

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

of such practices is double—there is *pœna damni et sensus*. *Pœna damni*, exclusion from the kingdom of God, as in the text read to you. *Pœna sensus*, they run the hazard of his wrath and eternal displeasure; as ver. 6, ‘For these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience.’

In the text there is—

1. A sentence passed on all unclean persons: they have no ‘inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.’

2. The certainty and evidence of it: ‘For this ye know.’

First, In the sentence we have—(1.) ‘The subject, or persons spoken of; (2.) ‘The predicate, what is said of them.

1. The subject: ‘No whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous, who is an idolater.’ Where mark, he mentioneth not the lesser sins, filthiness of talk, foolish speaking, jesting, but the more grievous transgressions spoken of ver. 3, *ὅτι πᾶς πόρνος, ἢ ἀκαθαρτος, ἢ πλεονέκτης*; not but that they in themselves deserve damnation, but they are but appendages and degrees to the other sins.

Again observe, in the enumeration there is a special brand put upon the third sort, ‘Nor the covetous person, who is an idolater.’ *Πλεονεξία* here signifieth excessive and unnatural lusts; because it is put among the *nefanda*, and because the word is clearly so used Eph. iv. 19, and in other places is joined with words that signify unnatural and unlawful lusts not fit to be named: 1 Cor. v. 10, ‘With the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous;’ and Col. iii. 5, ‘Mortify your members which are upon earth, fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry.’ Certainly there is some reason why this should always bear company with these unclean sins; and what is it but that it hath affinity, and is of the same nature with them? 1 Thes. iv. 6, 7, ‘That no man go beyond and defraud his brother in any matters, because the Lord is the avenger of all such, as we also have forewarned and testified; for God hath not called us to uncleanness, but unto holiness,’ *μη ὑπερβαίνειν καὶ πλεονεκτεῖν*, &c. We render it, ‘That none go beyond and defraud his brother in any matter, because God is the avenger of such.’ But the reason rendered, ver. 7, ‘For God hath not called us to uncleanness, but to holiness,’ will enforce another sense, not to yield to unnatural and unlawful lusts, to commit filthiness with his fellow-christians, in such a manner as is not to be plainly mentioned, or in that way of villany for which God punished Sodom, and hath exercised severe vengeance on the very heathens. This seemeth everywhere the meaning of a *πλεονεξία*, ‘inordinate lusts,’ which we translate ‘covetousness.’ Now what *πλεονεξία* is in the abstract, that *πλεονέκτης* is in the concrete; a man given to inordinate lusts, or filthiness not to be named. But this man, be he ‘covetous,’ or be he an ‘inordinate luster,’ is said to be an ‘idolater,’ as covetousness and inordinate lusting in the Epistle to the Colossians is said to be ‘idolatry.’ I confess this staggered me at first, and made me suspect my former interpretation, because covetousness is known idolatry; as ‘Charge the rich men in this world, that they trust not in uncertain riches, but in the living God,’ 1 Tim. i. 17; and Job xxxi. 24, ‘If I have made gold my hope, or said to the fine gold, Thou art my confidence.’ This I confess

staggered me, and made me think covetousness is to be taken in the ordinary and vulgar acceptation; but I recovered myself again, when I considered that interpretative idolatry is when the creature is set in the place of God; which may be done two ways—by confidence and trust, and by love and delight; for there are two chief respects due to God—love and trust. Now though the covetous person in the ordinary sense is an idolater, as he trusts in uncertain riches, and maketh wealth his all, so men given to other sins, especially to the greediness of uncleanness, may be idolaters also, because they prefer their brutish satisfactions before God. And the apostle saith the same: Rom. xvi. 18, 'They serve not God, but their own belly;' and again, Phil. iii. 19, 'Whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly.' Add, moreover, they may be called idolaters also because they yet live in the same villanies and abominable practices which heathens and idolaters do, and are very reconcilable to them; therefore I shall stick to the sense first given, many of the ancients concurring, and also divers of the most learned modern writers producing irrefragable proofs for their exposition, not fit now to be insisted on.

