

and enslave us to the world. It doth but betray you into mischief. Do you desire your way to heaven should be made more hard, that is hard enough already?

2. That you might devote your riches to the Lord, and be holy and heavenly in the midst of so great temptations; that you may not by momentary and temporal things forfeit eternal, but rather further them: Luke xii. 21, 'So is he that layeth up treasures for himself, and is not rich towards God;' 1 Tim. vi. 18, 19, 'That they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate, laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold of eternal life.' Wealth rightly employed makes us capable of a greater reward hereafter, as it makes us more useful here.

## SERMON XI.

*And the disciples were astonished at his words. But Jesus answered again, and said unto them, Children, how hard is it for them that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God!—MARK X. 24.*

In these words you have two things—

1. The entertainment which the disciples gave to his former speech, 'They were astonished at his words.'

2. Christ's further explication of himself, 'But Jesus answered again, and said unto them, Children, how hard is it for them that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God!' Wherein observe—

[1.] The manner of our Saviour's speaking, in that kind compellation, 'Children.'

[2.] The matter of the explication, 'How hard is it for them that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God!'

1. For the entertainment which the disciples gave to his former speech, 'They were astonished at his words.' This astonishment was caused either by the legal dispensation under which obedience was rewarded with visible and temporal blessings, and therefore they marvelled that rich men should find such difficulty of entering into heaven; or else it was occasioned by the Jewish expectation of a pompous Messiah, wherewith the disciples themselves were leavened, expecting to share of the honours and riches of that kingdom which Christ would set up. Now Christ's answer was quite blank contrary to these carnal hopes, therefore they marvelled. Or it may be upon the common reason that the gates of heaven should be shut to them to whom the gates of the world do always lie open. Thus hardly are good men brought to disesteem worldly things, and rightly to ponder and weigh the doctrine of the cross, which Christ had so frequently taught them.

2. For Christ's explication; and there—

[1.] The compellation, τέκνα, 'Children;' so he bespeaks them who

were sincere for the main, though a little leavened with carnal conceits, and to sweeten the doctrine which seemed so contrary to their humour : 1 Thes. ii. 11, 'As you know how we exhorted, and comforted, and charged every one of you, as a father doth his children.' Novices and weak ones are to be used with all indulgence, for they had not received the Spirit in that plentiful measure as afterward.

[2.] The matter of his explication, 'How hard is it for them that trust in riches,' &c. He had said before, 'How hardly do they that have riches;' now he explains himself, they 'that trust in riches.' He instanceth in this—

(1.) As one common disease of rich men, as soon as they have anything in the world, they are apt to trust in it. Some abuse riches one way, some another; some to increase their worldly cares and desire of having, others to feed their pride and sensuality; this way, or that way, according to their different temper and constitution of body and soul, but they all agree in this, both the muckworm and the epicure, that they trust in riches.

(2.) He instanceth in this trust rather than love of riches, not how hard is it for them that love riches, but how hard is it for them that trust in riches, because this is more, and doth more express the disposition of worldly men. We love many things in which we do not put our trust, but we put our trust in nothing but what we love. A glutton loves his belly-cheer, but he doth not trust in it, as thinking to be protected by it, as the covetous doth by his estate; and therefore though he make his belly his god, or his chief good, and last end, yet he doth not make it the first cause and fountain of his happiness. But now this gives all the titles and privileges of God to wealth. Trust makes wealth to be the first cause, the chief good, and the last end. Well, then, for these two reasons doth Christ instance in this one sin, as being a common disease and cause of all the rest, or implying them at least. This young man, who went away sorrowful from Christ, thought he should be despised, and grow necessitous if he should forsake all upon the command of Christ; he made his riches to be the fountain of his hope and confidence; and therefore doth Christ say, 'How hard is it for them that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God!'

*Doct.* That rich men are very prone and apt to put their confidence in riches, and so thereby render themselves incapable of the kingdom of God.

In the handling this point I shall—(1.) Show there is such a sin as trusting in riches; (2.) The heinousness and evil of it; (3.) The signs and discoveries of it; (4.) The remedies.

