22, 'My son, keep thy father's commandments, and forsake not the law of thy mother; bind them continually upon thine heart, and tie them about thy neck: when thou goest it shall lead thee, when thou

sleepest it shall keep thee, and when thou awakest it shall talk with thee.'

3. Serious caution, that bad principles be not rooted in us: Heb. iii. 12, 'Take heed lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God.'

4. Watching against vain pleasures, which render it brutish, sottish, frothy, and stupid: Hosea iv. 11, 'Whoredom and wine and new wine take away the heart;' the generosity, bravery, and sprightliness of the heart.

5. If gotten, keep it: Prov. iv. 23, 'Keep thy heart with all diligence.' Our first business is to get an heart worth the keeping; a vain heart is better thrown away than kept. When the heart is renewed and changed, keep it pure and loyal to God. First get out sin, then keep it out. We keep it by a constant watchfulness over the senses: Job xxxi. 1, 'I made a covenant with my eyes; why then should I look upon a maid?' Over the thoughts: Prov. xv. 26, 'The thoughts of the wicked are an abomination to the Lord.' Over the affections and passions: Gal. v. 24, 'They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.'

6. Increase it to a choice, an excellent spirit: 1 Cor. ii. 12, 'Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God, that we may know the things that are freely given to us of God;' 2 Tim. i. 7, 'For God hath not given us the spirit of fear, but of power, of love, and of a sound mind.'