2. The predicate, 'Hath no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God;' that is, no portion in the church of God under Christ, nor inheritance in heaven; for there is both a kingdom of grace and of glory. The latter is especially understood, that kingdom spoken of, Mat. xxv. 34, 'Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you.' They have no right unto, and so living and so dying, never shall have possession of, that blessed estate. And it is called 'the kingdom of Christ and of God,' because this kingdom is now in the hands of Christ as mediator, and so shall be till the judgment be over; but after the judgment, he shall give up the kingdom to the Father, 1 Cor. xv. 24, or resign up the church to God, to live and reign with Father, Son, and Holy Ghost for ever.

Secondly, The evidence, 'For this ye know.' In the original, *ἐστε γινώσκοντες*, ye are knowing. It is a Greek circumlocution, to make the sense more emphatical; as if he had said, If ye have the least taste of the christian religion, ye cannot be ignorant of this, that such filthiness and unlawful lusts deprive us of the kingdom of God; ye have been always taught this. Now this is added—

1. To show how heinous a sin this would be in them that have faith and knowledge, and yet indulge these kind of lusts; these rebel against the light of conscience, and wilfully forfeit heaven to please the flesh: James iv. 17, 'Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.'

2. To teach us that we ought to be put in mind of what we already know; for temptations induce a strange kind of oblivion into the mind, which is an ignorance for the present: 2 Peter i. 12, 'I will not be negligent to put you in remembrance of these things, though ye know them;' and 1 John ii. 21, 'I have not written to you because you know not the truth, but because ye know it;' and Rom. xv. 15, 'I have written to you, as putting you in mind.' Our work is not only to inform people of what they know not, but to inculcate and press known truths; not only to cure ignorance, but also forgetfulness, laziness, and dulness.

Doct. That it is an evident truth that all unclean persons have no inheritance in the kingdom of God and of Christ.

1. That there is a kingdom of God. This notion implieth, on God's part, his sovereign authority and right to command; and on our part, both duties and privileges. On God's part, 'One God over all, blessed for ever,' Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, who hath full right, as creator, to command and govern us with such laws as he thought fit to give us, with such rewards and penalties as he thought fit to annex to them. This right God never divested himself of, nor can it be vacated by our sin, but continueth still, while man receiveth his being from God by creation, and the continuance of his being by daily preservation and providence. There is *dominium jurisdictionis et proprietatis*. The dominion of jurisdiction is founded in the dominion of propriety. We are his own, for he created us out of nothing, and therefore hath a full right and title to govern us. Now God will govern us, not with a rod of iron, by necessity and force, but with the bands of a man, by laws backed and confirmed with rewards and punishments; for he will not violate the liberty of his own workmanship. Man, being a rational and free agent, is governed accordingly by moral means, induced to his duty by the rewards of obedience, and deterred from sin by the punishments appointed for the wicked and rebellious. On our part the kingdom of God implieth duties and privileges.

[1.] Duties. As in a kingdom subjects are bound to obey their proper and rightful lord, so here; God being our lawgiver and king, as he hath right to command, so we are bound to obey. As in the Lord's prayer, when we say, 'Thy kingdom come,' we presently say, 'Thy will be done,' Mat. vi. 10. All that own his kingdom are bound to obey his will. So Mat. vi. 33, 'First seek ye the kingdom of God and his righteousness;' that is, approve yourselves to be the faithful servants and subjects of God. Well, then, this is required of us, that we be willingly subject to God. All creatures are subject to him by constraint, the devils themselves not excepted, though rebels and grievous revolvers; but those are properly said to be his subjects that willingly consent to his government.