I. That there is such a sin, and that a very common sin. The scripture shows it plentifully. Job, when he protested his innocency, among other sins he reckoned up, he disclaims this, chap. xxxi. 24, 25, 'If I have made gold my hope, or said to the fine gold, Thou art my confidence; if I rejoiced because my wealth was great, and because my hand had gotten much.' Job to vindicate himself from hypocrisy reckons up the usual sins of hypocrites, and among the rest this for one, making riches our hope and confidence. He had immediately before waved the crime of extortion and oppression, but he thinks not

that sufficient to clear himself, and therefore he further denieth also the crime of carnal confidence. It is not enough that our wealth be not gotten by fraud, cosenage and extortion, but we must not trust to it. Symmachus renders it *ἀφοβίαν*, my safety and security, the cause why I am not afraid. The world looketh upon wealth as that which will help us to all we want, defend us from all we fear, and procure to us all we do desire; as if by that we were out of the reach of all danger, and in a capacity to live longer and happier under the patronage and provisions which our money shall procure to us. Another place is Prov. xviii. 10, 11, 'The name of the Lord is a strong tower, the righteous runneth into it and is safe: the rich man's wealth is his strong city, and an high wall in his own conceit.' Mark, what the name of the Lord is to the believer, that is wealth to the carnal rich man in his own conceit. A godly man never thinks himself safe till he can get into the name of the Lord, and be within the compass and verge of the covenant; but a carnal rich man, if he be walled and entrenched within his wealth, thinks himself secure against all changes and chances, and so God is laid aside and little cared for. That there is such a sin you see, but I shall prove that it is a common sin, very incident to all men, and that it is a very secret sin, but yet of a pestilential influence.

1. It is very natural to all men, yea, impossible almost to be free from it. Consider man as degenerate, and in that corrupted estate in which he is, as fallen from God as his chief good and last end, and so he is an idolater, and makes the creature his god, or sticketh too much to it, more especially to wealth. Wealth is the great instrument of commerce; it cannot be denied to have a power and influence upon human affairs: Eccles. x. 19, 'Money answereth all things.' It can do much in this lower world, and saveth us out of many dangers: Prov. xiii. 8, 'The ransom of a man's life are his riches.' It hath its use in this world as a means in God's hands to sustain and preserve life. But what more common than for a man to look to the subordinate means, and neglect altogether the first cause. As children will thank the tailor, and think they owe their new clothes to his provision rather than to their parents' bounty, so we look to the next hand, and set up that instead of God. Rich and poor cannot be exempted from this sin. (1.) The poor, and those that have not wealth; they idolise it in fancy and conceit, that if they had estates this would make them happy and glorious; and because they have not, they trust in those which have, which is idolatry upon idolatry. See Ps. lxii. 9, 'Surely men of low degree are vanity, and men of high degree are a lie.' To appearance men of low degree are nothing and can do nothing towards our relief, and so are vanity; but men of high degree, they are a lie, because they disappoint those that trust in them, to the wrong of God. Alas! they have neither power to help nor hurt, if the Lord will not: 2 Kings vi. 27, 'If the Lord do not help thee, whence shall I help thee?' And therefore we need not fear the hazard of their frowns nor of their displeasure; we need not with such restlessness court their favour and trust in them that have wealth. (2.) But chiefly this is incident to worldly great men, to trust in what they have; their minds are secretly enchanted by their estates when they are increased to them. Still the distemper grows with the increase of worldly accommodations: Ps. lxii. 10, 'Trust not in

oppression, and become not vain in robbery: if riches increase, set not your heart upon them.' As soon as we begin to have anything about us, from thence forward we date our happiness and security. Many that in want despise wealth, and live in an actual dependence upon God's providence, as soon as they have somewhat in the creature, they begin to value themselves at a higher rate, as if they could live alone without God, and their hearts are altogether for increasing their store, or keeping and retaining what they have already gotten.

