

[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.

---

## 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*

signifies a cable, by which mariners do fasten the anchor, but that also is a mistake; for that word is otherwise spelt, *κάμιλος* and doth also rarely occur in that sense, and therefore rather the beast is intended than the cord or cable.

It was an ordinary proverb among the Jews, and is so even to this day, that an elephant cannot pass through the eye of a needle. Our Saviour indeed a little changeth the proverb, instead of the elephant, a beast which few had seen, putting a camel, a creature very ordinary in Syria; 'It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle.' I will not say that this similitude was chosen because they were wont to lade their rich wares upon camels, and so the camel doth most decipher the rich man, who is the packhorse of his wealth, and hath the burden, but not the use of it. However, two things I may gather from it, as Origen hath done before us—

1. That there is something in turning christian, or entering into the kingdom of God, that answers the needle's eye, and that is the strait gate and the narrow way which leads to life, Mat. vii. 14, the strait gate of repentance, and the narrow way of constant mortification.

2. That there is something on the rich man's part which answers the camel, namely, that they grow so great and bulky, in regard of their pride, worldly lusts, joys, and confidences, that they cannot reduce themselves to those straits that are necessary for entering into the kingdom of God, as the camel's bulk and bunchback hinders his entrance into a strait place. This without straining I might observe; though I must tell you, I think the main intent of this proverbial speech is nothing else but this, to express an extraordinary difficulty on the rich man's part, not to be removed but by the almighty power of grace. Such similitudes are frequent in scripture: Jer. xiii. 23, 'Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots?' so Mat. xxiii. 24, 'Ye blind guides, which strain at a gnat and swallow a camel.'

Well, then, you see it noteth the difficulty, if not utter impossibility, for men of that rank, without peculiar grace to avoid the snares of Satan, or to render themselves capable of eternal blessedness. And since Christ doth again and again press this—we have had it three times, and now doth amplify it by a comparison—I shall observe—

*Doct.* That the danger of riches, and the difficulty of rich men's salvation, is a point ought much to be pressed and seriously thought of.

There are two propositions included in this observation—(1.) That the salvation of rich men is very difficult; (2.) That this must be much pressed and seriously thought of.

I. The difficulty of their salvation. I have formerly proved this by reason of the sins incident to this state and condition of life, therefore now I shall quit that, and prove there is a great deal of difficulty for rich men to enter into the kingdom of God, because of the duties required of them.

1. There are common duties that concern them and all christians.

2. There is something peculiar and singular expected from the rich, which makes their entrance into heaven more difficult.

1. There are common duties that concern them and all christians, that are more difficult for them than for others to perform, and these

are set down Mat. xvi. 24, 'If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.' Christ saith, 'If any man,' without exception; small and great, rich and poor, they must all submit to those terms. The duties are three, and they make way one for another—(1.) He must deny himself, and he must comply with this; (2.) That he may take up his cross, and bear it kindly and willingly; and that fits for the (3.) Duty, following Christ, or cleaving close to him. These are the three duties that are required of all that will come after Christ, and would follow him as their great Lord and master, and captain of their salvation: He must 'deny himself,' his own wit, his own will, his own affections and interests, and be wholly at the disposal of God, pleasing him in all things. Till we come to this, nothing else in christianity will down. Well, when this is done, then he must 'take up the cross;' first deny ourselves, that bows the back of a sinner; then take up, and bear the cross kindly; that is to say, rather suffer the loss of all than wilfully sin against God, and hazard his favour. And after this he must follow Christ, not forsake him because of the cross, but stick the closer to him, walking according to his doctrine and example. Let us treat of these duties apart, and withal show how hard it is for the rich man to comply with them.

