

God's word: Ps. cxix. 9, 'Wherewith shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereunto according to thy word;' 1 John ii. 14, 'I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one.' But especially get a sound fear and reverence of God rooted in your hearts: Gen. xxxix. 9, 'How shall I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?' Live always as in the sight of God, who is thy maker, preserver, and judge.

Use 3. Is advice to all christians. Upon all occasions, think what will become saints. Let the conscience of your dedication to God be ever upon your hearts. We that are adopted into God's family, to be children of God, and heirs of eternal life, redeemed by the precious blood of Christ, cleansed and sanctified by his Holy Spirit, what a clean heart should we have within ourselves! what an holy life should we carry in the view of others! Our words should be grave and serious, our conversations such as will become the gospel; that no filthiness may be allowed in us, or drop from us in word or deed: 2 Cor. vii. 1, 'Having therefore these promises, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of flesh and spirit.' We are servants of an holy God; we have holy work to do, and an holy estate to expect.

SERMON IV.

Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient; but rather giving of thanks.—EPH. v. 4.

THE apostle having condemned three gross sins in life and practice, he cometh now to speak of three other sins in speech; for all impurity, both in word and deed, is forbidden to christians. In the words note—
 (1.) The sins enumerated, 'Filthiness, foolish talking, and jesting;'
 (2.) The reason of the prohibition, those things 'are not convenient;'
 (3.) The special duty substituted into their room and place, 'But rather giving thanks.'

First, the sins enumerated are—(1.) *Ἀισχροτής*, 'filthiness,' called elsewhere *ἄισχρολογία*, filthy communication, 1 Cor. iii. 8, which is a broad speaking of those things that belong to uncleanness. (2.) There is *μαρολογία*, 'foolish talking,' which is meant either of all impertinent, rash, and roving discourse, which doth rather bewray the speaker's folly and indiscretion than any way edify the hearers: Prov. xv. 2, 'The tongue of the wise useth knowledge aright, but the mouth of fools poureth out foolishness.' When men use a multitude of useless words to no purpose, or have a torrent of words for a drop of sense; or of those that make themselves fools, or act the part of a fool to please others, as David counterfeited madness before Achish; as if it were the praise of a man to make himself an artificial fool or jester to humour others. (3.) The third word is *ἐντραπελία*, which we translate 'jesting.' The philosopher understands by it that virtue which is

called urbanity, which is the middle between scurrility and rusticity. But as things easily degenerate, so do names; therefore the apostle useth it for that exercise of wit that may be called foolery or mockery, such as idle and scoffing companions use to make themselves merry with, or to please some with the hurt and offence of others, and suiteth not with christian piety, gravity, charity.

Secondly, The argument or reason used against them: *τὰ οὐκ ἀνήκοντα*, 'These things are not convenient;' that is, these things are unseemly, or unbefitting the seriousness and holiness of a christian; and so it is the same argument with the former, 'as it becometh saints,' only delivered with some difference of expression. We are apt to extenuate these sins, therefore consider what will become saints. Christianity is a grave thing; it consists chiefly of two parts—dying to sin and living to God; and those that come under the power as well as the profession of it are to behave themselves partly as men in conflict with sin, and partly as those that study to honour and glorify God. With respect to the first part, our life should be a perpetual repentance, always getting farther from sin; therefore the present season is not a time of laughter and vain mirth, but of agony and strife against the devil, the world, and the flesh. To live in pleasure upon earth is to gratify our spiritual enemies, to be laughing when we should be mourning and weeping, or sowing in tears that we may reap in joy. Therefore obscene talk or vain babbling, that serveth for no grave use, ridiculous mirth that only tendeth to vain pleasure, layeth us open to our enemies, with whom we are in constant warfare; and so it is unbecoming christians, as evidencing a naughty spirit in ourselves, and as tending to infect others. With respect to the second, the honouring and pleasing God, our whole life should be a constant hymn to God, or a perpetual act of praise and thanksgiving: 1 Peter ii. 9, 'Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people, to show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.' Therein we have a fitter subject for our rejoicing than obscene and scurrilous discourse, wherein profane persons most show their wit.