2. It is a very secret sin, and found in those that are least sensible of it. We seldom or never mistrust ourselves of this confidence, which is so natural and so common; and why? Because we have too gross a notion of this sin of trusting in riches. A man doth not think he makes money his idol if he do not pray to it, or offer sacrifice to it, or adore it with outward ceremonies, as the heathens did their idols of gold and silver; whereas this sin is to be determined *non exhibitione ceremoniarum, sed oblatione concupiscentiarum*, not by the formal rights of worship, but by the secret workings of the heart towards it. Though we do not actually say to the fine gold, Thou art my confidence, or use such gross language to riches as, Ye shall deliver me, or I will put my trust in you, yet secretly we idolise it, and set it up in the place of God. It would have been a sorry vindication of Job's innocency to deny that; few hypocrites say so in open language, but our hearts say so though we perceive it not. There is nothing so close and secret in the bosom of man as his trust. But the heart hath a tongue as well as the mouth, and thoughts are called the sayings of the heart. Yea, divines usually observe that there are two sorts of thoughts, *implicit* as well as *explicit*. The scripture calls them inward thoughts: Ps. xlix. 11, 'Their inward thought is that their house shall continue for ever.' This is the interpretation of our actions when we do not make God our portion, but trust in the abundance of our riches; this is our inward thought, the saying of our heart, Ye are my God; we do in effect say, Thou art my confidence, my hope, and my joy, and will stand by me when all things cease and fail, and wilt not suffer me to want or to be wronged as long as thou lastest; these are the secret speeches of our hearts. Christians, many may, orator-like, declaim against the vanity of the creature, and speak as basely of money as others do, and say, We know it is but a little refined earth, but their hearts close with it, they are loath to part with it for God's sake or upon God's declared will. As he that speaketh good words of God is not said to trust in God, so speaking bad words of worldly riches doth not exempt us from trusting in them. There is a difference between declaiming as an orator, and acting like a christian; well, then, it is a common but secret sin.

II. My next work is to show the evil of this sin, and how great it is, both in regard of its heinous nature and in regard of its mischievous effects.

1. In regard of its heinous nature. It is a renouncing of God, and setting up another in his stead.

[1.] It is a renouncing of God, and taking away his honour. The heart of man is so conscious to itself of its own weakness, that it will not be long without a prop, it must have something to rest upon.

Now, naturally, we have no respect to invisible things, so as to choose them and to rest upon them, but easily take up with what comes next to hand. By a vile ingratitude we pervert God's bounty to a defection from him. As harlots love the gifts rather than the man, so we take the gifts of God, and rest upon them, and set them up in God's stead. No man can trust God and riches too, therefore if we trust in riches, the heart is diverted and carried away from God: Jonah ii. 8, 'They that observe lying vanities forsake their own mercy.' They turn their back upon God, and take up with these vain comforts here in the world. The same temple will not serve God and Dagon; the Philistines could not bring it to pass, do what they could; nor the same heart God and the world: 1 Tim. 6, 17, 'Charge them that are rich in this world, that they trust not in uncertain riches, but in the living God.' If we trust in the one we disclaim the other. Now consider what a dishonour is this to leave God for the creature! the fountain of living waters for broken cisterns: Jer. ii. 13, 'My people have committed two evils, they have forsaken the fountain of living waters, and hewed out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water.' They leave the husband for a slave, treasure for coals, things precious for dung.

[2.] As there is a leaving of God, so there is the setting up another god in his stead; therefore covetousness is called 'idolatry,' Col. iii. 5, and a covetous man an 'idolater,' Eph. v. 5. Mammon is the idol, and the worldling the priest. Our trust is not only diverted, but placed elsewhere, while we expect that from wealth which is to be expected from God alone. Trust in God is a confidence that no evil shall befall us, and nothing truly good shall be wanting to us while we keep in with him; such a kind of confidence we place in riches, therefore this must needs be a heinous sin. So that besides apostasy and forsaking the true God, there is idolatry: we set up another god. Trust is a prime affection, which keeps up all commerce between us and God. Our allegiance and respect to the crown of heaven is mainly preserved by dependence, and the heart is never kept in a right frame but when we look for all from God. Let a man but think himself sufficient to his own happiness, and God will soon be laid aside. As soon as we can live without God, we presently omit all kind of worship and respect to him. Our first parents greedily caught at the bait: 'Ye shall be as gods,' Gen. iii. 5. How as gods? Not in a blessed conformity, but in a cursed self-sufficiency. Thus we all affect to be sufficient to ourselves, to be able to live without God. The prodigal son, when he had his portion in his own hands, soon left his father. If we can live without God, we will never care for him. You dethrone God, and put money in his place, and set up something as God.

2. The mischievous effects and fruits of carnal confidence. You may consider these effects *meritorie* and *effective*.

[1.] Consider it *meritorie*, the merit of it; it maketh us incapable of eternal life. God is disparaged from being our paymaster and giving us our reward when we trust in money. Look, as God sent the Israelites to their idols, to see whether they could deliver them: Judges x. 14, 'Go and cry unto the gods which ye have chosen; let them deliver you in the time of your tribulation;' so he will send us to the things we trust to. A man seeks his heaven and happiness here, while

he is content to enjoy wealth without God, and so dischargeth God from providing a reward for him. Luke vi. 24, 'Woe unto you that are rich, for ye have received your consolation;' you have the happiness you pitch upon. God once said, Woe to you that are rich, but never said, Woe to you that are poor. They that have their heaven, their happiness here without God, can expect no more from him. Therefore meritoriously this is the fruit of it, it will make us incapable of eternal life.