[2.] Privileges. There are many privileges belong to God's subjects, both for the present and in the world to come. For the present, that they are under the special care and protection of God, both as to their bodies and souls. For the souls, he sanctifieth them, writeth his laws upon their hearts and minds, as he did upon Adam's heart in innocency, and promiseth to do it in the new covenant made in Christ to those that serve and obey him, Heb. viii. 10; and so the kingdom of God is within us, Luke xvii. 21. And besides, giveth us peace of conscience and joy in the Holy Ghost, Rom. xiv. 17. And then for our outward man, protection and maintenance. The necessaries of this life shall not be wanting to those that enter into his kingdom: Mat. vi. 33, 'First seek the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you.' But in the world to come we enjoy our chief privileges, and therefore our estate there is called 'his everlasting kingdom,' 2 Peter i. 11; and Luke xii. 32, 'It is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.' That is our blessed state, where we are absolutely free from all evil; therefore called the 'day of

redemption,' Eph. iv. 30, because all the effects of sin then cease, and therefore we enjoy all good. Every subject weareth a crown, which is sometimes called 'a crown of life,' James i. 12, 'a crown of righteousness,' 2 Tim. v. 8. A crown of life to show the happiness of that estate, and a crown of righteousness to show the sureness of it. This is chiefly considered here.

2. There is no entrance into this kingdom but by coming into the kingdom of Christ. Besides the kingdom which belongeth to Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, one true and only God, there is the kingdom of Christ considered as mediator; a new right of empire and sovereignty over the creature, not destructive of the former, but accumulative, as superadded to it, that the government of God might be the more comfortable and beneficial to us in our lapsed estate. This is called 'the kingdom of Christ,' because Christ, as mediator, hath purchased it: Rom. xiv. 9, 'For to this end Christ both died, and rose again, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and the living;' Rev. ii. 12, 'Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.' And upon the account of his merit and redemption of captive souls, God hath bestowed it upon him: Ps. ii. 8, 'Ask of me, and I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession;' and Acts ii. 36, 'God hath made this Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.' Made, that is, appointed, ordained. It is God's kingdom by original right, but Christ's by donation and purchase. Besides, it is Christ's kingdom because he is the administrator of it, both as to legislation and execution. Legislation: Mat. xxviii. 18, 'All power is given to me both in heaven and in earth;' and John xvii. 2, 'Thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him.' The mediator, God-man, is the supreme prince and head of the church, that he might dispense salvation upon his own terms, and his doctrine and faith might be embraced by all nations in the world. Here is a new power, new government, new laws, which shall be the rule of man's duty and God's judgment. Now this is comfortable and beneficial to us, because this new kingdom was set afoot to save and recover fallen man, who was disabled for his duty, and incapable of the happiness which God offered, and obnoxious to his displeasure. Therefore the kingdom and lordship of Christ is spoken of as medicinal and restorative, tending to reduce man to God, that after the breach we might again enjoy his favour, and live in his obedience: Acts xvi. 46, 'Preaching peace by Jesus Christ; he is Lord of all.' He is set up to be king and lord, to make peace between God and man, who were at odds before. His right to govern obliged him to chastise us for our rebellions: Acts v. 31, 'Him hath God exalted to be a prince and saviour, to give repentance and remission of sins.' This new Lord and king hath made a new law of grace, which is *lex remedians*, a remedying law, propounded as a remedy for the recovering and restoring of the lapsed world of mankind to the grace and favour of God, granting thereby free pardon and right to blessedness to all that sincerely repent and believe in him, but sentencing them to death that will not believe in Christ. Now without entering into this kingdom of