Thirdly, The duty substituted into the room and place of these: 'But rather *εὐχαριστία*, giving of thanks;' meaning to God (though he be not mentioned), from whom all mercies are received, and to whom all praises are due. This is added—(1.) To show that delight is not abrogated, but preferred or transferred to a better object; and so answers the objection, Must a christian be always sad? No; let your mirth run in a spiritual channel, and then you will have cheerfulness enough, matter of rejoicing enough, upon better terms, and at a more sincere rate. (2.) It specieth what should be the christian's mirth, the commemoration of the mercy of God, especially the great benefits we have by Christ. We need not be beholden to sin for our joy; we have the innumerable benefits of God to rejoice in: Ps. lxxviii. 19, 'Blessed be the Lord, who loadeth us daily with his benefits, even the God of our salvation;' and Eph. v. 20, 'Giving thanks always unto God and the Father, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.' There is the christian's way of mirth, and that which should revive and cheer his soul; there he may rejoice always, and rejoice without offence, and

needeth not run to obscene talking or unsavoury jests to cause laughter. If we be christians indeed, and esteem what we profess to believe, can anything be more contentful to us? (3.) It intimateth what we should do when our hearts are most disposed to mirth, and we are apt to let loose ourselves to joy and gladness; as, namely, when we are cheered with the liberal use of the creature at feasts and banquets, we should not wholly compose ourselves to ridiculous mirth, but rather give thanks: James v. 13, 'Is any merry? let him sing psalms.' When we have our souls at this advantage, we should turn our rejoicing into a spiritual channel.

From this view you see the drift of the text. I shall handle it more diffusively in these observations—

I. That christians should make great conscience, not only of their actions, but their words also; for after the apostle had dissuaded them from all uncleanness and filthiness in practice, he addeth, 'Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient.' We must make conscience of our words for these reasons—

1. We are not absolute proprietors and possessors of our own selves; our tongues are not our own to speak what we please. Exempt any one faculty or member from the jurisdiction of God, and you disown his authority and interest in you, and open a floodgate to let in sin and wickedness into the world. They were rebels against God's government that said, Ps. xii. 4, 'Our tongues are our own; who is lord over us?' We had them from God, and they must be used for him, not against him; therefore we are not left to run at random in our ordinary discourse, to say and utter what we think good.

2. As we had our tongues from God, so we are accountable to him for the use of them; and therefore will our actions not only be brought into the judgment, but our words and speeches also: Mat. xii. 36, 37, 'But I say unto you, that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give an account thereof in the day of judgment; for by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.' As if our Lord had said, Deceive not yourselves, as if words were too light to be accounted for. Words, such as they may be, may occasion a sad reckoning between Christ and you; for in distributing rewards and punishments, he considereth words as well as actions. All the business is what is that *ῥῆμα ἀργόν*, that idle word which our Lord there speaketh of, and how far it reacheth. The word may signify either vain or false: those false and blasphemous words which, out of the malignity of their hearts, they had uttered against him, are certainly comprised; namely, that he did cast out devils by Beelzebub the prince of devils. But are not other words of lesser malignity included also? Yes; all that bewray the evil treasure of the heart, an ill talent in men, as contumelies and reproaches against godliness; yea, rotten speech, that showeth the prevalency of uncleanness in the heart, for they are such words as discover a man's state and temper; for the judgment of absolution and condemnation is to be passed according to these words. And though we cannot extend the rigour of it so far as to say that every word which conduceth not to some end of christian edification shall make men miscarry in the judgment—(alas! who then could be saved?)—yet surely we ought to make conscience of all our words.

As we must take care that we prejudice not christian hope, so we must not open a gap to looseness ; therefore do not say, It is but a matter of words ; for how little soever men may esteem words, they may weigh heavy in God's balance, and idle words must be avoided as well as gross sins.