[2.] Consider carnal confidence *effective*, in the influence of it; the effects of it are very mischievous.

(1.) It is the ground of all miscarriage in practice. When men think they cannot be happy without wealth, or so much coming in by the year, then they will soon come to this, they dare not obey God for fear they shall lose their worldly comforts, wherein their happiness lies. It is notable, when the Holy Ghost speaks of keeping the commandment, and that the commandments of God are not grievous to his people, presently he speaks of victory over the world: 1 John v. 3, 4, 'For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments, and his commandments are not grievous; for whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world, and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.' Why? What is the reason of this connection? The world is a great hindrance and let in keeping the commandment. Unless a man overcome his worldly appetites and worldly desires, he cannot keep the law of God to any purpose; and therefore David saith, Ps. cxix. 36, 'Incline my heart unto thy testimonies, and not to covetousness;' implying that while our hearts are carried out so strongly after worldly things we can never be thorough and upright with God in the way of his testimonies.

(2.) It hinders us from looking after heavenly things. It is impossible a man should in good earnest seek things above whilst he trusts in the world, and promiseth himself a long and happy life here. Trust is *acquiescentia cordis*, the rest and complacency of the soul; it seeks no further when it hath something to rest in; therefore when we rest here, all other happiness is neglected; there is no want in their condition: Luke xii. 19, 'Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease.' They cannot endure to think of a change, of leaving this, and going to a world to come, of shooting the gulf, and launching out into another world, and therefore make no provision for eternity. Well, then, trusting in riches is bad, as it takes off the heart from depending upon God's providence for the present, for so far a creature exempts itself from the jurisdiction and dominion of God; but much more bad as it takes us off from depending on God's promises for the future, as it flatters us with hopes of long and happy days, and causeth us to put off all thoughts, and all care about eternity and blessedness to come. He that trusts in riches judgeth all his happiness to be in this life; let him enjoy the world to the full, and he hath enough; here is his happiness, and his heaven too: he saith as that cardinal, He would not give his portion in Paris for his portion in paradise. Tell a worldly man of laying up treasures in heaven, and of the riches of the heavenly inheritance, he smiles at it, and will not give a foot of land here for an acre in heaven. Tell them of growing rich towards God,

and it is but a fancy : Luke xii. 21, 'So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich towards God.' So they may enjoy present satisfactions, they will give God a discharge for other things. As the Reubenites and Gadites would stay on this side Jordan, and consented to abate their portion in the land of Canaan, because they were already in a rich country, so they can be content to abate heavenly happiness, for if it be well with them here, they are satisfied, for other things they need not trouble themselves : 1 Cor. xv. 32, 'Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we shall die ;' and there is an end of the world with us,

(3.) It is the ground of all the disquiet and discontent of mind that we meet with. If a man would live a happy life, let him but seek a sure object for his trust, and he shall be safe : Ps. cxii. 7, 'He shall not be afraid of evil tidings ; his heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord.' A man that puts his confidence in God, if he hears bad news of mischief coming towards him, as suppose a bad debt, a loss at sea, accidents by fire, tempests, or earthquakes, as Job had his messengers of evil tidings, which came thick and threefold upon him, yet he is not afraid, for his heart is fixed on God, he hath laid up his confidence in God, therefore his heart is kept in an equal poise ; he can say, as Job, 'The Lord hath given, and the Lord hath taken away ; blessed be the name of the Lord,' Job i. 21. His comforts did not ebb and flow with the creature, but his heart was fixed trusting in the Lord. But now when a man puts his joy and his contentment under the creature's power, he is always liable to great dejections and anxious disquiets : Jer. xlix. 23, 'They have heard evil tidings, they are faint-hearted.' His life and happiness consists in the presence of creatures, and in the affluence of the world which, being mutable, so must his comfort needs be ; so that he that trusts in riches, to be sure doth but make way for sore and sad troubles of spirit. Good David, when he had abused his prosperity to a carnal trust and security, he felt the more trouble afterwards, and so gives us the instance of himself in this kind : Ps. xxx. 6, 7, 'I said in my prosperity, I shall never be moved. Lord, by thy favour thou hast made thy mountain to stand strong, thou hidest thy face, and I was troubled.' He shall never want troubles that placeth his trust in anything on this side God, but is up and down as his worldly comforts ebb and flow ; whereas a christian, who makes God his trust, and the favour of God his greatest interest, is like the nave or centre of the wheel, which still remains in its own place and posture in all the circumgyrations and turnings about of the wheel. So in all the turnings of providence, when the spokes are sometimes up and sometimes down, sometimes in the dirt and sometimes out of the dirt, the nave and centre is still where it was. Well, then, if you would be acquainted with true peace, let not your hearts be set upon great estates, which are liable to so many changes, but trust in the Lord, and your heart shall be established.