[1.] He must deny himself, whatever his corrupt heart desires, how dear and pleasing soever it be; though his parting with the contentments of the flesh should be like 'cutting off the right hand, and plucking out the right eye,' Mat. v. 29, 30, yet this must be done, and he must fully resign up himself to please God in all things. Now this is very hard and difficult for all men, which we may soon be sensible of if we do but consider how earnestly man affects a dominion and sovereignty over himself, to be *sui juris*, at his own dispose, as those rebels against God said, Ps. xii. 4, 'Our lips are our own, who is lord over us?' A libertine yokeless spirit possesseth them. We conceit that our hearts are our own to think what we please, our tongues our own to speak what we please, our hands our own to do what we please. Man affects to be a god to himself, and to be solely under the government of his own will, and to have all his comforts in his own hand and at his own dispose, denying himself nothing which his heart affects; as Solomon saith he did, Eccles. ii. 10, 'Whatsoever mine eyes desired, I kept not from them, I withheld not my heart from any joy.' Natural pride and self-love is such that we cannot endure the yoke of any restraints, but we let loose the reins to a full fruition of whatever our hearts affect. Now, as self-denial is difficult to all, because of this yokeless and libertine spirit, much more to the rich and to the great, and to those that flow in ease and plenty, and have no bands and restraints of providence upon them; they are more licentious, impatient of contradiction, or of having their wills thwarted, and therefore by a lawless liberty they wholly seek to please themselves, and to feed their own lusts, without any care and respect to God: Jer. v. 5, 'I will get me to the great men, and will speak unto them, but they have altogether broken the yoke, and burst the bonds;' that is, they cast off all the bonds of loyalty and obedience to God. And why? Because they think they can subsist alone and apart from him: Jer. ii. 31, 'Wherefore do my people say, We are lords, we will come no more unto thee?'

Men think themselves to be lords of their own fortune, and therefore slight God, break through the restraint of his laws, cannot deny themselves anything that their corrupt hearts affect. Those that are in a low condition, kept bare, and in a daily need of providence, are more humble and submissive to God; but when they grow great, they turn the back upon him, and cannot endure his strict government. So Jer. xxii. 21, 'I spake to thee in thy prosperity, but thou saidst, I will not hear.' Those that are rich and well at ease are loath to be controlled in their will, even by God himself: Exod. v. 2, 'Who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice to let Israel go? I know not the Lord, neither will I let Israel go.' Who so self-willed, proud, and scornful of God as they? who so apt to please themselves, and to use their riches to feed their lusts, and to provide accommodations for their flesh and corrupt nature? Self-denial and a flesh-pleasing course are inconsistent; and therefore, because of the lawless liberty which they take to please themselves and to make provision for the flesh, they cannot comply with this precept of Christ, 'Let him deny himself.'

[2.] To take up the cross, that is another of Christ's precepts, and to be willing to suffer affliction, either from the hands of God or from the hands of men for God's sake. This is one thing that we must reckon upon: if we would be christians and Christ's disciples, first or last we shall be called to this exercise. Ignatius, when he was led bound before the tribunal, Now, saith he, I begin to be a disciple of Christ. Many think it is factious to talk of the cross in days of peace and liberty, but Christ puts it into our indentures. If we should never suffer for Christ, yet we must be sure that we have a heart that would suffer if God calls us to it. It is possible a man may go to heaven without suffering, but he cannot go to heaven without a resolution to suffer when God will. Now the cross makes it hard to all: Heb. xii. 11, 'Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous but grievous.' It is not pleasing to the flesh to endure blows, suffer smart, and to account all that we have as 'dung and dross in comparison of Christ;' to be joyful in tribulation, and so wholly swallowed up with the hopes and interests and concernments of the world to come, and to be dead to present things. Oh! how irksome is the remembrance of this to those that are high in place and office, and sail with a full tide and current of worldly felicity! To be averse to suffering is natural to man, and is in itself no sin, for nature is to seek its own welfare and preservation, but when it goes to excess, it argues a tenderness of the flesh, and that we have consulted with Satan: Mat. xvi. 22, said Peter, 'Be it far from thee, Lord; this shall not be unto thee;' but Christ said, ver. 23, 'Get thee behind me, Satan.' Now the more men have to lose, the more tender they are of losing it; a little is sooner quitted. This young man went away sad, for he had great possessions. Great men, when once they come to be noted for the profession of the truth, they shrink and fall off presently; they have not learned to leave all for Christ's sake. Judas, that had the bag, turns apostate and traitor to Christ, John xii. 6; when he saw nothing but opposition increasing, the supposed kingdom not to go forward, and heard Christ speaking of nothing but the cross and suffering, he thinks of betraying his master; heaven is no pennyworth for him if it cost so dear.