3. Words do much discover the temper of a man's heart. There are three operations of man by which he is discovered to be what he is—thoughts, words, and actions ; and all these we should make conscience of. Certainly in all these things there should be a difference between the people of God and others. To instance in what we are upon, the people of God should be observably different in their words and discourse from other men : Prov. x. 20, 'The tongue of the just is as choice silver, but the heart of the wicked is little worth ;' where the tongue of the righteous is opposed to the heart of the wicked, and compared to silver, and the heart of the wicked to dross. Because their heart is little worth, their discourse will be accordingly, for the tongue showeth what is in the heart. So Prov. xv. 7, 'The lips of the wise disperse knowledge, but the heart of the fool 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, for the tap runneth according to the liquor wherewith the vessel is filled. One place more : Ps. xxxvii. 30, 31, 'The mouth of the righteous speaketh wisdom, and his tongue talketh of judgment, the law of God is in his heart.' All men's discourses are vented accordingly as their hearts are busied and affected. A man that hath the law of God in his heart, and maketh it his work to suit his actions thereunto, will also suit his words to it, and edify those with whom he speaketh. Thoughts, words, and actions are the genuine products and issues of the heart. Grace in the heart discovereth itself uniformly in holy thoughts, holy words, and holy actions ; therefore if our conference be not different from ordinary men's, it showeth the temper and constitution of our souls is the same.

4. Because our tongue is our glory : Ps. lvii. 8, 'Awake, my glory ; awake, psaltery and harp ;' Ps. xvi. 9, 'My heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth.' Compare Acts ii. 26, 'My heart is glad, and my tongue rejoiceth.' So Ps. xxx. 12, 'That my glory may sing praise to thee, and not be silent ;' that is, my tongue. But why is our tongue called our glory ? For a double reason, both which are pertinent to the case in hand—

[1.] Because thereby we can express the conceptions of our minds for the good of mankind. It was not given to us for that use for which the tongues of the brute beasts serve them, to taste meats and drinks only, or to taste our food. No ; but to converse with each other. Speech is the excellency of man above the beasts. Man is ζῷον πολιτικόν, a sociable creature, and therefore fitted by God that we may entertain one another with discourse. Now it is a manifest abuse of this excellent faculty when, instead of propagating wisdom and knowledge, we should only vent our corruption by it ; and should make no other use of it but to vent our scum and froth to the poisoning and infecting of other souls. This is to propagate the general taint, and to make one another more corrupt than we are by nature. Well might

the prophet complain : Isa. vi. 5, 'I am a man of polluted lips, and dwell among a people of polluted lips.' By the lips the contagion of sin spreadeth from one to another, and so our glory is turned into shame. Therefore if men do not make conscience of their words, their tongues will run riot against all decency both of speaker and hearers.

[2.] The other reason why it is called our glory is because thereby we may express the conceptions of our minds, to the glory of God as well as the good of others : James iii. 9, 'Therewith we bless God, even the Father.' And this is proper to us, not only beyond the beasts, but even the angels. The beasts have tongues, but no reason ; the angels have reason, but no tongues ; but man hath reason, and a tongue wherewith to utter it, and so man is the mouth of the creation, who can not only think of God, but speak of God, his word and works. Therefore the chief use of the tongue is to glorify and praise God, to magnify his name, and delight our souls in the sweet commemoration of his excellencies and benefits : Ps. xxxv. 28, 'My tongue shall speak of thy righteousness and of thy praise all the day long.' This is the great and noble use of the tongue, to give the Lord thanks for mercies received, or what he has done for the world, for the church, for our bodies and our souls. Now shall the mouth that is consecrated to God be filled with dung, and the tongue which was designed for so excellent and noble a use as to be God's harp be debased to so vile an office as to become Satan's trumpet, to stir up filthiness and uncleanness in ourselves and others, pollute that tongue with lust and filthiness which should speak of the holy God ?

5. Because our speeches are regarded by God ; and therefore you must consider not only what is fit for you to utter and others to hear, but what is fit for God to hear. You are indeed to consider all three. What is fit for you to utter : Will this become saints ? What is fit for man to hear as tending to his profit, at least not to his hurt. But this is not all ; in the close of the day, when you are making your *examen*, have you spoken such words as are fit for God to hear ? Ps. cxxxix. 4, 'There is not a word in my tongue but thou knowest it altogether.' There is not a word we speak, vain or serious, idle or to purpose, but the Lord considereth it perfectly : Mal. iii. 16, 'Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another, and the Lord hearkened and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written.' He taketh notice of every word that is spoken for or against him. Reason will tell us that this certainly belongeth to the infinite perfection of God's nature ; but if it were soundly believed, it would make men more cautious. If you have spoken wantonly, filthily, foolishly, the Lord heareth, and you must give an account of it to him. Now tell me, should we not make conscience of our words ?