III. I come to give some signs and discoveries of this secret evil, confidence and trust in riches.

1. When men oppress, and do that which is evil, and think to bear it out with their wealth, power, and greatness, as if there were no God above to call them to an account, or as if there had not been, or could not be such a turn of human affairs as God can lay them low enough,

and their honour be laid in the dust, and the poor and afflicted shall be exalted. God hurls the world up and down, that misery may not want a comfort, nor power a bridle. Sometimes God puts up this, sometimes the other sort of men, that still by all these changes he may keep the world in order, that think they may do anything because it is in the power of their hands: Micah ii. 1, 'Woe unto them that devise iniquity, and work evil upon their beds; when the morning is light they practise it, because it is in the power of their hand.' Usually the world is governed by interest rather than conscience; they count everything right which they are able to effect, and justice is measured by present safety, not by principles of conscience; it is in the power of their hands, and therefore they will do it. The Lord gives caution against this: Ps. lxxii. 10, 'Trust not in oppression, become not vain in robbery; if riches increase, set not your heart upon them.' When a man thinks he is able to carry it against others, and to do his adversary two wrongs for one, then he makes no conscience, but does all that he can, not all that he ought. Alas! this poor creature rests upon his vain support, and that which seems to be his present advantage will in time prove his loss and ruin, when the course of providence is altered. How soon can God turn poor worms into dust! bring them down from their altitudes, and make them become the scorn and shame of those afflicted poor that wait upon the Lord! Ps. lii. 6, 7, 'The righteous shall see and fear, and shall laugh at him. Lo, this is the man that made not God his strength, but trusted in the abundance of his riches, and strengthened himself in his wickedness.' This is that brave, that gallant man in the world, that never thought of securing his greatness by God's protection, nor applied himself to piety and justice, nor imagined that such things would be useful to his present security, but resolved by wealth and wicked enterprises to establish and perpetuate his greatness; but how hath God confuted all his vain and false hopes, and brought utter destruction upon him! Thus it hath been, and thus it will be again, till the world learn to grow wiser by all the changes that God hath wrought before their eyes. And therefore, this is a sign of trusting in wealth, when men grow proud, insolent, and overbearing, and speak roughly: Prov. xviii. 23, 'The rich answereth roughly,' and are high-minded: 1 Tim. vi. 17, 'Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not high minded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God.'

2. An inordinate care and solicitousness to get wealth. Multiplying of worldly practices cometh from unbelief in God and confidence in the means: Prov. xxiii. 4, 'Labour not to be rich; cease from thine own wisdom.' This toiling and labour to get the world into our hands argues we esteem of it beyond what it deserves. Indeed there is a lawful labour; wealth may be sought for the necessities of life and exercise of good works; but when men make it their main care, they place their happiness in it. Now, because it is hard to distinguish honest labour from worldly care, the best way will be for you to consider the disproportion of your endeavours to earthly and spiritual and heavenly things; for our Saviour, when he describes the carnal fool, that trusted in the abundance of his riches, he tells us, Luke xii. 21, 'So is he that layeth up treasure for himself and is not rich towards God.'