[3.] Let 'him follow me.' He that will be Christ's disciple must follow him, his doctrine, and his example.

(1.) His doctrine; that is, the directions he hath given us in his word. Now what is the drift of Christ's doctrine? The doctrine Christ brought out of the bosom of God is to draw us off from the world to heaven, from the pleasures of the flesh and the baits of this life, to seek things to come and things eternal. This is one great excellency of the christian faith, that it reveals the doctrine of eternal life and a blessed estate to come, which all other professions in the world could only guess at. Christ hath made it manifest, and brought it to light, that there is such a thing: 2 Tim. i. 10, 'He hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.' And the gospel reveals the way that leads to it; it makes a free offer of it upon the condition of faith in Christ: John iii. 16, 17, 'God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life: for God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved.' And walking in all holiness of life: Heb. xii. 14, 'Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.' And the gospel lays before us the highest motives to quicken us to walk therein, and take off our affections from the world: Col. iii. 1, 2, 'If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God: set your affections on things above, not on things of the earth.' This must be our great scope and business, that we may get home to God with a neglect of present advantages. The gospel tells us that we should not be troubled though our outward man decay, whilst 'this light affliction, that is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory,' 2 Cor. iv. 17. Well, then, seeing this is the great design of the doctrine of Christ, that here we should ply our work, that hereafter we may receive our wages; that here we should study holiness, that hereafter we may be blessed with him. Now what doctrine can be more contrary than this to those 'that have their portion here,' Ps. xvii. 14, 'That have received their consolation here,' Luke xvi. 32, 'That have received their good things in their lifetime,' Luke xvi. 25? To tell them of a dislodging and removal, and of foregoing the things they love and see for a God they never saw, oh! how tedious is this to a carnal heart! They are already happy and blessed, and cannot endure to think of a change, and therefore are incapable of following this doctrine, that drives us off from carnal vanities to look after the interests and concerns of the world to come.

(2.) His example. I shall only instance in two things—we are to follow him in humility of heart and purity of life.

(1st.) In humility: Mat. xi. 29, 'Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly of heart.' This is the great thing the Son of God would recommend to us, in which we should take after him, even to be of an humble and lowly spirit: 'Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus,' Phil. ii. 5. Christ was the Son of God. He did not affect to be a God by robbery, as the angels had rebellious thoughts against the empire and majesty of God, and they were thrust down from heaven for their aspiring; but the Son of God was equal with God the Father:

'He thought it no robbery to be equal with God,' ver. 6; and yet 'he made himself of no reputation, took upon him the form of a servant and was made in the likeness of man, and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself,' ver. 7, 8. Certainly, if any had cause to stand upon his terms, Jesus Christ had much more. That preface is notable and very magnificent, John xiii. 3, 'Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he was come from God, and went to God.' And what follows? 'He washed his disciples' feet,' ver. 4, 5. Thus the boughs that are most laden hang their heads, and the sun at the highest casts the least shadow. Jesus Christ indeed was high, excellent, and glorious, yet he would condescend to set his disciples such a pattern of humility. But now who more proud and disdainful than the rich? When men have anything in the world, they grow high and lofty. Oh! when we consider the pride of man to man, we may more stand wondering at the condescensions of God to man. As soon as a man hath any estate in the world, he is altered presently: 1 Tim. vi. 17, 'Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not high-minded.' Many that in their low estate were humble and meek, in prosperity grow proud and disdainful; many that were forward and zealous, grow cold and slothful in spiritual things; many that, while they were kept dependent upon God, were diligent in hearing, profitable in conference, thought it no disgrace to instruct their families, were patient of reproof, but when the world comes in upon them, no such matter. As the moon is never eclipsed but in the full, so all the grace that they seemed to have it is under an eclipse when they are in the full of prosperity.