6. Because the well ordering of our words is a great point of christianity, and argueth a good degree of grace : James iii. 2, 'He that offendeth not with his tongue is a perfect man ;' that is, hath made a good progress in religion ; for so many ways do we offend with our tongues, that to restrain the irregularities of them showeth that we have a good sense of our duty, or a great awe of God upon our hearts, and are able to resist other temptations, and guide our actions according to the

christian rule. Now, that you may not think it an arbitrary thing, let me tell you there is an absolute complete perfection, and there is a perfection of sincerity. He doth not mean it in the first sense, for he saith there, 'In many things we offend all.' The best have much to blame and accuse themselves of. But in the latter sense, he is a true and sincere christian, one that hath profited in the doctrine of Christ, and desireth to do all the will of God. But what doth the apostle say of other manner of christians, that have gotten no manner of government of their tongues, but let them loose to all kind of vanity and folly, censuring, detraction, and evil speaking, &c. ? James i. 26, 'If any man seemeth to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, that man's religion is vain ;' that is, though he maketh show of living religiously, or serving and worshipping of God, he doth but deceive himself if he thinketh his religion shall stand him in any stead. Well, then, life and death are in the power of the tongue ; upon the good or ill use of it dependeth not only our temporal but eternal safety.

II. In making conscience of our words, we should specially take heed of filthiness, foolish talking, and jesting.

There are many evils of the tongue, but these are those which we have now under consideration. For the first, 'filthiness,' men will easily grant that this is an evil, but think not so of the second and third. Natural conscience and reason may cause us to blush at filthiness, but is apt to patronise and plead for fooling and jesting, as strains of wit and pleasantness, and not matters of sin and crime ; therefore we must go over them particularly, and show that they are sins which become not sincere christians.

1. Filthiness is when we speak of obscene things in an obscene manner, without any respect to modesty and christian gravity or sobriety. Now this is a great evil, for filthy speakers bring the spiritual *miserere* upon themselves, or that disease whereby men vomit their excrements by their mouth ; nothing is more beastly than their speeches. But they that can speak filthy words without blushing will commit filthy deeds without shame or restraint ; for by their filthy talk they have polluted their own minds, and prepared themselves for the sin.

[1.] It is a sin most inconsistent with any reverence and fear of God : Ps. xix. 9, 'The fear of the Lord is clean.' Because there is shamelessness and boldness in it : Isa. iii. 9, 'They declare their sin as Sodom ; they hide it not.' Now it is a grievous temper and state of heart to know no shame, for this is to contemn and despise God. Others disobey him ; but such despise him, and seem to have cast off all honesty, and glory in their shame, as if it were a credit to them to defy the holy God and the restraint of his laws.

[2.] It is a grief to the Holy Spirit, as it obstructs that purity and cleanness of heart which he would work in us : Eph. iv. 29, 30, '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. And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.' The Spirit is represented both as the Holy Spirit, and as the Spirit of peace, and so opposite both to filthiness and clamour. His habitation must be clean and quiet ; therefore clamour, wrath, and bitterness must be put away.

[3.] You infect others, and corrupt them by filthy discourse. Many an hopeful gentleman hath been debauched this way, by unclean representations both from the stage and the talk of their company. The filthy speakers are factors for hell to proselyte men to the devil, and draw unwary souls into his snare : 2 Peter ii. 18, 'They allure through the lust of the flesh, through much wantonness, those that were clean escaped from them that live in error ;' they entice and cast them back again into all carnality and filthiness

2. The next word is *μωρολογία*, 'foolish speaking.' This hath so many branches, that it is hard to reckon them up ; as—

[1.] When they speak of foolish things. As some can spend hours in telling vain tales, that serve for no other use but to possess the minds of the hearers with levity and folly. Now if the 'thought of foolishness be sin,' Prov. xxiv. 9, words of foolishness are much more sin, as they are more public, and abuse the time and ears of others : Prov. xv. 14, 'The mouth of fools feedeth on foolishness ;' it is as diet to them.

[2.] When men speak of serious things in a ludicrous and vain manner, and design it for jest. This is playing with sacred things, like the Philistines calling for Samson to make them sport, Judges xvi. 25, or the Babylonians asking for one of the songs of Sion, Ps. cxxxvii. 3, or the sensualists inventing themselves instruments of music like David, Amos vi. 5, as if their carnal mirth never relished better than when it is seasoned with something that is sacred, and religion is forced to serve their profane mirth.