When men seek the world in good earnest, and make slender provision for heaven and the happiness of their precious and immortal souls, when they never look after the assuring of their interest in things to come, when the lean kine devour the fat, when that which should be sought first, either is sought last or not at all, then men trust in these outward things. Surely you fancy a greater happiness in the enjoyment of worldly things than you should. The scripture notes as a sign of this inordinate respects a making haste to be rich: Prov. xx. 21, 'An inheritance may be gotten hastily at the beginning, but the end thereof shall not be blessed;' and chap. xxviii. 20, 'He that maketh haste to be rich shall not be innocent;' and ver. 22, 'He that hasteth to be rich hath an evil eye, and considereth not that poverty shall come upon him.' When men are so earnest to commence into an estate, taking all opportunities, seeking to get it by indirect means, and think thereby to make them and theirs happy, this inordinacy will prove their bane and ruin. In bestowing it as God directs, none so slow; in getting it, none so earnest: certainly he that believeth will not make haste.

3. When men think themselves better provided by a wealthy apostasy than by a close adhering to God all-sufficient. Sometimes the keeping of wealth and religion come in competition. Now, when a man debates with conscience, Here is your duty, and there is your loss, can you trust in wealth rather than in the promises of God? If the Lord for our duty should reduce us to never so great straits, he is able to make it all up to us again, this should suffice us: 'The Lord is able to give thee much more than this,' 2 Chron. xxv. 9. But if in the debates of conscience gain bears sway, it is a sign we trust in wealth rather than in the promises of God.

4. When men slacken or omit prayer, because they are well at ease and have worldly abundance. This is a certain truth, that trust in God, or prayer, or an acknowledgment of God, always go together: Ps. lxii. 8, 'Trust in him at all times, ye people; pour out your hearts before him.' If the heart be taken off from the creature, it will be much with God; but when men are full, and think they need him not, and therefore grow cold and careless in their addresses to him, it may be in their affliction God shall hear from them, but at other times the throne of grace lies neglected, they have other trusts, and depend on something on this side God, or God would be oftener acknowledged.

5. When men think wealth shall sufficiently secure them against all changes, and that when they have it they shall see nothing but happy days, and therefore give up themselves securely to enjoy the pleasures of this life: Luke xii. 19, 'Soul, thou hast goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry.' Sensuality, security, and pride are the fruits of carnal confidence: 'They trust in their wealth, and boast themselves in the multitude of their riches,' Ps. xlix. 6. As if their felicity and chiefest stay lay in them, not only against the chances of this life, but against God's threats and vengeance and judgment; thence men fetch their support and comfort, and hope for them and theirs: Prov. x. 15, 'The rich man's wealth is his strong city.' A penny in their purse is better than the God of heaven. Here is their great assurance, the sure pledge of their happiness, as if God could not bring them down wonderfully.

6. When men are so loath to forego riches when God calls them thereunto, it is a sign they trust in them, not in God. The soul of man should be justly poised, and at a point of indifferency to worldly things, to get or keep, to want or have, as God will. Until our resolutions be as easily cast the one way as the other, we shall never be said to be wholly free from this sin of trusting in riches; but certainly we are deeply tainted with it when we are so over dejected with worldly losses: 1 Cor. vii. 31, 'They that mourn as if they mourned not;' and 2 Peter i. 5, 'Add to temperance, patience.' If there were a moderation in the use of worldly things, it would make way for patience. Gregory saith, Job lost his estate without grief, because he possessed it without love; but it is a sign we love them too much when we murmur against God, and the heart is so depressed when they are taken away by God's providence, as if all our happiness were gone. Certainly riches are too highly prized, and the world too impatiently desired, when they are so deeply lamented; if when they take wings, and are gone, they bewail it as if their god were gone: Judges xviii. 24, 'Ye have taken away my gods which I made, and the priest, and are gone away, and what have I more? and what is this that ye say unto me, What aileth thee?' Thence ariseth their trouble, grief, and sorrow of heart.

IV. For the remedies against this secret and great mischief of putting our confidence in earthly things.

1. By way of consideration.

[1.] Consider the uncertainty of riches should check our trust in them: 1 Tim. vi. 17, 'That they trust not in uncertain riches.' What depends upon more uncertainty than our outward estates; and will you trust in them? Who would trust another that is sure to fail him at his greatest need? Prov. xxiii. 5, 'Wilt thou set thine eyes upon that which is not? for riches certainly make themselves wings, and fly away, as an eagle towards heaven.' A man is not better and more sufficiently provided for his dinner because there is a flock of wildfowl now pitched upon his fields; they may soon fly away. Riches are like winged creatures, compared to eagles which fly away towards heaven. How are they gone! how many ways may the Lord take them away from us! There is the fire, the thief, fraudulent bargains, vexatious lawsuits, public judgments, the displeasure of the times. Many are the wings that riches have, and therefore unless a man hath a mind to be deceived, why should he trust in them? This should be deeply thought of in our greatest prosperity, especially when we have many instances before our eyes. Alas! how many are there that have laid out all their wit, and labour, nay, and venture conscience, to get an estate, and all is gone in an instant, and they have heirs that they never thought of! And yet the world is as greedy upon these things as ever.