Christ there is no entering into the kingdom of God. These two are not contrary, but the one is subordinate to the other; namely, the kingdom of Christ is derived from God, and referred to him. The supreme right of governing is still in God, and our subjection to him is preserved: Phil. ii. 11, 'That every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.' And Christ doth redeem us that we may serve him: Luke i. 74, 'That he would grant unto us that we, being delivered out of the hands of our enemies, might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him all the days of our life.' And besides, it is impossible that we can perform the duties that belong to the kingdom of God, or enjoy the privileges thereof, without entering into the kingdom of Christ; for he healeth our natures, and giveth repentance as a prince, Acts v. 31, or a new nature, as the foundation of a new obedience. Nor can we enjoy the privileges, pardon and life. Pardon we have not till we be Christ's subjects: Col. i. 13, 14, 'Who hath delivered us from the power of Satan, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son; in whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins.' As soon as we are brought into his kingdom, then we have remission of sins. Then for life: 'There is no access to the kingdom of God in glory but by Jesus Christ as mediator: John xiv. 6, 'Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father but by me.' Christ first took possession of it in our name: John xiv. 2, 3, 'In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you: I go to prepare a place for you; and if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself, that where I am ye may be also.' And so in due time we get possession also, and reign for ever with him: Rev. iii. 21, 'To him that overcometh I will grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I overcame and sat down with the Father in his throne.' After we have a while resisted the devil, and approved ourselves to Christ, we attain that immortal glory, a part of which is reigning with Christ, and dominion over the creatures.

3. The title or right to the privileges of Christ's kingdom is by way of inheritance. This word is solemnly used in this case; as Mat. xxv. 34, 'Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you;' and Acts xxvi. 18, 'That ye may have remission of sins, and an inheritance among the sanctified.' So Col. i. 12, 'Made meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light;' and innumerable other places. Those excellent things which are prepared for us in another world are of the nature of an inheritance, not purchased by us, but freely bestowed upon us, by virtue of our adoption and sonship. God adopteth us in Christ, and receiveth us into his family. What followeth? 'If a son, then an heir of God through Christ,' Gal. iv. 7; and Rom. viii. 17, 'If sons, then heirs, joint heirs with Christ.' Our right to the heavenly inheritance cometh to us by virtue of our sonship and adoption, which is begun in the kingdom of grace, and perfected in glory. God, of rebels, at first maketh us sons, before we can lay claim to heaven and glory as our portion and inheritance. All the business then will be, who hath a right to sonship? If you search the scriptures, you will find that it belongeth only to those that

'believe in Christ,' who recovered our lost and forfeited privileges: John i. 12, 'To as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God.' Well, then, thus far we have gone. Inheritance depends upon adoption and sonship; sonship upon the grace of the Redeemer; and a right to the Redeemer's grace we have by faith. But will every faith serve the turn? No; none but such as produceth purity and obedience; for the property of faith is to purify the heart, Acts xv. 9; and without purity of heart no man shall see God, Mat. v. 8. Again, faith produceth obedience; for the mystery of the gospel is made known to all nations for the obedience of faith, Rom. xvi. 26, and none but such have a right: Rev. xxii. 14, 'Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have a right to the tree of life.' 'Those that obey and fulfil the will of God have a right to be admitted into heaven.

4. By the tenor of the christian doctrine it plainly appeareth that whoredom and all uncleanness excludeth men from this inheritance; therefore unclean persons, and men given to unnatural lusts, have no right, and cannot, without usurpation, pretend to any hopes of this blessed estate. It appeareth plainly by these particulars—

(1.) Because it is contrary to that covenant by which all enter into Christ's kingdom: Mark xvi. 16, 'He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved.' Now baptism implieth a renouncing the devil, the world, and the flesh, and a dedicating ourselves to Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, as our creator, redeemer, and sanctifier; and therefore by the baptismal covenant none can be saved but those whose faith effectually turneth them from the world and the flesh to the love, service, and obedience of God, so that they first live to him, and do hereafter live with him. And this covenant doth still bind them, under the penalty of damnation and losing the hopes of glory, to mortify and subdue the desires of the flesh more and more: Gal. v. 24, 'They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh, with the affections and lusts thereof.' Those that are baptized into his name have entered into his kingdom, profess themselves to be his subjects; they not only ought, but it is presumed that they have, crucified the flesh. In what a woful case then are all those that obey the inclinations of the flesh, and suffer their lusts to have their full career, without check or stop, and take no course to mortify them, that do neither combat nor overcome, that live in all uncleanness and filthiness! They must seek another religion to comfort them, for christianity is not for their turn.