(2d.) In purity and holiness: 'He that saith he abideth in him, ought himself so to walk even as he walked,' 1 John ii. 6, and 1 John iii. 3, 'Every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself even as he is pure;' and 1 John iv. 17, 'As he is, so are we in the world.' Now prosperity and true holiness seldom go together; they are afflictions that promote holiness: 'They verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure, but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness: now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous but grievous, nevertheless it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them that are exercised thereby,' Heb. xii. 10, 11. Then are men most serious when they feel the rod and are pinched with some necessity; but when they are full, they wax wanton, kick with the heel, and throw off all respects to God and godliness.

2. As the difficulty ariseth from the general duties that are common to them with others, so it ariseth also from this: more is required of them that are rich and great in this world than of others. They should be eminent and exemplary for holiness. They have larger accounts to make to God than others, for our account must be according to our receipts: Luke xii. 48, 'Unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required; and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more.' Among men this is a constant rule, and so it is with God; the account is according to the thing with which ye are trusted; they that have more must account for more. Now certainly more is required of great and rich men than of others upon four accounts—they have greater obligations, more opportunities for spirit-

nal improvement, they have larger abilities and advantages of honouring God, and because of the influence of their example.

[1.] They have greater obligations. Certainly they to whom God hath been more bountiful, are bound to be more dutiful than others. It is not enough to render to God, but we must render according to what we have received. It was Hezekiah's fault, 2 Chron. xxxii. 25, 'Hezekiah rendered not again according to the benefit done unto him.' The rent must be paid according to the value of the farm. God will not accept that at the hands of a rich man which he would accept from a poor man, which hath not such great obligations. A man that hath tasted of the bounty of God's providence, and hath had fulness and plenty of all things, it is required he should serve God more cheerfully than others, Deut. xxviii. 47. Their duties are greater, and their sins are greater; as you know the prophet aggravates David's sin by the mercies he had received, in 2 Sam. xii. 7-9, 'I anointed thee king over Israel, and I delivered thee out of the hand of Saul; and I gave thee thy master's house, and thy master's wives into thy bosom, and gave thee the house of Israel and of Judah; and if that had been too little, I would moreover have given unto thee such and such things: wherefore hast thou despised the commandment of the Lord, to do evil in his sight?' They have tasted more of the bounty and goodness of his providence, and have had more than others to revive the sense of God, and keep up the memorial of God in their hearts.

[2.] They have more opportunities of being free to good duties, as being not so straitly bound to bodily labour for present maintenance, nor burdened with so many cares and distractions of this life, and so have more time and leisure for studying the mind of God in his word and improving themselves in the knowledge of the truth, and meditating the statutes of God, as David professeth he did all the day long. And look, as the apostle speaks of married and single persons, 1 Cor. vii. 32, 33, 'He that is unmarried careth for the things that belong to the Lord, how he may please the Lord; but he that is married careth for the things that are of the world, how he may please his wife;' they that are in a single estate have more leisure to attend the service of God, greater opportunities of holy privacy and meditation upon the promises of God, are less distracted and divided with the cares of the world, and have nothing else to do but to serve God and study to please him; so it is true of poor and rich; those that live in a plentiful condition, oh! what a great deal of time and leisure have they for religious duties, better education, more helps, more advantages, therefore they are more bound to addict and give up themselves to the study of divine things. A little knowledge of God he will accept of in a poor tradesman that is divided and distracted with the cares of the world, and have not such leisure to attend the service of God, and the opportunities of holy privacy and meditation, which he will not accept of in the rich, that have so many opportunities to furnish themselves with knowledge, and have little else to do but to serve God and labour to please him, and to study the promises of God, that they may grow in grace; and yet, when they abandon themselves to sensuality, and live from one week's end to another, and can scarce tell what to do with their time, and yet cannot afford it to God, how culpable are they!

[3.] They have greater advantages of furthering the duties of piety and mercy, and of honouring God with their substance, Prov. iii. 9, and of relieving others, of 'making themselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness,' Luke xvi. 9. I say they have greater opportunities of being 'rich in good works,' 1 Tim. vi. 18. Others that have hearts have not estates, and cannot be so publicly useful. God expects from every man according to his ability, and therefore they should abound in all acts of mercy and piety, for the promoting the honour and service of God, and relief and comfort of others. But alas! usually it is here as in nature, those mountains in the bowels of which there are most mines of gold and silver are most barren; so rich men, for the most part, live most unprofitably as to the fruits of grace, piety, and charity. They that have great estates have least heart to do anything for God, and men of a middle condition do exceedingly outstrip those that are vastly and excessively rich, in being liberal and open-handed for honouring of God and the relief of others.

