

Swine wallowing in the mire, and dogs devouring their own vomit!

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Puritan Devotional

By Charles Simeon

Bible Text: Jeremiah 17:9-10; Matthew 23:27

Preached on: Sunday, January 7, 2024

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There are but two classes of people mentioned in the Scriptures, and to one or other of them we all belong. There is no intermediate category. Indeed, we cannot always determine to which of these classes men belong, because we cannot discern their hearts, but the all-seeing God, to whom all things are open and exposed, will differentiate them from each other, as easily as we distinguish cats from dogs. It is of infinite importance that we should have this truth impressed on our minds, for we are ready to rank among the wicked only those who are guilty of heinous crimes, whereas all are wicked who are not truly converted to God; God's testimony respecting them is applicable to them all, whether they are more or less wicked in respect to gross sins. The openly debauched are surely exceedingly loathsome in the sight of God. Let anyone but notice their speech, and how replete is it with lewdness and blasphemy. Let their character be marked and what evil dispositions they manifest on all occasions. Let their conduct be scrutinized, their drunkenness, their whoredoms, and all their other abominations, and who must not confess the justice of that scriptural representation which compares them to swine wallowing in the mire and dogs devouring their own vomit. The more decent people, it is true, do not appear so vile in the eyes of men. Yes, perhaps they are even honored and esteemed by others, yet they are loathsome in the sight of God.

What monsters of ingratitude are the very best of unregenerate men? What inconceivable mercies have they received from God, and yet they have never spent one hour in humble and grateful thanksgiving? How loathsome then must they be to the God of all grace? We confess that their actions may have appeared good to men, but how have their hearts appeared to the all-seeing God? Have they not been a very sink of iniquity? Yes, so depraved are the very best of men, that there are few, if any, who would not rather die, than have all the secrets of their hearts known to men, as they are known to God. What then are such people but whitewashed gravestones? No wonder that, however they are esteemed among men, both their persons and their works are an abomination to the Lord. "The human heart is the most deceitful of all things, and desperately wicked. Who really

knows how bad it is? But I, the LORD, search all hearts and examine secret motives,"
Jeremiah 17:9 and 10.