(2.) Because of God's express exclusion. Surely they are excluded from this inheritance whom God excludes and Christ excludes. Now everywhere God has declared his mind not by consequence, but direct sentence: 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10, 'Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God, neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor extortioners shall inherit the kingdom of God?' These things are inconsistent with a christian's duty and reward; and to flatter yourselves with a belief or hope of the contrary is to give God the lie. So Rev. xxi. 8, you have another black catalogue: 'But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have

their part in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.' It is opposed there to the saint's inheritance: 'He that overcometh shall inherit all things.' But they that will neither fight, nor strive, nor seek the assistance of Christ's Holy Spirit, that they may overcome their lusts, but wallow in these sins and vices, shall be damned into hell. So again, Rev. xxii. 15, 'Without are dogs, sorcerers, and whoremongers.' Dogs are they that eat what they have vomited, and after repentance fall into their former sins. The other sinners are sufficiently known by their own names; only you see whoremongers are not forgotten, but expressly mentioned as those that shall be without, that is, excluded from the blessedness of the saints. Now what can such sinners say for themselves against such express denunciations of God's word against them? It may be they say they do believe in Christ, and all that believe are pardoned, and justified from all their sins; but Christ will be no patron of wickedness. He that believeth giveth up himself to be sanctified and governed by him, as well as to be pardoned and reconciled to God. If faith be used to cross obedience, it is no true faith; for 'Christ is the author of eternal salvation to all them that obey him,' Heb. v. 9. To all them, and only them. If you believe Christ, you must believe that you cannot be saved unless you be converted to God. It is the devil, and not Christ, that telleth you you may be saved in an unregenerate estate. If a bare strong confidence in Christ that we shall be saved notwithstanding our sins were true faith, the hardest heart would make the best faith. Who fuller of confidence and foolish presumption than they that are hardened in their sins? Therefore the business is not about faith and believing, but whether you believe Christ or Satan. If you hear Christ's voice in the word, this controversy is at an end. He hath flatly told you that you thus living and dying cannot be saved, and have no inheritance among the saints in the kingdom of Christ and of God.

[3.] From the heinous nature of the sin. It is a sin of great atheism and great infidelity. By the scriptures you know, or might easily know, that if you live in uncleanness, you incur the loss of heaven; yet you are so violently bent upon the fulfilling of your lusts that this cannot reclaim you. Certainly faith cannot consist with these sins. A man may run blindfold into hell if he will wink hard and go on securely; but he that will with open eyes run into the bottomless pit, he doth not believe the danger. You cannot drive a dull ass into the fire that is kindled before him; and Solomon telleth us, 'In vain is the net spread in the sight of any bird.' If men that have reason and conscience had eternity in their sight and view, would they venture thus? You never knew a soaken sinner in this kind, but he had ill thoughts of God and the world to come.

[4.] It is idolatry. Primary idolatry is when divine honours are given to any creature. But how is whoredom and uncleanness idolatry? Because by it men are addicted to some base thing which they prefer before God. They love brutish pleasures more than God: 2 Tim. iii. 4, 'Lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God;' and for the satisfaction of their lusts are deaf to all God's counsels; that is our god who is most valued by us, and for whose sake we will do most. Now if men can dispense with God's honour and their duty to

him for a sense-pleasing and flesh-pleasing life, they will do more for the flesh than they do for God; therefore the flesh and the belly is their God. Now how justly are they deprived of salvation who put such a vile scorn upon the great God, our creator and preserver, who prefer the belly and the flesh before him! All their business is to have their will and pleasure for a while; but how long will they have their will in these things? Besides, such a base god as they have set up must needs breed a base spirit; for every man's temper is as his god is. As the psalmist saith of gross idolaters, Ps. cxxxv. 8, 'They that make them are like unto them; so is every one that trusteth in them;' so it is true of interpretative idolatry; this idol of carnal pleasure embaseth the spirit, and maketh them unfit for everything that is worthy, noble, and generous.