[4.] More is required of them because of the influence of their example. They are as the first-sheets, others are printed off by them. The more any are exalted and lifted up above others, the more conspicuous are their actions. The example of an eminent person is never single, for when such a one doth evil, he carries others with him as the stream doth that which floats upon it. If they do good, their countenance and example doth exceedingly provoke many to follow after that which is good; therefore they should specially take care to fear God, and be diligent in the exercise of godliness, and serious in the business of eternal life. But alas! who authorise sin and propagate it in the poor more than they that have a plentiful fortune and estate to bear them out in it? Who are more dissolute and lascivious, and profaners of God's holy name and day, and deriders of God's word, and holy services and servants? and so wherever they go, they leave their dregs behind them, and leaven others, and draw them into sin, which makes the difficulty of their salvation so much the greater.

II. The other proposition that is contained in this observation is, that this ought to be much pressed, seriously thought of, for Christ inculcates it again and again.

1. To keep up a remembrance of God and heavenly things in the hearts of rich men. Security and forgetfulness of God is the cause of all the mischief rich men are liable to. Men that have so much in the world never think of God and salvation. The heart is so full of the world, that it leaves no place for the thoughts and remembrance of God. When God would offer to come in upon them, it doth fare with him as it did with Christ; when he was born at Bethlehem, 'there was no room for him in the inn,' Luke ii. 7. When God would lodge in the understanding, the upper chamber of the soul, that is full of worldly or sensual projects. If he would enter into the memory, that is the world's warehouse, and it is pestered with cares about present things. If he would enter into their hearts and affections, they are prepossessed already, that is the world's storehouse, there their treasure lies; and so, what with this and that, it comes to pass, that 'God is not in all their thoughts,' Ps. x. 4. The awful remembrance of God is a strange uncouth thing to those that are full, and live plentifully



in the world. This appears by the whole current of scripture; God forewarns his people of it: Deut. xi. 12, 'When thou shalt have eaten and be full, beware lest thou forget the Lord thy God.' When men are full, and abound with so much accommodation, God is banished out of their thoughts. He complains of this as the cause of his people's forgetting him: Hosea xiii. 6, 'According to their pasture, so were they filled; they were filled, and their heart was exalted, therefore have they forgotten me.' God is forgotten in prosperity, when we have not such a sensible need of him and of his help. Men can live alone and apart from God, and therefore cast off all thoughts of him: 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, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy.' Plenty easily breeds forgetfulness of God, therefore it needs often to be inculcated and enforced upon, and thought of by them.

2. This ought to be much pressed and seriously thought of, to awaken suspicion; there may be a snare in our estate. To suspect danger is a good means to prevent it, and therefore, that we may draw men to self-suspicion, being compassed about by the snares of the devil, we must again and again tell you how hard it is for rich men to be saved. Agur was afraid of riches and the evil influence of them, and therefore prays for a competency: Prov. xxx. 8, 9, 'Give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with food convenient for me, lest I be full and deny thee, and say, Who is the Lord?' Whereas men that never think of danger are surprised with it before they are aware; therefore it is good to be suspicious of a prosperous estate, to be afraid of the world more when it smiles than when it frowns. Most men are afraid of poverty, but few are afraid of wealth, and yet there the snares and temptations lie; and the reason is, because they prize their temporal interest more than their eternal salvation. Poverty is against their temporal interests, but wealth, fulness, and plenty is a hindrance to their eternal salvation, and men will venture their souls rather than their bodies. It is fat and rank soil that feedeth weeds; therefore think of it often; here lies the difficulty to have the world at will and not to be ensnared by it; to learn to abound is the harder lesson. Paul had learned both, so must we: Phil. iv. 12, 'I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound; everywhere and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need.' We say of a proud man or woman, Such a one would do well to be a lord or lady; but it is harder than you imagine. How few are there that have any lively thoughts of eternity, or make any serious preparation for death and judgment, when they have health and wealth, and all the accommodations which the carnal nature desires? And therefore be suspicious when you find delight, and what is pleasing to the flesh, it is not likely to be safe for your soul. Oh! possess your estates with fear. The fear of a snare may help to avoid it. How easily may such a carnal heart as yours be enticed from God, and grow cold and remiss about the great things of your salvation!