[3.] Lavish, superfluous speech to no end : Prov. xxix. 11, 'A fool uttereth all his mind.' They can hold nothing, but, whether it tend to hurt or profit, out it cometh. Many have gotten a custom of vain babbling, and full of endless talk to no purpose. Now 'In the multitude of words there wanteth not sin,' Prov. x. 13 ; and all this prattle cometh out of a vain and foolish heart, that never had any serious sense of holy things ; and therefore are indifferent what they speak, for God or error ; things that belong to them, or belong to them not, their own or other men's matters.

[4.] Rash speech, to speak of things they understand not. As the apostle speaketh of some that, desiring to be teachers of the law, understand neither what they say nor whereof they affirm, 1 Tim. i. 7. As many, like little infants, will attempt to run before they can go, so some are full of talk, and all about matters of controversy in religion, which they understand little of. But empty vessels and shallow brooks make the loudest noise.

[5.] Another kind of it is personal boasting, to set off themselves and their own excellencies. All their discourse is of themselves : Prov. xxv. 27, 'For men to search their own glory is not glory.' This *περιαντολογία* is foolish speaking, when all their discourse tendeth to set off themselves, and usher in something of themselves, and *I* cometh in at the end of every sentence. The rule is, another man's mouth should commend us, not our own : Prov. xxvii. 2, 'Let another man praise thee, not thine own mouth ; a stranger, not thine own lips.' But I will not undertake to reckon up all the kinds of it.

Now I shall prove that it is a sin that should be made conscience of.

(1.) Because it suiteth not with the seriousness of religion, which is

the wisdom of God. As he hath manifested the riches of his grace and goodness in the gospel, so he hath 'abounded to us in all wisdom and prudence,' Eph. i. 8. There should not be a wiser man than a christian, who is guided by the direction and counsel of a wise God, and therefore all his discourse should be grave and wise and serious. Solomon telleth us, Prov. x. 31, that 'The mouth of the righteous bringeth forth wisdom. His heart is stocked with such truths as contain the highest wisdom in the world, and therefore his mouth should overflow with it; as he that hath in his pocket more store of gold than of brass farthings will at every draught bring out more gold than farthings.

(2.) It suiteth not with the mortified estate of sincere christians. All foolish talking cometh from some unmortified lusts in our hearts, such as pride, vainglory, worldliness, uncleanness; therefore are they talking of vain things, and boasting of themselves with the contempt of others; and till these lusts be mortified, in vain do we expect a cure. Now when the heart is purified and purged from vanity, worldliness, and pride, men's discourse is presently altered. If the heart be set on the world, their discourse is commonly of the world: 1 John v. 5, 'They are of the world, therefore speak they of the world, and the world heareth them.' If the heart be unclean, and swarm with noisome lusts, the speech will be rotten. If the heart be proud, men love to hear themselves talk. Vainglory will betray itself in our discourses. Every carnal affection leaveth a tincture on our speech.

(3.) Because it shutteth out better discourse, and so converse with others is rendered unprofitable. Omission of good is caused by it. A christian should come into no company but he should bethink himself what he is to do or say for God there. Now when men abandon themselves to foolish speaking, they little mind the use of edifying, or speaking of the great and most necessary things. Better things would come into other men's minds and mouths if they were not entertained with such vain discourse; and so the lean kine eat up the fat, and the better part doth not only give way to necessary business, but even impertinent vanities. Martha is rebuked for losing the season, when Mary heard Christ's gracious words, Luke x. 39-41, and she was employed about the necessary ministry of the family. How much then are they to be rebuked that jostle out all good discourse by their vain and unprofitable talk!

(4.) Because it argueth great emptiness, that we have not a good treasure within us, Mat. xii. 35, or have not hid the word in our hearts, Ps. cxix. 11, or not taken care that it might dwell in us richly, Col. iii. 16. The full vessel will splash over, but vain empty spirits have nothing good to serve and supply the necessities of others.

3. We come now to the third sin enumerated, 'and jesting,' *ἐντραπέλια*.

Here we must state this matter.