[5.] Because they have not that spirit that should fit them and make them meet for heaven. All the world issue themselves at length into two places, heaven or hell; and by the way they have a several sort of spirit that disposeth them to either. The godly and sincere christians have the Spirit of Christ; it is absolutely and indispensably necessary for them: Rom. viii. 9, 'He that hath not the Spirit of Christ is none of his.' If you have any part in Christ, you are possessed with his Spirit, which is the earnest of your everlasting abode with him: 2 Cor. i. 22, 'Who hath sealed us, and given us the earnest of his Spirit in our hearts;' for he stirreth up heavenly desires and motions, and putteth you upon serious preparations for a better estate. And it is God's wisdom to put all things in their proper places; and therefore in time, when they are sufficiently prepared and made meet, he will translate heavenly creatures into heavenly places and mansions, where they shall live with him for ever; for the grossly carnal, such as the whoremongers and unclean are, they are possessed by an unclean spirit, which hurrieth them violently into hell, as he did the swine into the great deep; and they are making themselves more meet company every day for the devil and his angels.

[6.] This exclusion is so absolute and peremptory that it admits no exception but that of sincere repentance, which is both a change of heart and life. For the present the exclusion standeth in force against you, like the flaming sword that guarded paradise; but your case is not remediless, because Christ is an all-sufficient saviour, and his sacrifice for sin so full and valuable that nothing can hinder you from pardon and salvation but your own impenitency and unbelief. Certainly this may be done, for this hath been done after a like sentence and denunciation, that no whoremongers have inheritance in the kingdom of God: 1 Cor. vi. 11, 'But such were some of you; but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.' It giveth some hope to a sick man when like deadly diseases have been cured. Surely an ocean can cleanse one nasty sink, and an emperor's revenue can pay a beggar's debt. Your case is foul, but it admitteth of this change; and if you yield to it at last, you may be accepted at last, after all your great and heinous sins. The covenant of grace doth promise pardon and salvation to every penitent believer whenever they truly turn to God, without excepting any person in the world; only you must look that your

repentance be sincere, and that there be a thorough change of heart and life. No other repentance is true but a quitting and leaving these sins before they leave us. Three things are apt to deceive you—

(1.) Some trouble for these sins while you go on still to commit them. There is no question but conscience will smite when the sin is past, and the fog that blinded the mind begins to be dissipated, and reason recovereth the throne again; it will pierce the heart with sharp reflections because appetite and lust have been preferred before it. All unclean persons are not past feeling, nor have gotten the victory of conscience; but though the soul be scourged with some remorse, yet as often as the temptation returneth they are still carried away, as marsh land is drowned with the return of every tide. Therefore in repentance it is not enough that there be sorrow for the sin, but there must be a forsaking and leaving of it: Prov. xxviii. 13, 'Whoso confesseth and forsaketh his sins shall find mercy.' These great and heinous sins must be forsaken, or else we are wicked men. Ahab wept for Naboth, 1 Kings xxi. 29, yet afterwards imprisoned Micaiah. Saul with tears confesseth his injustice to David, yet continueth to persecute him, 1 Sam. xxiv. 16, and xxvi. 2. There is repenting and sorrowing for sin in hell. The repentance is never sound till the heart be so turned from sin that it may be turned against it. If we have smarted for eating forbidden fruit, we must meddle no more: Ps. li. 6, 'In the hidden part shalt thou make me to know wisdom.' Broken bones must make us wary and cautious.