3. This ought oft to be pressed and seriously thought of, to stir up observation how it is with us. There is no man that observes his heart but will find this effect, that riches make the business of salvation more

difficult. Good David observed that his heart was corrupted by his condition : Ps. x. 6, 'He hath said in his heart, I shall never be moved ; for I shall never be in adversity.' And elsewhere we find he was sensible that worldliness was creeping upon him : Ps. cxix. 36, 'Incline my heart unto thy testimonies, and not to covetousness.' A child of God hath not the bent of his heart so perfectly fixed towards God but it is ever and anon returning to its old bent and bias again. The best may find that they cannot keep their affections as loose from the world when they have houses, and lands, and all things at their will, as they could when they are kept low and bare. The best may find that their love to heavenly things is on the wane as worldly things are on the increase. It is reported of Pius Quintus that he should say of himself, that when he first entered into orders, he had some hopes of his salvation ; when he came to be a cardinal, he doubted of it ; but since he came to be pope, he did even almost despair. Many may find a very great change in themselves, much decay of zeal for God's glory, and love to and relish of God's word, and mindfulness of heavenly things, as it fares better with them in the world. Now it is good to observe this before the mischief increaseth. Look, as jealousy and caution is necessary to prevent the entrance and beginning of this mischief, so observation is necessary to prevent the increase of it. When the world doth get too deep an interest in our hearts, when it begins to insinuate and entice us from God, and weaken our delight in the ways of God and zeal for his glory, then we need often to tell you how hard it is for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven.

4. To stir up supplication for special and peculiar grace, that it may not be so with us, that the Lord would keep us from the snares of our condition ; for 'with God all things are possible ;' that we may go to God, and say, Lord, let not my estate be my bane and poison. On the one side, it is a great judgment that God brings upon wicked men when 'their table becomes their snare,' Ps. lxxix. 22, when their comforts are cursed to them, and when their hearts are drawn from God by their plentiful condition in the world. On the other side, it is a peculiar grace and favour from God when we be heavenly-minded in the midst of plenty, and keep up lively spiritual exercises of godliness notwithstanding our opulency and plentiful condition in the world. Jehoshaphat is an instance to encourage you to pray for this : 2 Chron. xvii. 5, 6, it is said of him, 'He had riches and honour in abundance, and his heart was lift up in the ways of the Lord.' Christians, it is hard to carry a full cup without spilling, to have riches and honour, and all this with great abundance, and yet to have a lively zeal towards God and a great delight in his ways. Now this is possible with God, and this God hath bestowed, and therefore it should be asked. There is nothing that quickens to prayer so much as a constant sense and apprehension of the danger and difficulty which attends such an estate ; therefore this must ever be laid before you, that your thoughts may be steeped in this consideration.

*Use 1.* It serveth to check the desire of greatness and increase of wealth. If you had more your duty would be more, and your account greater, and your snares and temptations and stumbling-blocks in the way to heaven would be much more multiplied ; and therefore you

should be contented with what you have. If we cannot thrive in the valleys, and keep up a lively and warm respect to the world to come in a low condition, how should we expect to grow on the tops of the mountains, where we are more exposed to tempests, and the soil is more barren? therefore you should strive rather to give a good account of a little than to make it more. The Lord knoweth that if you were a step higher, you would be apt to be proud, licentious, secure, mindless of eternal life, further off from God, and then better you had lived in beggary all your days. The time will soon come about when you will judge so, and therefore do not enlarge your desires, as if you could never have enough.