[2.] Consider, none ever trusted to the world but they have cause to complain in the issue. We think wealth can do great things for us, and stand us in stead beyond any other thing to make us happy, but we shall find it otherwise. God is jealous of our trust, and the creature that is of itself vain is made more vain by our dependence upon it. God will set himself to disappoint a carnal trust: Prov. xi. 28, 'He that trusteth in his riches shall fall.'

[3.] Consider, the more wealth, many times the more danger, therefore shall we trust in this? In a net, when great fishes are taken, the lesser make their escape. A great tree by the largeness and thickness of its boughs provoketh others to lop it, or it falleth by its own weight. Nebuchadnezzar led the princes and nobles captive when the poor were left in the land. As many times thieves and robbers cut off the finger for the ring's sake when they cannot otherwise pluck it off, so is a man destroyed and made a prey for his wealth's sake.

[4.] Consider the unprofitableness of wealth without God; it cannot make you contented, and safe, and happy, and comfortable: Luke xii. 15, 'A man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.' A man doth not live upon his wealth: 'Not by bread alone,' Mat. iv. 4, but by the providence of God. I do not only say they cannot make you happy and wise; certainly they cannot do that; but they cannot make you more healthful, cheerful, and comfortable; so that whether you will or no, at length you are brought to depend upon God. But especially is their unprofitableness seen in the day of death and in the day of wrath. In the day of death, when a man must shoot the gulf of eternity, and launch out into the deep ocean of the other world: Job xxvii. 8, 'What is the hope of the hypocrite, though he hath gained, when God taketh away his soul?' When you must die, and nothing shall remain with you but the bitter remembrance of an estate, either ill-got or ill-spent (for it is all one), oh! how bitter and grievous will this be to you to call to mind the iniquity of traffic, to remember the cries of the oppressed widow or orphans, or neglected poor, or your pride and luxury, and sowing to the flesh, when God comes to take away the soul! Or else in the day of wrath: Prov. xi. 4, 'Riches profit not in the day of wrath.' Of internal wrath, when a spark of God's anger lights upon the conscience, and our thoughts are awakened against us, and fall as a heavy burden upon us, oh! what will all riches do! To allude to that Prov. vi. 35, 'He will not regard any ransom, neither will he rest content, though thou givest many gifts.' Justice will not be bribed, neither will all the money you have buy you a pardon. And in the day of external wrath: Zeph. i. 18, 'Neither their silver nor their gold shall be able to deliver them in the day of the Lord's wrath.' As Absalom's mule left him hanging by the hair of the head, so will riches leave and forsake you in all your misery.

[5.] Think seriously of this, that God is the author of all wealth, and the sovereign disposer of it; and therefore, whether we have it or have it not, we must trust in God. If wealth fails, that we have it not, then it is manifest it is not to be trusted in. If it should increase, yet it should occasion us to trust in God, who gives us what we have; by what means soever it comes to our hands, it is his gift: 'It is the blessing of the Lord that maketh rich,' Prov. x. 22. If riches come to you by inheritance from your ancestors, it was by the providence of God that you were born of rich and noble friends, and not of beggars. If it come by gift, it is God that made them that gave it you able and willing. If it comes by industry and skill, it is God that gives the faculty, the use, and the success; so that still God is to be trusted in, not the creature, for he hath a mighty hand in the disposal of things in the world.

## 2. By way of practice.

[1.] Pray more to be kept from this sin than from poverty, namely, to have riches, and not to trust in them. It is an extraordinary gift of God, and to be sought with greater care, diligence, and frequency of prayers and fastings, than either health, preferment, life, or any other thing: ver. 27, 'With men it is impossible, but not with God, for with God all things are possible.' God only can do it thoroughly. This should be the constant request of rich men, Lord, let me not trust in what I have; this is a greater blessing than the greatest abundance in the world.

