

and exposes himself to the penalty of death, and exclusion from heavenly blessedness.

The Scriptures assure us that *we are all by nature the children of wrath*, that we have *all erred and strayed from the way of God*, and that *sentence is passed upon all men, for that all have sinned*. But a reference to sin in general is little likely to work in your minds the conviction that you are in a state of condemnation, since men are singularly ingenious in finding excuses for their crimes, and persuading themselves that all is well with them, even when they are most obnoxious to the divine displeasure. I shall, therefore, endeavour to fix your attention upon that particular offence to which the pursuits of commerce more especially expose you, though in truth every human being, more or less, is liable and prone to it. I mean the love of the world, and the choice of it as a portion, to the exclusion of the Infinite good. Ever since the fall there has been a fatal propensity in man to forsake God, to love, and even *worship, the creature more than the Creator*, to substitute the pleasures of sense for those of reason, and the gratification of the passions for the favour of the Almighty. Of two great evils the whole human race have been guilty—*forsaking the fountain of living waters, and hewing out cisterns that can hold no water*. Nor can any of you plead exemption from the charge. If, then, while engaged in your lawful calling, you pursue the things of the world in the spirit of the world; if your motives are purely selfish, beginning and terminating in your personal gratification; if, when you prosper in your