*Use 2.* It teacheth us patience, not only in the want, but in the loss of outward riches. It is more irksome to lose than to want, as it was an unnatural thing for the sun to go back ten degrees in Ahaz's dial. Yet this is to be borne, for when God taketh away your wealth from you, he maketh your way to heaven more easy; if God taketh away riches, he doth but take a bush of thorns out of the way that would prick and gore your souls. The world is apt to turn away your heart from true happiness, and to hinder you in the way that leadeth to it. Now God's grace is seen not only in fortifying the heart, but in abating the temptation; he seeth you are apt to sleep upon a carnal pillow, and therefore taketh it from under your heads to awaken you. If you believe the word of God, that riches and honours do easily prove a snare, why should you be grieved when the snare is broken? Do you love to have your salvation hindered or hazarded? and therefore why are you so impatient when God cuts you short in these outward things?

*Use 3.* Let rich men think of this, and make application of this sentence to their own hearts, that they may possess their estates with fear. To this end, consider—

1. The person speaking is Christ, who had so much wisdom and love to the comfort and happiness of men, that he would not fright them with a needless danger. (See before on ver. 23.)

2. Whom it is spoken of; rich men, those that can live of themselves in the world without the supply of others. The disciples, that had little, cried out, 'Who then can be saved?' We fancy it is spoken only to the overgrown rich; but they that have but one talent must improve it, and it is hard to do so. We must give an account of one talent as well as ten. The sensualist will turn this upon the covetous, and the covetous upon the sensualist, the voluptuous gallant upon the cornorants of the city, and they upon the epicures; but Christ saith indefinitely, 'the rich.'

3. What is spoken of, entering into the kingdom of God. It is salvation and eternal life; not a trifle. Christ doth not say, He shall do no worthy exploits in the world, or arrive at no great degree of grace, but, He shall not enter into the kingdom of God.

4. How it is spoken. It is represented by a similitude that implieth impossibility, or at least an extraordinary difficulty without a miracle of peculiar grace.

Then look about you, sirs. Such speeches of Christ were doubly entertained—with wonder, as by the disciples in the next verse, 'They were astonished out of measure, saying among themselves, Who then

can be saved?' or with scorn: Luke xvi. 14, 'The pharisees also, who were covetous, heard all these things, and derided him.' For the reverence you bear to Christ, I hope you will not entertain it with scorn, but rather with wonder, holy fear, and solicitude.

I expect now you will say, What shall we do to prevent this mischief?

[1.] Remember your condition in the world. You are not a freeholder, but a tenant-at-will: Luke xii. 20, 'Thou fool! this night thy soul shall be required of thee, then whose shall all those things be which thou hast provided?' You are not owners, but stewards; not lords and masters of what you have, but only must improve it for God; and you must give an account: Luke xvi. 2, 'Give an account of thy stewardship, for thou mayest be no longer steward.' You are not citizens but strangers: 1 Peter ii. 11, 'Dearly beloved, I beseech you, as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul.' The world is our inn, where we abide but for a night; our dwelling is there where we live longest.

[2.] Judge of your estates to be good or bad to you, not as they do accommodate the flesh, but as they help or hinder you in your way to heaven. Make heaven your end, and consider all things else as means and helps. Ordinances are the next means, riches and estates are remote helps to heaven. All things are measured by the great and last end, therefore you are to judge of all things as they help you on in heaven's way. Better to be preserved in brine and pickle than to rot in honey.

[3.] Devote your wealth to the Lord: Luke xii. 21, 'So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich towards God.' Riches are snares, and will certainly prove means of our damnation if we do not so. That is the best condition for us in which we may do most service to God, and not to the flesh: Gal. vi. 8, 'For he that soweth to the flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption, but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.'

---

### SERMON XIII.

*And they were astonished out of measure, saying among themselves,  
Who then can be saved?—MARK X. 26.*

In this verse you have the entertainment of Christ's doctrine concerning the difficulty of rich men's being saved. The effects of it are two—(1.) A great wonder or deep sense of this difficulty, 'They were astonished out of measure;' (2.) An anxious question, 'And they said among themselves, Who then can be saved?'

For the first branch, their great wonder, *περισσῶς ἐξεπλήσσοντο*, they were struck at heart, 'astonished out of measure.' We meet with it before at the first proposal of this difficulty, 'They were astonished at his words;' but now, when Christ had rendered the reason, and reassumed