[2.] Be more ready to watch opportunities of charity, to distribute and dispense your estate than to increase it; for there is nothing will free us from this sin so much as the continual exercise of charity, or the giving of alms. Therefore your great care and delight should be to hearken after charitable occasions for the relief of the poor and for the church of God, and be glad when occasions of doing good are offered. They that hunt after opportunities of gain trust in riches, but they that seek opportunities of doing good show they are clear from this sin: Luke xii. 33, 'Sell that you have, and give alms; provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens, that faileth not;' then you trust in the promises. Your office is not that of a treasurer, but of a steward, to have them in your hands, not in your hearts; otherwise not you but your chest is rich.

[3.] Labour by faith to make God your trust and confidence: 1 Tim. vi. 17, 'That they trust not in uncertain riches, but in the living God. To rely upon his power, mercy, and goodness for all that you have and stand in need of: 'Give us this day our daily bread;' for protection and provision. When God giveth you riches, suspect what your heart may do with them. It is good to fear always, especially when we have what we wish for or desire. Therefore, still be looking to God, taking your maintenance out of his hands, and praying to him, and blessing him daily for your supply, and this will make your estate sweet and comfortable to you, and free from those snares wherewith otherwise it will be encumbered.

[4.] Be sure you get grace together with an estate, for otherwise singly it will be a snare to you: Prov. xiv. 24, 'The crown of the wise is their riches, but the foolishness of fools is folly.' Riches are as they are used; if they fall to the share of a man that is godly and wise, they are a crown and ornament, otherwise a snare; for the one employeth them to the honour of God, and the good of the church and state, and is more publicly useful, but the other groweth more haughty and fierce, and scornful of holy things, and sensual and vain, and eateth and drinketh, and swaggereth away the good gifts of God, which might have a more noble use. So Eccles. vii. 11, 'Wisdom is good with an inheritance;' it is good without it, but more conspicuously good with it. It is not said an inheritance is good without wisdom or grace. No; it is reserved to the owners for their hurt. So Prov. xvii. 16, 'Wherefore is there a price in the hand of a fool to get wisdom, seeing he hath no heart to it.' Many a man hath a price, but he hath not a heart; an estate is but as a sword in the hand of a madman, when a man wants grace to improve it.

[5.] Be sure your esteem of riches come below your esteem of religion and good conscience. As Nazianzen said of his eloquence, he had something of value to esteem as nothing for Christ. By all my wealth and glory, this alone I have gained, that I have something to which I might prefer my Saviour. This is like 'the woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet,' Rev. xii. 1, contemning all worldly and sublunary things for Christ.

[6.] Think of changes in the midst of your fulness: 'Surely every man at his best estate is altogether vanity,' Ps. xxxix. 5; not only at his worst estate, when God rebuketh him for sin. We should make suppositions, and see how we can bear the loss of all things, when they are represented but in conceit and imagination: Hab. iii. 17, 18, 'Although the fig-tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vine, &c., yet I will rejoice in the Lord, and joy in the God of my salvation.' The fool durst not suppose the accidents of that night: Luke xii. 20, 'Thou fool! this night thy soul shall be required of thee.' Security is a coward; acquaint the soul with a supposition of loss and danger.

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## SERMON XII.

*It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.*—MARK X. 25.

I HAVE now read you a sentence, that at first view may seem to cut off the greatest and most splendid part of the world from all hopes of salvation. Had it been my saying only, you might take liberty to tax it as rash and rigorous, but the mouth of truth itself hath spoken it, even Jesus Christ, whom we own as our Lord and master. He sufficiently knew the worth and way of salvation, and the state and danger of souls. Now he interposeth his authority: Mat. xix. 24, 'I say unto you, It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.' If we believe him, then let rich men look to themselves. He had already told them, that it is hard for them that have riches; then he shows wherein the difficulty lay, because of their trusting in riches. Now, he represents the difficulty by a similitude; it is as hard for them to enter into the kingdom of God, as for a thing of the greatest bulk to pass through the straitest place; for what more strait than a needle's eye, and a camel is a creature of a great bulk. A camel cannot pass through a needle's eye without a miracle, nor a rich man enter into the kingdom of God without the singular power of God's grace. For the expression: Some say there was a gate at Jerusalem, called the eye of a needle, a strait gate, by which a camel could not enter. *Nisi deposito onero, et flexis genibus*, without laying aside his burden, and bending his knee. But no approved history mentions this, and the conceit lesseneth the force of our Saviour's speech. Others say that the word *κάμελος*