Is all jesting unlawful and misbecoming christians?

[1.] My answer must be negative; for honest recreation and moderate laughter, to fit the mind for serious things, is certainly lawful: Eccles. iii. 4, 'There is a time to weep, and a time to laugh;' and honest and pleasant discourses are, at fit times and opportunities, lawful and edifying, as they tend to maintain cheerfulness of mind, and alacrity of spirit, which is profitable both to our health and duty: Prov.

xvii. 22, 'A merry heart doth good like a medicine, but a broken spirit drieth the bones.' Why then should we not exercise our tongues facetiously, as well as any other member? But then—

[2.] I must tell you that, in recreating our spirits with pleasant and delightful discourse, it is an hard matter to keep within the bounds of lawful and allowed mirth. There is an easy passage from what is allowed to what is forbidden: 'The fool's heart is in the house of mirth,' Eccles. vii. 4, 5; whereas the house of mourning is more profitable for us in this mixed estate.

[3.] In the use of it, all due circumstances must be observed; as—

(1.) In the matter. On the one side, filthiness and sin must not be matter of jesting; for that always is matter of grief and shame to us, whether we reflect upon it as committed by ourselves or others. It is a dunghill mirth that must have somewhat unclean to feed it. On the other side, nothing sacred. It is profane and impious for men to abuse scripture, to vent the conceptions of their light and wanton wits. No; there must be still a care, as of christian sobriety, that nothing sinful, so of christian piety, that nothing sacred, may be the matter of our mirth.

(2.) For the manner. It must be harmless to others, not making sport with their sins or miseries; for that is against charity, which 'rejoiceth not in evil,' *οὐκ ἐπιχαρεκακεῖ*, 1 Cor. xiii. 6. Especially not to mock at parents, magistrates, and others whom for their age, gifts, or office we are bound to reverence. Yea, we must consider what others are able to bear, not making ourselves merry with their infirmities, nor using such offensive jests and tart reflections on their personal imperfections as may provoke them to wrath and anger.

(3.) For the measure. Not excessive wasting the time in vain, especially not habituating the mind to levity; that is scurrility when men accustom themselves so to vain jesting that they cannot possibly be serious; they can as well be immortal as serious. This hardeneth the heart in impenitency, and maketh some men look like professed jesters rather than christians. They have hardened themselves in the excess of a jocular way, that a man cannot tell whenever they are serious. And so, for the warning of the world, God hangeth up some in the chains of this sin, as well as others as instances for gluttony, whoredom, and drunkenness.

(4.) For the time. Not when God calleth us to mourning or more serious employments should it be taken in hand. To be jesting in public calamities is to affront God's providence. And business must not give way to sport. Our true mirth lieth in our duty, and that must have the chief place, especially in its season.

(5.) The end and use must not be forgotten. Our great end is to serve and glorify God, and every thing that we do must have respect to it, and be proportioned by it. As the apostle speaketh of other passions of soul: 2 Cor. v. 13, 'If we be beside ourselves, it is for God; if we be sober, it is for your sakes.' In all tempers he minded the glory of God and their good. So in other passions; sorrow is allowable, as it worketh repentance unto salvation; so mirth, as it doth exhilarate the spirits for the service of God, and as it may be useful to our great end; it is therefore to be allowed only so far as it is concomitant with and subservient unto better things.

III. One special means of checking such sins is to consider how much they misbecome christians ; for the apostle saith no more but 'they are not convenient,' or do not agree with that state of grace into which we profess to be called.