(2.) The next thing that will deceive you is some faint resistance or striving against sin, but it groweth upon you. There are some sins where striving is conquering, as in the case of infirmities that we cannot wholly get rid of in this life; but in the case of heinous sins it is otherwise; they must not only be striven against, but left, otherwise no difference between godly and ungodly. The *conatus*, the endeavour, is not enough; the *eventus*, the event or issue, is considerable. If a man live in gross sins though he hath strivings and convictions, and ineffectual wishes to be better and to turn to God, this showeth he doth sin against conscience, and resist the Spirit, that should turn him from these sins: 1 Peter iv. 1, 'Arm yourselves likewise with the same mind; for he that suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin.' Christ had his innocent reluctances, but his love to God and men broke through all. Take heed of being rebellious against the importunities of grace. Such sins must not only be resisted, but conquered. A usurper may reign though there be much contradiction. Turn the tables. Should the feeble oppositions of sin against the life and reign of grace make the saints question their sincerity? Why then should this ineffectual striving acquit you from the reign of sin? It is not enough to disuse sin, but he must mortify it also.

(3.) That which will deceive you is a hope to cry God mercy upon your death-beds; and so, after an impure life, men hope still to go to heaven. We do not wholly exclude a death-bed repentance (if it be sincere, and we do it at last); it is possible, though men have but so little time left. It is great folly, as well as wickedness, to put it off till then; yet if God renew you by his Holy Spirit, you shall be accepted. But all the business is to prove it sincere; for how shall we know

whether our repentance cometh from fear or love? What cometh from fear will die again when your fear is over. God hath not your hearts till he hath your love. Now this sensible death-bed work is hard, not only for the most skilful about you, but for yourself, to discern from what cause it cometh, whether you are frightened into an unsound repentance, or be effectually and sincerely turned from sin to God, whether your heart and will be changed or not. Alas! it is easy to renounce and detest sin when we can keep it and cherish it no longer, and it is the mere fruit of necessity and fear. Besides, what hope of this, when we are contented to live longer in a course of known foul sin, provided at length we may be saved? To live a sinful life against conviction of conscience bringeth on final and judicial hardness.

[7.] If the children of God fall into any of these sins, they lose not their right, but their present fitness, to enter into the kingdom of God and Christ. When you hear or read such a saying as the text, a doubt may arise in your mind, What then shall become of Samson, David, and Solomon? I answer—

(1.) One act doth not denominate a man, but habits; such cannot be called whoremongers. The reign of sin in the heart cannot consist with a right to heaven: Rom. viii. 13, 'If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die;' that is, in a course of sin.

(2.) They lose their fitness: Gal. v. 21, 'They that do these things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.' Our divines at Dort, by the leper who was to dwell apart, say that he lost not his right in his house, but his fitness to dwell in it for the present. Sins are bound in heaven till repentance. They need a new pardon, though they are not put into a state of condemnation again, nor their former justification nullified. Infirmities have pardon of course: John xiii. 10, 'He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet.' But great and known sins must have actual repentance before they can be pardoned; they must be confessed and forsaken.

Use. Let sinners propound this to their choice, either these sins must be laid aside, or the kingdom of God must be lost. It is the highest profaneness this, to sell the birthright, Heb. xii. 6, to forfeit our glorious inheritance for a little brutish satisfaction. Will you for your unclean delights forsake the delight of angels, and choose the filthy pleasures of sin before the pleasures at God's right hand for ever more? The very punishment showeth the nature of the sin, which is loving pleasure more than God.

To quicken the children of God to avoid all uncleanness and tendency to it. You should check temptations to sin, and strive for an abundant entrance: 2 Peter i. 11, 'Give diligence to make your calling and election sure, for so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.' Reason with yourselves, as it is said of the trees in Jotham's parable, 'Should I leave my fatness, wherewith by me they honour God and man, to be promoted over the trees? Should I forsake my sweetness, and my good fruit, to be promoted over the trees? Should I leave my wine, which cheereth God and man, and go to be promoted over the trees?' So should you repel all temptations to sin, and abstain from all appearances of evil.