For three reasons this will hold good—

1. Because there are four affections which serve to draw us from and guard us against sin—fear, shame, grief, and indignation. Our flight from sin is begun in fear, continued in shame, carried on by grief or sorrow, and endeth in indignation ; and so sin is renounced, and the power of it broken. Now all these affections have a proper ground and consideration to set them a-work. Fear of wrath and damnation begins the work ; for men have a quicker sense of danger than of other things. Shame looketh upon sin, not only as hurtful, but as filthy and brutish, and that which maketh us loathsome to God. It is φόβος δικαίου ψόγου, fear of just disgrace. The filthiness and folly of sin is the proper object of shame. Sorrow considereth God's goodness and sin's unkindness, causing us to mourn that we should break the laws of God, to whom we are so much obliged, for very trifles. Indignation worketh on the unseemliness and disconveniency of sin, either to the nature of man, or that grace to which we are called by Christ. In short, fear looketh on sin as damning : Acts ii. 37, 'When they heard this, they were pricked at their hearts, saying What shall we do to be saved?' Shame, as defiling : Ezek. vi. 9, 'They shall loathe themselves for the evils they have committed in all their abominations.' Sorrow, as offensive to so good a God : Zech. xii. 10, 'They shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and shall mourn for him ;' Luke vii. 47, 'She hath washed my feet with tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head.' Indignation looketh upon sin as unbecoming our present resolutions and professions, our hopes and interest : Isa. xxx. 22, 'Thou shalt cast them away as a menstruous cloth ; thou shalt say unto it, Get thee hence ;' Hosea xiv. 8, 'Ephraim shall say, What have I to do any more with idols?' this is the soul's expulsive faculty. In short, the guilt of sin causeth fear ; the stain, shame ; the unkindness, sorrow ; unsuitableness, indignation. Awaken this, and sin cannot have long entertainment in the heart. Therefore it is enough to a serious christian : It is not convenient.

2. The unsuitableness mindeth us of our dignity, as being admitted to communion with God. Therefore to talk of filthiness with that tongue which is to be employed in speaking of God, and to God, is a most indecorous thing ; as it is to empty nature and put our food into the same vessel. Will you pollute those lips that should show forth God's praise ? There is no agreement between these things ; either we must lay aside the one or the other. Now which will you part with, filthiness and foolish speaking, or the blessing and praising of God ? Both parts you cannot act well, for the one is destructive of the other.

3. This striketh at the root of the temptation. Many think filthiness, foolish speaking, and jesting to be a great grace to them, and affect the reputation of wit at such a rate that they forget honesty. No ; these are not an honour and a grace, but a blemish and a blot. The apostle telleth you they are 'not convenient.' You thwart not only religion, but baffle conscience, that secretly telleth you this is not grave and

serious; it is not a glory, but a baseness; a thing you may rather be ashamed of, than affect the venting of wit in this manner, or pride yourselves in the deformed birth of your foolish minds.

IV. That a christian cannot want mirth as long as he hath such abundant cause to give thanks.

I will open this note in these considerations—

1. That it is an excellent exchange when we can change a sin for a duty; as in this case, by turning censure into admonition, and reproof or discontent into prayer, complaining of God into complaining to God, or carnal mirth into spiritual rejoicing, or jesting into giving thanks.

2. Evils are best cured by diversion. When our pleasantness is not abolished, but diverted, and directed to its proper object. It would be a shame for a man that calls himself a christian not to acknowledge that giving of thanks is a better subject of our mirth than filthiness and folly. The mind must have some oblectation, but let it run in its proper channel. Thankfulness is the sweetest employment in the world. To be always thinking or speaking of such sweet things as the mercies of God, surely if we esteem and value them, it will be more delightful to us than to be pleasing our fleshly lusts: Ps. lxxiii. 5, 'My mouth shall praise thee with joyful lips.'

3. None have such cause of delightful praise and thanksgiving as a christian. He hath greater matters to talk of than those things that are the subject of fools' boasting. Besides what is common to him with others, all the works of God to admire, and his excellencies shining forth in creation and providence, he hath the mystery of redemption, the grace of the new covenant, the glory of heaven, his own hopes. Our whole religion is an *εὐχαριστία*; for christianity is a partaking of the benefit, 1 Tim. vi. 2; besides many personal favours which should ever be before our eyes.

4. There is not any case incident to a christian but still there will be found ground of thanksgiving and rejoicing: Phil. iv. 4, 'Rejoice in the Lord alway, and again I say, Rejoice.' We have cause to be thankful for particular grace, for mercies in hand or hope. Well, then, carnal mirth may be cured by such a remedy at hand.

SERMON V.

For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.—EPH. v. 5.

THE apostle had argued *ab incongruo*, from what is indecent and misbecoming saints; now *a periculo*, from the danger of such practices: and fitly, because temptations do not usually enter by the fore-door of reason, but the back-door of sensual appetite and carnal desires; which therefore must be counterbalanced by dangers and fears, that, seeing the hook, we may be afraid to swallow the bait. The danger